



*A TROOP 4TH SQUADRON, 12TH US CAVALRY
1ST BRIGADE, 5TH INFANTRY DIVISION (Mechanized)
VIETNAM JULY 1968 –NOVEMBER 1971*

“In Their Own Words”

History of the 12th Cav in Vietnam 27 Jul 1968 – 30 Nov 1971
According to the collective remembrances of it's surviving troopers.

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“In Their Own Words”

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Leaving for Vietnam

from Jim Good

Going to Viet Nam? Seemed like a great adventure to me. I enlisted, and really would have been disappointed if I had gotten orders to go anywhere but Viet Nam. I wasn't especially patriotic, or gung ho, it just seemed to me like the thing that young guys ought to do. More or less a part of growing up. Our grandparent's generation fought in WW I, our parents in WW II, some of my schoolteachers and other middle-aged men in the community had been in the Korean War, and now it was my generation's turn. I suppose that in a way I thought I might be helping the South Vietnamese people maintain their freedom and way of life. In hindsight that doesn't seem to have been a realistic goal. You have to let some people fight their own wars, and decide their own fate.

At any rate, I learned of my orders to Viet Nam one afternoon in AIT. I think we were at a commo class. I seem to remember that we were on a break on the south side of that WW II vintage wooden barracks building that they used for commo classes at Fort Knox. One of the platoon sergeants called off a list of names and told us to gather around. He informed us that we had just come down on orders for Viet Nam. He was rather solemn and straight faced. I think that he was more upset to tell us that we were going, than we were to learn that we were being assigned to a combat zone. Hey, it was the fall of 1969, where did we think we were going? Disneyland? While we knew that some guys from most AIT classes got orders for Germany, Korea, or CONUS bases, the vast majority went to Viet Nam, so most of us would have been surprised to go anywhere else. We probably had two or three weeks left in AIT after learning of our assignment, and several of us also learned that we were to attend Sheridan tank school after AIT. Sheridan school was another 3 or 4 weeks I think, and more or less a "gentleman's course" after BCT & AIT. We still had the standard Army discipline to adhere to, but much less of the B. S. that they put us through in boot camp. Following the Sheridan school, we also had a week of "RVN Training" or specific preparation for duty in the Republic of Viet Nam. By the time we got to RVN training it was November at Fort Knox, and I recall that one day while practicing response to ambushes it started snowing. Not much accumulation, but enough to make the ground white. The absurdity of the moment caught us all. We were jumping off 2 _ ton trucks into the snow to practice avoiding a V. C. ambush. Of course, a few months later while sitting radio watch on a tank in the flat, white sand north of Cua Viet with the cold, damp air blowing in off the Gulf of Tonkin, it seemed like we really were in snow in Viet Nam.

One of my clearest memories of departing for Viet Nam was getting on the airplane in Kansas City to fly to California where I processed in through the Oakland Army Depot. I'd been on leave at home, and my mother and stepfather took me to the airport. That was

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back when airports were not highly secured fortresses, and friends and relatives could accompany you basically to the door of the airplane. At that time, Kansas City did not have the passageways that extend out from the terminal building to the door of the airplane. Rather you had to walk out on the ramp, and then go up a set of portable stairs to the airplane. My parents walked to the foot of the stairs and we said our good-bye's, and then I got on the plane. As it happened, my seat was on the left side of the airplane, and I had a window seat. As I looked out the window, my parents were still standing there waiting for a final glimpse of me, and my mother was crying. I was genuinely surprised to see her cry. My reaction was, "what's she crying for, I'm coming home." In hindsight I now know that it was only due to luck that I returned in one piece, rather than in a body bag, but at age 20 I suppose that I felt bulletproof.

I arrived in California the day before I had to report in to Oakland. I really can't remember if I had any specific plans for going a day early. Maybe I wanted to do some sight seeing. It could have been that we had to report in by a certain time of the day, and there may not have been any flights on the due date that would have gotten me there in time. When I got to San Francisco, I learned that there was to be a big concert at Altamonte Speedway that weekend. I think this was the Rolling Stones concert where they had Hell's Angels acting as security guards, and one of the attendees was killed by a security guard. I thought briefly about going to the concert and just reporting for duty a couple of days late, but decided that probably would cause a lot more trouble that it would have been worth.

The next day I reported in to the Oakland Army Base. I remember spending hours waiting in lines to have my personnel and finance records audited, to get my jungle fatigues issued, and to do whatever other nonsense the Army figured that was needed prior to shipping out. I spent one night there in a fairly nice, but large and crowded barracks area. The next day was more hurry up and wait until enough of us to fill a chartered DC-8 were collected together and moved to a temporary holding area. There were cots in the holding area, but not much else for comfort or entertainment. While sitting there, several busses brought in a group of guys who had just arrived from Viet Nam after completing their tour. They were going through the reverse process of getting Class A uniforms, and doing whatever else was necessary before being sent home on leave, or being discharged. The group of veterans looked thin, dirty, and haggard. They tried to cheer us up by saying things like "you'll be sorry" or "run now while you can." At any rate, sometime after midnight we boarded busses for Travis AFB where we boarded our MAC charter aircraft. A real no frills flight, but at least it was a civilian airliner, rather than a C-130 or something like that. We made a scheduled fuel stop in Hawaii, where we all got to leave the airplane for an hour or so while they refueled the plane, cleaned it, and changed airline crews. That was my one and only visit to Hawaii. Then we took off for the Philippines, however strong headwinds forced us to make an extra fuel stop in Guam. Again we got a chance to get off the plane, stretch our



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legs, and partake of the gourmet luxury of the PX snack bar at the air base passenger terminal. Then we went on to the Philippines, where I saw my first glimpse of Asian jungle. While on the final approach to Anderson AFB in the Philippines, I saw farmers plowing fields with water buffaloes pulling a wooden plow. I figured that I'd be seeing a lot more sights like that in the following months, and of course I did.

The flight from the Philippines to Bien Hoa AFB, Viet Nam was probably the shortest leg of the trip, and it was about midnight when we landed. I have no idea how long the trip took, between the fuel stops, crossing the international date line, and everything else it had probably been about 24 hours since we left California, give or take a day or two. We seemed to circle at a relatively low altitude for a while before landing, and finally the pilot came on the intercom and announced that it had taken longer than usual to get the artillery shut down across our approach path, but that we would be landing soon. When we got on the ground, an Air Force sergeant, with a pistol on his hip, boarded the flight, and said welcome to Viet Nam. He then told us to move quickly from the airplane to a covered area about 100 meters away. He then told us where to go to find bunkers if we started getting incoming fire while gathering there. Nice thought. "Welcome to Viet Nam, TAKE COVER!" Fortunately, we didn't get any incoming that night, however a couple of days later after completing the in-processing at Long Bin, the air base did get a couple of rockets while I was waiting for the flight to Quang Tri.

One of my memories of the short time that we spent in the Repo Depot in Viet Nam was when I went to the latrine the first morning to shower and shave. There were a couple of Viet Nameese cleaning ladies there who were sweeping and mopping the place while naked GI's were taking a shower. It didn't seem to bother either the showering soldiers, or the women who went about their task like it was the most normal thing in the world to be mopping a shower building while it was in use by members of the opposite sex. Oh well, there was a war going on, so I suppose things just operated differently. Toto, we were not in Kansas anymore.

Jim Good



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Basic Training

Dennis, having gone to Ft. Ord and singing that song, We are the Infantry, the mighty mighty Infantry, over and over, we should be entitled to the CIB. However, after serving with you guys in Nam, you guys should also be awarded that badge. You do in our hearts. You guys saved me from walking and probably saved my life. I will never forget your contribution. Thanks. Buy you a drink in Vegas. (Bob Taylor)

Hey Bob, do you remember what time of the year you were at Ft. Ord, I was there this time of the year, April, May, June and July, what a beautiful place this time of the year, and with the weather we are having I'm almost homesick for basic and Infantry training. Wally

Wally,

You're not homesick Bro, you're real sick if you're missing Basic training. I was in Ft Jackson SC in July, Aug, Sept, Oct and Nov. Did Basic and Advanced Infantry there. Hated the place. Hot and humid and the locals hated our Army asses. The only time they would even talk to us was on payday. I lost about 60 pounds in those months. They ran our asses off everywhere we went. We had a kid go AWOL in the second week of basic and we never got off post the whole time I was in basic. I would have killed the little SOB myself if I could have found him.

Peace, Rag

The first night I was in Ord, in January 1969, a fellow came rushing into the wooden barracks yelling for help. A guy was trying to light himself up with some turpentine! We Hawaii guys all jumped up and followed him outside. I was thinking, wasn't turpentine *paint thinner*? Sure enough, there was some guy sitting cross-legged on the ground across the company street in front of some empty barracks trying to light some matches. Another soon-to-be G.I. was squatting next to him blowing the matches out as the guy was lighting them. It was a little comical-looking. A bunch of uniformed soldiers suddenly showed up, roughly brought him to his feet, and took him away. As a draftee still not fully comfortable with my "shanghaied" status, I had some mixed feelings about the incident. It crossed my mind that it was a pretty good way to get a discharge, and wished that I had thought of it Today, that guy is probably Donald Trump.
Pineapple



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Rag,

That brings back memories!! I went through basic at Fort Bragg.....a fat (240 lb.) hayseed from Illinois farm country really was in for a shock. Our company (three platoons) was half made up of bros from Chicago and a lot of them were in a 'club' called the Black Stone Rangers! A white guy was knifed in the barracks the first week into the cycle. To restore some order a black DI called a special formation to let them bros know he wasn't thier 'brother'....his brother died in Korea. He invited them to line up at the orderly room door and they could then discuss their difference one on one. He sent the first three to the hospital.(true!) the rest dispersed....later we found he was our hand to hand instructor! We didn't get PX privileges until the last week of our basic. We were there in the winter (Jan.'69)...so it was mostly cold and rainy. They ran our asses off too. Literally, I was 185 lb.s when I went on to Fort Knox for my 11D training. THAT was a country club compared to Bragg. But I think they may have pushed us a lot harder than normal at Bragg to keep the tension under control. We did have some issues the DI's had to handle!!!! I don't know why they let gang members in the same outfit unless they weren't tuned into that stuff like people are today.
Bob Rebbec

Wally,

I would have given anything for Basic at Ft Ord. I was at Ft Gordon Ga. In Feb, March, and April. 1/2 of our training company had to live in tents with kerosene heaters. It was colder than a well diggers ass. We had to have a fire watch every night incase a tent went up in flames. We had two tents go up in smoke but no one injured. I guess luck or pure stupidity kept me from K.P until the next to the last day of Basic. I never looked at the bulletin board the whole eight weeks and when I finally did my name was on the KP roster. When I showed up the head cook ask why I hadn't been on KP before I told him I never saw my name on the list. The day after graduation I went on sick call and was diagnoses with walking Pneumonia > I guess I had been sick for two or three weeks but I didn't want to get recycled. You can keep Basic training. One weird thing though I was assigned to the 5th of the 3rd Infantry at Ft Campbell KY after AIT. My First Sergeant was a pretty fair man but would deny a weekend pass in a heart beat. We had a IG inspection and my section aced it we were the top Commo unit in the 5th. After that the First Sgt would ask you if you wanted a pass. The weird thing was we were going down a road near A-4 and C-2 and we stopped by a Company of 1/61 grunts guess who was with them. My old First Sgt. and he even



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remembered me. I ask him for a pass but he just laughed and went on down the road. Take care Keith

Wally, You know what I liked the most about Basic Training??? NOTHING-- Merk Nerk

Hey Mikey,

Basic was really tough on me, it was the first time I had been away from home, literally, in my neighborhood none of us attended summer camp. The worst thing about Basic was being away from home, the rest was a piece of cake, I was a squad leader right from the first week of training so I never had to do Kilo Papa....(as SS would say), I was also a squad leader in AIT so I did not do any KP until about the 5th week of AIT, so things were not so bad. What did I like about Basic??? Late in the afternoon, at Ft. Ord, when the sun was going down in the California Pacific, it was beautiful. The Fort is located on a hill overlooking the coastline and highway one, and it was really pretty, to this day I like going up there at least once a year just to watch the sunsets. I went in at 165lbs and came out at a solid 160lbs. I was the fastest guy in the Company in the "dodge run and jump" drill, Oh to be 21 again!!!! See ya Wally

Bob, Yeah basic was a bummer. I was a northerner sent to a southern fort. They were still fighting the Civil War down there then and they figured everyone from NY lived in the city and rolled fags in the subway for a living. They came down pretty hard on us Yankees. We had a kid from Miss. get up on the barracks roof almost every night and threaten to jump off. They would then have to call our DI in from off base and of course he was really pissed off after that. The next day he'd kick our asses cause we all had to pay for the one guys screw-up. I also weighed in at 245 pounds. I was down to about 180/185 when I shipped over to Nam and I was 154 when I came home. I was 21 years old when I got drafted and had lived in PA for a couple of years on my own while I went to college. I grew up in upstate NY and we could drink at 18 so I had spent alot of time in the bars. My Father was a tuff old SOB and he would have made one bad ass DI so it really wasn't hard for me to take orders. I had a lot of street smarts so I played the game the way the Lifers wanted it. I really felt sorry for some of those young kids 18 and 19 that had never been away from home before. It sure was a shock to some of those kids. Alot of these guys looked up to me as a big brother and I was always being asked for advice. I really used to feel bad when these dudes would get a Dear John from home and they figured life was over for them. Man I

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used to do some real bullshit talking to keep these guys from going over the edge. The only thing that really pissed me off was the day we graduated from basic they sent me and the 5 other guys I came in with from NY back to clean the barracks. You know wax the floor and all that shit. Then after about 3 hours of this shit they pullup front with a duce and half, load us up and drove us 2 miles down the road to AIT. We get there and here is another big ass DI yelling the same shit as the first DI we saw when we got to basic training. The only thing that kept me in good shape was I played their game and told the Lifers what they wanted to hear. I also kicked ass on the rifle ranges and that didn't hurt either. When they made us qualify with the M16 after we qualified with the M14 I knew my ass was going to Nam. When I got out of AIT I got 3 days leave and 2 days travel to Ft Lewis so when I left Nam I couldn't even get an early out. I did the whole 2 year tour. I did end up with a great instructors job at Ft. Benning, Ga for my last 5 months in the Army but that was the only good break, other than being assigned to A Troop, that I ever had in the service. Boy it's nice to be able to laugh about those times now. Peace, Rag

Ours wasn't a north/south thing much Rag...it was a black/white, ghetto/anywhere else thing. Not cool at all. But I didn't have a terrible time personally...also a good shot (came with in a couple of points of the Bragg record they told me, if you believe that shit) and your right, that doesn't hurt but it's the dietary deal that astounded me most.....over fifty pounds in eight weeks!!!! They should sell this on TV!!! It's taken me nearly thirty five years to get most of it back...I am 225 now.....need to re-up I guess. Bob [Rebbec]

Most of you guys went in to basic training pretty heavy and lost weight. I did just the opposite. I went to basic at Fort Lewis, Washington, weighing 150 pounds, soaking wet with a hard-on. I left weighing 175 pounds. Talk about being a lean, mean, green fighting machine! The guys in my basic training unit would just stare at me while I scarfed down all that mess hall chow. They asked me how I could eat all that slop. I told them I grew up with four brothers and had to fight them at the dinner table just to get my share of food. The policy of the our basic mess hall was, "Take all you want, but eat all you take." Hell, that was fine with me. These days, I'm back to watching what I eat and forcing myself to exercise. Ain't life a bitch? Take care, J.T.

JT, I was like you, skinny and needed nourishment. I went in to Ord in Oct of 1968 weighing around 165. I got sick with the stomach flu while waiting to get assigned to the basic company. The sargeant told me that I was just home sick. I



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finally threw up in formation in front of a Lt. They took be to sick call and I was finally assigned a basic company. They had me filling sandbags. I lost 15 pounds. I should have thrown up on that sgt. We were confined to the company area for the duration of basic due to meningitis. We wore maggot tags. I still have mine, 3-D-5-1. Finally got to AIT at Ord and got to drink some beer.(Stillwell Hall). or something like that. Haven't quit since. [Bob Taylor]

I went in at 205. After AIT at Ord I was 168. Came home from Nam at a hefty 145.
Jim C.

I have you all beat, I went into the Army at 135 left basic at 160 and came back from Nam at 165. I guess the Army made me grow up and out. Keith

I too, like you was already enrolled in college classes, I was not a good student and knew it. I enlisted just to get the waiting over with, I was almost 21 and had not been called yet....later I found out they had lost my records and would have not been called until Carter was president.

Wally

You damn young kids. I grew up in NY and the drinking age then was 18 yrs old. I'd been to college already and was back home when I got drafted at age 21+. So the women and booze had already corrupted my life, not that that is a bad thing mind you. When I reported to basic in Ft Jackson SC I couldn't believe all these poor young 18 yr old kids that had never had a beer or even seen a naked women in the flesh. I felt so sorry for these kids. I remember this one little guy, only about 5 ft tall, that had flunk out of cooks school so they dumped him into our advanced inf. training group. This kid, small fry we called him, was as green as they come. Had never been away from home and really lost. This kid stuck to me like stink on crap. He was always asking me questions about life and things. I worried about this kid like he was my younger brother. I had to protect him from some of the other guy's cause they loved to bust his balls and play jokes on the little guy. I know he went to Nam and I hope he made it back in one piece. Our last day in AIT the drill sgt. came up to me and thanked me for keeping the kid going. Seems he was just as worried about small fry as I was. Like I said I was 21+ but I felt like an old man compared to some of these kids. They would get all shit faced on that 3.2 beer they had on post and all it did for me was make



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me piss all night. I at least knew that if my number was up I had lived a lot of life that these young kids would never have a chance to see. I guess it kind of stayed with me in Nam cause Baynes and Barnes were young, Hall was a little older but he too needed guidance. I asked for those three guys when I took command of A14. I had to argue with Top cause he told me I was nuts to take three green FNG's but I told him I'd feel better training them my way as they had no bad habits yet. They all turned out fine, at least while I was there until Dec 69. You were right Wally. There weren't to many guys older than Myself, Mills, Dye, Larson and a few others. Most of the officers weren't much older either. You young guys hang in there. Hopefully I can collect some SSI before it goes broke. Peace, Rag

Gosh, you guys were awful young. Hell I was drafted in 1966, at the ripe old age of 25. Yep, Valentines Day. I told them that I was almost 26 (In May) and would be ineligible. I missed the keyword "almost" as the Drill Sergeant so kindly pointed out. Man back then when you got a divorce, the divorce papers and draft notice passed each other in the mail. I think my ex mother in law must have hand carried the divorce papers to the draft board. JOE BYRNE

I guess I was on the young side when I got drafted. My cousin and I volunteered for the draft in Oct 1968, one month before my 19th birthday. He served with the 1st Cav. Both of us spent 6 months at Ft Ord as 11C10. We went to our local draft board in the summer of 1968 and asked them to draft us in October. They were happy to oblige. bob t

I'm another "old" draftee. I was 22 when the letter came in '68. It's a long story of why the letter even came, because I was in college, in good standing, about to start the 2nd semester in my junior year. It wasn't until I was in for about a year and in the 'Nam when I realized how inequitable the draft really was. Not everyone had to serve, there were too many holes in the system. My good buddy sat the war out because he got married and had a kid with a woman he really didn't love, as soon as the lottery came in and his number was really high, they got divorced. He was in college too. Of course, we all know how the wealthy in this country kept their sons safe. I think the all-volunteer army of today finds the same problems of avoidance by the majority of the country's young, only this time it's even easier to let your neighbors do the fighting. GeorGersaba

I think I was of a typical age. I did poorly in collage and 'volunteered for the draft by going to the local draft board chairwoman and telling her let's get it over with.



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She did. I had turned twenty a couple of months before I went off to basic in Jan. 1969. Twenty, twenty-one seems to be a pretty average age for a draftee.....twenty-four and five year olds werewell, real OLD! (-: George, I too have thought about the "system" and it kind of grates me when people get a free ride. Not that I resented serving, I am very proud and glad I did. But had I not been drafted I probably wouldn't have enlisted. So I could have been a "free rider" too. Maybe the most equitable way would be like Israel and have compulsory service....doing something.....????? Bob REBBEC

Man you guys were nuts. There was no way I was volunteering for the draft. I had the world by the ass. I was operating tower cranes for Eastman Kodak construction Co. and making about \$350 to \$450 per week on average. That was real good money in 1968. I was driving a new 1968 hemi Roadrunner that was all paid for. Out every night drinking and womanizing. I also had a 1940 Willys coupe I was drag racing about 4 times a week. There was no grass growing under my feet. I was living at home and had a ton of money to piss away on whatever I wanted. I often think my Dad had me drafted cause my brother Don and I was eating him out of house and home. Many a night we would get home just in time to shower, change cloths and go to work. Man them were the days. There was no way I was leaving that if I didn't have to. I figured if they called me I'd go if not I just keep drinking and having a good time. But you guys are all right. I'm glad I got drafted and had the opportunity to serve with all you great Americans. We had some bad times but we also had a lot of laughs. I've got a lot of great memories that I often think back on and it often times makes my day.
Rag

I was working as a Honda motorcycle mechanic and also living at home. I was racing TT scrambles on my Norton 750 every week and having a good time. (I was second in points. open novice) I wasn't old enough to drink but had a few when available. All my friends and brother were in at the time so I just wanted to get it over with and be free when they were discharged. My brother was drafted and never left the states. He was at Ft Meade, in F Troop, 7th cav, as a turret mechanic. My close friend was a mechanic and sent to Germany. Another friend was a mechanic in Vietnam. Since I was also a mechanic, I figured to get to be a wrench turner somewhere. Wrong, I got infantry. bob t

I was at Ft. Ord at D-2-1, spring of 69. I waited as long as I could to join up cause I was having a good time cruising the Strip and eating hamburgers at Tommy's at all hours of the night. towards the end of '68 and early '69 the Strip had begun to



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fade away, the cops were really cracking down, the guys coming out to the strip were not the same cool guys that were cruising in 66 and 67. The world had started to change before our very eyes. It was no longer getting high for the fun of it, everyone was trying to overdose, no shit!!!. The music was also changing, and none for the better...The cars had begun to lose their horsepower, except for the Chevy's...the world because a different place, literally overnight. Things always happen for the best and I ended up in Nam with all of you.....thank God for that. Wally

I was in 3-D-5-1. I still have my maggot tag. In the spring of 69, I was at Ft Benning flunking out of NCO school. I didn't want to be there but the CO stated that there were only two ways out. Graduate or get kicked out. I chose the latter. Took me 4 weeks or so. Bob t

Ft. Ord is beautiful, as you know, but they told me it does not get cold up there. Bullshit!!! We were there soon after one of the wettest winter we had had in So. Cal. It was green and wet. All in all I had a good time there, the only thing that bothered me was being homesick. Ended up going down the hill for Infantry training, now that was a drag, the D.I.'s were assholes there and the C.O. was a middle age dude that was a 1st Lt., he had come from the Marine Corps where he was an E-7. They count cadence different in the Corp and we kept tripping all over ourselves with him singing that bullshit he would do. Finally some of the other D.I.'s told him the truth, he was pissed and let one of the guys in the training cycle sing the cadence, he was good too. Pvt. Williams, did not make it back home.

Wally



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1968

A Troop 4th Squadron, 12th US Cavalry, 1st Brigade 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized)

The TO&E of a Cavalry Troop in the 1960's called for three platoons. Each platoon had a platoon leader's vehicle, a scout section of two scout squads with each squad having two vehicles (4 vehicles in the section) a tank section of three tanks, an infantry squad and a mortar squad.

Many Cavalry units reorganized the platoons to have 9 M-113s when they deployed to RVN - 11th Cav is the best example. However A/4-12 kept its original organization when it deployed to RVN with one small exception. There was never enough infantry replacement so the infantry squad was folded into the scout section and most of the time the mortar squads were pulled from the platoons and formed a mortar platoon.

A platoon's organization would have been (using 1st platoon as an example)

10 - Platoon Leader

11 - Scout Section Leader

12 - Scout

13 - Scout Squad Leader

14 - Scout

15 - Infantry Squad - not used as a scout

16 - Platoon Sergeant and Tank Section Leader

17 - Tank

18 - Tank

19 Mortar Squad, but removed and grouped with the other mortars to form a mortar platoon under Troop Commander's control.

There were three platoons. In addition there were two radar tracks, (Call signs 61 & 62) the troop commander's track, a light recovery vehicle and the commo track (Call sign 30) that is why the 3d Platoon Leader's call sign was 40.

Matt Spruill This is the second installment to my e-mail on Troop organization.



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As I mentioned before each platoon had a mortar squad, they were 81"MM mortars mounted in a track. Common practice was for all three mortars to be grouped into a platoon. When I was there the "19" Squad leader ran the mortar platoon. The mortars went to the field whenever the entire troop deployed. In night defensive positions they were located in the center of the troop position and were aimed at a pre-determined target. They also had registered data for other likely targets.

The troops had two [Ground Surveillance Radars](#) (GSR). They were AN/PPS-5, and used call sign 61 and 62. Each radar had a track and a crew of 2 or 3. The radars looked like a large can turned on its side with the radar end being curved and the operators end being flat. This was mounted on a tripod and could be hooked up to a small generator for power.

The radar was designed to pick up movement and worked best against vehicles, but it could pick up groups of people. There was no scope like you see on most radar, but the radar return came through an noise which the operator heard in a set of head phones. It required training and practice to use the set with any reliability.

The radar also went to the field when the troop deployed and at night was located in the center of the troop's position.

When I was there I had the mortars and the radar set up on the same base azimuth. That way when ever the radar picked up a target they only had to give the mortars the azimuth and range for the mortars to fire, it took some practice but several times suspected targets were engaged.

As each mortar track and radar track had a 50 cal mounted on top they also provided a nice firepower reserve for direct fire in a defensive position if needed.

When on the move the radar tracks accompanied and set up with the mortars to provide them security.

Is anyone out there a mortar man or a GSR operator?

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Matt Spruill

Matt, I was the gunner on 29. MOS was 11C20. I was trained as a mortar man at Fort Ord. During the time that I was over there, I only remember a few times that we set up as a company and used aiming stakes and the M16 plotting board. It seems that most of the time we were at platoon strength and usually just "hip shot" the mortars. I don't remember the radar tracks very well. The tank's range finders were used to give us an accurate distance to target and we would use the vertical cross hair for alignment and adjust range accordingly. Much of the time that I was there, Jun 69 to Jun 70, track 29 wasn't running so I spent time as M60 gunner on different tracks. I can remember one time that we had the three mortar tracks set up on coordinates and we had some Marines working with us. They had electronic listening devices set up on a trail in three different spots. Movement was detected on the first, the second and when we got the ok, we fired 5 rounds from each tube and blew up the third sensor. In the morning we found a bloody shirt.

Bob Taylor

Glad to see that troop tactics changed some time after I was there. Don't remember ever seeing a radar track and to the best of my knowledge never used the mortar track other than as another vehicle with a 50 on it. I never remember them set up as a battery but then we were usually operating as independent platoon and not that often as a troop. The one time we could have dropped a few rounds in to keep them hopping it was decided that the men didn't have the experience to register accurately enough, especially when friendlies were also operating in the same valley and positions iffy.

William McShane

[Feb. 1901: On Feb. 2nd the 12th Cav. was formed at Ft. Sam Huston TX.]

[Feb 1968](#)

TET offensive initiates additional troop buildup in Vietnam

[March 1968](#)

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1st Brigade 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized), Ft. Carson, CO begins receiving troops buildup and training for deployment to Vietnam. [Formation, Training & Deployment to Viet Nam](#) **April 1968** Civil Disturbance Training and deployment to Washington D.C. riot control; in the time frame of the end of March and the first of April. Pineapple:

Barbara and I were out doing the Thanksgiving shopping tonight and while waiting for her to clear the checkout I went over to the book rack and picked up a book about Nam (surprise surprise). I always check them out to see what reference there is to the Cav (normally none at all). This one did make reference to the fact about the 5th Inf being send to Nam despite not being ready for combat operations (that is one reason we sat on the beach for so long). It seems that the Division had been wrapped up in riot control and were behind in their training and in the outfitting of equipment to be used in Nam. So it was held back until sometime in September before the whole unit was declared fit for duty. CoopAccording to "The Rise and Fall of an American Army" by Shelby Stanton (1985, Novato CA, Presidio books), the 5th I.D. (Mech) brought 1,072 armored vehicles with them. Once there, they received 140 APCs, 8 mortar carriers from Fort Hood and a total of 67 M48 tanks from Ft. Knox and the Letterkenny Army Depot in Chambersburg, PA. During the shakedown period, the division's readiness was complicated by the September monsoons which temporarily isolated the division on the wrong side of the Cam Lo main bridge. But the day was saved by aerial resupply. Some elements of the division came into enemy contact in August, but the rest of the division actually entered the fight in October 1968. According to Stanton, the NVA on the DMZ now had to deal with armored formations and "mechanized momentum." **June 1968** Robert Kennedy assassinated in Los Angeles.

Deployment of advance party for Quang Tri and Wunder Beach. Tent City built in the sands of Wunder Beach.

[Photo of Wunder Beach Commemorative Patch made by locals](#) provided by Al Sacks

Deployment of advance party from Ft. Carson to Danang on [C-141's](#).



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Jim Mills arrives with advanced party that in Danang, and then flown to the Marine base at Quang Tri in C141's. While awaiting the arrival of the main body elements we receive our in-country briefing from the 3rd Marine Div., fill sandbags, pull guard and learn how to burn shit.

July 1968(ORLL Beginning First Period 1/5 th Inf Div (M) Quang Tri Province, South Vietnam 1 Nov 68) Phase III – Movement to Vietnam: On 1 July 1968, an advance party consisting of 300 personnel and 85.5 short tons of cargo departed Peterson Field, Colorado Springs, Colorado. This lift required seven C141 aircraft (3 for passengers and 4 for cargo). Upon arrival at Da Nang Air Base, the advance party moved to Quang Tri Combat Base to establish a temporary base camp and prepare to receive the main body of the Brigade. The main body started moving on 22 July 1968 and completed movement on 31 July 1968. The movement of the main body required a total of 64 C141 aircraft consisting of 48 passenger sorties and 16 cargo sorties. A Total of 4,578 personnel and 1,109.3 short tons of cargo were moved by air. Personnel landed initially at Da Nang and were transloaded into C130 aircraft for movement to Quang Tri. Priorities for movement were 1-11 th Inf Bn, Brigade Hq, 1-61 st Inf (M), 1-77 th Armor, and the 75 th Support Bn in that order. After arrival the brigade began to deprocess the equipment shipped by surface transportation. The majority of this equipment was off-loaded at Da Nang and transshipped to Wunder Beach on the coast ESE of Quang Tri City. From 1 August to 15 August 1968 the battalions unpacked, conducted orientation and acclimatization training, and prepared for combat. The units were initially positioned as follows: 1 – 11 Inf LZ Sharon 1 – 61 Inf (M) Wunder Beach 1 – 77 Armor Wunder Beach 5 – 4 Arty LZ Sharon A/7 th Engr Wunder Beach A/4-12 th Cav Wunder Beach 75 th Spt Bn (-) Quang Tri CB D 75 th Bn Dong Ha 517 th MI Quang Tri CB 407 th RRD Quang Tri CB 86 th Chem Det Quang Tri CB Bde HQ Quang Tri CB (5) .50 Caliber MG Mounts:

(a) Observation: The M@ caliber .50 cupola mounted MG on the M1 cupola in the M48 series tanks is unsatisfactory forthe type of combat experienced in Vietnam. A pedestal mounted MG with armor protection enhances the tank commander's ability to return fire immediately. The .50 caliber MG used in reconnaissance by fire is easier to control if mounted by this method.



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From Lt. William G. McShane 3rd Platoon 1968-69

As I read comments of others about their memories of their early days in country I decided to try reconstructing some of what happened to me from memory and comments I made in letters to my wife to be. She has saved all of the letters I wrote, so there should be some interesting facts a few of which I have already come across. If anyone wants to edit this or can fill in some of the blanks I would love to start a dialog.

The troop left Carson and flew to Traverse AFB in CA, then to [Wake](#), Manila and finally Da Nang I got off the plane on Wake, walked out to an old WWII bunker and checked out the Pacific. Never saw the pacific. I commented in letters that each stop got hotter and hotter. When we disembarked in Da Nang the heat was so oppressive I just stood there and sweated. Sweated some more. Then watched the tracer fire shooting off in the distance.

I can't remember how we got from Da Nang to Quang Tri. Boggles my mind, but I remember our first days were at Quang Tri combat base in a tent city next to the marines. Here we were in our nice clean fatigues in a base camp. No equipment. Don't remember when we got weapons, but do remember we had some rule about loaded rifles. My first trip out of the compound was when John Howell (It) and I grabbed Lou Coates' XO jeep and went for a ride down 1 to Quang Tri City. Here we go out of the compound it nice new fatigues, steel pots, belts, flackjackets up to our eyeballs, weapons at the ready, driving down the road sightseeing. Uneventful except for the smell of burning charcoal, palm fronds, and nouc mam(sp). Marines lazily walking up and down the side of the road, dirty, no pots, no flackjackets, some no weapons. We looked like a couple of fresh flowers totally out of place. FNG's

Hot hot hot. No ice. Went to the Marines on a mission to get a refrigerator. Marine Major from home town looked at young 2lt (our mothers knew each other) and blew me off. He was even a supply officer. I guess I should have known better. Should have sent Sgt. Platt in the first place.

Prior to July 8 - NCO's and Officers buy a refrigerator. Supplied by none other than Sgt. Platt. Cold beer!

Just talked with Lou Coates, the Troop XO on departure. To correct the record, he states that the Troop left in mass before he left. While we were on leave prior to departure, he and 10 or so others, Harrison included, worked, tying up loose ends. When we, the whole Troop embarked, he went on leave and then directly to Nam and directly to Wonder Beach, missing the Quang Tri tent city stage. Does anyone remember how we got from Da Nang to Quang Tri. I am drawing a blank.
W. McShane

I was in the advance party and it is my recollection that we flew from Da Nang to Dong Ha or Quang Tri. I remember that the Air Force tried to frighten us when we were about to land at Da Nang by telling us that the base there was under

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heavy fire. The A Troopers were smart enough to realize that they would not land those huge planes if they really were under fire.

Remley Campbell (Static)

Blue Max:

Let me add to the confusion with my faded memory of almost 34 yrs ago.

I remember an advance party being sent from the Brigade and A Troop sent personal with it. In regards to the Troop going on leave, there was a period of time when almost all of A Troop was on leave. There was a small party left behind to wrap up odds and ends. I was part of that small party, I had to attend a meeting (as the ranking NCO of the Troop) in regards to status of Troop preparation and you want to talk about being the low man on the totem pole. There even were a couple of days when you could not find an officer in site. During this time we basically hung out at the motor pool or some other spot out of site - out of mind. One of the reasons I remember this time period, we had one buck Sgt. who was thrown from a jeep injuring his elbow so bad that he could not go to Nam with the Troop. Another reason why I remember this period of time is because we became so laid back that some people felt like we forget that we were still in the Army and one morning at formation we had a surprise inspection. At this inspection several Article 15's were handed out, including one to me for not shaving. At age 19 I could go for months and not shave and pass inspection but high up wanted to put people on notice that we were still in the Army. The company clerk at that time told everyone not to worry he would handle it and make it go ahead. It was not until Pineapple was back in the rear, did I find out that I had an Article 15 on my record. When the Troop came back from leave, the party that had been holding the fort down while they were gone, took their leave.

Coop

Bill (Blue Max)

Guess I'll add a little more fire to the confusion. Coop corrected me on one part and that was leaves. From what I remember the Troop was split for their leaves. The advanced party where the first to leave and by the time we returned the rest of the troop was on leave. I don't recall how many troopers a C-141 holds but the A Troop was one one. If I recall correctly there where three birds that took the



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advanced party over. Carson to Travis AFB to Wake Island to the Phillipines and then to Da Nang. From Da Nang we flew in C-130's to Quang Tri and landed in a 30 mph cross wind needles to say the pucker factor was high. All I remember about Quang Tri was the Marines gave us some in country traning, filling sand bags and pulling guard on our motor pool. I do remember that a higher up came up with the idea that we should make a landing pad shaped like a diamond out of sand bags. During constrution of the pad some Marines came by and told us that the pad would be under water after the first rain (it was). One thing that I can't place is did the Troop come together at Wunder Beach or at Quang Tri?

Jim M. A 4/12 (advanced party) 68-69
D Co. 1/11 ACR 69

4th of July show put on by the Marines, the whole perimeter opens up and flares light up the sky.

By the way, I have a really stupid question. I really seem to remember being in Viet Nam on the 4th of July. I have this memory of being in a marine area with the other platoon leaders and Bobcat. The Marines let loose with everything sometime during the evening, a mad minute I think, to celebrate the 4th. Scared the shit out of me because I thought the perimeter was under attack. I think it was Quang Tri, but it could have been Wunder Beach. Now, am I dreaming or do you remember that too or do I have the date wrong?

James Kershner

L.T.

You are not dreaming it was at Quang Tri on the 4th of July like you thought. It gave me one hell of a pucker factor. Shit I was in country for just 2 days and I thought they were already going to waste my ass. All I remember was it was one hell of a show.

Jim Mills

Good, I'm glad to know I haven't totally lost it after all these years. I can't believe I turned 60 last week. I still think I'm about 25 and bullet proof. Two other things I remember about that 4th of July. I bought a K Bar knife from a marine for a case of beer. I'm sure he thought that he pulled a good one on an army LT, but the beer is long gone and I still have the K Bar and it is as sharp as ever. The other



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thing I remember is that when the jar heads set off their "fireworks" I grabbed my .45 and and tried to chamber a round and it jammed. I found out later that it was defective and I turned it in for another one, but after that I always had a 45 and an M-16 and I won't even mention the .32 snub nose I carried in my pocket. James Kershner.

Swinny arrives with main body.

Equipment - Tanks & APC's arrive

Coop says they were sent over from Carson with M48A1 tanks which were gasoline engine powered. Think this should be noted in the record. Saw a show on the history channel awhile back about WWII Sherman tanks which were also gas powered. Both the US and Germans nicknamed them "Ronsons" because like the cigarette lighter, they lit first time and every time when they were hit. I do recall seeing a bunch of burnt out Marine tanks around everywhere. A few were even flamethrower models.

Malan.

We trained on M60 at Carson and then picked up M48A1 or A2 but they were gas burners for sure. We did not bring them with us; that I can remember.

Coop

There was a report of enemy activity near Tombstone. A Troop sweeps area around 0300hrs. No contact was made but tanks run over a few hootches.

Bob:

Except for the dead cat and A/C (Coop is referring to a humorous story Bob posted on the commo net) it sounds like A Troop when they first hit Wunder Beach; we had so many 3rd degree sunburns the CO threaten to give out Article 15 for destroying Army property.

Coop

Coop:

Tanks for memory I just about put the Wunder Beach Sunburns to rest. I didn't think we had that many layers of skin to peel off. Even the Brothers got



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sunburned. [Photo](#)

Jim Mills

From Lt. William G. McShane 3rd Platoon 1968-69

Remember the first month as pretty slow therefore wrote a lot of letters.

10 July report that the Marines up north are into it although our area is fairly secure. Marines kill 233 and take 4POW's. 3 Killed.

14 July Arrival at Wonder Beach which turned out to be the first real base of our own albeit short lived. Sandbagging and more sandbagging! Yesterday rained harder than I have ever seen it. Everything drenched.

17 July Playing a lot of poker!

18 July Ship in. Six days to offload.

21 July Sea snake came swimming at me while body surfing. Got the hell out of the water.

24 July No Mail No Mail No Mail. Went out on the ship to check on the off loading. In the lights hanging overboard sea shakes and squid galore. Every once and a while a big something crashes through and takes a mouthful.

25 July FIRST LETTERS FROM HOME. Dated July 2. Wrote Peg about Fat Harry, Pewee and Skinny Luke. You guys remember who they were? Big waves at the beach. Body Surfing. Seems we are all swimming in the nude and one of the guys got his ass burned so bad he couldn't stand the feel of a cover or whatever on it

July 27 drawing rations for 250 men and only feeding 190. Eating like a demon

July 31 We received 23 of our vehicles last night. Today will put on armor and start mechanical checks.

[August 1968](#)

Quang Tri base camp occupied

4/12 Cav assigned to guard road between Quang Tri and Dong Ha

The following is from Keith Short of C 1/11th Infantry:

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On 6 Aug 1968, A/4-12 Cav replaced C/1-11 Infantry in a place called "Red." Red appears to be the area around FSB Pedro area to the north of the Thach Han River. It begins at 13:41 hours when A/4-12 Cav start calling in their locations at check points #1, #7, #23, #25, #50 and #70. I'm assuming these were places were east of FSB Pedro. At 15:59 hours the location of A/4-12 is at YD258526, some 4300 meters north of Pedro. At 12:59 hours, 7 Aug 68, an A/4-12 Cav location is at YD232477 just off Rte. 557 on a little knob about 1900 meters SWW of Pedro. At 13:45 hours there is an A/4-12 Platoon at YD231472. At 14:04 hours 1/A/4-12 at YD2314566 found a spider hole they threw CS in and then destroyed it with a track (no enemy found). At 14:28 1/A/4-12 was at YD227466. At 14:28 1/A/4-12 was at YD222474 and at 16:10 hours they're at YD231481. At 17:59 hours A/4-12 Cav reports LP's at YD285501, YD291503 and YD293500. At 22:01 hours the CO of A/4-12 was given orders to report to QTMB NLT at 11:00 hours for a meeting. On 8 Aug 1968 at 16:58 hours A/4-12 Cav sends in their ambush locations at YD278482, LP at YD286501, a patrol from YD287502 to YD272489 to YD274482 (an area 4500 meters NE of FSB Pedro). At 21:00 hours to 21:50 hours A/4-12 reported they were shooting illumination after hear noises from 2x persons running at them at YD284501 (this position is west of the ammo dumps at Red Devil). On 10 August 1968 at 11:40 hours the 1/11 Daily Journal entry reads: Change of Task Organization (Loss of A/4-12) will be effective 101600 11 Aug 68.
[End of Short's insert]

Mine (I would assume - and we all know what assume spells - 1st platoon) first time took place up on the DMZ; we had been doing a sweep all morning. We took a lunch break, all the tracks were spread out in a line. I was sitting out on the right front fender of A16, McNeil and Willie P were up top and Troy was in the drivers hatch. What followed seemed to happen in slow motion (but it took place in seconds) out front and to the right of the tank the ground started erupting (it was incoming mortar rounds) McNeil yells incoming about the same time, being wet behind the ears I was amazed by it all. In the next moment it's assholes and elbows, with c-rats flying through the air. Being the gunner I had to get in fast so the rest could get in; while this is going on Troy has the Tank going backwards. The grass was so tall unless you were in the TC hatch you could not see shit. The next thing you know we have back off into an old B52 bomb crater, trust me you



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can lose a tank in one of them, and threw a track as we hit bottom. The rest of the platoon had pulled back, we are sitting at the bottom of the crater at an angle so it is out with side arms (grease gun / 45 pistol ha-ha) lucky nothing else came of the incoming. An M88 was sent up to pull us out of the crater; they hook onto one hook and pull us out while doing this the other track comes off. So here we sit one large visible non-mobile bunker. The rest of the platoon is covering us from a distance. I do not remember how long it took to get the tracks back on but I would think we would have been inspired. Were we lucky, someone watching over us, or what? [Photographs of M88 and crewman](#)
(Charles Cooper)

From Lt. William G. McShane 3rd Platoon 1968-69

August 6 Spent a week in the hospital in Da Nang Legs, hands, feet, lips whole body swells up so much I must walk on heels of my feet to get around. Learn what it's like to get malaria from the men in my ward and swear if I get out of this place and back to my men I will force feed malaria pills to them for the rest of the year. The sweats and cold chills they had under ice water rubber blankets made a believer out of me. I didn't have it and didn't know what I had until four months ago (2002). Story to be told at the reunion under the right circumstances. Remember after returning to the platoon, one of my men getting a wound, bite or irritation, on the rear of his calf. A few days later it ate its way through to the front of his calf without touching either side. Just came out the front. Sent him to the doc and it was the last I saw of him.

While I am in the hospital Sgt. Jim Platt gets the platoon up to strength and combat ready.

August 15 Out of the hospital, no ticket home. Guy in another platoon shot a friend in the arm with a 45. We are doing road duty. Keeping open the road between Quang Tri and Dong Ha. Wrote home and I quote " I know that I have got the best platoon over here and I think my men are beginning to think the same way also. It is not a feeling of over confidence either; it is just a feeling of pride among everyone." Credit one Platoon Sergeant, Jim Platt.

August 18 Took six incoming rounds, from where or where I don't know? Close to DMZ. August 21 Fire fight up North. Air strike. "I think the mail is getting fouled up again. It isn't coming in regularly. A few of my men haven't gotten mail from their wives for 8 days when they were getting it everyday."

August 24 Got ahold of the clerks typewriter to write home. We were 1500 meters from the DMZ. Second platoon took three incoming when leaving.

August 24 - Sept 8 References to being in base camp at Dong Ha. Vaguely remember calling Dong Ha base camp for a while. Think our area was on south of the tarmac. Took 50 incoming rounds and spent



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a few hours in a trench. Came out of the trench and saw Sgt Spybuck pop his head up. He was white. Hard to do for a 201 pound Cherokee. I remember him as being just one big man with coal black hair. He was Indian but I really can't say what tribe. One night on road duty I fell asleep and my men could not wake me. I was out cold in some kind of stupor. They got worried, call HQ and out came Spybuck, to save the day and me. I seem to remember being held up in the air by Spybuck and him shaking me while holding me with his hands on each of my upper arms as I dangled in front of him. Wake up time! He was Top at that time. Reported we were in a typhoon for three days. Tank sank in a rice paddy up to its turret ring. Assume we got it out.

September 1968

A-18 hits mine near C2. Swinny, Mills, Tulki and [Gaylor](#) shaken but there were no major injuries. [Photo of A-18 Crew](#)

I'm still not sure of the time of this event but it must have been at the end of Aug. or early Sept. 1st platoon had been pulling road guard on Highway 1 keeping the road between Dong Ha and Quang Tri secure at night. How we got to where we ended up is still locked away. Any way we ended up on a Recon near, I believe, C-2. We did our Recon of the AO and started back down the road following the tracks we left on the way up figuring we did not hit anything on the way up we should be ok on our way down the hill. I still don't remember the explosion all I remember is coming back down on the turret, looking down where the mine exploded. At this time we had M48A1, which was gas powered. Why they did not give us A-2's or 3's I do not know. Back to the story the mine went off about amidsthips it seemed like that it went off right under me. The next thing I remember is asking Swinny if he is ok and he was. All of a sudden, SSgt. Cunningham comes running from his ACAV. Finds what he believes to be a spider hole and empties about 3 M-16 Magazines into a hole about a foot deep. Still it had to have been a command-detonated mine considering where the mine blew and that was A-18's welcome to Nam.

Tanks for listening
(Jim M "68")

Septemeber 5, 1968

Typhoon BESS strikes I Corp with 50-knot winds and heavy rain. Operations are



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suspended for two days and defensive positions are washed out.

I remembered a typhoon hitting early in our tour but could not recall the date of and etc. One of the reasons this memory has stayed with me all of these years is everytime it rains hard I can see myself back in Nam pulling guard on A16 (at night near a bridge) in this typhoon. You could hold your hand in front of your face and not even see it. Let me tell you it became just as wet inside the tank as it was outside; wet and cold all night is something that will cause one today to look out the patio door and stare out into a hard rain and smile.

Cooper

[12 Sep 1968](#)

Brigade sweep along DMZ. A28 hits mine. 2nd platoon APC hit by Chicom anti-personnel mine. Spc Jones and Van Winkle wounded.

Harold Joseph Van Winkle, Jr., aka Rip. Married. Patterson, New Jersey. Was wounded on Sept 12, 1968. Sent to Ft Zama Japan. The shrapnel was real close to his heart. His son, Saun, was a couple of months old and he heard him baby talk on the phone, but never got to see him.

(G. Bowers)

Also, are you sure that Michelson was KIA in Vietnam? He was hit on my track (A10) up on the DMZ and I had him medivac'd out. I think the date was Friday Sept 13th, 1968. If he was KIA no one ever told me. I can't remember his first name but he was supposed to be getting an early out to go home to start college. Anyone have any other details?

(Ltee Kershner)

Charlie Brown:

I had to think on this for awhile but if I remember correctly Michelson came back to the troop before he left for the world. If this is the person I'm thinking of I believe it was his 2nd. tour.

Jim M.

I agree that it was his 2nd tour. I'm glad to know he wasn't KIA. I don't remember too much except he was a good guy and he was sitting on the back of



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my APC when we started taking incoming. I think he got hit in the stomach, but didn't seem fatal at the time. I remember the first round, probably a rocket since we were sitting almost on top of the Ben Hai River, hit right in front of a tank to my right. I thought the tank had fired and it went low, then I realized that it was enemy fire. We opened up and I watched a gunner on one of the tracks burn out his 50 cal barrel by firing without stopping. When that happened you could see the rounds not going straight, but kind of cork screwed. (By the way, that it one of my nightmares about Vietnam in having a weapon that won't shoot straight or running out of ammo. In truth, I always had so much ammo on my track and on me that there was never a chance I would run out. After an experience, which I will relate some other time, I always made sure I had a .32 5 shot snub nose in my pocket.) I think I remember somebody trying to chae the barrel and getting burned because they didn't have asbestos gloves on. The next thing I remember is all of the tracks and tanks backing off the hill. We had some other WIA's I think an E5 was shot in the arm. Then a Medivac chopper came on my freq and said that he was coming in for a dust off. I told him the LZ was hot and he said don't worry just pop smoke and be ready to get the wounded on his chopper. I never knew who the pilot was but from that day I will buy any Medivac pilot or crewman a drink anytime, any place. Those guys had to have the biggest brass balls in the war. Thanks for listening.

(J. Kershner)

From Lt. William G. McShane 3rd Platoon 1968-69

Sept 15 Into the DMZ. Launched from A-3. 1st and 2nd Platoons stage in the night before. 3rd Platoon, ours, holds back and keeps the road open and rendezvous in the morning. Road off 1, to A3, not cleared of mines, so get off into the low grass. Hit a mine. Zamora was driving. All okay, just a little sore. Track a mess. I wrote that the rest of the Troop pushed into the DMZ that two other tracks hit mines and there was contact. We got a few. Can't say more than that because I was sitting there on the top of that exposed hill with one of my tanks and another track waiting for repair.

September 24 Rained for three days. Cam Lo Bridge completely washed out last night. Mission was guarding the Cam Lo District Headquarters from VC or NVA attack. Drenched. If I remember right, at one point we may have been in Cam Lo cordoned around some Marine 155 SP's. Great fun trying to sleep with those babies going off all night.

Sept 27 Cordoned off a vill and waited for the PF to come in and search. Told eight VC caught.



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Sept 30-Oct 1 While riding on Sgt Platt's tank we hit a mine.

September 29, 1968

Battleship New Jersey (BB-62) arrives on station off I Corp.

October 1968

1st platoon sent to Camp Eagle by way of LCU to Hue.

October 8 Talk of being attached to the 101 down in Hue. Alexander no longer CO. Ended up a CO of company in 1/77. We lost a great CO.

October 20 Now attached to 101st north of Ha Vong Pass (sp). Raining for six days.

Lt. William McShane

November 1968

6 Nov 1968: Nixon elected president. American troop strength is at 540,000.

Returned to Quang Tri.

From Lt. William G. McShane 3rd Platoon 1968-69

Nov 6 Prior to this date we break off with the 101st and drive north past Wonder Beach again. Remember Sgt. Platt taking the lead tank over a bridge shaped almost like a perfect arch, semicircle, going about 5mph and praying the damn thing didn't drop out from under him. Peg sent a plastic pumpkin for Halloween. Hung it between the whips on the track.. Got more smiles and thumbs up from guys as we drove around country with that orange glow between the whips. Nice to cheer up people.

Bill McShane

On Nov 8 I was pissed about something and I wrote "Point #2. Our president must be and idiot. I am far from a war monger, yet I don't like to be shot at by artillery from the other side of the DMZ. If the bombing halts bring peace that is fine, however the first one did the opposite. They dropped 130mm artillery rounds into Dong HA for two days straight after the first one (the 36 hour job of a few days ago) and managed to destroy one hell of a lot of government property, not to mention killing the Sergeant Major. All those halts do is let Ho chi and the boys hump down more ammo on their backs" etc.



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In another instance I railed on about the news we were seeing of rioting students.

December 1968

06 Dec 68

[SSG Guy Creep](#) killed doing thunder run. Took RPG in swim vane and 50 cal shield. SPC Jones wounded, mechanic wounded (lost part of his skull cap), and two others wounded.

I was in 2nd platoon then. i was in charge of track 23 & 24. I got over to Sgt. Creep's track that night before "doc" could get there and saw he was dead. we were all so mad at the dustoff pilots because they wouldn't come in and get guy because they were scared somebody would fire a star cluster into their chopper. hell, they were green i guess.

Sgt. Kilmore

[December 18](#) Returned from R&R and doing guard duty for engineers building a road into the Bai Long Valley. Lost a man in another platoon while I was away. Wrote the "Americans forces left the valley a year or more ago and the NVA and Cong have had it ever since. No sweat though, the Cav is tough."

Bill McShane

While I am B.S.ing. Do you remember Christmas '68. Don't know where the first platoon was but second was reinforcing an engineer unit building a road west to the Bi Long Valley. Monsoon rains came. Third was cordoned up just west of a little stream tributary south of a river and acting as a base for the second and engineers to return to. River started rising. They got a portable bridge in and we just got the last vehicle over before the stream became a torrent and we would have been stuck on that side for months. Headed back to I think Nancy or Red Devil and while riding on Platt's tank hit a mine. I didn't notice any mention of that road to the Bi Long, if that is how it's spelled and wonder I any of the guys that came after us ever used the road.

Christmas spent in the field cordoned up east of the road into the Bai Long Valley. Raining for days and the river between us and base, which I believe was Nancy at that time, was swelling. Received a live Christmas Tree, the bottom four feet for

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Christmas. Also a plastic reindeer, and Santa. Put the tree in the ground with some decorations and had a little service around it. Second platoon was with us. Don't remember where first was. Christmas dinner flown in. Turkey. After dinner ordered to return to base and get out of area. Worried about not being able to cross swelling river. Got the last vehicle over and were just able to pull up the bridge before the creek became a torrent. Think on the way back I was on Platt's tank and fell off, or hit a mine and was blown off. Probably the latter but didn't write home about that. Another Christmas dinner at base and then back to Wonder Beach. Got a "Tuggy Tooter" for Christmas from Peg. Also, the top half of the tree arrived. Raining and in the mountains. Now cold. Can see my breath.
(William McShane)

Bill, I'm not sure where we (1st platoon) was at for Christmas of 68. We had just picked up our new tank at Nancy and if my memory is correct we went to a base camp that the 1/77th was at. I believe our crew ate Christmas dinner at Nancy before heading out. After Christmas I just remember being at Red Devil waiting shipment to the 11th Cav.
(Jim Mills)

From: ken and victoria carlson
Sent: 12/18/2005 10:16:08 AM
Subject: Re: A Troop 4/12 Cav

Coop,

My most memorable Christmas in Vietnam was Christmas Eve, 1968. A Troop, or at least most of it, was working on the road over the mountains and into the BaLong Valley. We had an engineer unit and an artillery battery attached to us, making us almost a battalion sized outfit. 1st Brigade had decided that our little operation was large enough to call our headquarters "LZ Carlson." Coming out of LZ Sharon to the Southwest, we followed the Thach Han River until we came to a small stream called Khe Trai. There, the engineers built a pontoon bridge and we set up HQs across the stream towards the hills where we intended to build the road. (YD265440, for those who want to check the map.) We had been there

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for at least two weeks when Christmas Eve arrived. Earlier in the day, a monsoon had hit us and we lost a 2 1/2 ton truck which slid over the side of the road we were building. I had to declare it a combat loss because there was no way to pull it back up the steep cliff. We blew it in place. Our biggest problem was that the monsoon had turned the small stream into a raging torrent, and the pontoon bridge was washed away downstream. We were on the wrong side of the stream, stuck in "Injun Country" until a new bridge could be put in. On Christmas Eve, COL Frank Borman and the crew of Apollo 8 were making mankind's first trip around the Moon. As the officers and I sat in A1A, my track, soaking wet and trying figure out what we were going to do, we listened on one of the LT's transistor radio as Apollo 8 saw it's first "Earthrise." From 70 miles above the surface of the Moon, Astronauts Borman, Lovell and Anders took turns reading the first ten verses from the Book of Genesis, the story of Creation. They ended at Verse 10: "And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called He Seas: and God saw that it was good." And as the spacecraft began to disappear again into the silence behind the Moon, COL Borman paused and said, "God bless all of you on the good Earth." I looked around the cramped space of the track. All of the officers had tears in their eyes, me included. Just then, PSG Jim Platt opened the back of the ACAV and looked in at the scene. I don't know what went through his mind as he saw all of his officers crying, but I recall he reached in his pack and pulled out a small bottle of scotch. "Here --- you guys need this more than I do." Then he closed the ACAV door and left. Next day, Christmas 1968, was the only time in my 26 year military career when my unit did not receive Christmas dinner in the field. The rain and wind was just too severe to fly out our meal. But when we returned to LZ Sharon some 6-7 days later, our cooks had Christmas dinner waiting for us. The road into the Ba Long Valley was never finished on my watch, but it wasn't for lack of effort on the part of A Troop. We went places and did things, others wouldn't even consider. You guys were superb. May you all have a Merry Christmas and Joyous New Year.

Ken Carlson A Troop Commander 1968-69



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1969

I think this action took place late '68 or early '69. The Troop was pulling a sweep into DMZ, this is the first time we went up far north into the Z. The grunts and we were searching bunkers. This guy was from A15 track, he throws a frag into a bunker and goes in and drags out a wounded NVA. He had to disarm and drag him out because he was not coming out on his own. They medivac'd the NVA. I remember it was still early in country for us because the B52's were still flying missions. If I am not mistaken A15 trooper received the Silver Star for this; later on he went on R&R to Hawaii and when he returned to the Troop he was put in charge of the Club at Nancy.

(Charles Cooper)

Coop,

Is this the mission we sat up a NDP and a NVA rocket team started rocketing e that we were there. The north side of our perimeter opened fire and then the New Jersey fired 2 rounds. The next morning we started the sweep. Then the incident you mentioned took place. We continued the move and ended up at the Ben Hai River. I remember firing several main gun rounds into North Viet Nam. We then hooked west and ended up in a NVA base camp. SSgt. Makela found a bunker and went in with a pistol and brought out a very frightened dink. We trashed the camp. Found a bunch of documents and a small medical bunker. I heard we were ordered out. While all this was going on, A Co 1/77 was in contact with another bunch of bad guys. These could have been the owners of base camp.

(Glenn Bowers)

The guy that tossed the grenade received the Bronze Star. We were maneuvering along the beach and somehow he saw the bunker. I think they had a formal presentation for the award. He came back and was shaking his head. Why for you shake your head we asked. He said he received 2 Bronze Stars and he couldn't figure out what the big deal was and why did he received 2. I think the morning after was when we, A28, sunk into a sand bog. It took 2 tanks to pull us out. What



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fun. (Coop)

I was speaking with Ken Dye tonight and he confirmed the following information for Dec 68 or early 69.

Person who went into the bunker and pulled out the NVA was Dan Lohman and Ken put him in for a Bronze Star w/V, I do believe this would be the first A Trooper to receive a medal for Valor while in Nam. Dan Lohman was part of Ken's squad A-15.

We also discussed my notes on "First Time", Ken added we were working with the 1/11 Inf. During the incoming Ken had to go out and recover the grunts and then pull back; all of this took place while A-16 was stuck down in the bottom of the bomb crater.

He was also talking about A Troop's trip to Hue part of the Troop was assigned to the 101st Airborne (up on top of a hill outside of town). He has a lot of good information for '68-'69. He gave me the address of Dan Lohman, I am going to see if I can get a hold of him.

Coop

Subject: Sitrep: DMZ early 69

I was reading on the troops site about the action on the DMZ (it was in early 69, not late 68). I had been wondering all these years why the Brass was so hot for us to get out of there. Well, I found out. This maps says we weren't just in the DMZ, but were in North Vietnam. :D Anyway if I remember right we were up to the Ben Hai river on the coast.

John/okie/hogpen

My flag is out with the Cav pennant flying proudly below it. Can you remember where you were 35 years ago. I think do. It wasn't bad....just awesome. I was on ambush in the scrub west of Quang Tri. We were hunkered down along a supposed 'rice trail'. The bush was not very thick and low enough that if you stood up the taller guys could almost see over it. Like with most all ambushes



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nothing was going on. Then, with no warning, to our north about a few clicks a duster opened up with tracers and air bursts. Suddenly, a couple of clicks east of them, pop ups of all kinds lit the sky. Buy now we were wondering what the fuck was going on and, I might add, getting a bit nervous. Behind us, to the south and south west, red tracers and pop ups split the darkness.....what, we're surrounded!!!!???? It was all still going; duster, pop ups, and tracers, only a few moments had passed, when from the east...Quang Tri lit up too. That's about when one of the guys said, "it's the fourth of July!". The show went on for what seemed to be several minutes, and in the total black that was the Viet Nam bush, it was spectacular!!!! Bob [Rebbec]

Way to go Bob, I remember it also as Sgt "D" knocked his finger out of it's socket and told me to go out and setup as he would be our later but didn't make it back out. It was my first ambush and boy was I praying.. I do remember blowing the hell out of a pagoda. Joe [Byrne]

06 July 69

LZ Nancy 2nd and 3rd Platoon back in - 1st Platoon due back the 7th

07 July 69

LZ Nancy Went to LZ Sharon to turn in old Tank

08 July 69

LZ Sharon Back to LZ Nancy with new Tank

09 July 69

LZ Nancy Doc took stitches out a grunt from 1/61 C Company; he had been wounded by sharpnel from a RPG at Khan Shun assigned to track 29(Taylor)

10 July 69

LZ Nancy Took new Tankers out to familiarize and test firing of weapons 17:30 return to LZ just in time to receive orders to move out in 25 minutes for a screening mission. It was 21:00 before moved out and we could not see a damn thing, tracks were getting wire in their tracks and tangled up with anything

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hanging over the side of the track. 24:30 made it to our location just in time for it to start raining

11 July 69

Troy and W.P. left for the world.

company went out on ambushes from LZ Nancy, assigned to 23 M60 gunner (Taylor).

12 July 69

Still on screening mission, went out to pick up some grunts and A13 threw a track. We stayed behind to help; rest moved on. About twenty minutes later they received a change of mission and return to LZ Nancy before moving on to Publeo, leaving my track and A13 behind. About 12:00 hrs made it back to LZ Nancy hooked up A12, A15, A31 and A39 and took off to catch up rest of Troop. It started raining again and the hills were beginning to get slippery. A13 threw another track A12 and my track stay with him; had to call A18 to help tow A 13 up the hill so other tracks go around us. It was dark by the time we had A13 running; we had to locate our platoon during this process we manage to slide down and turn sideways on the way to the bottom of this very steep hill (the brakes would not slow us down enough Jordan tried his best to kept it straight) after the rest of the tracks regroup at the bottom of the hill we continue on our way. As if sliding sideways in the dark to the bottom of a hill wasn't enough, a little later we slide off the side of a hill and threw a track. Brown came over and it took about an hour to throw the track back on, otherwise we would have had to sit there all night.

[WILLIAM'S GLADE 12 July – 26 July 1969](#)

Excerpts from COAAR

- (C) TASK ORGANIZATION:

Task Force 1-61: 1-61 Inf (M) (-1 Co), A/4-12 Cav, A/1-11 Inf, 2 teams P/75 th Inf, and 1 team 407 th RRD

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1-4 Marines

10. (C) CONCEPT OF OPERATION: From 12 July to 24 July 1969 elements of the 1 st Brigade, 5 th Infantry Division (M) with 1 st Battalion, 4 th Marine Regiment, 3 rd Marine Division under its OPCON conducted a joint operation in the area east of Highway 558 and west of QTCB. From 24 July to 26 July elements of the 1 st Brigade in coordination with 3 rd Marine Division and ARVN forces conducted a search and clear operation and established a cordon to provide security for the departure ceremony of the 9 th Marine Regimental Landing Team, 3 rd Marine Division on 25 July 1969 .

13 July 69

Another exciting day of hurry and wait; we are to sit here the next couple of days. Tanks went to knockdown the undergrowth around our location; during this we drove off into a ravine and A16 burned out a final drive. About 21:30 I was over at A15 when one of the trip flares went off; talk about hauling ass back to your track. No action, it may have been the wind or an animal.

15 July 69

Joint sweep with Marnies (grunts), one of them had a sun stroke. We went out to get him but a stream was blocking our way; a chopter came to pick him up. An M88 was on its way out, to work on A16, and its brakes went out as it was going down a hill. Took three tanks to pull it back up the hill. Barham came back from a 3 day R&R; he brought a little something back with him he did not want.

[IROQUOIS GROVE Combat Operations After Action Report 15 June – 25 September 1969](#)

excerpts

Task Organization to COAAR, Brigade control:

HHC, 1 st Inf Bde, 5 th Inf Div (M)

A/4-12 Cav

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5-4 Arty

P/75 th Ranger

A/7 th Engr

75 th Supt Bn

298 th Signal Co

407 RRD

517 MID

86 th Chem Det

43d Inf Plat (Scout Dog)

48 th PI Det

11. (C) EXECUTION:

- The following is a chronological list of significant events which occurred during operation Iroquis Grove:

(2) 16 June 1969 3/A/4-12 Cav, while providing security for the Cua Viet Naval Base, sighted five frogmen emerging from the water at YD358658. The enemy were engaged with negative results. A naval mine sweeper later located and destroyed two mines in the mouth of the Cua Viet River .

(10) 30 June 1969 A tank from A/4-12 Cav detonated a mine at YD432398 while moving into an ambush location. There were no casualties.

(29) 3 August 1969 A/4-12 Cav made contact with an estimated ten NVA. One APC was hit by an RPG and was subsequently declared a combat loss. Five US were WIA (E) and three NVA were KIA.



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(31) 11 August 1969 In two contacts by A/4-12 Cav at YD351418 two NVA were killed and one RPG with two rounds was captured.

(37) 24 August 1969 In the vicinity of YD066683, A/4-12 Cav found 15 NVA bodies approximately three days old.

(40) 30 August 1969 A/4-12 Cav received two 60mm mortar rounds. An aerial observer came on station and guided the ground elements to a point from which the area of operations had observed fire. Results of the contact were two NVA KIA, two PWs, five AK&s and a 60mm mortar baseplate captured

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES:

a. Radar (PPS-5 and PPS25), night vision devices (XM-43), aquabuoy devices and sensors were used in defensive roles throughout the brigade AO. These devices have been proven of great value in giving early warning of enemy movement and have been instrumental in inflicting casualties on the enemy by artillery fire.

15 July 69

been out for 4 days as a blocking force whole troop, north of Nancy. (Taylor)

16 July 69

LZ Angel Shadow comes up to tank and wants one man for AP; I went because 2 of my crew are on R& R and the third is new. This will be my first AP, out of eight men seven were first timers on AP. I stay awake almost all night.

17 July 69

LZ Angel Came in from AP 07:00, Shadow sends me and A13 out to help a couple of M88 (one has a throw track and the mags are out on the other one). A13 and I end up spending the night on a hill guarding these two M88.

18 July 69

Track back on one M88, another M88 came out and we help to pull the M88 into LZ Sharon. Brakes are bad on our tank, so it makes it a little interesting going down the hills. A13 broke down in Sharon, we return to the platoon with the



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night log run.

19 July 69

New Lt. arrives, we take the log run back to Sharon. A18 took out the nightly AP and threw a track; we went out and help him back in (back in camp 21:30).

20 July 69

Help A36 with it's housing, it was giving them trouble last night. Took the log run and Mr. Cool located us a cooler. On the way back it started to rain, back at camp I was informed we would lead a mounted AP tonight. Went to the wrong location the first time; relocated and now the brakes will not hold, had to put a roadwheel in between the wheels to hold us in place.

been out for 9 days, LZ Angel, Cam Lo, gave rides to Marines, one of them tripped one of our flares and started a fire. Three claymores blew, burned our bunkers, and almost our tracks. Marines caused it I was on 23 as a gunner and 25 as M79 man (Taylor)

21 July 69

Return to camp 06:30, talk too new Lt. (he is ROTC) seems OK. Hung out at A15 track most of the day; shooting the breeze.

22 July 69

LZ Sharon Rained all last night, started the day off with a sweep around Pedro and return to Sharon that afternoon (out in the field 12 days this time). Some people in 2nd platoon started shooting of flares and started a fire around a radar tower and if that wasn't enough they started shooting them at 5/4 arty. one landed in a ammo dump. Boy did we have some pissed CO's come over. Rained last night.

23 July 69

had a couple of Sgt. Majors come looking around this morning. Went down to C 1/77 to eat supper, Anderson and I went over to the 1/61 NCO Club. If J.B., Hursch, and Pete hadn't been there I don't think we would have made it back that night. But of course we all hung together or should I say hung on to each other.



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LZ Sharon, 12th day out, shot flares at arty unit a Sharon, big drunk! (Taylor)

24 July 69

LZ Angel Leave Sharon at 07:00, we have another new platoon leader today, we are to go about 4 clicks north of Angel and sit up a mounted AP and Blair will sit up two hill tops away as a dismounted AP. Blair had to blow his ambush (he heard movement and one of his guys saw some movement) about 22:00. He called for reinforcements; we took our Tank and haul ass, it was so dark that we could not see shit and drove our Tank off into a ravine, it was one hell of a ride. Made it to the ambush site and searched the area; did not find anything. We were out for about an hour and half but it only seem like 15 or 20 twenty minutes.

25 July 69

around 12:00 headed into the French Fort for chow; someone had started a grass fire and it was causing old mines to blow. A19 and A13 broke down. House-man ask me if he was in this journal, he is since he has been my driver for the last 13 days

26 July 69

2 tanks and a PC went a sweep down to the stream; we sit up on the hilltop by ourselves. Moved to our night location, A16 threw a track. Jordon and Brown came back from R&R.

27 July 69

Platoon return to Sharon to top off and then moved out to secure engineers location. Upon arrival we test fired our weapons had a little trouble with the 73, tube fires a little to the left and the 50 was dead on target.

28 July 69

up at 06:30 went out with A18, A13, and A11 to guard dozers. A13 broke a U joint and final drive. A18 and my Tank hooked up to tow it back in. A18 was in front and we were in the back (acting as the brake). Coming down a hill A18 had to stop, this was not a problem, went A18 started again we did not-- something had to give and it was part of the rear ramp of A13. We tore a nice big chunk of metal out of the ramp. We made it back to Sharon without tearing anything else

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up. While we were in Sharon we paid a little visit to C 1/77 and acquired a few little items (**two real nice ice chests**). That night Six called Ten and told him we had to return the ice chest or 1/77 would call CID in to solve the matter.

29 July 69

went out with A18, A15, and A12 to guard dozers. Engineers finished their job this morning we should go in tomorrow. Word is that we should move from LZ Nancy to Quang Tri around August 15. Around 02:45 Dave was having some kind of fit and they could not medivac him due to the wind. A11, A12 and my Tank took off for Sharon. We made it in about 30 minutes. Took him to 1/11, they did not have a doctor so A11 and A12 carried him into Quang Tri. (We were at LZ Mohawk ~ Pineapple)

30 July 69

LZ Sharon Keith came out this afternoon we went to the NCO Club.

driving 24, second platoon got a new Lt. (Bossom?) (Taylor) **I think it was Lt. Styles, actually, because Canda came to 1st Platoon and replaced him
~Pineapple

31 July 69

LZ Sharon Pulled maintenance today, helped A18 layout new track for both sides and let me tell you that is a ball-busting job. Went down to 75th to watch a movie, Lt. went with us. Ran into PP and Dan at the club, PP was blown away we took him back to A19.

Carroll Church, Top, arrives in the troop, tells Pineapple that to burn shit properly, the shit must be stirred, and happily demonstrates that. Pineapple demonstrates his gag reflex.

Neil Armstrong walks on the moon. 1st platoon is on dismounted patrol, in a place that also has lots of craters.

August 1969

Elements of 1/61 Mech infantry and 1/11 infantry are blasted to smithereens by

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artillery hidden in the hills that form the Bi Long Valley as they use the new road.

1st Platoon works at LZ Angel, LZ Pedro and LZ Mohawk, all in the AO that includes Nancy and LZ Sharon

From Coop's War Diary:

01 Aug 69

Left Sharon at 11:00; we are back out in the same area we were in a few days ago. We have a 60mm mortar that Shue had traded a 46 for and out of eight rounds only one worked. Don't know if was the tube or the rounds.

02 Aug 69

Changed location today, we did a few sweeps around 14:00 Ð 15:00 we ended up at the river to wash up. Went back to night location and J.B. set out a four-claymore ambush.

03 Aug 69

we are to head back into Sharon today. About 5 minutes from Sharon we get a call that 3rd platoon has been ambushed. We turn around and haul ass. 2nd platoon and the old man make it to 3rd platoon before we do, we are instructed to take up the right hand side of the cordon, on the way A13 breaks down and we hook up and tow him into place. 6 calls in air strike, then artillery, and then the Troop opened up. I fired 20 main gun rounds and 700 50 cal. (the 73 jammed). To this day, what happen next I can not explain. Out of all of this hell we were pouring down into this area one of the TROOPERS of 3rd platoon walks out . I do not his name and I have always wonder what happen to him. 3rd platoon had 5 troopers medivac'd that day. Before we fired, we were told everyone was out of the area only the enemy was down there. Spent the night on a hill overlooking the valley; J.B. took out a AP. [Link to photograph of napalm burning after being dropped on ambush site referenced above.](#)

I was with the 3rd Platoon that day, I was the PSG of 3rd at that time. we had one person med evac'd and one PC destroyed. We were headed back in when we got hit. The ambush was set for for 4 vehicles because 5 other vehicles come in from another direction, but all 9 come out the same way. The ambush was not long

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enough to get the whole platoon. The track that got hit was the platoon leader's, which we did not have a LT at that time. Don Bunch

I was out with 1st Platoon that day. We were closer than the 2nd and took a position on some low hills overlooking the little valley where 3rd got hit. All the vehicles except the one had pulled out of the jungle. Saw the guy come out of the jungle with uniform smoking (an unbelievable sight), nearly got bombed by one of those Phantoms, and later saw what was left of the hit APC melted to a puddle of aluminum. McFadden was the LT, but as I recall he was away from the platoon picking up new funny money for C-day. That night we (1st) stayed on the hills. A large "manned ambush" was set out behind us composed mainly of FNG's, really just to get them some experience being out away from the tracks at night. In the morning it was reported to me that everybody was asleep. You know who you are! (Not to worry, I don't. Everybody was an FNG once, and never again!) LTF

we were just about at the gate at Sharon when 3rd platoon got hit, and got hit hard, and how to my utter dismay we had to turn around the head back to where we were just an hour ago! Worse, when we arrived we were being shot at by 3rd platoon! I'm sure it wasn't the NVA because there were red tracers flying towards us! I remember just peering over the M60 shield at all the noise and moving greenery from the fight on the other side of those green jungle walls. Haw! Haw! If you see the jungle rocking, don't come a-knocking. I didn't see that 3rd platoon guy emerge from the jungle like you did. I guess I must have been looking the other way or my memory is erased. I do remember that the log run came in with cases of ice-cold apples so me & SS had us an apple feast while Phantom jets were dropping napalm between us & 3rd platoon. That's when Groulx explained to me that the hot sucking wind was caused by the fire consuming all of the oxygen to our front in big bites. Then, I heard the funniest thing on the radio. Some sergeant who was leading a patrol in that thick jungle screamed for artillery support. When they asked for coordinates, he said, "Dammit, just fire, I'll adjust" Sure enough, it took just 2 adjustments to get the fire on target. How lucky was that? Pineapple

John, good to hear you are still around. Don't worry about things being foggy about Vietnam. Just a little while ago the ambush of 3rd Platoon in August of 1969 was mentioned and it's amazing what came back to me about that day. My recollection



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was that we were at LZ Sharon then when 2nd Platoon received word that 3rd Platoon had been ambushed. We rushed out of Sharon and put up a blocking force on one side of the ambush site (though I'm sure the NVA were long gone by then). I watched what was probably the first airstrike of my tour in Vietnam as jets bombed the area and then gunships strafed the area. Quite a sight for a 19 year old to see. Afterwards the platoon went down for a recon of the site. Saw the 3rd Platoon vehicle that had been hit. Either us or 1st Platoon booby-trapped the vehicle and we spent the night some distance from the ambush site. Next morning the booby-trap was still intact so obviously none of the "little people" returned. Anybody else out there from 2nd Platoon remember that day?

Turtle

04 Aug 69

A Troop credited with 3 KIA, we had three men come up to our location to be medivac'd One had shrapnel in his foot, one had a M-16 round stuck in his back (didn't go all the way in) and one had a blasting cap go off in his hand (if he hadn't had a Bible in his left pocket it could have been much worse). We towed A13 back into Sharon. Later that night Reb and I help Mike back to his track.

05 Aug 69

LZ Sharon Still in Sharon, a couple of other units and a ARVN unit is out sweeping the area where 3rd platoon was hit.



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The Night of the Ammo Dump

6 Aug 1969

The ammo dump went up in Late August, I believe. I was CO of A/1-77 at the time and we were in a night position several miles northwest of LZ Nancy when it happened. Initially I thought NVA had infiltrated the camp and we were preparing to move back towards LZ Nancy in case there was an attack. I was told by the battalion operations officer that when the mortar platoon was pulling charges off the rounds or was disposing of some charges that had been pulled off that they used an improper procedure, started a flash fire that spread to other charges and so on until most of the dump went up. (Matt Spruill)

06 Aug 69

07:00 towing A18 down to the 75th (after 5 or 6 six stops nobody seems to know anything about it) for repairs. On the way back to LZ Nancy, A14 and A15 break down. About 24:00 a short round from 4 duce mortar set off an ammo dump. You could see flames and explosives from all over Nancy; it also touches off riot gas. They had to medivac 5 people, 1 dead and 2 missing. (Charles Cooper)

In August of 1969 the ammo dump went up at LZ Nancy. I can remember the incident because a bunch of CS gas went up. I had just gone to bed after a night at the club when the thing went up. No one could find their gas masks so we had to cover our faces with whatever we could find. Does anyone remember the incident?

Taylor

August 6, 1969

From: John Olney "Okie"

What happen to A18 was we were crossing a river that had a steep bank on it. We had a new driver and he didn't hit it fast enough and the tank stalled on the way up. We got about 4 or 5 miles and all of a sudden a big puff of white smoke and the power pack froze up. The reason I remember is I was the skinniest and had to crawl in and unhook the sprocket. I also got a little R&R out of it, because I got to stay at the 75th and help them put the new power pack in.

Bob

I sure as hell remember that incident 'cause I thought I was going to gag and or suffocaten to death. I was concerned especially for the guys in 2nd platoon because I think the last time any of us thought about using a gas mask was in basic or at Ft. Carson. Seem's like we had pulled into Nancy for refuelling and to change out an engine pack or maybe it was only to check the drive axles, 3rd echelon stuff, but I remember squatting down beside the 27 track and Turtle or somebody telling me to wet a tee shirt and breathe through that. Fortunately, the wind blew the AO clear after what seemed like forever, but in reality was probably only 3-4 minutes. That's the way I remember it, 'course a lot of gin has flowed over the transom since then.

Don Bossom



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Bob Taylor same night those motormen put a short round in the ammo dump!!!!!! Ever been pukey drunk when the tear gas was so thick you couldn't see 10 feet? Lots of fun!

Ya, I was at Nancy when our side put a 'short round' in the ammo dump. THAT was totally miserable!!! Very new in country and I had just recently been introduced to "Beauford the Skull".(You guys remember Beauford don't you?) Crawling through CS gas, so thick you couldn't see to get to the tracks and our gas masks, was no fun!!!! Puking all the way. We thought we were being over run. When I found out what happened I couldn't decide to kiss the mortar man (no VC) or shoot him.

Bob Rebbec

Bob,

Remember it clearly. Was in my bunk in the commo hootch and the Commo Sgt. came in and woke us up the CS wasn't bothering us while we were in the hootch but once we went out side it hit you like a ton of bricks. I think I would have rather spent the time in the hootch asleep instead of being out in that stuff.

Take care, Keith

Hey I remember that night and your right I don't think many of us in 2nd plat had a mask, I ran outside and headed towards the guard bunker thats the last place i remember seeing a mask, on the way i almost fell into a smouldering shit can and even that smelled better than that dam CS.

Duke

I remember that night the ammo dump went up especially since I was one of the few guys (and there were only a few of us) that had a gas mask available and believe me, I used it. A lot of guys suffered that night although for a fairly brief time.

Kim aka Turtle

And I remember sleeping through the night the Ammo bunker blew up at Nancy then awakening to find myself alone in the reception barracks stinging from all the CS Gas and smelling of gunpowder. I remember wondering, where is everyone at, and looking over to see the bunk next to mine with a big shrapnel hole where Mike Davis's head should have been. He had jumped in the bunker earlier in the night and they couldn't wake me, evidently I wasn't in any shape to be woken. They had concern for their own lives. I'd a done the same! That should have been the end of little 'ole' me. Ask 'ole' Mike about it I'm sure he'll get a kick when he remembers. But I guess all the planets aligned and the Moon was in Aquarius and I was spared to live another day. Their ain 't no sense to it. [Bill Dodds]

In August of 69 I was the platoon leader of the Scout Platoon 1/77 Armor. On that fateful night, we were ordered to proceed from LZ Nancy to reinforce B Company 1/77 which was in contact with an enemy force of unknown size. The mortar platoon was firing illumination rounds so we could link up with B Co. as quickly as possible. All the way out I was unsuccessfully trying to raise the B Company Commander on the radio so that we could link up and not blow each other away in the process. When we finally did link up the contact had been broken, so the Capt. called me over to his tank to find out why we had been unable to communicate. At the time we were issued radio frequency books which gave the frequencies for all the units in the Brigade. The frequencies were changed on a regular basis



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and when that happened, new books were issued. Well, naturally, the books had just been changed and I had forgotten to bring the new one, still had the old one. As the Capt was chewing the last little bit of my ass that was left, we heard a tremendous explosion. We turned and saw a series of explosions in the middle of LZ Nancy. We were sure Nancy was under attack and immediately radioed back that we were prepared to come back and do whatever was needed. We were told that there was no attack, and not to return to Nancy until the next day. The explosions had successfully interrupted my ass chewing and I managed to avoid the Capt. for the rest of the night. The next day we both went our separate ways. Fast forward now to November 69. The Troop has a new CO and he wants to meet his platoon leaders. He looks at me... "Don't I know you?" You guessed it. The Troop's new CO is the former CO of B Company, 1/77, Capt. Matt Spruill. You can imagine how thrilled he was when he remembered where we had met before. Turned out to be the best CO I ever had. LT Styles

An Eye-witness account of the Ammo Dump Incident with photos!

LZ Nancy, 6 August, 1969. In reference to several mentions of the ammo dump blowing up and as I in the 4.2" mortar platoon at the time, some clarification of that night should be made available.

We were firing illumination rounds for our FO that was out on an ambush with the 1/77 Scouts and we had overheated the #1 gun so we cranked up #2 and started hauling ammo over to the Gun#2 bunker. After about 30 minutes of constant firing, that tube was GLOWING hot and a piece of the "cheese pack" charge wafted out of the tube landed just inside the bunker door. Normally, a poncho would be covering the opening but with ammo going in and out at such a pace, it was folded over the top of the bunker. Anyway, the guys setting the charges were just dropping the leftover cheese packs on the floor of the bunker and when that burning charge landed on that pile, dat's all folks. We didn't even try to stop the conflagration...we didi maoed outta there. I headed back toward the hootches and dove into a slit trench between them and the shower (which took a 4.2 round thru one of the 55 gallon drums). Ammo was blowing up inside the #2 bunker and was sending rounds flying thru the air everywhere. One of the rounds landed on the roof of the hootch next to me it, rolled off and nailed me in the back. It must have been only a few minutes later when another round landed in the trench that we used as our main dump because when those rounds went off, the CS went off too. Lucky for me, Lt. Jesse Silva came looking for us guys that were unaccounted for and he told me to get over to the Seabee's area. What a fireworks show it was that night. I have recently found out that a couple of Seabees that had driven a water buffalo over to the #2 bunker in an effort to put out the fire were killed when the HQ42 track exploded with a full

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load of ammo. My platoon wasn't allowed back in the area till later the next morning, just in time for the 8"ers to open up on the other side of the ridge. The "definitive" pucker factor. Just walking around the gun pit area kicked up the dust that was soaked in CS powder.

[The photos were courtesy of my Company CO, Cpt. Floyd Robertson.](#)

Memory by: Tom Loehr

[Captain Floyd Robertson's pdf file with his and other's memories of that night.](#)

(from Taylor's letter home:)

Aug 10 - 13 LZ Nancy, 4.2 inch mortars got hit, we used our three mortars to help them. The troop's mortarmen stayed behind at Nancy while the rest of the Cav went to C2. Second platoon got 8 kills while acting as a blocking force. Us mortarmen eventually joined back up with the Cav.

From Coop's War Diary:

07 Aug 69

LZ Nancy The ammo dump is still burning; 4 mortar tracks and 2 or 3 other tracks that were next to the ammo dump are toast. Talked to TOP about getting out of the field, should be the new training NCO next month.

08 Aug 69

LZ Nancy Mounted AP tonight, men on second guard thought they heard something and fired a 79 round & M-16. Turned on the searchlight didn't see anything.

09 Aug 69

LZ Nancy A11 ran out of fuel on the way back in; we towed them in. Towed A91 into the motor pool. Went to USO show (NO BOB HOPE)

10 Aug 69

04:30 going out past Jane this morning, will sit up as blocking force for grunts who will be sweeping the area. A13 threw a track on the way, took a couple of



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hours for A13 to be back on the road. A16 throws a track next; finally we make it to our AO. Set up, put out claymores and wire; J.B. put out three claymore ambushes.

[Aug 10 –13 LZ Nancy](#), 4.2 inch mortars got hit, we used our three mortars to help them. The troop's mortarmen stayed behind at Nancy while the rest of the Cav went to C2. Second platoon got 8 kills while acting as a blocking force. Us mortarmen eventually joined back up with the Cav. (Taylor)

[11 Aug 69](#)

A10 and I made a log run to 6's location, on the way back one of J.B. ambushes was set off. The rest of the platoon cut loose into the area. Once we made it back to the platoon we turned around with A10 & A13 and returned to the ambush location and shoot the hell out the area before the guys dismounted to sweep the area. 1 KIA NVA and 2 RPG's. They threw the dead NVA on our Tank deck (his face was blown away, both legs were broke and his body was like one big bowl of JELLO the poncho he was wrapped was soaked with blood). Artillery was called in so close that one guy on my tank was hit. I fired 10 main gun rounds and 300 50 cal.

[12 Aug 69](#)

LZ Nancy Return to Nancy today, getting ready to head out to C-2 around Cam Lo (a lot of mines in that area)

[13 Aug 69](#)

06:00 loading up (wire, 79 ammo, water and a few other items) 10:00 left Nancy went to C-2 then on to A-4. The OLD MAN just finished giving us all a pep talk: C 1/77 had 4 killed, 9 wounded and hit 10 mines. Those kinds of pep talks I could do without. I would say we are a couple clicks south of the DMZ; a chopper just killed 2 NVA (been there done it brought the T-shirt took the pictures all before)

[Aug 23 69](#) Troop at A4, I was on 25 as gunner, puff came in one night and put on a show for us. (Taylor)



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24 Aug 69

We found 15 NVA bodies in various stages of decomposition. It was very, very hot and humid that day.

Aug 29 Alpha 4, gunner on 25, hit a mine and assigned to a tank, 3 APCs lost to mines. CO's pc hit one also a couple of days earlier (Taylor)

Aug 31 Troop at Hill 100, moved to Mother's Ridge where 25 hit the mine. Assigned to 27, got stuck, gooks dropped 2 mortar rounds close to troop. Troop responded and got 2 kills and 3 prisoners. Dragged raced CO's APC from C2 back to A4. Still on 27. We won (Taylor)

30 Aug

Hey there Fearless Leader,

Do you remember the incident when you guys encountered gooks?, Captain Robinson kicked one of them and forced him to surrender, while that was going on one of them ran up to one of the tracks, Big Daddy shot him point blank. I was not in country yet, but no one has mentioned yet.

Wally

Wally, I'm pretty sure I remember this we were up around the Z and the whole Troop was together " one of the few times we were all together" we were casually going about our business when we started taking on Mortar Rounds the second platoon. and third platoon went to the left and right and first platoon went down in the draw where the rounds were coming from I was on a small hill and I could see these two NVA laying in a ditch the first platoon was getting close to them when all of a sudden they jumped up like rabbits and one ran straight for a personnel carrier. Whoever who was on the 60 started nailing him but he just kept coming finally he went down and the other was KIA also the reason I remember this so well is that some big brass wanted to come out and see the Dead NVA so we put the two dead on my tank and brought them up the hill to where the chopper was going to land. We put the bodies on the ground and after the big brass left Sgt. D was the lead tank and I was following 26 went down into a deep gully and up the other side I went into the gully and hit a mine I was in the same tracks as 26 never understood that. The mine really messed 28 up blew a couple sets of road wheels off and ruptured the fuel tank on that side. we got the Tank back to Nancy but it took a long time for repairs during the time we were down for repairs is when the incident happened where Sgt. D drove the burning tank out the tank he drove out was 27 not 28 he was also wounded and sent to Japan for about 3 months in this maylay (sic) .I forget the platoon sergeant's name that was over the 2nd platoon while Sgt D was gone but I know we were at Cua-Viet most of the time he was there and we had to go on a lot of ambush patrols on foot being tankers we didn't like that too much maybe this is the incident you are talking about.

Merle TC28

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I have a notation on my short-timer's calendar that this contact occurred on 30 August 69. We were indeed casually going about our business, in this case Troop-in-line test-firing all our weapons into the DMZ, Six Robinson commanding. Scared the heck out of an NVA squad doing forward observing for arty across the Z. They mistakenly thought we had detected them. What appeared at first to be mortar fire were the explosions of a couple of command-detonated chicom mines attached to trees, attempting to sweep the crew off some of our tanks. Don't remember who was closest. The squad attempted to evade by going down a valley stretching into the Z. Six decided hot pursuit was justified. 2nd and 3rd platoons went along the sides of the valley pouring in fire, 1st platoon was at the head of the valley, and an artillery spotter flew overhead. The spotter could occasionally see an unknown number of NVA moving toward safety through the trees. Since 1st platoon was the only one in position to go into the valley, I requested permission for the 1st to pursue and pin them down. Hell, that's definitely one thing Cavalry is FOR. Six finally said do it (although to be honest, he later said there was a misunderstanding in all the radio cross-talk and he had not meant to) and away we went.

We did run them down and trap them, a couple in a patch of woods and 3 in a large shell crater adjacent to the woods. Turns out there were only 5 total, 2 killed, 3 captured including the squad leader, who Intelligence later said had a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering. The guy was no dummy, he did not panic, he waited until the right time to calmly surrender. But one of his guys started a rush across the crater toward the 10 track at the edge with a chicom grenade in hand. Big Daddy Trimble on his 60 nailed him, depressing the barrel so far down that he chipped the corner of the APC deck. At the same time I hit him with a .45, he was really close. Pretty fatal without that extra lead. How the other NVA got killed is a story which I suspect I remember differently from other Troopers' versions. The wounded guy in the woods took a bad hit through the leg from a .50 round. The other captured guy was unharmed physically, but literally paralyzed with fear. He stood frozen against a crater wall, petrified and unresponsive right under the front of 10 where we couldn't even see him until we came around the crater from the far side. He had just seen his buddy shot to hell in front of him, and truly believed as told that we would skin captured NVA alive (so reported Intelligence later). I heard he didn't come out of his trance-like state until the next day when he suddenly started screaming like crazy.

The other notable aspects of the 1st's foray into the valley I'd rather hear from somebody else so I don't sound too self-serving, and the details of the squad leader's surrender to Six Robinson I could mention later. But that sure was a good day for the Cav, as the forward observation team was put out of action and whatever smoke they were bringing on the AO was at least temporarily interrupted.

LTee F

From: jerry malan

Date: Wednesday, July 16, 2003 6:45:29 AM

To: George Gersaba

Cc: Bob Barrows

Subject: Cav History Aug 30 1969

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George, Have been reading the history. You are doing a great job. Thought I would give you a bit more detail on the events listed as occurring on 30 Aug 69. The troop was together that day with 1st platoon in the lead and Barrows tank at the head of 1st platoon. We were approaching a ridge line at a 90 degree angle and encountered a soft muddy area some 500 meters away from the ridge. The tank began to sink and we reversed and backed out of it before we got stuck. We moved to our left approx 500 meters where the ground was solid and turned right to head towards the ridge line again. Shortly after we had made this turn several explosions went off on the top of the ridge line at about the same area where we had encountered the mud. Barky was in the area and spotted some NVA in a valley on the other side of the ridge line. The entire troop pulled up on the ridge inline and proceeded to open up on the valley. We emptied the turret of 90mm ammo during that time and had to move the gun tube to the rear to reload the turret ready racks from the 2 racks on either side of the driver. The 1st platoon then proceeded to sweep the valley and 2nd and 3rd platoons kept their positions on the ridge line. The tanks were some 30 meters in front of the APCs during this sweep. Dodds had been assigned to our tank as no tankers were available as replacements and was loading that day. I don't think he had been with us long and am sure this was his first combat experience on an M48 tank. The valley had some heavy bamboo and underbrush as it was very difficult to see anything but brush thru the tank sights. Some one was on one of the radios saying we were about right on top of them and I still couldn't see anything thru the sights on the tank. Vision or not I decided to fire the area up and cut loose with a canister round and told Dodds to reload canister while I sprayed the area with .30 cal coax fire. I expected Dodds to say "up" when the cannon was reloaded and he was clear but didn't hear anything from him so I finally looked over and the turret was empty. I tapped Barrows on his leg and ask him where Dodds was and he said "on the back deck". I told Barrows to tell him to get back down inside which he did. A few minutes later Barrows said he wouldn't get back in the Tank. So I reloaded the 90mm and sprayed a little more coax and since I couldn't see anything I got out of the turret and grabbed an M16 and sat up on the loaders hatch. I hadn't been there very long when the NVA fellow appeared in front of us and Sgt Barrows sprayed him with the .50cal and he went down. The CO said that higher up needed prisoners and if the NVA was alive we should take him prisoner. We pulled the tank up beside this guy and could see he was hit in the leg but he also had his hands under his chest as if he might have had a grenade so we decided to let him leak a little more before we called Doc up to look at him. We were about 30 meters in front of Lt F's APC so he was to our rear and right. There was a bomb crater in between his track and our tank. Sgt Barrows had his .45 pistol in a holster under his .50cal and I saw him reach for it. I didn't know what he had seen but knew the shit was close to hitting the fan if he was getting his pistol. I watched him pull the pistol and as he moved it to our rear I followed him with the muzzle of the M-16. There was an NVA crawling up out of the bomb crater right in front of the Lt's APC maybe 20 feet away from and the APC. The Lt was dismounted with his .45 pistol in hand. (Beginning to sound like the wild west?) In between the crater and the APC. Barrows popped the guy in the upper chest with the .45 and almost at the same instant I sprayed him with the M16. He was not taken POW but the wounded one was. Barrows got a wristwatch marked made in Moscow off one of the guys which I later lost. We also got a brand new AK47 which still had the factory grease on it and appeared to have never been fired. They choppered the wounded fellow out and patched him up. I understand he spilled his guts and they



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flew him back out the next day when he showed our guys where they had stayed ect. Word was that he told them when his unit was resupplied and one of our units set up an ambush for them and had some success. I felt for poor Dodds. The turret of a tank is bad enough looking out the gunners view but the poor loader has no view at all and it really wasn't fair to put him in that position without the benefit of some training. I don't recall any other NVA KIA or taken prisoner but that may have happened elsewhere where I didn't see it.

Jerry Malan

Sgt Barrows shot the NVA guy twice in the leg with the .50 cal and 6 wanted him taken as a prisoner. While waiting for the medic another NVA came up out of a bomb crater between our tank and LT Fs' APC. Sgt B shot him with his .45 pistol and I sprayed him with M-16 fire. I'm pretty sure he never crested the edge of the bomb crater where the APC could see him...ask Sgt B. Jerry

Malan

This is my memory of the incident of August 69 on the DMZ: Peter Rabbit was TC; I can't remember now who the driver was or who was the left m60 gunner; Doc Parker was on the track with us and I was the m60 gunner on the right. Over the radio came a message that we were heading into a horseshoe shaped ambush-this message came from a spotter plane. While this was going on, headquarters and 2nd platoon came up on the left flank, while 3rd platoon came up on the right. 1st platoon went up the middle and as we were closing in on the enemy, the barkey spotted the nva crossing back over the dmz into north vietnam; as they were moving, we were notified that the enemy was carrying some kind of "boxes"; therefore, 6 wanted to know what was in those boxes. As we moved on up into a little valley we took on fire, so we proceeded to fire back. 50 cal. and 60 cal. were firing. I fired 100-200 rounds through it, then I gave it to Doc Parker and as he was firing, I looked to my right and there was a Sgt on a tank that was trying to fire his m50 machine gun which would not fire but one round at the time; it seemed that his timing was off; it appeared that he was getting exhausted from chambering one round at the time. Being frustrated he grabbed the m79, loaded it and it went off before he could get it completely raised; the round went off directly in front of the tank. Peter Rabbit got word that there was some wounded on the left and he saw nva go into a bomb crater. As this happened, I decided to dismount, as being an infantry soldier I felt like I could do more on the ground than where I was at. As I dismounted, PR told me to get back on the track and I told him to Kiss My A-- and that I was sick of this Sh--!! Doc Parker dismounted behind the track for cover and I asked him did he want me to go with him, but he said no; so I proceeded around the right firing my m16 over the crater and closed in on the position and as I approached one side of the crater, a guy from another platoon came up at the same time from another angle. There was a young looking nva soldier holding a grenade in one hand; as the other guy told him in vietnamese to surrender; my first thought as he released the grenade, was is the pin released!? Fortunately, it wasn't. As I held my weapon on him, the other guy tied him up with his belt; there was one dead nva soldier in a hole in the crater.

As others from the different platoons came up I remember Capt. Robinson came up holding his 45 and he looked around at me and said that I was in uniform; I suppose because I had my flack

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jacket and helmet on. Since he knew the top brass was on the way (and I was in uniform) he handed me his 45 and took my m16 and told me to take in the wounded prisoner; and to shoot him if he gave me any trouble. They loaded the prisoner on the Loach helicopter and as we were flying tree top level I was holding the 45 upright; the pilot looked around and told me to point it out the door! So I did. When I returned, the guy who tied up the prisoner, was pissed with me because he kept saying that I had stole his helicopter ride (well, he should have been in uniform!) I returned the 45 to the captain and he gave me back my m16 and we searched for the "boxes", but found nothing. We loaded up the dead nva, and carried them "somewhere"; then "they" decided to bring them back; we threw them off and some of the guys took their 4/12 cav patches and laid them on the chests of the dead and also left the Ace of Diamond playing card to let the enemy know we had been there. This is how I remember it.

Duffy

Jerry I received your E about Birth Control, but, there was nothing on it. Have you seen the way they are describing what happened the day we captured the NVA Trooper and nailed the other two! If they did all the shooting and capturing, I wonder how we ended up with the watch and I got my new AK 47? Some are saying it happened in Aug before I got in country and some say it happened later in the fall. I know I reenlisted in October and got a 30-day reenlistment leave that I had to make up before I left Nam!! I think that may be the time you got to go to the rear till I got back cause when the original A17 got broken and we got the replacement "Stoned One" (You picked the name!) It was only 12 days before we hit the next mine as pictured in our collection of pictures. I hit that dude in the thigh with the .50 Cal. I hope I didn't ruin his Love Life!! Well I'm out of here, Regards to You and Debbie I'm Gone

Barrows

My platoon was in the field with the rest of the troop near the DMZ. At one point 1 st platoon (my platoon) started up a scrubby brushy hillside, when we experienced two explosions. At the time we thought they were mortar rounds. We found out later they were, Chi/Com anti-personal mines.

At this point, I had been assigned to tank 1-6 I believe they were short 1 crew member.

When we heard the explosions go off very close by, we all climbed inside and buttoned up, and began advancing being guided by a F.O. flying above in a Cessna. Command had instructed 2 nd and 3 rd platoon to block and 1 st was to advance up the middle and engage the enemy. As we advanced we came to a knoll or high point and command ordered us to recon with fire. At this point I must mention that I was trained 11-B Infantry, and knew little of the operation of a tank. Jerry Malan a regular tanker on 1-6 had graduated tanker school, as well as TC. Sgt. Barrows, and had lots of experience firing etc. I asked Jerry where he wanted me, he in turn asked me if I wanted to fire and he would load, as Sgt. Barrows had an over ride to correct any wrong targeting I might have. I slid behind the breach and into the gunners seat, and began looking through the gunners sights. I could see the brush around the tank and the crater marked landscape ahead in the ! kill zone but I could not identify any enemy troops. So, I began firing H.E.-Rounds

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into the bomb craters in the distance, firing between 15 and 25 rounds total. At one point Jerry had to stop loading, to clear the empty casings from the turret.

Command ordered a cease fire and I believe we took time to refresh the ready rack. Then the F.O. (code named Barkie) had just observed the enemy on the move ahead of our position, and near to the left flank of our platoon formation. Since Our tank was on the left flank

I took this time to speak with Malan and told him that, I was not comfortable with firing the 90MM and wanted to load as I felt he could probably do a better job engaging enemy targets being a tanker and all.

We switched and I helped throw out the last of the empty casings. Malan slid into the gunners seat and I loaded for him. Command ordered us to advance on the enemy, and we began creeping forward as per F.O.'s directions.

The vehicle I was in was 1-6 the left flank tank in our platoon sized online sweep formation. The PC next to us on our right was 1-1 ? not sure of number but the T.C. was Peter Rabbit, Jimmy Mann drove and I think Duffy was left gunner possibly Mike Davis Right gun.

Next P.C. over may have been LT Canda's command track.

I could hear F.O. talking us toward the bomb crater he thought the enemy had concealed it's self. We crept forward and at one point I heard F.O. shout excitedly over our CBC head sets, "Left flank tank stop, your about to run over them, Their in a bomb crater to your right front" (or words to that effect). I could hear Sgt. Barrows firing his 50-CAL and observed he seemed to be having trouble with it. At this point I decided to join him topside for 3 reasons, #1 I felt that firing the main gun was futile at this point being's as F.O. had said we were right on top of the enemy. Being an Infantryman 11-B, I was not sure of how close the 90MM could be fired, #2 From what I heard above I thought Sgt. Barrows could use some help above, as per our close range with the enemy. I felt that Malan could stay inside and fire the Co-Ax 7.62's, without my help. #3 has to do with a warning we had received several days prior to this engagement. It was recently rumormored that the NVA had ! a new weapon in their arsenal. A small shaped charge, fitted with a tiny parachute attached to its finned tail. This they would use in close combat with armor. It was to be throne from a concealed position by ground troops over the top of a US Tank or PC, where it would be effective against the thinnest armor on the vehicle. The tiny parachute would deploy and it would come down nose first upon the top of it's intended target. When the nose struck, It would detonate the shape charge that would blow a small hole through the armor and then explode inside.

I did not intend to find out how effective it would be. I left the turret after yelling to Malan that I was going Up top.

Upon emerging from the loaders hatch, I ran immediately to the bussle rack and found my personnel weapon M-16. I locked and loaded, then swung around, and walked forward on the



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deck of the tank, where I observed Sgt. Barrows trying to fire his 50CAL, Single shot at a time, toward target on the right front side of the tank Opposite me. I flipped the safety off my 16. Just at that moment I saw a flick/movement directly in front of the tank and closed my 16's sights on and enemy NVA obviously trying to flee the area. His AK-47 was in the present arms position in front of him and he turned to look at me. I fired at him on semi auto until the magazine was empty. To be sure, I didn't see a round hit him, however I was convinced that I had hit him, due mainly to his actions when I fired at him. He didn't return fire rather He Immediately turned back and hit the ground and began part crawling and part pulling his self out of my field of vision, under the right track and fender of! the tank. I was terrified and when I squeezed off those rounds tears came to my eyes and clouded my vision. I then leaned against the turret, reloaded and reconed the area to the left of Sgt. Barrows. There was a lot of firing that continued for several minutes before cease fire was finally called. I could hear Peter Rabbits track firing and their was much yelling back and forth between Barrows and I think LT Canda and or Duffy or PR. It wasn't at real clear to anyone where anyone else was and where the enemy was. When the firing stopped and cease fire was called I shouted that I was going to dismount and did, walking, creeping in front of the tank and coming over to the right of it. Where I observed the enemy NVA I had shot trying to hide under a small dead tree branch. I watched him for aprox 1-2 minutes then grabbed some como wire from the side of 1-6 and tied it to one of his legs. I stepped back to the rear of 1-6 and began to pull his body from under the tree branch.! When I was sure he was not booby-trapped I went over and claimed his AK-47 as a trophy of war, along with his wrist watch and his medicine kit and his note pad. I put those items in my personal container on board 1-6 except for the note pad, which I gave to command for investigation. I Believe Captain Sprull was our commander at that time. [Actually it was Captain Robinson]It was known that one of several enemy engaged that day survived. I am unsure weather the one I shot, survived or not for sure but it was my understanding and my fervent hope, that he was wrapped up and sent to K-2 for interrogation upon wince he received good treatment.

He was, shot twice in the knee, the same knee I believe.

That night I slept fitfully if at all, and the next morning 'I believe', Captain Spruell [Captain Robinson] came over to our track and verbally commended me personally, for my duty in that skirmish.

After reading others accounts of this same incident I find that some saw it unfold differently. This is fine. I don't wish to argue with them, or to discredit them. That is for them to judge. But as for me, this is the way I remember it. I take no pleasure in believing that I shot the man I saw running in front of me.

On many other occasions I fired at the enemy who were concealed or hidden, however on this particular occasion I observed the whole thing at close range in Technicolor with Dolby stereo complete with blood and special effects.

It is entirely possible that Sargent Barrows shot him after he turned and scrambled out of my vision, indeed he went over to Sarg's side.

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It's also entirely possible that fire from Peter Rabbits track felled him.

I only know the effect it had on me, believing in my heart that I had shot this man. To shoot at muzzle flashes or fire at enemy troops hundreds of yards away, or just to recon with fire is one thing, but to look into the eyes of a person your trying to kill is quite another.

It hasn't been a pleasant experience for me for I grow tired of remembering and wondering if this poor unfortunate rice farmer lived or died and weather he had loved ones who mourned his loss. I still remember to this day the look of fear on his face, as we faced off to each other, and the feelings I felt as I squeezed off those rounds from my perch on the deck of 1-6 that day. Had I spoken his language, perhaps I could have spared his life. Perhaps he was ready to surrender? I cannot say.

I'd be glad to let others claim this incident. I don't seek any glory nor do I believe killing and maiming others will yeald it.

Later I took the AK back to the troop area at LZ Sharon and turned it over to the NCO Club for safe keeping. They hung it on the wall behind the bar. The other items I took and put in my footlocker in my hooch back at, Sharon?, I believe the watch made in USSR, went to Sarg.Barrows. There was an ink pen made in Hanoi and the medical kit, that I hoped to take home to my mother who was studying medicine at Portland State, as a war souvenir. I don't know what happened to them, I believe they were stolen.

I believe this action in which I played a part, has profoundly effected the way in which I think about war.

I have been haunted by this and other such memories, since my return. I no longer think it's a good Idea to send skinny pimple faced kids over to foreign lands to kill people. Yea, I wish someone would take these thoughts from me I'd surrender them gladly. Bill Dodds.

September 1969

3 Sept 1969

Ho Chi Minh, leader of the North Vietnamese, dies in Hanoi at the age of 79.

Sept 5 Alpha 4, typhoon hit, heavy rain, wind and mud (Taylor)

Sept 6 Back at Nancy, The first and third platoon went to LZ Jayne. Finally on 29, we got a new engine, transmission and transfer case. Pulling night ambushes, Got a new CO. We stole the Col 's Jeep, repainted it and kept it. (Taylor)

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09 Sep

Troop is back from A4, no one in 1st platoon was injured. 5 NVA KIA, Dodds brought back an AK-47 (it is in the club along with a RPG from Hai Lang) I will be taking over one of the tracks and J.B. will be taking my place in the rear. (Coop)

Sept 14-29 broke again, We were put in for CIB's. Monsoon started, daily rain. We had gook made jackets. "Fighters by day, Lovers by night, Drunkards by choice" on the back of them.

(Taylor)

19 Sep

I am TC on A15 now (an old Tanker now a Grunt). We are now pulling night mounted AP; it has been raining hard for the last four days. Dan went on R&R yesterday. (Coop)

Troop is working along the DMZ/marketplace working from Alpha-4. As you approach A4 from the south, the first thing you see on the first hill is the EOD bunker. There is a huge sign telling you so.

The troop has a steak cookout at A4 way into the night. We use a piece of anti-RPG fencing for a grill. The North Vietnamese leave us alone. My theory is that they too were cooking steaks and in no mood to fight either.

We have two nights of staying at a large command bunker and witnessing rockets bracketing the bunker in the mornings. We are very happy to be going out to the field 1/77th troops take our place.

The next day, command bunker is rocketed at A4, supposedly killing many 1/77th troopers. (ggersaba)

Sept 27 2nd platoon sent to C2, attached to the 1/11 infantry. TC on 29, 2nd platoon received two new APCs (Taylor)



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UNNAMED OPERATION 25 September – 22 October 1969

excerpts from COAAR

6. (C) TASK ORGANIZATION:

1-11 Inf

1-61 Inf (M)

1-77 Armor, A/4-12 Cav

3-5 Cav, C/2-34 Armor

10. (C) CONCEPT OF OPERATION: During the period covered by this report the brigade operational area was divided into five task force areas of operations.

c. TF 1-77 Armor operated in AO Gold. This battalion, based at LZ Nancy conducted search and clear, reconnaissance in force and rice denial operations throughout AO Gold.

11. (C) EXECUTION: list of significant events which occurred during the operation

(5) 30 Sep 1969 APC from 2/A/4-12 Cav detonated an AT mine at YD102668. Results were four US WIA (E) and moderate damage to the vehicle.

(7) 2 Oct 1969 Night defensive positions of B/1-77 Armor, A/4-12 Cav and 2&3/C/1-11 Inf were attacked by an estimated NVA company at YD72677. Results of the contact were one US KIA, 22 US WIA (E), 14 NVA KIA and one NVA PW. Nine RPG's, 11 AK47's, 60 Chicom grenades and 30 B40/B41 Rockets were captured.

(18) 18 Oct 1969 A/4-12 Cav found two NVA bodies at YD174679; two hours later the unit uncovered two more bodies at YD178682.



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October 1969

2 Oct

"I remember the night my tank caught fire during one hell of a firefight a few clicks west of A-4. Sgt D jumped on my tank A-27 and told me we were on fire, my loader had already been hit and was laying on the turret floor, I had no turret power after being hit at least twice by an RPG, I had to traverse the turret manually to let Sgt D in the drivers hatch so he could get us off thaside (?) of the perimeter, I was wounded that night also."

(Duke)

We went out to retrieve some of the 1/77th and escort them and their disabled tracks back to A4 I think, we were on are way back late afternoon almost gettingdark, rained all night, some of the 1/77th guys were playing poker in a VTR in thecenter of the perimeter, i could hear them laughing and carrying on while I was on guard sitting in the pouring rain..

Duke

George, I was looking through some letters that I sent to my parents and found two articles about Sgt D. It must have been published in the Stars and Stripes. [Article from the Stars And Stripes describing Sgt. Di Santo's actions](#) The fight occurred in Oct of 69 near Mother's Ridge. The headlines on the article give allot a credit to the 1/77 armor. Only three tracks from the second platoon were there. 20,22 and 27. Two of our tracks were left guarding a portable bridge on the way up there. The rest of the platoon was at C2 broke down. Lt Bosson was the Lt and I know Larry Corso was one of the wounded. The articles will be nice for the history. I also looked through the letters and can come up with a chronological order of some of the Cav's movement. I will send it later as a word doc and you can post it as needed. I did mention something about a fire. It was started by a marine coming into our perimeter and set off a trip flare and some claymores. You can read it when I send the file. Bob Taylor

Bob Taylor,

If you guys are talking about Oct. 2, 1969 I remember that pretty well. I turned 21 10/02/69! We were hit at 1AM 10/02/69. Second platoon...at least part of it... was on Mudders Ridge. A tank got stuck. There was 2nd 4/12, 1/77, and a light platoon of grunts from, I THINK, 1/11. Our tracks (2) were left at a junction at the base of the ridge. It was a very nasty night!!! An FNG, that had been in country a VERY short time, lost half his face when an RPG hit the gun shield on his .50 cal. Sergeant D got hurt pretty bad too. I don't know about the grunts or 1/77 guys, but most of the rest of our wounded was relatively minor if I remember right. Look at the pic's I posted. The ones with captured AK's and RPG's piled up and a couple of guys with head bandages drinking beer were taken 10/03/69. By the way WHO is the guy in those pic's??? (Seems he had a pregnant wife AND girl friend and couldn't go home...or something like that. Real fun guy and yarn spinner...he gave me my first beer served in Beaufort (our skull) shortly after I got to LZ Nancy.... same night those motormen put a short round in the ammo dump!!!!!! Ever been pukey drunk when the tear gas was so thick you couldn't see 10 feet? Lots of fun!) I don't know for sure, but I've always had the impression that 10/02/69 was the heaviest contact any of the elements of the 4/12 engaged in. Not the biggest but the 'worst'. (I left for home Aug. of '70 so I don't know about after that.) It went on until nearly dawn with "puff" helping to keep the gooks at bay. It was so bad because our guys were trapped on the ridge and the NVA used the



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bomb craters as (hell the ridge was just a series of craters) foxholes! We were scared shitless.... just two tracks...sitting ducks. We never got hit but we didn't stay to watch the end of a very scary (and CLOSE) light show either. About three or four in the morning we headed back toward Quang Tri and ended up joining the relief element of the 1/77 that was headed out.

Bob Rebbec

In Oct '69 I was XO and so nowhere near the action, based at C-2. However, my understanding was that 2 tanks from the same platoon in 1/77 threw tracks in a shell crater, and at least 2 more got stuck trying to recover them. (The platoon leader was a former LT from 4/12 who had had 2nd Plt before me - Robinson claimed he had this LT transferred out before his troops shot him.) Inasmuch as it would not be possible to recover the vehicles before dark, the tank company CO, approved by Higher, made the decision to hold position overnight. 2nd Plt 4/12 was also to stay. After dark an infantry unit was brought in to help provide security. There was speculation at Bn HQ that the NVA did not know the extra reinforcements were there, and so thought the position would be relatively easy to overrun. That's how I heard it.

LTee F

I didn't get hit in the track it was after we pulled back to the other side of the ndp and got our driver (Joey) out of there, he had been on guard when the first rpg hit us and got hurt pretty bad, I got hit after we carried him back up into the NDP and sat him down to see how bad he was, I lit two smokes and stuck one in his mouth then BOOM I went flying, it looked like someone took a whole junkyard and threw it at me at a thousand miles an hour, light shrapnel and no eardrums.....You really got me thinking about that right now more than I have in quite awhile I'm sitting here almost shaking all over again.. If it wasn't for Sgt D I might not be here right now, I lost all contact with Joey, my mind is still not real clear what all went down that night...

Duke

2 October 69

Bob, do you remember Oct 2 or 3rd, 1969? The second platoon was at C2 and some of the tracks went with the 77th and got hit. Sgt D was wounded along with many others.

The next day we left C2 in a deuce and a half with 12 of us or so in the back. We were going to see Sgt D in the Quang Tri hospital. In the cab was the driver, Lt. Bosson and Capt Kaufman. As we entered the base, a marine MP stopped the truck and had Bosson get out of the cab because only 2 were allowed in the cab. We gave the marine a very hard time. After our visit, we again passed through the same sentry. The three were in the cab again. The MP jumped up on the running board and ordered someone out of the cab. Capt Kaufman forcibly opened the door knocking the marine on his ass. The MP pulled his 45, which didn't have a magazine in it, and arrested all of us. None of us in the back had proper uniforms on also. We were escorted to the marine HQ and Kaufman had to talk to the commander. I remember one of our guys had an ear cut off one of the dead NVA. He showed it to one of the spit shined marines who ran away. Kaufman came out and we were released to head back to C2. It would have made a good scene from the Dirty Dozen. Bob t



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Bob I'll never FORGET Oct 2, 1969. (I turned 21 that night on Mudders Ridge and didn't even have a birthday cake) That was some night! I didn't go along on that trip to see Sgt D; I wonder how it would have gone down if Capt. Robinson had been the CO? The Marines would have found they weren't ready for the 12th Cav. Of course, you might all still be in jail. BobR

Captain Robinson leaves.
Capt Kaufman arrives as the new C.O.

EXCERPTS FROM FULTON SQUARE COAR

22 October 1969 – 18 January 1970

1. (U) NAME AND TYPE OF OPERATION:
 - b. Type. Search and Clear, reconnaissance in force, rocket suppression, rice denial and security.
3. (U) LOCATION: Trieu Phong, Hai Lang, Mai Linh, Cam Lo, Huong Hoa, Gio Linh Districts, Quang Tri Province , RVN.
4. (U) COMMAND HEADQUARTERS: Headquarters, 1 st Inf Bde, 5 th Inf Div (M)
6. (C) TASK ORGANIZATION:
 - a. The brigade normally operated with four task forces formed by the cross attachment of infantry, mechanized infantry, tank and armored cavalry units. The composition of these task forces was varied on a mission type basis.

A/4-12 Cav operational control to 1-77 Armor
7. (C) SUPPORTING FORCES:
 - f. Chemical. The following activities were conducted by the Brigade Chemical section and the 86 th Chemical Detachment during Operation Fulton Square .
 - (2) Herbicide operations: The perimeters of FSB C2 and FSB A4 were defoliated with Agent Orange.



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11. (C) EXECUTION: The following is a chronological list of significant event, which occurred during Fulton Square :

(4) 29 Oct 69 – At 1440 hours A/4-12 Cav, reacting to an intelligence report, sweep the area in the vicinity of YD144706 and located 13 recently used bunkers. The bunkers were destroyed.

(18) 25 Nov 69 – While conducting reconnaissance on the north bank of the Cua Viet river, a tank from A/4-12 Cav detonated a mine at YD330711. The tank was a combat loss and one US was wounded.

(22) 15 Dec 69 – While supporting an infantry search and clear operation by fire west of FSB C2, A/4-12 Cav received 15 rounds of 60mm and 82mm mortar fire without casualties or damage. Later, an APC was hit by an RPG round resulting in one US KIA.

(32) 13 Jan 70 – While conducting a search and clear operation in the vicinity of YD124727, two tanks from A/4-12 Cav detonated mines. There were six US WIA and the tanks received minor damage.

Oct 4 Still at C2, brought mess hall up, sleeping in large bunkers, day patrols.
(Taylor)

Oct 12 rain, mud, limited travel (Taylor)

Oct 22 6th night out, hot, fired 40 HE mortar rounds and most of our illumination. New Lt and platoon Sgt (Taylor)

Other events in October, 1969 (according to Pineapple)

The infamous neutral steer on the new asphalt road incident with the Navy CB construction foreman occurs.

About the end of the month, a raging typhoon signals the beginning of the monsoon season. 1st platoon endures the storm while out on the DMZ. It rains



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every day of the monsoons until it's over.

Milard the Mallard Mills comes in from the rain tells Pineapple that he'll stay with 1-2 only until the rain lets up. He'll leave in *February* 1970.

3/3 Marines began their pullout on the first.

November 1969

03 Nov

We spent most of last month up at C2; except for about a week at the first of the month at Fire Base Sandy. All we did was pull guard duty and AP. After leaving Sandy we went to C2, it started to rain and we didn't do much for about a week. After it cleared up we moved out on sweeps and sitting up at night waiting for someone to hit us. Supposedly we were attempting to draw attention to ourselves so we could have a little pay back for 2nd platoon being hit hard about a week ago. About 10 men were medivac'd out of the field (2 were shipped stateside). So it became the same routine every night: pull in, dig fox holes, RPG screen up, 60's dismounted, claymores out and then wait. This went on for a month; the last night was the only exception. About 22:00 2nd platoon had movement on their side of camp (I did not write this part down but I believe we had a mobile radar unit with us?) we lob some mortars in the area and then called artillery in. Next we sent out Recon Patrol, there were fifteen of us. On the way out I hump the radio we covered about 3 clicks. We were running up and down hills, getting caught in the undergrowth, and stumbling over everything. We called in artillery again and lob a bunch of hand grenades. During all of this I pick up a small piece of shrapnel; I believe it came from one of our frags. Went back to Nancy for the Medics to look at my leg, it hurt with them probing around in my leg than when it hit me. Upon returning C2, was told to prepare A15 for turn in. Took A15 back in to Nancy. Lost Westervelt, he was transferred out of the Troop. We are short of men now, running with about 4 men per track. Toni is supposed to take over the club soon. I put in for R&R in Feb. (Hong Kong).
(Coop)

Nov 6 At Cua Viet, received orders for CIB. Articles about Sgt D (Taylor)

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The troop goes to the Cua Viet Naval Base, but spends most of its time across the river. Then the troop pulls perimeter security there and goes on nightly ambush patrols along the river.

16 Nov 1969

The My Lai massacre, which occurred in 1968, is revealed. Lt. William Calley is tried and convicted for his role in the massacre. This atrocity further discredits the war and gives momentum to the peace movement.

Nov 19 Cua Viet, the rest of the troop is coming up the 23rd (Taylor)

Thanksgiving is at Cua Viet: "We went into the Navy mess hall and got our chow, I remember paper plates, rain, and not much food was left for us. I clearly remember Big Daddy bitching and moaning about the little bit of food that was left. About a half hour later they picked a group of guys to go across the river, when the landing craft opened the front door to let us out I jumped out and landed in water up to my neck. We hiked up to a cemetery and set up an ambush site in the middle of a bunch of graves, one was open and Big Daddy and I decided that was our foxhole."

(W. Mendoza)

[Thanksgiving 1969 photo and captions from Pineapple](#)

Around Nov 23rd:

Subject: Mine hit Nov 1969

Gerry and Warren, Per your request I will tell you what I remember about Warren Congleton, Bob Barrows, and me (Jerry Malan) hitting a mine in late Nov 1969 north of Cua Viet Naval base in Northern I Corp. As near as I can recall it was on the 23th of Nov 1969 and 1st platoon of A Troop 4/12th Cav was deployed as a blocking force north of the Dong Ha river while 2nd and 3rd Platoons were doing perimeter security for the Navy base. We had spent the night close to a village and the next morning our tank A-17 was leading the platoon south out of our NDP. This was one of the few non free fire areas where we went and as the gunner and used to recon by fire using 40mm M-79, 90mm cannon, and 30cal coax machinegun fire I was bored and told Warren I wanted to drive that day. After a bit of protest I told him I had about 8000rds of 30 cal ammo that needed to be shot out of the coax machine gun (if you were ever a driver on a tank you would know that the coax barrel was about 10" behind your right eardrum and the noise from a 30-06cal 1919A4 machine gun going off that close to you would drive you crazy and deaf) and that if he didn't let me drive I was going to shoot all 8000rds over his head next time we were in the free fire zone. He said I could drive after that. I pulled

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out of the NDP in the same tracks we had come in on the night before and had gone 200-300 meters down the trail of last night's tracks when we hit a large mine. This was sandy beach area which usually did not damage an M-48 as badly as hard/rocky soil as the sand absorbed the explosion more than the other soil types. This mine likely had some extra explosive under it in the way of dud Arty shells as the blast was much worse than the typical anti tank mine I had hit before. The mine went off towards the rear of the tank and was so strong the next thing I saw out of the driver's hatch was the sand below me. The blast lifted the 52 ton ++ tank into the air so that I was looking straight down at the ground from the driver's hatch at what I would guess was about 15ft over the ground. We had about 2 tons of extra .50cal and .30cal ammo all over the running boards of the tank and in the busel rack that was thrown into the air as the tank went airborne. I remember the tank hitting the ground and then something hitting me in the head and shoulder with a heavy blow and I blacked out. When I woke my Platoon Sgt and Tank Commander SSGT Barrows was shaking me and asking me if I was alright. Other than a few scratches and bangs I was fine. Warren Congleton was riding on the loader's hatch when we hit the mine and was thrown up into the air and landed on the 90mm main gun tube. Think he landed with the gun tube between his legs. The Tank was a combat loss and it took several days to get it back to the Dong Ha River for transport across the river to the Navy base. We tried all day to get it loaded on the boats the Navy had at Cua Viet and they were too small to carry a tow vehicle (M-48 Tank) and a pusher vehicle (M-48 Tank) and our M-48 Tank. We had to wait for an LST to come from somewhere to get us back across the river. To transport the tank back to Quang Tri required a flat bed semi truck. It was monsoon season and the road from Quang Tri was washed out and we had lost control of it to the NVA. Warren and I stayed with the tank at Cua Viet for about 30 days while the Troop moved on. Warren was in some pain for several weeks after we hit the mine and knowing nothing about the Navy Medical System did not know how to go to get him to sick call. Some of the Navy guys gave him some pain pills they got from sick call and after a few weeks he was better. Hope this helps...sure some of the other 1st Platoon guys remember this as well, Sending this to some other people as well...last time I want to tell this story, Jerry

December 1969

01 Dec 1969

The Draft Lottery is instituted in an effort to reduce criticism of the draft as unfair.

Jim Good arrives in country. President Nixon announces "we will have peace in our time." For I Corps, this means that the 3rd Marines finally go back to the world and we get to takeover their very nice quarters at Quang Tri. No cav hands filled any of the hundreds of sandbags. HQ moves there.

The troop returns to the DMZ from its last assignment at Cua Viet in time to

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celebrate Christmas and New Years.

10 Dec

We have moved from LZ Nancy to Quang Tri, we have a new CO. We are still short handed. We spent Thanksgiving at Cua Viet, out of the last five nights we pulled 3 AP and when you're down to only fifteen men everyone goes.

(Coop)

15Dec

I remember that young Lt. damned near lost his mind when 2-0 took an RPG on the driver hatch killing his driver, Monte Stamm. That young Lt. came on the radio freaking out and the Captain had to calm him down, 2-0 kept yelling, "6,6,6,6, I have one KIA, two WIA, I have one KIA..." Does anyone remember his name? I think Lt. Perrino came in after that.

(W. Mendoza)

We went to [Hill 162](#) NW of C-2 to hit suspected enemy mortar positions. 4/12 Cav, 1/61 Cav & grunts, 1/11 grunts, and 1/77 tanks. Our track was on an adjoining hill. The front line tracks got hit with mortar and RPG fire. An RPG round made a direct hit on a 2nd platoon track driver. As I remember this, it was when one damned gook popped out of his spider hole, fired either an RPG or mortar, and then ducked back in his hole. We brought in half the 5th mech., blew away a few hundred yards of hillside and quit. A bit later he'd pop out another round so we'd light him up again - he probably went back to his living room 100 yards inside the hill to smoke some dope while we landed another million bucks of ammo on the entrance. He did this several times. Before the day was over, besides all the troops we started with, we also had 2 cobras, 2 Hueys, 2 Barkeys, 1 spotter chopper and 2 jets dropping bombs on that hole. Never knew if we got him - no body count (Robert Klinsky)

When you here of someone getting hit with a RPG how many of you think of Monte Stamm? I know after Nam every time I heard of an RPG attack I thought of him. I watched Black Hawk Down and that movie made my stomach turn. Just thinking about things I thought I forgot but were just hidden. John K. 2nd PLT

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69/70 A27

This is my recollection of an operation conducted by A Troop on 15 December 1969. Request you add it to the Troop history feel free to edit any typos.

A Troop participated as part of a task force under command of 1-77 Armor. Other units in the task force were C Co/1-77 Armor, A Co/1-61 Mech Inf, and maybe another Company from 1/11 Infantry.

The mission was to search the base of the mountain area located west and northwest of C-2. A Troop was the advance guard for the task force.

We left C-2 in the early morning and moved west along a dirt road that ran west and northwest to the mountains. When this road reached the mountains it made a sharp right turn and ran north along the eastern base of the mountains. Before we reached the turn in the road we began moving cross-country and deploying. The scouts of each platoon were leading their tanks sections. The mortars (formed into a provisional platoon under 19) went into a supporting firing position. The radar tracks with an engineer mine sweeping team on board initially stayed with the mortars. We were moving towards a small ridge (hill) to provide a covering position so the rest of the task force could deploy behind us and then move forward.

We approached a ridge - [Hill 162](#) - that ran generally from southwest to northeast. The tanks went into positions to cover the advance and the scouts of each platoon and the troop command track moved to the top of the ridge. On reaching the top of the ridge we were facing northwest and could see the road to our left after it had made its northward turn along the base of the mountains. The troop was deployed from left to right: 3d Platoon (with their left flank next to the road) Troop Hq, 2d Platoon, and 1st Platoon. While the tanks were moving forward to join us on the ridge we received RPG fire into the 2d Platoon and AK fire against the 3d Platoon. The 2d Platoon Leaders track was hit with an RPG round and the driver, Monte Stamm, was killed. The 2d Platoon leader provided me a back azimuth from where the RPG came from and I had the mortars fire on the position while the artillery Forward Observer (FO) called artillery fire down

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behind the NVA position in case they were reinforcing or withdrawing. While this was going on the tanks came up to our position and the 2d Platoon tanks fire several rounds of main gun into the NVA position.

C/1-77 Armor deployed to our left rear to protect that flank while A/1-61 Mech deployed behind us, dismounted from their tracks, and moved forward on foot. They moved around us and to the base of the mountains were they began searching the small valleys and draws.

After firing on the NVA RPG location, the 1st Platoon scouts were sent forward on the right to check out the area behind the small ridge in front of us. While doing this they had 4 or 5 round of closely spaced artillery fire land about 100 yards from them. This was followed a few minutes later by a second volley. The FO contacted the brigade fire coordination center that told us that no artillery was being fired in our area. At the time I wasn't sure if they were correct or perhaps ARVN artillery had been miss-directed. After what happened later in the day, I came to believe that the rounds were 130mm NVA artillery being directed by an FO along the base of the mountains to the northwest. The explosions were smaller than a 155mm but larger than a 105mm or mortar.

While out in this area the 1st Platoon Scouts found a cache of NVA mortar rounds. Shortly thereafter they were pulled back to the main position.

A/1-61 Mech had moved on foot to the base of the mountains and began searching. This search found several caches of mortar round.

While this was going on a helicopter came in and took out Monte Stamm. The radar tracks came forward with the engineer mine sweep team. The engineers went to work sweeping the road along the base of the mountains from the 3d Platoon's left flank back to where it turned east. This required several hours and they found and dug up several mines.

Late in the afternoon A/1-61 Mech began withdrawing from the search area. Their route was through the low ground directly in front of us. As they were moving through this area they began to receive mortar fire. I happen to be looking to the northwest and saw the dust and smoke caused by the NVA



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mortars. They were about 1,000 meters from us and next to the base of the mountains. I had the mortars begin firing on this position while the FO began calling for artillery fire. I then contacted A Co/1-61 Mech and told them we would be firing over their heads and if any thing came close to let us know. I remember the reply was something like "Any thing you can do to help is appreciated." Using the 50 cal on the command track I was able to mark the mortar location for the 3d Platoon tanks. They fired main gun into the area of the mortars, they were joined by several other tanks. All tanks were firing HE. Some of it was hitting in the trees, causing air burst and some was hitting the higher ridge behind the NVA position. Do not know if we killed them, but they stopped firing. The troop ceased firing and the FO walked artillery fire back and forth over the area. By then a Forward Air Controller (Barky) was on the scene and we turned the target over to him as he directed a flight of jets and some gun ships.

The order was given by the task force commander (LTC Miller, CO of 1-77 Armor) to withdraw back to vicinity of C-2 for the night. A Troop was designated the rear guard.

After everyone else had departed we began to move back to C-2. The radar track and one platoon (3d I think) moved down the road the engineers had swept to the vicinity of where the mortars had been. The mortars had displaced farther back to provide fire support. Once 3d Platoon established a overwatch position, the rest of the troop pulled out, again using the road, moved passed the 3d Platoon and established a position farther back. When this was done the 3d Platoon moved back through this position. We continued to use this rearward movement by alternating bound until we were well away from [Hill 162](#). We then formed march-column and moved to C-2 where we spent the night.

I guess I remember this so well, as I made some notes afterwards. It was a classic use of cavalry: an advance guard, a screen for the main body to deploy behind, overwatching fire support and a rear guard using movement by bounds to cover the main body. And the troop performed it so well.

Through out my Army career I have told this story many times to show some of the things you can do with a Cavalry Troop. (Matt Spruill)



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Approx. 24 Dec

A cook released the gas pressure on a stove to close to another lit stove - fired him up. Sent back to the world but should be OK. (R. Klinsky)

Question...Christmas '69 at C-2

Does anyone remember what brass we all had to get spit shined to meet? My memory tells me he was a 4 or 5 or maybe a 10-star general, commander of the Pacific Fleet or something. His son had been shot down over N. 'Nam so every Christmas he'd make a pilgrimage as close to the "D" as he could - in memory. He said he'd like the privilege of shaking each of our hands. That 5 or 10 min. w/ him boosted my morale more than anything else that ever happened to me over there. (R. Klinsky)

Skee's talking about the head squid in the AO, Admiral John McCain, the CINCPACFLT ~ Commander In Chief Pacific Fleet. His son John eventually became a powerful US senator from Arizona some years after his release from the Hanoi Hilton. ~ Pineapple

Also around Christmas, Ron Ely, the guy who played Tarzan visited C2 and shook our hands. I was impressed that he had the cojones to come up there. Also, if I'm not mistaken, Johnny Grant, the mayor of Hollywood also showed up with 2 showgirls. It was muddy as hell and my track was in the motorpool as usual for major repairs when they showed up. It wasn't easy for them to navigate through the mud stepping on the odd pieces of board to get to us, but they did, shook me and SS's hand, remarked something about me looking like Sal Mineo, then left. Of course, SS & I were very high at the time and must have looked pretty odd looking to them because they really beat feet to get away. (Pineapple) see below link to more of the story.

[Christmas 1969 at C-2](#)



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1970

History of the 12th Cav in Vietnam 27 Jul 1968 – 30 Nov 1971

According to the collective remembrances of it's surviving troopers.

CPT Errol D. Alexander, July-Oct 1968
CPT Kenneth G. Carlson, Oct 68-Mar 69
CPT Larry R. Robinson, Mar-Sep 1969
CPT William C. Kaufman, Sep-Nov 1969
CPT Matthias A. Spruill, Nov 69-Feb 70
CPT John L. B. Smith, Feb-May 1970
CPT Robert R. Richards, May-Oct 70
CPT Woodrow W. Waldrop, Oct 70-Apr 71
CPT Edward E. Helton, Apr-Oct 71

January 1970

2 Jan

After a fun filled New Years on the bunker line at [Charlie 2 \(C2\)](#), the Cav pulled out. C 2 took rounds promptly at 7:00 a.m. on a regular basis and the Cav waited for it to end. 26 & 28 were down for repairs and both crews were drinking coffee in the one-foot deep mud to determine how we were going to get these two monsters back on the road. One crummy rocket came in and landed fifty feet away. The angle of impact was such that most of the shrapnel went forward. Messed up a 2 1/2 ton and blew holes in the shit house. Lucky no one was using it.

Unfortunately, there was shrapnel that came back and nailed seven out of eight of us. Daryl Pence, 26G was sent back to the states. I knew Deierling was hit right away, because I saw his shirt rip across the back. Bass took a chunk in the leg and had infection problems for the remainder of his tour. The rest of us just received minor injuries.

A week later, working the DMZ with Sgt Alexander as TC on 26 (DiSanto was on R&R), we hit a land mine. That was the infamous night that we locked and left 26

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and came in after dark via flares. Mendoza's track hit a mine. Spruill had negotiations with the medivac (Batman). We got in about 2:00 a.m. to C 2.

The next day we loaded a canister round and fired on 26 before towing it to A 4 where two of us stayed with it for four days of monsoon.

DiSanto came back from his R&R to no tank, no gunner, and no driver. At that time I was an extra guy, because I was new in country and became the gunner. A week to remember, (John Sharpe)

John, I remember that day because my track was back at C2 for some reason. It was about the time Stamm was KIA. If I remember correctly the rocket landed beyond the guys but close. They caught the back blast. Mike D would know since he was wounded. I guess that is why C2 was rocket alley. Bob T.

I remember this day very well! PR, Maggot, and myself went out to pull 3 of the wounded troopers to safety!! C2 was ROCKET ALLEY!! Thank GOD we made it home. Kid

I D000 remember That John I Think Myself and Fenwick were the only Two without a Scratch

Merle A28 Reed

I also remember that when the rocket landed, I along with my crew, was in that bunker next to the 4/12 mess area, as we were in C2 every morning around breakfast time, safe from that lethal rain. The protocol was get your breakfast and walk directly into the bunker to eat it. Because you always timed it right, the "incoming" siren would always go off after you got your breakfast. That morning, someone came running into the bunker yelling for the 1st platoon doc. Doc Kagimoto ran outside along with PR, Kid, and Maggot. As the rockets were still falling, I thought it wise to be around to retrieve them should it become necessary. I kept on eating breakfast. I wondered why someone was outside during rocket attack time. During the same medivac, my friend Papasan, who had arrived with me in-country, was flown out never to be seen again. I thought he was one of the wounded from the rocket, but he wasn't. Someone had either



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pushed him or punched him and he fell from his track. He had just transferred off my track to the mortar track after 6 months on the crew. I think the bad craziness exhibited by SS and I finally got to him, and the relatively saner mortar crew appealed to him. Unfortunately for him, someone didn't like him. I never knew what really happened to Papasan until 2001, when I located SS, who told me the story. Papasan made it back to the world in one piece and I talked to him also in 2001, but he didn't want to reveal who sent him to the hospital. Pineapple

Around Jan 9th

N.E. of C-2 within easy sight of the Red Chinese Flag, 1 tank hit a mine about 3 PM. Another tank started to pull around it to tow him and hit a booby trap. Claymore in a tree at a height to wipe everyone off a track, but since the tank was higher the main blast hit the center. The TC (Drake) caught pellets in the side of his face, groin, leg and side - medivac'd. It was getting dark so we locked up the tank (26?) to leave it and started leaving. We got about 100 yards when a 1st platoon track hit a mine that about 8 of us tracks had already been over (finally got the rust broken loose??). All 5 onboard were medivac'd. We finally made it back to C-2 about 9PM with arty supplying illumination all the way in.

(R. Klinsky)

Hey guys,

By the time you receive this, except for Pineapple, it will be January 12, this is the Day that according to Duffy, I flew...The day that 1-0 hit a mine late in the evening at the "marketplace".

We ran over a mine. I always wondered what it was going to feel like? would our driver survive? would I survive? would it hurt? would our APC explode considering the amount of Ammo we carried? All those questions went through my mind the instant after the explosion. I remember talking to Hestand, the muffled noise of an explosion, the sensation of going up into the air, lots of dirt around me, the .50 Cal going up ahead of me....landing on the inside of the APC and the .50 landing on my chest....looking at the gas tank and wondering if it would explode because the mine hit just ahead of it. My back did not hurt right away until I jumped off the track and started looking for Walker, our driver, then I realized I really hurt. That day is etched in my memory also because that is the



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day that our Capt. promised the medivac to shoot him down if he did not come get us out, he became my hero that day.

The next day I remember Big Daddy helping me get dressed, I could not get out of bed in Quang Tri, we were there 3 days and were sent back to join the Troop.

I wrote a speech in College about this experience because on the Chopper ride to the hospital Walker's face was bandaged up and he kept saying, "I can't see, I can't see" with lots of concern, Big Daddy put his arm around him and told him, "don't worry Walker, you gonna be ok" I looked down and could see the lights of the city or the base. Please don't mind me rambling on, just wanted to share it with you all, I probably have shared it before with you , but I always like to share it with someone on this day.....We shall never forget!!

I always remember those that shared the experience with me....Love you all.
Wally

Wally,

You're right you did share that before, but it is okay. I think about that event often. That was a tough time for the Cav. Monte Stamm and Al Hall were killed in the few weeks prior and a rocket wounded about seven guys on C-2 on January 2nd.

I was driving 26 that day. Mike Deireling was laid up with shrapnel wounds, Sgt Alexander was the TC, because Di Santo hadn't returned from his R & R yet. Daryl Pence was send home with shrapnel wounds, so I don't remember who the loader or gunner was.

That chain of events started with me hitting a land mine. We tried driving it on one track, towing it, and finally booby trapping it and leaving it for the night.

The one thing that stands out in my mind was how well the arty guys handled those flares. A-4 fired for us until we were too close to A-4, then C-2 took over. When we were too close for C-2 to fire, A-4 had turned there guns around and fired.

Some pretty cool shit for a bunch of kids.

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John

Wally and John, I remember that night too. I was driving 29 and trying to be careful and not lose a track. The best thing that night was when Capt Spruill called in that medivac and threatened to shoot it down. I'm glad that we only suffered a few wounded. That was not a good place to be that late and not set up in an NDP.

Bob Taylor

Wally, I remember that night well:) I was driving 13. After you boys were Chopped out we SHOT THE HELL out of everything on our way home:) I always wondered myself about how it would feel to hit a mine. Thanks be to God I never did!! Sure came close a few times. I know in my Heart The LORD protected all of us. I will Never Forget Duffy seating on top of the track reading his Bible, and Praying for all of us!! As I look back today I just want Duffy to know how thankful I am for his Faithfulness in The LORD:)

Kid

Hey Wally, welcome to that exclusive club of "minefinders".

The APC I was on (21) rolled over two of them while I was in-country. One was on September 30, 1969 while we were working out of Charlie-2 and the other was on February 8, 1970 while working out of Cua Viet (isn't it amazing how those dates stick in one's head?) The first one, two of my best buddies Jim Lundvall and Ed Ward were medevaced out and wound up going home because of their wounds. The rest of us on the personnel carrier were messed up a little bit though not as bad as Ed and Jim. I remember being covered in black powder and walking around in a daze.

The mine on Feb. 8 wasn't quite as bad as the first but hitting a mine is definitely an experience not to be forgotten.

Turtle

I also remember that night. At that time I was the 4.2" mortar platoon leader in 1/77. I had split the platoon, leaving 2 tubes at C2 with the platoon Sgt and I took 2 tubes to A4. We had been there since mid Nov. We got the fire mission to provide continuous illumination for the Cav. If my memory still functions, we fired



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all the illum we had except for our final defensive supply. Yes, the tubes got so hot that one gunner did piss on it (not a nice odor)!

Nice to know someone appreciated our efforts.

Earl Schorpp (40)

Wally:

The day you flew was also my first experience at being "airborne". It's funny some of the things you think about while flying through the air. I remember being aware that the mine went off under the left rear of the track and wondering if the shape charge we kept there was going to explode. A day or two after we were medavaced I left to meet my wife in Hawaii for R&R. One of the toughest things I ever had to do was get back on the plane to go back, when my last memory of that place was hitting the mine. Speaking of memory, when I got back Capt. Spruill commended me for the report I made over the radio immediately after the incident. Didn't remember it then, don't remember it now. Anyway, the crew of 10 is still around and I look forward to seeing everyone in Sept.

LT Styles

The night was real bad; the capper was that A12 was the last track to pull into A4 that night/morning. That day the troop's cooks had made a trip up there to feed the troop a hot non-C ration meal. By the time our crew got to the meal site, there was nothing but a few thin slices of mystery meat and dibs and drabs of boiled carrots left. After swearing at the cooks, the crew left and relaxed by taking a tub bath in an artillery water buffalo (they denied us use of their shower.)

Pineapple.

09 Jan

[Al Hall](#) is killed while waiting for a USO show at C-2, accidentally shot in the back by a REMF.

We went to a USO show at C-2. Waiting for the show to start when a shot sounded and everyone scattered - except 2 medics who immediately started both kinds of artificial respiration on the guy hit (Al Hall you say, I never knew him). The 16 round never exited, just tore up his lungs and he was gone in a very

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short time. Som new guy from arty had grabbed a 16 off the rack. No mag in it but he never checked for the round someone had left in the chamber - safety off. He leaned it against the split log bench; trigger snagged and went off point blank into Al's back. A lot more details are permanently etched in my mind about this. About 15 minutes before this happened; I had been sitting exactly where he was when he was shot. Some buddies came in so I moved 2 benches back and into the middle and a few minutes later he came and sat there. ...But for the grace of God...

(R. Klinsky)

The rest of A Troop moves from LZ Nancy, to new and improved quarters at Quang Tri Combat Base. For most of the troop, it's no big deal since we spend most of our time in the field, but now on stand downs, the conditions are less primitive.

Jan 10 1970 At C2, going north of A4, cold, can see your breath (Taylor)

Jan 24 back to Quang Tri (Taylor)

EXCERPTS FROM GREENE RIVER COAR

19 January 1970 – 22 July 1970

1. (U) NAME AND TYPE OF OPERATION:

b. Type. Search and Clear, reconnaissance in force, rocket suppression and ambush.

3. (U) LOCATION: Trieu Phong, Hai Lang, Mai Linh, Cam Lo, Huong Hoa, Gio Linh Districts, Quang Tri Province , RVN.

4. (U) COMMAND HEADQUARTERS: Headquarters, 1 st Inf Bde, 5 th Inf Div (M)

6. (C) TASK ORGANIZATION:



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a. The brigade normally operated with four task forces formed by the cross attachment of infantry, mechanized infantry, tank and armored cavalry units. The composition of these task forces was varied on a mission type basis.

A/4-12 Cav operational control to 1-77 Armor

11. (C) EXECUTION: Following is a chronological list of significant events which occurred during Operation Greene River :

(46) 2 May 70 – At 0905H vic YD278468 1/A/4-12 Cav with members of the A/7 Engr received SAF from the south of their location from an estimated NVA squad. 1/A/4-12 Cav returned fire with organic weapons and searched the area. Results: Three US WIA (M).

(55) 4 July 70 – At 0659H personnel of A/4-12 Cav while retrieving a mechanical ambush vic YD343448 discovered three claymore mines missing and a fourth booby trapped. The booby trapped detonated resulting in one US WIA(E).

21 Jan

Hey all, By the time you get this it will be 34 years to the day since rockets rained on us at Charlie Two. Does anyone remember that???? I recall that it was a beautifully clear day, brisk and cool, Had rained recently and there was lots of mud on the ground because Big Daddy and I ended up in the mud when the shit hit the fan. I remember running into the command bunker and we were freaking out!! Capt. Spruill was sitting on his cot, I can still see him putting on his boots muttering to himself,,,,, " you damned civilians,"" I yelled" Capt. we are getting rockets" he said, don't worry about it, put on your flack jacket. He proceeded to go outside and call artillery on their ass. That night there was a b-52 strike on the position,,, (as I remember it). Just wanted to share the memories with you all. Sorry I remember so much of it. Love to all wally

Papasan, Gerald Holden, is medivac'd after a fistfight (?) at C2 in which is he thrown off a track. He never returned.
(SS)



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Larry somebody (not Veatch or Corso) was involved in that fight with Papasan.
(Duffy)\

22 Jan

First night back from C2, we stayed there for a month and half. Two Troopers were killed, [Stamm](#) 2nd platoon KIA and [Alfred Hall](#) accidentally shot in the back by a REMF while at a USO show. A17 and A10 hit mines; A10 had two or three people hurt. A10 driver was the most serious but he is back with us now. We went west of C2 a lot, Doc Parker found 28 mortar rounds. Received incoming about a half-dozen times; I guess it was not too bad except for the rain. We went so far north this time you could see the NVA flag flying across the DMZ with your naked eye.

(Coop)

Need a little help from anyone, I found a letter my dad wrote to a congressman about a grudge against the VA, in it, it states how he was wounded the first time, it says (Mike Minchey), "I was wounded on the last day of January of 1970, when a soldier in front of me walked into a booby-trap at Jones Creek, I was blinded in right eye and wounded in lower leg and spent the next several weeks on the Naval Ship USS Repose, Instead of going home on a medivac I stayed on board till my eyesight improved and I volunteered to return to combat." Does this incident sound familiar sound familiar to anyone dad also stated that he was on the ship several weeks before he could return to duty.

Thanks (Derek Minchey)

February 1970

Monsoon ends.

From G. Gersaba's War Dairy:

01 Feb

Cua Viet:

We got here 2 days ago. 1-2 caught fire 3 miles before we reached here. The batteries have mysteriously reversed polarity, they tell me. The days have sped

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by, unlike our track. Otherwise, on the way over here, we went through Quang Tri City for the first time in my tour. Tripped out on the sidewalks, shops, traffic cops, etc., I was surprised to see that a real city exists here. Since I came in country the only city I've seen was Saigon.

02 Feb

Crossed the Cua Viet today, going north. Nice day to ride in the sun. It has been a long time since we've last seen the sun.

Sgt. Styles comes up to me and tells me that I'm going on LP and Stoecker will take it out. OK, what the fuck, I say, and he says nothing, turns and leaves. Fuck. After a while, Lt. Styles comes around and says that I'm in charge of the LP again. Sgt. Styles comes back and says, "I've changed my mind you're in charge." What the fuck?? Stoecker comes by and says that he doesn't care that he's not in charge and volunteers to hump the radio. Should I break the news? I'm a fucking Speck 4! So we stealthily set up about 250 meters from the village. It was very realistic. Mendoza, Stoecker and Hooper are with me. I survive the night.

03 Feb

Another sunny day. Is it true that the monsoons are over? February is the fabled time. Since September, it has been nothing but rain, and here I am with a fresh pack of Marlboros, and a tepid Pepsi to greet the day. Last night was a semi-bummer, but today the sun shines and my heart sings. But essentially, this day is the same as yesterday (as all days are.) Spent an uncomfortable night wrestling with flu symptoms. I think I have a head cold, at the least. Defcons kept me awake all night as they screeched overhead to land about 2000 meters west of our NDP. Intelligence predicts that the 2nd platoon, which is NDP'd on the other side of Jones' Creek, is going to get hit tonight.

We swept some flat sand today with PC's on line. Most ridiculous exercise yet. Object of a sweep being to look under rocks and shake bushes, something we can't do in an area devoid of bushes and trees. I guess we were looking for mines. I lost my nerve and made Alvis and SS drive, better them than me.

They're telling me I have to attend the TC meetings since I've been taking out LP's since Groove left us in December. Great. When the hell will they give 1-2 a



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sergeant? I've been asking since December, with no answer.

04 Feb

Today we will go to Jones' Creek to dick around and eat lunch. We are scheduled to go back to the great sand wastes in the afternoon. I am definitely sick. My nose is running and my eyes are sore. Alvis gave me some penicillin and some thing he said was "generic" Contac. I should beat this cold by tomorrow. Sgt. Styles thinks I'm high. Wow.

Feb 4 Cua Viet, here 4 days now (Taylor)

05 Feb

I feel better. My nose is still running, but my body doesn't feel as if was used as a bowling pin, like last night. Yesterday, I could hardly move.

At the end of my guard, about 0215hrs, Cooper's LP spotted fifteen gooks! He called for 19's mortar tube and artillery. Christ! 15 gooks? This morning we go on a body count hunt. It rained last night. I got wet despite my being inside all night. Today it is overcast. Maybe I spoke too soon about the end of the monsoon.

We checked out the area where Cooper saw those gooks. Found nothing. No blood trails, nothing. So we dried our wet sleeping bags and poncho liners ~the rain did catch us by surprise. I am still sick, but feeling 100% better than I did yesterday. Tonight, Big Daddy takes an LP out.

My sprocket broke loose, all of the bolts snapped off because of short blocking to increase the tension. I have to be towed back. Bummer. 1-2 dies again, unable to finish another mission. Have to remember to replace the block, and puzzle the motor pool sergeant once again.

06 Feb

Ah! Today! Nothing happened in the night. No gooks to shoot at. At 8 AM, I broke track and while I was working, an explosion sounded about a click away, near the village. I find out later it was an advisor to the PF & RF (ruff & puffs) who stepped on a tank mine. It was in about the same spot the old 1-7 hit one last November. Brings back visions of the grunt Captain who went the same way at the



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Marketplace in August.

I am towed in with some difficulty – but make it in safe, only to run into skirmish #25 with motor daddy on sprocket theory. I let him have his way without too much argument. I used words like “probably” the bolts were loose...It is nice to be back in Cua Viet proper.

Oh yes, I made friends with the kids from Lang Ha, the village across the Cua Viet Navy base. “Mason” was one of the kid’s names. I smoked one of their horrible gook cigarettes and shot marbles with them. Mostly it was a nice day in the sunshine.

TET starts today, also is “Red” Phillips’ birthday. SS and Alvis stay in the field. I saw the tail-end (ha-ha) of “Some Like it Hot.” The movie was excruciatingly boring, even for what little I saw.

07 Feb

I assembled a sprocket today with almost no help. All I needed was professional opinion. That is the extent of the work I did. It took me most of the morning, a job normally done in about 10-15 minutes by someone competent. From lunch to about 4pm, I read a science-fiction novel, “Operation Time Search” a story about the war between Atlantis and Mu. I never heard of Mu. Did you hear that? Are there cows around here? [Photograph of Pineapple assembling a sprocket.](#)

This afternoon, a LCM carrying a deuce and a half and army people hit a mine just as they docked in Dong Ha. 2 killed, 1 mutilated and one missing. One of the killed, a guy in HQ 1/77th, on the mortar track, was on the way to face charges for possession of marijuana. The mine blew the 2 ½ ton off the boat. No navy men hurt bad.

08 Feb

Pulled KP today in the Navy Mess, not as difficult as KP in the world. I did very very little, almost nothing, but what can you say about KP?

They found the “missing” in that Dong Ha explosion. He was under the 2 ½ ton. Crushed. His name was “Joker” same company as those others that were killed.

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He was to face charges too. He locked and loaded on the master-at-arms in the club. Swift justice dealt out by the Cua Viet river!

While on the subject of mines, 2-1, 2nd platoon Sergeant Hunter hit one today near those French ruins where I shot marbles with the kids. The driver had a sore jaw and broken teeth. Sgt Hunter, a huge guy, limed into the mess-hall. The mine blew him out of the cupola with is .50 caliber MG.

Otherwise, today was another dull day in the NAM! Would duck hormones help?

09 Feb

A day characterized by dull recollections of the night before. Worked hard all day. Nearly got the track together. Received some "care" packages from the silent majority. Best ones since Christmas!

Motor Daddy, after seeing me pull apart a track adjuster, popped his eyes and accused me of having the mechanical ability of a monkey. How right he is! Luckily, Giz put it back together again despite motor daddy's doubts about all the kings horses and all the kings men.

10 Feb

Got the PC together today. Batteries down low. Looks like slave-starting from now on. In disgust, I volunteered for afternoon detail on the bunker line. Tried to see Tony Rome and True Grit this morning, but at the last moment, the films were cancelled.

Parkinson tells me that a girl who read his palm two years ago predicted "a horrible death" for him before his 24th birthday. In about 2 days, we shall see. Actually that's a bummer of a thing to think about in the field. I don't think I'll drive anymore.

11 Feb

This looks like a bleak day. Already my PC refuses to start. Burnt-out slave receptacle. No negative ground, all melted away. Dammit! I hate this stupid vehicle!!! I feel like going over to 1-3. Today we go across the river for another 6 day mission.

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Feb 11 Cua Viet 6 nights out, three in, new LT.(Taylor)

This time, we pull ambushes. 4-0 elements are already across spending miserable nights in the Cua Viet cold. I anticipate another fight with Motor Daddy today over “who melted the leads on my new *cupped* slave cable!?! What will I tell him? That the evil spirits that inhabit my track took a hold of it? Gah-damn! The hassles mount steadily over the mechanical state of 1-2.

Across the river today with the old man. We swept our AO which is about ½ way up the river to Dong Ha. Rice paddies up the ass. Conducted my first “cordon and search” since AIT. Cordoned a bombed-out Buddhist temple and searched it.

Word is that the mission is mostly ambushes at night ~ a bummer. Right now, ambushes are the worst things we do in the field.

Word on 1-2 is transfer case. They’ll pull the pack on that hunk of shit! Gizmo scares me with his crappy tracking. Told him we may as well be on the lead vehicle! Riding with Milard and Giz on the 1-3.

12 Feb

Hot chow today while the weather is bitter cold. My cold lingers on, hoping for another wet night. We re-swept our AO this morning. I shivered most of the way. Damn the monsoon is still fucking with us!

Today is Parkinson’s birthday. He survived the horrible fate predicted for him. The only negative thing that happened to him was an insect bite near his groin (he said.) What an anti-climax! Whew. I drove for a while today putting my mind at ease about the tracking business.

13 Feb

First platoon sends out an ambush patrol at night while operating across the river at Cua Viet. Sgt Styles, Wally, Barnes, Alvis, and Zahler. We ended up being ambushed ourselves. Too detailed to write in, I will describe the scene when I see you all. I have been dying to tell this story for 32 years, since everyone else was sleeping; Alvis and I are the only one that really knows what happened that night. By the time the others woke up the shit was all around us. (W. Mendoza)

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Then there was the time when we couldn't decide if we wanted an ambush or a listening post...sent 4 guys as I recall out way to far for a listening post But too Small for an ambush. In the middle of the night the NVA and our guys got into it. The NVA threw grenades so as not to give away their position, our guys opened up with an M60 and M16s. I can't remember who went out that night, but I talked to the guy who had the M60. He ran a belt of ammo thru it took about 2 steps and threw it down as it was slowing his progress. They left the M60 and a prick25 radio in the field.

(Malan)

Was this the same night that Coop, PR, Maggot, Kid, Veatch, and a few others were out, and we took friendly fire coming in to help out Sgt. Styles' squad? Sounds like the same night. Anyway it was a wild one!! Remember riding up river on the Navy boats, and getting sniped at? It was a wild & crazy time, but got to know a lot of GREAT GUYS!!

(Mike Davis)

From Ggersaba's war dairy:

Last night, a little after 12, the ambush led by Sgt. Styles (Mendoza, Barnes, Alvis and Zeke) was surprised by some gooks. Very exciting for them. The story is as close as I can piece out, is: Mendoza and Alvis were up on guard. Suddenly without a sound, a gook walks up on the trail they were watching. He was carrying an AK-47 and stooping low. 3 feet from Wally, he stops, spots the ambush and runs. The gook dove into the bush, and with another (who knows who else?) starts pitching grenades at the ambush. In the confusion, our ambush manages to shoot about ½ magazine of 16 and blow one claymore before they start running madly back toward our NDP. Styles deserved some credit for getting all the men back. They left the radio, the M-60, 2 rifles, grenades, sleeping gear and ammo. Yesiree Bob. Must have been some run. Meanwhile, I had a major case of the ass because I had to get up. We pulled 100% alert the rest of the night. I'm going out of my gourd with the lack of sleep. Still, I'm glad I wasn't out there.

At dawn, we checked out the area. And I do mean dawn, yawn! We found the weapons, radio and everything else intact. We also found 4 Chicom grenades, all duds. Three grenades had the pins pulled and one was completely intact. I guess

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the guy that threw the last grenade after 3 duds thought maybe he'd bean someone with it. I found something in a cellophane bag that looked like dried food. There were blood trails, but as usual, no bodies. 4/12 Cav strikes again.

The day is overcast and cold again. The C.O. wants a practice ambush with 12 claymores on 12 clickers. What bullshit. We change AO's today ~ going to our old one just east of Jones' Creek, word is that no L.P.'s tonight!

Sgt Barrows needs to tell the tale of the 4 ill fated guys who were too far out for a listening post and too weak in strength for an ambush. He knows names etc. The NVA must have kicked one of these guys and got his attention. The NVA threw grenades to prevent giving away their position (damn guys were good) our guys on the other hand opened up with their M60 machinegun and M16s giving the NVA a target for their grenades. I talked to the M60 gunner the next day (can't remember who it was) and he said he ran the 100 round belt thru the M60, took a few running steps with it and decided it was way too heavy to be running with and threw it down. They left the machine gun and their radio out there that night. I don't recall anyone getting wounded. They were way out there as well and had to come back in on a very dark night. I don't remember the details of the mine we hit up on the DMZ. I do recall spending days putting the damn thing back together. It seems to me we hit 3 mines in A17. I know we got a new M48 while we were there and it seems to me we hit one in a Sheridan and got a new one but I've slept since then. Sgt Barrows was telling on the phone the other day about getting the shit knocked out of me with a .50 cal ammo can when we hit the mine north of Cua Viet..Hell I didn't remember that.

GOING TO SIGN OFF FOLKS

MALAN

Hey guys,

By the time you receive this ,it will be 12 Feb. I wanted you all to have this before the end of the day.

It was 31 years ago tonight that a small ambush patrol was ambushed by NVA at Cua Viet.

Sgt. Style, Zahler, Barnes, Alvis and myself were hit while on night ambush about

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500 meters from the Troop position .

I recall it was raining lightly, Alvis was on guard, it was about 11:30 PM . We had all turned in for the night, taking 2hours shifts (I think) each, it was Alvis's turn and I had just finished my shift at 11:00pm so I was a bit awake.

The way they hit us it is a miracle that anyone of us survived, much less come out of it without a scratch. The whole incident is too long to recount from beginning to end, suffice to say I thank God I am alive today to retell it.

That is the night I earned my CIB. I can still recall Big Daddy's voice in the dark yelling from the troop location, "Mendoza, come on in! Mendoza come on in!"

I have been spooked about the dark ever since and to this day I cannot sleep in total darkness.

I am glad to be around today to be able to share memories with You all who I consider all to be brothers, even thou in some cases the memory is a bit faint. I look forward to seeing all of you in November, when they will be saying in Vegas, "HERE COMES THE CAV.!!!!"

Take care guys, Wally Mendoza

Sent: Saturday, November 29, 2003 6:56 AM

Subject: Monte Stamm's niece Ashley

Hey Coop:

*it's good to hear from you. i was in the 2nd plt., Aug. 18, 69 to Feb. 13, 70. i was a gunner on track 24. Monte Stamm was on 24 with me, also Jerry Hansard was on 24. Stamm got hit on Dec. 15, 1969, and died. I saw a message on the message board from his niece Ashley, asking for anyone who rememered Stamm to contact her. I posted my e mail address, she answered, and i have lost her e mail address. I sent her a message, on the message board to write me again, but no response, so far. I want to thank you for offering to help a old 12th cav. trooper I think of you guy's often. **I got hit on Feb. 13, 1970.** I spent 6 months in the hospi tal, at Ft. Gordan, Ga. I'm doing well. Maybe i'll see you guy's again someday.*

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Thanks again,

Ron Stinnett i had no nickname.

14 Feb

What can I say? The morning is as overcast as my clothes. My first exertion today was to fling squares of black tar paper. This is the stuff they put in the crates of M-79 ammo. Kind of like tossing Frisbees.

Yesterday, on the way over to this AO, while on the LCM, I had the same thoughts as I always do; that is, when I ride LCM's on the river: We're going to hit a mine. That's why whenever I board a boat I loosen my shoelaces. Superstitious? You damn right. Today is supposed to be Valentine's Day back in the world.

Went out on a dismount along Jones' Creek around noon ostensibly to look for mines floating in the river, but really just to kill time.

Spent the rest of the day either sleeping or skipping stones in the river. No LP tonight. A general pays us a visit and tells us about death and communism. Also, the general expects us to tie down our one row of concertina with tangle foot and engineer stakes tonight! What lifer dreams!

Stoecker, short as hell, (15 days) is driving me crazy with his Gracie Allen logic and incomplete hearing. Ah well, someday...

Oh yes, around lunchtime, I taught some kids how to write their names and drew some silly pictures for comic relief.

15 Feb

Instant cocoa this morning. Had a sleepless night because of the killer mosquitoes attacking me. I fought a losing battle. First sentence I said this morning was "Get the Fuck out of Here!" to the gook kids that appear every morning at our NDP, hovering like vultures and begging ~ unlike vultures ~ for food. I can almost see why the men who massacred that village felt no pain as they cut down those skinny children. I find myself wishing I could spray their

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bodies with my rifle on full automatic. Meanwhile Gizmo is trying to brew the world's perfect coffee-can-full of cocoa. Tell me life isn't maintaining a weird cosmic balance.

16 Feb

Yesterday, a cataclysmic event! Before I went on the noon dismount, the radio mentioned me, saying that higher wanted me for an interview. Further probing revealed that I am being considered for a job in Finance! Me? Lucked out and become a REMF? Suddenly Vietnam is not as hostile. My problems all erased. No longer will 1-2 dictate my actions. Out of the field and into the kitchen the slave moves!

Clearly this sudden turn in fortunes will have a profound effect on my war dairy. After almost 8 months in the field, I can hardly think, lucked out for the second time in my life, the first was when I was sent to the Cav instead of to the leg unit I was born and bred for. No more sleeping in holes, going on LP's or AP's! No more worrying about land mines, no more ambushes to look for. All tension and all danger is now reduced to intangibles. I pulled guard last night, I think it is the last time I put out claymores, concertina, trip flares, and dug a foxhole! Ah yes, 1-2 is "up" today.

17 Feb

A trip today on the way back from Cua Viet to Quang Tri. I rode a ¾ ton truck with Karl from the 2nd platoon driving. I sat in the back with my meager possessions, all of which fit in a M60 ammo can. I had a broken mirror, a double edge razor, a book, "Waiting for Godot," and a folding pipe from Hong Kong. We stopped in Dong Ha and purchased some fine Dong Ha 100's to smoke on the way back ~ they look like commercially rolled cigarettes. I don't know how Karl could drive. I didn't care. My brains were numb as I:

1. I saw the deputy commander of Red Devil in his air-conditioned office. I started to salute but he waved me off.
2. Saw a major somebody, he's the commander of Finance, but has an airborne ranger patch on his uniform. Very friendly guy.
3. Saw a Mr. Reynolds, a not so friendly warrant officer.
4. Even tho' I was high I functioned, because I really really wanted out of the field.

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5. Got the job, at least until March 25, I'm out of the field!

But the field is where my buddies are, how about SS, Milard, Giz, Park, Al and everyone else? Ah well. Met Deon, Vouk, PR, Jim D, and Corso to party up the night. [This was the end of my "war diary" of 17 days in February, 1970
~Pineapple]

19 Feb

Been having our trip flares tied off by Charlie. Bout 9:30 trip flares went off on 3 sides at the same time. (I was buttoned up in my mortar track (hey, c'mon, it was raining - gotta keep the ammo dry ya'know) when our perimeter exploded w/ return fire. Banged my head then got it opened up and still remember how incredibly impressive all that firepower was going off allat once. Damn you guys were good!!!) I popped illum and HE until we all decided no return fire was going to come. Chuck was just doing a serious perimeter probe and he learned quickly our shit was much to fast and much to powerful to mess with. Think they went home to change diapers....

(R. Klinsky)

Feb 19 Cua Viet, going back to Quang Tri on the 22nd. Tankers to get new Sheridans . Lost two APCs to mines. Took speed boat ride on Cua Viet River (Taylor)

22 Feb

I just returned from R&R to Hong Kong. I have been putting off for a long time facing something that I had to think about first. About 3 or 4 weeks ago I took out a four LP. We had one M60, three M16s and claymores. We were out about a half click or so in a grave yard. Around 01:00 while I was on guard, I saw movement (6 or 7 VC) about two hundred meters to my front. I woke up Coronato and we saw 6 or 7 more go by. I told everyone not to make a sound, I was afraid the VC might hear my knees knocking. The way I have come to look at this is being the safest way I could deal with the issue. One group was to my flank and out of sight while the in front out numbered us, through we would have surprise on our side. We had one other ambush that tried to shot it out with VC in a graveyard and they came out on the short end of thestick. I have thought about this for a long time and like in most of my cases your instincts take over for better or worse. I STILL THINK ABOUT THIS OVER THE YEARS, BUT ALWAYS I COME TO

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QUESTION, "HOW MANY MEN WHEN OUT AND HOW MANY CAME BACK UNHURT. The Kid, Maggot and myself were talking about traveling to Sidney. (Coop)

March 1970

1 Mar

We made the switch [to Sheridan tanks] on or about March 1, 1970. John 26

The following was contributed by 3rd platoon Robert Klinsky, from his war dairy:

2 Mar

1st platoon spotted 10 gooks across the river today. Made a sweep but never saw them again - natch.

5 Mar

Andy Shuller had a blasting cap go off in his face (oops). Drew blood and blurred his vision but will be OK. Medivac'd by boat.

6 Mar

A gook sampan boat hit a river mine. 4 killed plus 1 with broken back & neck. We pulled a sweep and stayed out an extra night.

7 Mar

Screw up in 4 deuce defcons from Cua Viet. Landed an HE 50 mikes from our perimeter. Like we need this shit! 8th, back to Cua Viet.

10 Mar

2nd platoons across river. CO told them to go straight to a woodline despite their protests they'd pass thru a minefield where they'd hit a mine last month. Made them go anyway and they hit another mine - 3 medivac'd - broken arm the worst. They also took two incoming rounds that night. &*\$% ^&* CO!!

14 Mar

LT and 4 tracks crossed Jones Creek at low tide. One track had a breakdown on the wrong side of the creek and they tried towing it back - across the creek - now

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at high tide. (Not!) Got stuck in the middle of the creek with the track full of water and the top 2" showing out of the water. We left it overnight.

Lopez passed out sitting on his track. Stomach cramps and seizures. Medivac'd. Medivac was going to start treatment for "heatstroke" - Doc Lagnese told them he was just crashing from speed.

15 Mar

Went back at low tide and towed LT's track out of Jones Creek and drained it.

March 15 put in for R&R, swimming in ocean daily (Taylor)

16th, back in to Cua Viet.

March 19 cold, rainy, got small dog on track (Taylor)

24 Mar

2 AM defcons were a nightmare for our mortar track (49er). 2nd rnd was a dud 300 mikes out, 3rd & 4th hot and on target, 5th hot but 150m short, 6th 25m from the tube - INSIDE OUR PERIMETER!!! Thank God it either didn't have time to arm or it was another dud!! Next AM I read the lot number then blew it in place and fired the rest w/ that lot number into the ocean. Didn't need THAT experience either!

April 1970

April 3 took first chopper ride. Operating on the beach, cold rainy (Taylor)

April 8, 1970

"26 took an RPG through the road wheels and hit a guy in a fox hole. DiSanto was TC, I was gunner, Jerry Beverage was loader, Chet Misa was the driver, and Tom The Gook was a passenger. Tom was medivaced with a bullet in the leg."

(J. Sharpe)

John Sharpe wrote that an RPG hit A26. [Photo of RPG hole on Track A26](#) The night was April 8, 1970. We had just set up our NDP north of Cua Viet. The area was flat and sandy. We put up our RPG screens and a bunch of claymores in front of each track. Guys also went out and put up trip flares 50 to

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100 meters outside the perimeter. It was a moonless very dark night, and as night fell, our Lt, who I believe was Lt. Perrino, began calling in defcons on one side of the perimeter. He brought them in very close. I was in the middle of the perimeter manning the mortar track. It was hot and very muggy so about 5 of us were talking behind my track, ducking the shrapnel from the artillery. After the Lt was done on one side of the perimeter, he had the artillery dropped in on the opposite side. Shrapnel flew over our heads as we took cover behind track 29. Right after a round hit extremely close, one of the trip flares went off. One of the guys peeked around the PC and shouted, "Look at all those gooks!" I didn't need to look as the five of us scrambled to our positions. I spun the mortar tube around and began firing charge 0 rounds. The whole perimeter opened up at that time. Smithy and Koontz joined me in dropping rounds. The tanks were firing, machine guns blasting and all of a sudden there was this bone-chilling scream. Gibbs, who was in a foxhole next to 26, took the shrapnel from the RPG. His arm was nearly blown off. Tom, the scout, was hit and also one of the other M60 gunners was hit. Sgt. D crawled over to my track and opened the door. I thought that we were goners because I believed that it was the NVA. He wanted me to fire some illumination rounds and I remember that I replied that illumination rounds don't kill. He said OK and crawled away. After awhile a Medivac landed and we loaded the three wounded men. When the pilot took off, he caught our Concertina wire with his skid. Somehow Sgt. Hunter got the pilots attention and we got the wire unhooked. [In the morning, we went out on foot patrol and found 7 dead NVA under our wire.](#) They had bamboo sticks holding the wire up. One had an RPG launcher and some of them had satchel charges. We found another NVA further out. We were very lucky that night. That trip flare saved our asses. I believe that a guy named Ferguson set it out. Also, our Lt saved us by calling in those defcons so close.

(Bob Taylor)

I was the gunner on 26 that night and was on guard behind the fifty. We had a headquarters radar track to the right and Gibbs was in a foxhole to the left. That doesn't say much for the radar. Most of the gooks were in front and to the right of me. I opened up with the fifty, but the rounds coming in were from the wire and not from the large amount of gooks farther out. They just took off. I think the sappers in the wire were going to open it up for the others farther out.

Before I could hardly fire, Sgt D pushed me down in the gunner's seat and I cleared my sector with three canister rounds with Jerry Beverage loading. Sgt D emptied the fifty and went to check the perimeter while Tom the Gook and Chet Meesa loaded. Tom got shot in the leg. Gibbs scream was the most bone chilling sound I've ever heard in my life. That RPG burnt through the road wheels on the right side of 26 and out the left. To add to the confusion in the tank, our coax jammed a round in the chamber. Beverage unwrapped a new barrel, then bare handed the jammed barrel to the floor. It ignited the wrapping from the new barrel. I went back to the fifty while Jerry stomped the fire out. In retrospect that part was a little comical.

I don't think we took a round in after a few minutes, but didn't quit firing for a long time. I was soaking wet with sweat, but freezing cold. Go figure. The TC on the headquarters track had a week to go and in the midst of all this he yelled out "I'm too short for this shit!"

(J. Sharpe)

John Sharpe and Bob Taylor write in the Hist. of the Cav that they were north of Cua Viet on April 8



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1970 when A26 was hit with an RPG. Was this when the NVA had several hundred pounds of plastic explosive and a balloon type water mine with them. They had come within 25yds of the perimeter and dug fox holes? The guy who hit the trip flare was out several hundred yards with the mine gear and all that gook C4)

(J. Malan)

Jerry, that is the night. Lt Perrino was calling in the defcons when the guy tripped the flare.

(B. Taylor)

The gooks hadn't dug holes and I don't remember water mines, but they had a shit load of plastic explosives. One guy had a snorkel.

(J. Sharpe)

That night NVA Naval sappers hit us. They were coming down to mine the river. The next morning we recovered 240 pounds of ChiCom TNT, pencil delay fuses and baskets with inflatable rubber tubes to float the mines. April 8 1970.

(D. Perrino)

On the evening of 4-8-70 we in the Cav selected a position to set up our perimeter. This position was a few clicks north of Cua Viet. It was a flatpiece of terrain with white sand as far as one could see.

Our perimeter was set up in a 360-degree circle, just like the cowboys did with their covered wagons in the old western movies. Tanks were positioned a 12,5, and 7 o'clock. Next to each tank was a 113 PC and in the middle was our mortar track. For some unknown reason I had the troops dig foxholes in between each track which later proved to save our asses.

As the sun set in the west troopers visited with each other at their emplacements. Most likely talking about the day they would leave the Nam and return to the world.

Someone called in arty defcons that were landing so close one could hear the shrapnel whizzing over our heads as we ran for cover by our vehicles. I recall Sgt. Hunter making coffee for the troops and removing his boots to air out his feet.

Just as the last defcon was registered outside our perimeter I saw a trip wire go off approximately 100 to 200 meters to our west, and at that time I heard someone yell "god damn look at the fucking gooks."

Every one ran for their foxholes and gun emplacements and at that moment every emplacement opened up with machine gun, rifle, and main gun fire spraying the areas to their immediate front.

As this all took place I heard a blood chilling scream as trooper Gibbs was hit by shrapnel from an RPG that hit the road wheel of A26 to his immediate right.

Now if you can believe this a captain in the rear with the fucking gear, most likely sipping some cold



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beer kept coming on the radio asking for a confirmed enemy body count. I got on the radio and told this son of a bitch to keep the net clear of traffic we need a medivac for our wounded,(which was Gibbs and little gook Tom).

Sgt. Hunter being the good trooper he was grabbed an M-16 and jumped over the concertina directly to our west where we had seen the trip flare go off to get a body count.

After a few seconds I jumped over the wire to assist Hunter. As he was coming back into the perimeter, he got his sock on his caught in the concertina wire.

As I covered Hunter I saw three fucking gooks off to my immediate right facing our perimeter with what later proved to be AK-47's. At that split second I fired several bursts from my M-16 at the gooks, and could see the shirts on their backs rip as each round found it mark. (Mr. Rebbec this brings back memories of our little encounter).

Someone called in Puff who lit up our outer perimeter with cover fire I remember thinking no one can survive that gunfire. There were so many red tracers falling from the sky it looked like you could walk from the ground to the plane.

After puff finished the medivac came in to my left and hovered just off the ground as the wounded were loaded. As the chopper started to lift off the left skid got caught on the concertina wire preventing it from lifting off. Two or three of us pulled the wire off the skid, and as the chopper lifted off it turned on its searchlight lighting us up like a candle in the darkness.

After a while things for us started to settle down as a light fog started to settle in. I walked from position to position checking on the troops. As the sun rose in the east we could see seven dead NVA lying just outside our perimeter, they were so close it was frightening.

Some time later the Colonel flew out to our location and the Lt. asked me to select a trooper off each track to receive an award. I went to each track as requested and ask the troops to select the trooper they wanted decorated.

We then buried the 8 dead NVA and departed to Cua Viet.

Closing comments : a captain that I won't mention his name told me prior to 4-8-70, "Sergeant, the war is over in Vietnam"

Where did he gather his Intel?

Troopers these are my memories of the Cav.
David Boshell

From Klinsky's war dairy:

8Apr

2nd platoon got in another firefight about 10PM. Body count, 8 NVA. Our worst, 1 messed up arm



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and a scouts broken leg. Same night, 1st platoon killed one of 2 gooks walking near their perimeter and also the perimeter here at Cua Viet had 2 exchanges with AK47s. We provided illum till 3AM.

From: Jerry Beverage
Subject: Heart attack
To: "Jerry Malan"
Date: Saturday, June 27, 2009, 8:35 AM

Jerry,

Just a note to let you know. Just got out of the hospital found out i had a heart attack sometime in the last few months. Didn't know i had one no signs.. The Doctor said it was on the bottom part of the heart. Can't do any thing for it because the tissue is dead. The heart doctor didn't say what % was damaged. I am doing good now but still weak. I wanted you to be the first to know in case the Lord calls me home. The night of the fire fight on April 8th that 2nd Plt had i am the one that set out the trip flare the gook set off.Over by the bomb crater

i was on 26 Sgt. Ds tank that night. Along with John Sharpe Chet Mesa, Sgt D. My tank 28 had got some bad fuel and was in base camp. Never told anyone i set the flare out that night that they tripped until now. Thought guys in 2nd Plt. would want to know. Your Friend

Jerry Beverage

12 Apr

41 hit 40lb mine. Rodgers got broken left foot, broken right ankle, a hole in his back, and a gash in his left leg requiring 120 stitches. Werner, sitting behind Rodgers had some internal injuries but was OK in a few weeks. TC & gunners OK.

Brothers,

I will be arriving Wednesday evening for the reunion. My cell is 401 354-5433. I received a letter - snail mail - today from an old trooper, Gerald Standridge. He's looking for a sworn statement regarding a PC that hit a land mine. He lists several names of people on the track: Richard G Rogers, J. C. Hunt from KY, Gerald Ware from Atlanta, Carter Fuller from FL, If any of you can help him or know of any of these troopers please contact Gerals A. Standridge, 100 Peach Hill Dr., Jefferson, GA 30549. See you in Vegas LT Zero

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That incident happened in April of 1970, about the time and near the location of your famous night firefight on the north side of the Cua Viet river. I was in 3rd platoon, but had the great, good pleasure of being on an in-country R&R to Vung Tau when the track hit the mine. Total combat loss, and I know that Rogers was medevac-ed to CONUS, and later had a foot amputated from injuries received in the blast. Carter Fuller is a sometimes member of the Commo Net. According to the last roster that I have, Rogers & Ware are TNF status, there is an address for J.C. Hunt, though I don't know how active he has been in the organization. Doc Lagnese probably treated the victims of that blast. I vaguely remember Standridge's name, but don't really recall anything about him. Perhaps he was medevac-ed too, and didn't spend much time in the platoon. Long time ago, and that is one of the incidents that I recall hearing about, but did not witness. Jim Good

Brothers: I do recall that incident. The track that blew was in column right behind mine (40). I had just radioed our proposed NDP to troop and started to move to a slight rise on otherwise flat terrain. Cpt Smith and the Battalion S3 Air had also just called and said they were airborne in our area and were coming in to our position. Then the mine blew. When I turned to see what in the hell happened, their track was in the air, and landed on its side, and was on fire by the time I got to it. The guys on top were blown off (thank God for the soft sand of Cua Viet). Rodgers was still in the drivers seat. We pulled him out and away from the now burning PC. Rounds were starting to cook off. Andy administered morphine to Rodgers. When Cpt Smith and the S3 Air landed in a LOH, I kind of remember Medevacing the wounded on their LOH. I have Standridge's address and will write a letter to him confirming the incident. See you at FSB Vegas. ETA Thursday mid afternoon. Have a safe trip. Earl (40)

In the fight's aftermath, some medals were handed out to 2nd Platoon:

April 11 returned to Quang Tri for R&R (Taylor)



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20 Apr

Left Cua Viet for Quang Tri

23 Apr Pedro - (boo coo mine area)

Track 32 Call Sign 42 went over a brush-covered embankment - ass over teakettle - skidded down on their top. Can't believeno injuries. ([Click here for photos](#))

from Good:

I don't remember who was on the track, but apparently the gravity was especially strong in the area where it flipped. If I recall correctly, the sheridan that I was on had some sort of mechanical problem, (didn't they always??), and our crew was in Quang Tri when this incident happened. I remember them bringing the track back to the motor pool, but don't recall how seriously damaged that it was. It seems like no one was killed or seriously injured when it flipped, but somehow it seems that I recall that the driver was trapped in the driver's hatch for a while. Given all the ammo and other stuff that we carried in APCs it must have been a real mess inside when it went over. The story I remember was that John Coble was the TC of the track and he ended up trapped. Sniper Tom, you may be onto something there. I remember Coble had one of his arm's in a cast for a while. I can't remember how he broke it, but it might have been from when this track flipped over.

Jim Good

As I remember that incident, the 40 track was behind Coble as we traversed down and across a slope covered with high grass. When the PC started to roll it was like watching it in slow motion. It rocked back and forth once or twice and then rolled completely over. The roll occurred because the right track went down into a hidden bomb crater. Coble's leg was pinned to the ground by the 50 cal gun shield. I tried to get him unpinned but the damn track was still rocking slightly, keeping his leg pinned. I was concerned that the track may catch fire so I remember saying to him " You're coming out of there right now" . I grabbed him under the arms and pulled until he finally popped out from under the gun shield. We medivac'd him and he returned to the field in a couple of days. Nothing more serious than some bruises!

Earl (40)

25 Apr Pedro

21 hit mine. 1 busted eardrum. CBL (combat loss) track.

26 Apr Pedro

62 hit small mine - no injuries.

April 27 Got back the 24th pulling bunker guard at Quang Tri (Taylor)

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28 Apr Pedro

Sheridan and a pickup track (whatever THAT was) hit mines on the way back from a log run. 18 caught fire and driver, Sammons, slightly injured back.

**I think I remember this incident. Wasn't this the one where the Sheridan & the M-548 (pickup track), and another vehicle, either a second Sheridan or an ACAV, were on the way back to Quang Tri from FB Shitty Smitty? The TC of the Sheridan thought of something he wanted to tell the CO, and had just initiated a call on the radio. Since the whole troop was in a perimeter, everyone was on the same frequency, and most of us heard the exchange. "6, this is XXX (I've forgotten his call sign)" XXX, this is 6, go ahead." "6, this is XXX AAAAHHHHHHHHHHRRRRRRGGGGGGHHHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" [high pitched scream] The TC of the other vehicle with them then excitedly keyed his mic and said "6, XXX just hit a big mine and blew up, they are on fire!" Turns out the Sheridan had hit a dud 155mm WP round, and burst it open. Scared the bejeezus out of the TC who had his radio keyed, and he screamed like a woman being raped. The other track could just see the flash and the cloud of smoke that engulfed the Sheridan. Scared the crap out of everyone for a minute, but as I recall, it really didn't do much if any damage, and no one was hurt.
(Jim Good)

30 Apr 1970

Nixon announced that US troops have attacked Communist sanctuaries in Cambodia, following the overthrow of Prince Sihanouk by US-aided Lon Nol.

May 1970

May Assigned to 20 as gunner, no more mortar track. General and Colonel stated that the 4/12 was the best outfit in the 5th Div. (Taylor)

4 May 1970

The National Guard kills 4 students at Kent State.

From Klinsky's War Dairy:

6 May Pedro:

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18 hit another small mine - it's 3rd. No one hurt.

7 May Pedro:

66 hit a small mine.

14 May Pedro:

Watched a LRP team from a couple clicks away getting fired on by some gooks last night. Cobra came and hosed the area around them. We went in to extract them this AM. Pete (my driver) spotted 8-14 uniformed NVA. We were set up in a horseshoe formation so the direct fire who could see them couldn't fire w/o hitting our own so 6 had us fire them up from 700m out. A tanker watching thru a scope saw our 1st willy pete marker land in the middle of 3 who'd split off from the rest. We dropped 75 and fired for effect working the creek bed over pretty good. A later sweep found a spider hole in the creek bank where they'd holed up. Never saw them (or bodies) again but recovered 3 of their rucks, medals and certificates, bloody pants and an NVA radio - on our push!!

15 May:

27 hit small mine.

May 18 back out in field (Taylor)

19May:

I'm (Skee) now officially TC of 49er.

May 25 Blocking force, platoon only (Taylor)

27 May Happy Birthday to me.

AM; Sgt Smith and Lee had a short fight. 05 later, Coble picked a fight w/ Lee. 2:30 PM, a jet caught fire and crashed within 500m of Quang Tri rear gate. Monster smoke ring. The pilots must have bailed w/ 02 'cause we'd given up watching for them in the sky when someone finally saw the speck of their chutes.

4:30 PM Sgt Mac came out drunk cussin' and threatnin' to kill Georgia, Minchey and a few others for trying to get Coble and Smitty busted. 3rd herd's getting' flaky!!! WE NEED A STANDDOWN!!!

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May 31 track broke down, in Quang Tri (Taylor)

Summer 1970

It was the summer of 1970, I don't recall the month. We were southwest of Quang Tri, in the "Backyard" area between the combat base and the river [Photo Quang Tri River](#). I think LT Schorp was on leave, and don't remember who was calling in the DEFCONs. We may have had a FO with us, but it was probably the platoon sergeant. The area was fairly flat and open, not a lot of brush or trees to stop shrapnel. I don't recall the round being all that close when it went off. Seems like it was just a fluke that one, a lone, big hunk of shrapnel flew a lot farther than usual. The arty guys may have goofed up somehow - extra charge bag, wrong azimuth or deflection, or the guy calling it in may have been more aggressive than he intended, but it really didn't seem especially close. At any rate, we were spending a typical night in the field. All the claymores, tripflares, RPG screens, etc. had been put out. Most of the guys were just loafing, or visiting with friends around other tracks, and not really paying a lot of attention to the DEFCONs. Today, if there were 155mm artillery rounds going off just over a half mile from your campsite, you would be going nuts. In Viet Nam it was just another evening. As I recall Morris Smith telling the story, he was thinking about his upcoming R&R in Hawaii where he was going to meet his wife for a week away from the war. He said that he was trying to determine how many days he had left until leaving on R&R and he raised his left arm to count on his fingers when "Whap!" the hunk of shrapnel hit his left side, and he let out a moan that everyone heard. If he would have had his arm down by his side, he might have lost it. Later, someone found the piece of shrapnel on the floor of his turret. Seems like it was about 6 or 8 inches long, and 2 inches in diameter. It split his side open from just under his armpit to just above his hip, but fortunately didn't cut very deep. Just split the skin, and the shrapnel didn't penetrate him. I can't remember if he had on a flack jacket or not, but I tend to think he didn't. We quickly shut down the artillery, and called a dustoff. [Photo of dustoff with Smith onboard](#) Doc Lagnese may recall some of the details, as I assume he put Smith on the medivac. Smith didn't even stay in the hospital at Quang Tri very long. I remember a few days after the incident we were in the rear, and he was resting at "B Med," Company B, 5th Medical Bn, which was the 5th Mech's organic medical unit, and which served more or less as an outpatient clinic and minor convalescent center. I think Smith only stayed there a very few days before returning to the unit. He probably

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stayed in the rear on light duty until going on R&R, but eventually he returned to the field with the 3rd Platoon. Just by the grace of God his wounds were relatively minor.

Jim Good

Summer 1970 continued...this is a conversation on the commo net in late Feb 2008

John,

If it was in 1970 near the Rock Pile, it may have been that big fire at the start of the Bai Long Valley when we went on Task Force 1/77 Armor. Lots of artillery, the Cav, 1/77, 1/61 and probably other units as well. Seems like it was June or July of 1970. After taking a large artillery unit to Van der Grift and setting up a temporary firebase there for a week or so, we returned to Quang Tri by way of the Bai Long Valley. The first night we got a big grass fire which nearly got into our perimeter. An attached engineer bulldozer was outside the perimeter trying to cut a fire break between us and the flames. The fire got to some of the claymores and set them off. Interesting night. After that, things were relatively quiet going back through the Bai Long, but everyone was on full pucker factor because we were the first U.S. unit to have been out there for quite a while. LT Zero may offer more details -- not that he caused the fire or anything. :-)

Jim Good

Jim is right that the fire in the Ba Long valley occurred in mid-'70 – in mid- to late-July. It is the source of two of the most memorable images that I recall from my time with the Troop. We had been at Firebase Vandergrift as part of an “artillery raid” that the Brigade had conducted, in which they moved 175mm and 8-inch artillery pieces out there in order for them to be in range to do harassing and interdicting fires on the Ho Chi Minh Trail complex (see entry under 9Jul further down in this history). Once that operation was concluded the artillery and other units returned to Quang Tri or Dong Ha Combat Bases, but we were sent south through the Ba Long valley. We set up our first NDP in a huge, grass-

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filled meadow; I'd estimate (after looking at Google Earth) that it was a mile or more long and a half-mile wide (at about 16deg. 37' 54"N, 107deg. 01' 41"E, I think). A few ancillary activities that afternoon were sending a team to blow up a dud bomb (big sucker!) that we had passed and allowing folks to wash up in the river (some "fishing with hand grenades" occurred, as I recall). As Jim says, later on a grass fire started outside the perimeter, started by a smoke grenade, I think. We had an engineer crew with a bulldozer with us; once we saw that the fire was getting serious, those guys went outside our ring of claymores and cut a firebreak around the NDP. That was right about at nightfall. So the first memorable image, from a while later on, was the whole valley full of grass burning in the dark, except where we were – like something out of *Apocalypse Now!* The other memorable sight occurred when the sun rose. By then the fire had burnt itself out, so there we were, in a little muddy, grassy circle surrounded by black in all directions. [Bob Richards]

John, I checked the Cav website history section and in July of 69 we were near LZ Angel. A marine tripped on one of our flares and started a fire. Almost burned our tracks. I only remember it because I wrote home back then and mentioned it in the letter. Pineapple put it on the history section.

Bob Taylor, 2nd Platoon, 69-70

Hey John, the only fire I remember was our first mission to the DMZ (out of good old LZ Nancy) and this was July or August of 1969. Capt. Robinson was in charge of the Troop and we would go thru the bush using pop up flares and C-4 (yes, that C-4) to start fires and deprive the bad guys of cover. Thought we would burn down the whole DMZ at one point but of course that never happened.

Turtle

Turtle I'm sure we were on some kind of move and got into some high dry grass. I know we were tired but had to go on. I know we went by the Rock



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Pile and some of the older guys told us that the Marines took it on foot. John

John were we set up on line during the day watching it burn? Or was that our tracers starting a fire in the dry season????? Damn it's all so jumbled. Sure wish I'd have kept a journal.
Bob [Rebbec]

Turtle I am not sure any more but I think maybe summer time. John

John, do you remember about what time of year that was?

Turtle

Bob do you remember what we were in when we got caught in some valley at night and there was a fire coming our way or was it around us? I remember it was some where past the Rock Pile. I also remember it was a long night and mission. I guess if you can't remember maybe Turtle can. Take care. John K. 2nd PLKT. 69/70-- It was in 1970.

[June 1970](#)

[6 Jun 1970](#)

[Robert F. Kennedy assassinated.](#)

From Klinsky's war dairy:

[9 Jun](#)

12Pm Quang Tri got hit by 19 rockets. Hit the 1/77 hootches killing 2 and wounding 22 engineers - direct hit on their hootches. Hit empty service club and empty movie area. Almost hit battalion TOC. 2 hit not far from our hootches - but we were back in the bush.

[12 Jun](#)

I (Skee) got walked on my bare back by a 6" centipede. Drew blood. Doc lanced it w/ a razor blade. Tight & painful for a day or 2 but no damage.



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19 Jun

Sgt. Mac hit a mine with 46 (YES, he was driving - for kicks) Blew a nice hole but no damage or injuries. (believe this is the day Sgt. Otts joined us.)

23 Jun

Sgt. Otts and Werner medivac'd for M-79 shrapnel wounds. (If I remember correctly the round one of them fired hit a limb right over their heads) Werner right back but Otts needed 4 stitches in his neck.

25 Jun

27 hit mine on Red Ball. 79 mini-primer, mortar round primer and 105 for a kicker - 105 didn't detonate. No damage, no injuries.

26 Jun

I'm now an official "[Acting Jack](#)" (field 5) 24 hit mine - kicker didn't detonate (same FNG must've set them both up).

1/77 scout track hit by command detonated 155 mine in our AO. Chuck blew it directly under the driver. Blew him, the lats, seat, dashboard - right up and out the hatch. Legs gone. KIA

27 June 1970

Tank A-38 hit mine: the incident took place near the Quang Tri River, about 2 miles south of Quang Tri City. The driver (SP4 Lea) and I (Jim Good) were both slightly injured, and medivaced to Quang Tri. Other guys from the 3rd Platoon saw a young kid, about 14 years of age run from the area. It appears that he set off the command detonated mine as we drove past. Lea, Jerry Darnell, John Davis and I all got the Purple Heart for injuries resulting from that mine. [Photograph of damaged A-38.](#)

(Jim Good)

From Klinsky's war dairy:

28Jun

47 hit mine. 3- 155 rounds. CBL tank but bruised knee and sore butts the worst injuries.



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29 Jun

20 hit mine. Driver took 4 stitches in chin. CBL track. Had belly plate which helped a bunch.

July 1970

From R. Klinsky's war dairy:

1 Jul (Skee made 2 digit midget)

3rd herd moved to Hai Lang w/ 1st platoon joining us later. 3 companies of NVA supposed to be in the area. (what the heck were we...bait???)

3 Jul

Tingo shot his big toe almost off w/ a 60. Using the Cav and 2 platoons of 1/77 as a blocking force, the ARVN's waxed 145 NVA.

4 Jul

Sgt Debos went out to pick up a gangbang of 4 claymores. Gooks stole 3 and booby trapped the 4th. It went off when he was about 20 ft from it. Messed up his side, legs and chest pretty bad.

9 Jul

Moved toward Khe San way west in the Mountains not far from Laos with 3/5 Cav, 1/61, 1/77, 4/12, 175's, 155's, aid station, dozers, & commo (most of Quang Tri, I think), to set up a new firebase. Mine roller 48 tank hit major mine, knocked it off the road and CBL'd it. 4/12 command track hit mine, CBL. Broken wrist and bruises worst injuries.

As the entry above shows, the "artillery raid" to FB Vandergrift was a big operation.[see above Summer 1970]This was the first of two such operations in which we participated in the summer of '70. The troop was the advance guard for the whole shebang. Shortly after we passed the Rockpile, we came to a stream crossing on route 9 (at 16deg. 45' 58.3" N, 106deg. 51' 15.7" E). Since we had an engineer team with us, I had them check the ford with their mine-detectors - it

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came out clear, so we proceeded through the ford. Two Sheridans crossed the ford ahead of the command track. As the command track crossed, the mine detonated (must have been command-detonated). It went off under the right-side track, so the vehicle, besides flying into the air, dumped me, Greg Beining, LT Malm, and whoever else was in the track off on the left side. We landed stacked like cord-wood, and I recall looking back up at the track as it fell back to earth on its side, and thinking, "Man, I hope that doesn't land on our legs." It didn't. Maintenance/recovery took care of evacuating the vehicle; we continued the mission on down the road to Vandergrift. My "trophy" from this incident was a huge and persistent bruise on my left butt-cheek. I didn't do much sitting down for several days. On thinking about this later, I was pretty pissed that the engineers did not detect the mine during their sweep of the ford. [Bob Richards]

10 Jul

24 hit mine while bookin'. Went down embankment and flipped over. 1, and possibly 3 broken legs (I assume not all on the same guy). New firebase is shaping up.

15 Jul

Convoy from Vandergrift to Cam Lo got ambushed. RPG's and auto fire. 1 medivac'd - not bad. On our way back from Cam Lo, 1/61 put out a dismount sweep to check the ambush area. Got fragged by a gook. 1 KIA, 1 WIA. Gook got dead too.

18 Jul

Dude from 1/61 built his fire over an old M16 mag which exploded and put shrapnel in his face. Medivac'd.

21 Jul

1/61 ambushed 1/77's scouts! No one hurt. Dumb shits!!!

25 Jul Pedro

My claymore ambush blew at 6AM. Blew 1 gook into a tree. Later found 2 rucks. 9PM, 1/77 security platoon killed a gook w/ claymore ambush



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August 1970

From Klinsky's war diary:

12 Aug 7:30 AM

20 rockets were fired 1800m in front of us aimed at Sharon. Our tanks and mortars fired up the launch site, as did 105's from Ann. Tried to sweep the area but was tri-can - nothing.

14 Aug

Brigade security platoon ambushed in our AO. 2 KIA, 2 WIA

17 Aug PM

27 sank completely in Quang Tri River. CBL.

19 Aug

I'm going in for E-5 board. 47 in front of us hit mine. CBL. Roland minor back injuries and shock, Lea paralyzed 2 fingers - also his 3rd mine! Sent stateside.

20 Aug

passed 5 board

28 hit mine. CBL. Minor injuries.

21 Aug

18 hit mine. CBL.

27 Aug

11 hit mine. CBL. Minor injuries.

29 Aug

22 hit mine. CBL. Minor injuries.

September 1970

09 Sep

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Gook fired 2 bursts of AK47 into the perimeter from about 400m out. No injuries, never found him.

29 Sep

Sgt. Otts caught shrapnel from 81mm 200m out. Da Nang for recoup.

30 Sep

"66 hit mine. 8" round. 6 medivac'd. Beining (driving), broken arm, possibly broken leg, messed up pretty bad - stateside bound. F.O messed up neck &/or back, old man cut head (out cold). FNG - hurt knee, engineer & LT, internal injuries." That was 5 days a'fore I ETS'd!!! That was the last entry (besides "I'm outa here!") in my diary.

Skee

October 1970

11 Oct

[Melvin E. Tucker](#), PFC, perished.

23 Oct

[Michael Le Boeuf](#) accidentally killed by a .50 caliber machinegun at home base in Quang Tri

November 1970

23 Nov 1970

A raid into North Vietnam to free American POWs comes up empty-handed.

Thanksgiving 1970:

I left Quang Tri on Thanksgiving Day 1970 to come home. We were to go to Can Ranh Bay. Like most guys, we got orders to go home, but not given a way to get there. Jerry Beverage and I bummed a ride on a C 130 to Da Nang, hoping to find another flight to Cam Ranh from there, but no flights were leaving in the foreseeable future. The Air Force ran the club at Da Nang and wouldn't let us in, because it was their Thanksgiving celebration. (I always thought they were a bunch of pansy as &*%\$*&%\$). Somehow, we found our way to a French restaurant just outside the base. We celebrated with another guy over some

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wine. We truly had something to be thankful for, we were on our way home. When we returned to the airport, it was deserted and dark, but we found a cargo flight going to Cam Ranh Bay. There were no seats, just cargo, us, and four or five Vietnamese that looked like farmers and probably had no business in the plane. We flew through the worst storm I've ever flown through. The plane even leaked. I think we landed about 2:00 a.m.

John Sharpe

December 1970

31 Dec 1970

Troop strength is 280,000.



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1971

January 1971

[Recommendation for a Presidential Unit Citation for Lam Son 719](#) brought to light by Charles John Wayne Russell.

The following information was provided by Short, Keith . (2000) C COMPANY, 1st BATTALION, 11th INFANTRY. Colorado : Roshtiek: from his research manual.

Two operations of the 5th Mech out of the AA's; with information in regards to A Troop 4/12 Cav activities.

1/C/1-11, 1/5 Infantry Division (Mech)--Quang Tri Province
3/A/2-506th Infantry (Ambl), 3/101st Airborne Division (Ambl)--Thua Thien Province

Lam Son 719 Significant Events entries in the Combat After Action Report of the 1/5 Mech.

According to the AA, A/4-12 Cav had 25 WIA'S and no KIA'S during this operation.

28 JAN 71

1/A/4-12, 282217H, YD107694 (4km SW S-4).

The unit reported that a trip flare was detonated approximately 75 meters north of the NDP. They also received 3-4x rounds of AK-47 fire from the north. Organic weapons fire was placed on the area, and pink light and radar were employed, but with negative sightings. The area was swept at first light with negative results.

29 JAN 71

2/A/4-12, 291200H, YD157687 (4km ESE A-4).

An M551 Sheridan detonated a PM60 mine buried near a tank trail. There was 1x US WIA; the vehicle sustained moderate damage. The unit then received approximately 10x rounds of AK-47 fire from 100 meters west of their location. The area was engaged with organic weapons fire and was swept

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with negative results. There were negative further friendly casualties.
The resulting crater was 5'x3'x7'.

2/A/4-12, 291430H, YD163700 (5km east A-4)

An M551 Sheridan detonated a PM60 mine buried in a tank trail. There was 1x US WIA; the vehicle sustained moderate damage. The crater was 7'x7'x5'.

February 1971

12 FEB 71

A/4-12, 121145, YD158698 (3km E A-4).

A M551 hit a PM60 pressure activated mine which was buried in an open field resulting in a crater which was 4' by 4'. There were negative friendly casualties, the vehicle was a combat loss.

April 1971

3 APR 71

1-77, 032310H, XD820418 (2km N Khe Sanh).

Team received AK-47 fire and grenades from an estimated 6x NVA. Small arms fire and grenades were returned. A/4-12 reinforced team. Results: 1x US KIA, 1x US WIA, 2x NVA KIA. Sniper team at 040800H, made a sweep of area where there was contact resulting in the following items captured: 2x RPG rounds, 1x RPG cleaning kit, 1x estimated one pound type of explosive, 1x homemade bangalore torpedo, 1x hunting knife with scabbard, 1x first-aid packet, 1x NVA pistol belt with fish cakes. There were heavy blood trails and drag marks throughout the area.

Montana Mustang Significant Events entries in the Combat After Action Report of the 1/5 Mech.

According to the AA, A/4-12 Cav had 19 WIA's and 2 KIA's during this operation. They were attached to Task Force 1-77 Armor with the 1-77 Armor (-).

20 APR 1971

201025H, YD238460. 2/A/4-12. Track detonated an unknown type boobytrap--negative casualties or damage. Area was checked with negative



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results. No recent area activity.

201230H, YD331445. 3/A/4-12. M551 detonated a 20 pound plastic pressure activated mine--negative casualties. No recent area activity. 2 vehicles had passed over mine previously.

May 1971

1 MAY 1971

011340H, YD290458. 2/A/4-12. M113 hit Arty shell having claymore type clacker detonator--negative casualties. One roadwheel was blown off.

5 May 1971

051000H, YD249484. 2/A/4-12. M551 hit aluminum type rocket mine blowing off 2 roadwheels--1 US WIA.

051145H, YD258486. 2/A/4-12 discovered mine made up of 1 RPG and 1 82mm round. Mine was blown in place.

18 MAY 1971

182040H, YD112719. 2/A/4-12 spotted 3 personnel 50 meters from their position while on an 8-man ambush and engaged with M16 and M79 fire, the enemy were engaged with M16 and M79 fire to the South. 4.2" blocking fire was used to the West.

19 MAY 1971

192115H, YD131684. CP/A/4-12 took 3 unknown rounds of incoming--1 US WIA.

No counterbattery fire.

23 MAY 1971

230900H, YD100642. A/4-12 took 4x 82mm rounds--negative casualties or damage. Counterbattery and 81mm fire employed. Scts/1-61 swept area with negative results.

30 MAY

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301440H, YD263485. A/4-12. M113 set off a TM-41 mine with 4.2" round on top of it blowing off 2 roadwheels and damaging hull around sprocket. 4 US WIA.

31 MAY

031000H, YD355453. A/4-12. Individual set off anti-personnel mine--1 US WIA. No recent area activity. Area swept with negative results.

June 1971

4 JUN

040835H, YD304409. With mine detector, 1/A/4-12 detected boobytrapped 155mm round which was blown in place.

041255H, YD361477. 2/A/4-12. Individual set off pressure activated mine (anti-personnel)--3 US WIA. No recent activity.

7 JUN 1971

070908H, YD232435. 3/A/4-12. M551 set off suspected 155mm/4.2" round blowing off 1 roadwheel arm and 2 pads--negative casualties. Area swept with negative results. No recent area activity.

8 JUN 1971

081400H, YD222456, 2/A/4-12. M113 set off anti-personnel mine wounding individual on next track--no vehicle damage.

081742H, YD262487. A/4-12. M551 hit unknown type mine which tipped vehicle on its side with one man trapped inside--2 US WIA.

July 1971

2 JUL 1971

021850H, YD137632. A/4-12 took AK-47 and 2 RPGs from unknown size enemy force and returned organic weapons fire. Negative casualties or damage. Area swept with negative results.



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7 July 1971

071200H, YD095683. A/4-12 found 1 mortar site which they destroyed.

[Trooper Memories of 1971](#)

[February 1971](#)

[March 1971](#)

Pineapple,

Found a letter "Tex" Keith L. Anderson, 3rd platoon, wrote me in March of 71 after I was home and he had about 70 or so days left. Might be a bit for the journal. I believe I say he'd been located, if not, let me know cause I've got a line on him thru Terry.

Keith wrote;

"I don't guess you've heard about them running us off the Rock Pile. Just before we went to Khe Sahn, they had us sitting on a hill just north of the Rock Pile. We stayed there 19 days. When we went up there we had 5 P.C.'s, 2 Sheridans, old 39er, and 50 to 60 men. When we left, we had 3 P.C.'s, 39er, and 23 men. They hit us with over 300 rounds of 82mm, 122 rockets and RPG's all within 3 days time. Nobody got killed, but Boo Coo dustoffs."

Skee

We are getting an account thru print media with its own agenda, thru a reporter who was not there, for purposes not associated with Nam service. Nonetheless, there are points of interest.

There are a lot of names I don't recognize, but I was recently departed. Bounty on Captain's head - oh, I heard \$10,000 on ____ when I left, reckon that's the reference. (Note to all interested: best you do NOT go out of your way to locate ____.)

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Two majors shot at in the 1/77 - that is true to my knowledge. I had dealings with both. One was seriously wounded, one was killed, and the man killed was a fine fellow, says I. A good man, his heart was with the troops in the field. The other was strictly a rear echelon guy, which was his lot in life, I didn't like his attitude, but he thought he was doing his job. They apparently went to investigate "loud noise" in an enlisted bunker after dark in base camp, the guys were doped up according to the Stars & Stripes Article at the time, the officers got shot by the people in there. One major crawled back to an HQ bunker. The guys responsible were rear echelon MF, people wholly isolated from field activity, near as I could tell from the article, which was published after I was back in the States. I remember it well, was really disturbed that a good guy had been killed by REMFs.

There weren't a lot of people above CPT rank I had much respect for over there. Truth be told, rank was irrelevant as to whom I respected. Willing to bet that is true for many of you. But the guys I knew who got killed or fucked up never "deserved" it near as I could tell. Shit just happened, as later popular philosophy had it. Or as we said, "Don't mean nuthin."

The other stuff - well, Lehtinen sounds like he was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Doesn't matter who you are to get hit like that. Could have been me. Could have been any of us. Let's get him on the net.

LTee F

Hey Guys, Things really heated up after we went into Laos and Khe San. I was lucky to spend one night in Khe San, The main gun blew a seal so I had to return to base for repairs. But I wasn't so lucky at the Rockpile. We were occupying a hill that was a perfect location for an artillery observer and as you can guess the NVA wanted it. We got bombarded with mortars (over two hundred we figure with a 24 hour span), RPGs knocked out one tank, showed me how Superman flies and shared it's shrapnel with myself, Lt. Bergstrom, and I think about 4 others in our platoon. It was the most frightening time in my life and my back has never been the same. I remember the night before we thought we were goners. I was so scared my M-60 turned cherry red before I could release my fingers from the trigger; I must've fired 2,000 rounds. We had them linked inside a mini gun



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container 5K +.

And of course that was around the same time Nixon escalated the B52 strikes and we were the recipients of the misfires. They make a nasty land mind. We lost some good men from them. I'd like to go on but I've got to ditty-mow. Headed to N.C. to visit my kids.

Have a nice weekend.

trap

Rockpile at Khe Shan: 1st Platoon was guarding Hwy. 1; we were facing the Rock; 2nd or 3rd Plt. was to our left rear on another hill as you face the Rock. They were overran with NVA and had to call for our platoon to fire on their position with small arms and mortars. They had dug in and had constructed bunkers while located on that hill for two weeks. Charlie was trying to dig into their bunkers that night. We could see gooks running in the perimeter as trip flares were burning. Our orders were to fire at anyone we saw in the light--for all our guys were either in bunkers or dead. Our position got plastered by incoming rockets every afternoon about 3:00 o'clock. One guy (Greg Sessions) from my track (12) and another guy along with a FO were airlifted to the top of the Rock to spot the location from where the rockets were being launched. Arty from FSB Vandergriff would plaster them. Khe Sanh was an adventure and a nightmare!

I think we were out in the bush for 90 days when we left Quang Tri for Khe Sanh

NVA: This Charlie's unit hit a LRRP team and we had to reenforce them. The LRRP team lost 2 KIA and we lost 1 KIA. One of the LRRP's was a friend of mine who had extended and was about to rotate home in 60 days. I lost several friends at Khe Sanh. This Charlie did not make it home either Our unit got him in a fire fight when we arrived to extract the LRRPs.

Buddy Puryear



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20 Mar 1971

Articles found by Dennis Perrino (Zero):

Miami Herald article written on 25 Feb 1990:

From [Jim Good](#): Digital Versions of article

Miami Herald [article written on 25 Feb 1990: Word Document](#)

Miami Herald article written on 25 Feb 1990: As a web page

April 1971

Our combat base was Quang Tri for the duration. The Troop worked out of many AO's, Charlie Alpha 4, Vandegrift, and we were at Khe Shan when everybody pulled out, now that was an experience! (Walter "SKI" Slawinski HQ 70-71)

3 APR 1971

After reading Keith Nolan's very informative book, Into Laos, The Story of Dewey Canyon II/Lam Son 719, I found a couple of errors that were probably only meaningful to me and a few others. I was sorry to hear that Mr. Nolan has passed away February 19, 2009 because he has written some fine books on the Vietnam War. And, that a correction to history will most likely not be made. In Chapter 17, Pages 354-356 Mr. Nolan describes the events of the last known soldier to have died in the Lam Son 719 operation, Sgt. Felix Marcial Trujillo. There are several references to a "Felix" in the book. Although, it was not the 3/5 Cav that rescued the Sniper Team that night on April 3, 1971, but the men of 1st Platoon, A Troop 4/12 Cav.

A Troop 4/12 Cav was assigned to the Rockpile area during most of the Lam Son operation, our mission securing a section of Hwy. 9 leading to the Khe Sanh Valley and beyond. There were many light skirmishes and things started to heat up our last few of weeks there. For whatever reason the higher-ups sent A Troop to Khe Sanh to act as a blocking force and patrol the hills around the Khe Sanh fire base. It was typical for us to set up on any given high point outside the base each night. Sometimes the high points weren't so high and were not the best defensive positions. I was in 1st Platoon riding on A10 with Lieutenant Gordon

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Davis, our platoon leader and the TC behind the 50. Cal. Andy Bellinder was our driver, Ed Monreal and Bob Brouwer manned the M60 machine guns.

In the late afternoon of April 2, 1971, on our way to our night defensive position or NDP, I was surprised to notice several guys up atop an open grassy hill a couple hundred yards away. It turned out they were American soldiers. We gave them the peace sign and it was returned. I asked LT. what was up. He didn't know, but called it in since there weren't supposed to be any "friendlies" in the area. We were told it was a Sniper Team. I remarked to LT. that it's one hell of a place to set up! Too exposed I thought. I know there were others thinking the same thing.

1st Platoon continued to our NDP about a klick north of the Sniper Team, got set up and settled in. The afternoon was gloomy and grey. Nightfall wasn't any better. It was one of those cold, black as black nights can be, with a light rain. Sometime after midnight we got the call. The Snipers were being overrun by enemy soldiers. We figured NVA regulars. In what seemed to be less than a few short frantic minutes we pulled out of our perimeter with two M113 Tracks and one Sheridan Tank. As we headed towards the direction of the Sniper Team the artillery flares launched from Khe Sahn firebase were lighting up the area. At least we could see what a mess we were in.

The Sheridan tank made the first move up the hill. Halfway up and it started to slide back, another try and no luck. The hillside was just too wet and slippery. By this time my driver, Andy Bellinder, said he could do it. We made two attempts. Andy was really "horsing it up" and "workin the sticks". On the second try we crested the hill and all our guns were blazing laying down cover fire. Command at Khe Sanh firebase called urgently on the radio and said we were penetrating their perimeter and ordered a ceasefire. Yeah right. FU was our thought. We didn't comply with the ceasefire until we determined there was no return fire and the tank and other track were agreeably positioned up on the hill.

The Sniper Team was really professional with an immediate Sitrep. One American KIA and one NVA KIA. The NVA had high tailed it out of there when they heard us coming. Hard to not hear the CAV coming. I remember we loaded the body of Sgt. Trujillo in our vehicle. I checked him again because I thought for



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a moment he was still alive. I was assured by one of the snipers he was not. This was a very distressing time for all the men on that hill.

With Sgt Trujillo, a couple other snipers on board and captured a RPG Launcher locked and loaded, we pulled off the hill. The other Track carried the remaining snipers and one enemy KIA. We took them to the Khe Sanh firebase before returning to the NDP.

One of the Snipers told me that with all the rain they were huddling in their fox hole under ponchos. It happened when one of them peeked up and out to do a check. They found they were within feet of what we think was 20 or more NVA soldiers on patrol. Both sides were taken by surprise. What a nightmare for them.

We returned to search the ambush site the next morning. We found no other enemy KIA. What we did find was an incredible amount of enemy grenade pins. I don't know how any of the Snipers survived that night. Or, how many NVA died on and around that hill.

When we returned later in the morning to the NDP, the grave for the NVA soldier was not covered yet. We were still filling it with the Platoon's trash. Not an honorable burial. In those days we didn't think much of those we were fighting and respected them only up and until their death.

Felix Marcial Trujillo's tour in Vietnam began July 14, 1969 and ended that night April 3, 1971. According to Mr. Nolan's book Felix may have been the last U.S fighting man to fall in battle during Operation Lam Son 719. Felix is resting now, atop a hill in San Pedro, CA.

There are only a few that know this story, included were the men on A10; LT. Gordon Davis, Platoon Leader; SP4 Andy Bellinder, Driver; SP4 Ed "Coffin Ed" Monreal, Right M60 Gunner; SP4 Bob "German" Brouwer, Left M60 Gunner and me Sgt. Walt "Fergie" Ferguson, Track Commander.

Written by: Sgt. Walt "Fergie" Ferguson on December 1, 2010



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65. 03 APR 71

—1-77, 032310H, XD820418 (2km N Khe Sanh). Team received AK-47 fire and grenades from an estimated 6x NVA. Small arms fire and grenades were returned. A/4-12 reinforced team. Results: 1x US KIA, 1x US WIA, 2x NVA KIA. Sniper team at 040800H, made a sweep of area where there was contact resulting in the following items captured: 2x RPG rounds, 1x RPG cleaning kit, 1x estimated one pound type of explosive, 1x homemade bangalore torpedo, 1x hunting knife with scabbard, 1x first-aid packet, 1x NVA pistol belt with fish cakes. There were heavy blood trails and drag marks throughout the area.

This event in the paper back of Nolan's book is on pages 364 and 365. The book seems to indicate that this event took place 08 April 1971. It also seems to indicate the area of this event was a 3-5 Cav hill outpost (whatever that means). The text isn't too clear about this or the reason there was an insertion there, as it might also have meant that the helo the team was on was diverted enroute to a 3-5 Cav outpost and on the way dropped the two snipers off on a hill with a couple of 101st snipers. The XD820418 map coordinate from the Lam Son 719 CAAR is 1900 meters SW of the western end of the Khe Sanh air strip. The coordinate is also 350 meters south of LZ Turkey at XD834417 on a hill between it and Khe Sanh, where the 101st had a 265th RRC team out of Phu Bai/Camp Evans working for a couple of years--and I'm thinking this was probably the 3-5 Cav outpost being referred to in the Nolan text, as maps do show trails going up to the top of this hill from the north. There are also a couple hills to the NNW of the XD820418 coordinate (See attached 1971 map .jpg from the Huong Hoa Map, Sheet 6242 III where a red "X" marks the CAAR map coordinate and this was probably where the sit-reps were being radioed from regarding this). I will file this story away with the CAAR. Feel free to have any of these veterans contact me about this. Thank you . . . You and your has a wonderful Christmas/New Years season and I wish you all the best . . . Sincerely,

Keith Short

May 1971

Hey Troopers,

I think it was sometime in May of 71 when the 1/5th was replaced by the 101st

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Air Cav and of course we were reassigned to them. I remember the changes they made weren't good. They wanted accountability for every bullet fired and as a result morale suffered. We felt very unsafe and became rebellious at that point. To add insult to injury the US cut our budget so allocations for promotions trickled in. I was in country 8 months before getting my Sp4 stripe. I couldn't leave there fast enough. It hurt seeing a great unit falling apart. Our First Sgt. didn't help morale much neither, he pissed off a lot of men back then. He had a preference for Article 15s.

When I returned to the world and seeing all the protesting towards us, I flew back to the east coast in civilian clothing. I didn't care being called baby-killers or warmongers; I just wanted to go home. I glad to be found and the painful experience is behind me. I hope that most of our brothers have healed. It made me a stronger person and no matter how bad things can get, if you can survive Nam you can survive anything.

See ya

Trap

May 21 1971

C2 was rocketed and B 1/61 suffered a high number of casualties. See page 42 for the story:

<http://digitaledition.qwinc.com/publication/?i=67000>

June 1971

June 8

I was third track behind Farmer's tank when it hit a mine. ([KIA webpage for Thomas H. Farmer](#)). Earl Warren and myself tried to crawl up to the tank and pull Farmer's body away from the burning tank. We got about ten feet away and the ammo started going up and the flames got too hot. Farmer lay next to the tank and his body was badly burned. I remember seeing the grate off the back of the tank flying over my track when it hit the mine. There was an E-6 black guy that was TC and he was blown about 20' from the tank when it hit the mine. He had a huge piece of shrapnel protruding from his left foot. The driver got out OK

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but don't remember who he was either. I just remember how bad me and Warren felt that we got so close and yet failed.

Buddy Puryear 1st Plt. '70-71

Tommy Farmer's death -- it happened in the "Backyard" (area around Quang Tri Fire Base). Buddy Puryear

[July 1971](#)

5th Inf Division stood down July 31, 1971.

[August 1971](#)

For a while we worked out of Camp Eagle w/101. While we were out in the bush with the 101, a 30 day mission, the maintenance track was with the 2nd Plt and we had half of the tracks down, so we were stuck on this hill for at least a week, even the LTR was down, during the day the rest of the Plt would go out looking for Charlie while we sat on this hill pulling guard on all the dead tracks, one day a Huey was flying by when we heard a machine gun and watched the Huey take evasive action, we called it in and the next thing we know there were Cobras firing up a hill about a click from us then the Hueys came in and dropped off some grunts and they took off and a few hours later they came back and picked them up. It sure put us on guard being that close to us. After they left the cobras had fun with us, they flew by then came back and dived on us, everybody was eating dirt. They came back a second time and flew just above our heads and we could see the pilot real good and he gave us the peace sign, laughing all the time! We didn't think it was funny at all! (Walter "SKI" Slawinski HQ 70-71)

[September 1971](#)

[October 1971](#)

The trip to turn in the equipment was very interesting to say the least. After we loaded all the tracks on a LST we headed towards DaNang, 100 miles south, and everybody (us landlubbers) got seasick, I didn't cause I went down below deck and found a rack and went to sleep, as we arrive there was a typhoon going on,

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the people put us up in condemned barracks that we didn't stay in to long cause we thought they would come down on us. (Walter "SKI" Slawinski HQ 70-71)



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EQUIPMENT

Now on the Charlie Browns rolling tank/PC story. While in Nam I had the good fortune to have one of my tanks burry itself up to the sprockets in that spongy stuff we all remember. I was a mess and I couldn't get another tank in close enough to recover it without risking that tank also. Hooked up a PC to it and It wouldn't pull it out. Hooked up two PC's. No go. I'm about to collect all the cables we have and link them when along comes the colonel. Melia was his name I think. He tells me to hook a tank to the front of the PC. So we have tank cabled to PC cabled to tank in the muck. Can't remember If we had another tank in line leading but the long and short is when the pulling started the rear of the PC in the middle ripped rightoff.
(W. McShane)

GSR, Ground Surveillance Radar. In theory they picked up movement with Doppler shift radar waves, it was supposed to detect things like vehicles or people moving toward you. In fact, the GSR took up space, and didn't do much. I think the night that 2nd platoon had their big contact across from Cua Viet with a couple dozen NVA naval sappers they had GSR pointed right toward the center of the group of dinks, and didn't see squat until one of the bad guys set off a trip flare. GSR was a technology, which had not completely arrived during the Viet Nam war.
Jim Good

Capt Spruill stated that there was no scope in the radar set up, that the radar returns were audible rather than visual. When the radar guys first came out with first platoon in the latter part of 1969, of course I was curious enough to want to learn everything I could about it, and one of the things that I did when I went up to the tripod was to look through a radar scope. It had what looked to me like a circular display, just like the stuff you see in the movies and a sweeping thingiegoing back and forth. I couldn't make heads or tails out of the picture. They did use headphones too, but there was definitely a green and black



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display. My first comment was, how can you tell if it's people and not bushes that's moving? They said they could tell because of their experience. When 2nd platoon got hit in April '70, the first thing I heard was that the attack came right at the radar gizmo, and if it wasn't for a trip flare, things would have been much different. It only points up what I've always experienced with technology, that anything on the bleeding edge is never ready for prime time. It takes years for the technology to mature.

(Pineapple)

Then there was the day we were riding along the trail and the damn left fender blew off A17 (M48). That was the day I learned not to put trip flares and grenades in the same box. That lid to that box must have gone 200yds up in the air. Malan

One day during the dry season we found a 1000lb-unexploded bomb. I think you have a picture on your video of the blast (that's not on the web site anymore...is that your picture?). I put a couple sticks of C4 on it and a long, long, fuse. We then hurried to a hilltop at what seemed a safe distance. That damn thing looked like an atomic bomb when it went off. Mushroom cloud, ring around the base, etcetera. To this day the most impressive blast I have ever seen. Malan

THEN there was the time the CO took the troop out to test fire weapons (west of A4 or C2). We came on line; A17 was the farthest track to the right, and fired away. I shot 2 rounds of 90mm and moved to the loaders hatch where I had my extra .50 cal mounted. The ammo was dusty so I decided to shoot it up. There was a clump of bushes out a few hundred yards that I took aim at and opened fire. Next thing you know there is a red star cluster flare coming out of that clump of trees. Seems there were some friendly folks hiding in my target. SS says He say some holes in their gear. Lucky no one was hurt. The Colonel was waiting for us when we got back to the base. He said my .50 was unauthorized and had to come off. I pulled the pin and moved it to the bustle rack. He said that wasn't good enough, he wanted the mount removed (that had been arc welded on). I told him we didn't have a torch in the field. He said you have a hacksaw don't you? It's hard to reason with people like that. Malan

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AND THEN while working out west we had to make log runs out to Hwy1 to get supplies. We had been fording this river at a certain location for a month without problems. The water was just deep enough that the driver had to button up to keep the water from washing up the front of the tank. We had Sheridans at this time and A17 drivers hatch had a problem in that getting the cam lock to close the drivers hatch required a 5lb hammer. Sgt Barrows stayed out in the field for this trip so I was playing T.C. We stopped and threw a few grenades in the water while Jersey hammered his hatch closed. When he was ready we proceeded to ford the river. Little did we know that a B52 strike had come thru there and left us a 20ft hole in the middle of our ford. We sank big time. Poor Jersey nearly drowned before he could find that hammer and get himself out. The transmission and engine as well as the turret electrical system fried. The guys at battalion or brigade put another engine and transmission in within a few days but the turret parts were not in country so we were not combat ready. While waiting for the other parts an APC from the troop got pulled back to base camp broken down but close enough to the mileage where they were going to get a new track. The problem was that this poor guy had to clean this APC before he could get his new one. I told him we should hook up the tow bar and I would pull him to the river where for a few C-rations the locals would clean it for him. He thought this was a grand idea. As I pulled him into the water I felt my ass getting wet. I looked down and my tank is filling up with water. Then the engine dies and I'm stuck. The guys who put the engine in didn't put the access plates back on under the tank. It was all their fault-honest. Malan

Barrows and I were talking the other day and he reminded me of the time the CO Capt. Smith decided we were using too much C4 explosive (most to heat our C-rations but I do remember boiling 2 quail I had killed running in front of the tank which took about a case of the stuff and they were still tough) and started having that green plastic explosive sent out that didn't burn worth a damn. Barrows laughed and said he never noticed we doubled our claymore orders to get the C4 out of them. Malan

Then there was the time the new scout in the platoon wanted to go out and learn to set up claymore ambushes with me. We found a good spot with a trail on it; I showed him how to hook the claymores together with Det cord, and how to pull



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the trip wire across the kill zone to the claymores. I was in the process of showing him how to hook the safety pin on the end of the trip wire into the grenade's blasting cap, hooking only one hole so it was sensitive. He was standing up looking down at me squatting beside the 4 claymores and as I turned loose of the safety pin it pulled out of the flip lever on the grenade's blasting cap. This gave us about 4 seconds before 5 pounds of C4 went off. He ran as soon as he saw it happen. I didn't know if I should run or shit. I knew the back blast on one claymore was about 18 meters and figured 4 would be much further so I decided to disarm it by pulling out the grenade's blasting cap. I was surprised how hot the cap was when I grabbed it (fuse inside burning) and realized that the explosive in the cap might very well become more sensitive than usual since it was hot. I very carefully pulled it out of the claymore and threw it. It blew up about a foot from my hand. I got my first gray hair that day. The new guy never asked to go out with me again. I changed to an electrical system after this so I could set it up as hairy as I wanted to and knew that until I hooked the battery up 100 feet away I was safe. Also made it less hairy to pick them up in the morning when you might not remember exactly where you left them. Malan

Barrows you need to tell Pineapple the story about us towing the broken Tank and having the NVA following us with the mortar rounds and how we load rated that bridge that day. You had better details on it than I have. I do remember pulling out of Charlie 2 one morning during the usual mortar and rocket attack and was amazed when the mortar fire started following us up the road. Made the hair on the back of my neck tingle a bit. Malan

Nobody has mentioned that the tanks led the troop because the tanks could stand the mine hits better. Also Charlie started putting some sort of counting detonator on his mines so that the tank would not set the mine off but the APC that followed would. We then had to start putting 2 tanks in the front of the line. .

Trains

Does anyone remember seeing some of the remnants of the narrow gagerailroad neat the hospital & Replacement Detachment at Camp Roberts / Quang Tri Combat Base? Were there any train tracks left when we got there? [J. Good]



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Jim, I recall tracks south of QT west of QL . Seem to remember taking a body maintenance stop at the bridge. Must have been A Troops reversion of an Incountry R & R. [Earl Schropp]

p.s. I believe that CAmp Roberts was also known as Camp Red Devil.

Jim, I remember and no, there were no tracks left when I was there. There was, however, a train still running every day from Dong Ha to Da Nang. I remember it well because one time 3rd Platoon did some guard duty for a battery of SP155's. The guns were doing fire support for somebody all night and when I woke up in my little sleepy hole in the ground I couldn't hear! Got sent back to Quang Tri for an exam and they sent me to Da Nang on a truck. The highway paralleled the train track for about 1/3 of the way down and I watched an old steam engine puffing along slightly slower than we were going! On the way back I asked the truck driver about the train and he told me it made a round trip every day they could get the engine running. Real sense of pride for the locals. To myself I just figured the only reason the thing didn't get blown sky high was Those People were using it for transport. Greg PS - turns out that during the night the concussion or back blast from the guns had managed to lodge a little, teeny, tiny pebble way down in my ear against the ear-drum. They had a heck of a time getting it out, but after that I no longer had rocks in my head....so to speak. [Greg Beining]



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Mechanics

Brings back a great memory. The mechanics had a bunker at C-2. Ernie Holton (now deceased) relayed this story. The bunker had a parachute on the ceiling to keep dirt from falling on the bunks. A rat called "Freddie" would entertain the guys by running around on the parachute. One night, they left some cheese from a B-2 unit on the ledge above Sgt Peterson's cot. The rat slipped in the middle of the night and landed on Pete. He about went nuts. I recall the mechanics were good guys and good at their jobs. They were constantly picking on Pete. I remember Vukatich?, Al Lott, Beatty, Holton, a few others.

John

John, Al Lott was from Yuma, Az. I know that his given name was Herbert. I checked around and can't locate him. He was an excellent mechanic and like many others, a tribute to our troop. [Bob Taylor]

Several of the mechanics of the '69-'70 era have preceded us to Fiddler's Green. Ernie Holton, Johnny Mills, Big John Mackin, Ken Eizik, and John Bracken are gone. Charlie DeMeo will join us in Vegas, and Butch Beatty has finally been located. I don't know if he can make it or not. Jim C.

Anyone remember a mechanic named King - a brother? [Skee]

Hey John,

I got to see it first hand....those mechanics were as dedicated as anyone I ever saw...They worked their tails off in that dammed heat and in the rain and mud. They took each job as a personal goal and did a super job everytime. There was a particular guy e-5 from Riverside ,Ca. Anderson. I have never been able to find him. Helluva mechanic, one hell of a guy.

Wally

Hey Jimmy,



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What about King, do you remember him,? Short, buffed, very nice man. He was a helluva mechanic.

He is pictured in the yearbook standing next to Beatty, in the pictured labeled "The Grease Monkeys." I have not heard whether he has been found or not.

Take care,

Wally

Yeah, this is the guy I was wondering about....Skee

Great to see you remember the mechanics! Bill Styles has been located, but Jim King has not. Dave Anderson came in mid-70, along with an airborne spec 5 whose name was Bill, I think. Sothey McLawhorn is in No Carolina. Zimmerman and Perkins worked in the motor shack. I apologize to those I've forgotten, but my memory fails me...



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HOLIDAYS SPENT IN VIETNAM

Thanksgiving

1969

Thanksgiving is at Cua Viet: "We went into the Navy mess hall and got our chow, I remember paper plates, rain, and not much food was left for us. I clearly remember Big Daddy bitching and moaning about the little bit of food that was left. About a half hour later they picked a group of guys to go across the river, when the landing craft opened the front door to let us out I jumped out and landed in water up to my neck. We hiked up to a cemetery and set up an ambush site in the middle of a bunch of graves, one was open and Big Daddy and I decided that was our foxhole."

(W. Mendoza)

The picture was taken on the evening of Thanksgiving Day, November 1969 on the Cua Viet River. We're going out on an ambush patrol after eating a turkey dinner. We're stuffed. Coop is leading us out. I strongly remember everyone except for that guy kneeling in front of me. It drives me crazy that I can't remember his name. It's like he came out of nowhere. Mike Davis has a similar picture and he labeled the guy the "new medic." His eyes are in shadow.

Pineapple



Front Row: the new medic, The Kid, Coop; Back Row: Pineapple, Peter Rabbit, Sniper Veatch, Milard the Mallard Mills



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I left Quang Tri on Thanksgiving Day 1970 to come home. We were to go to CanRanh Bay. Like most guys, we got orders to go home, but not given a way to get there. Jerry Beverage and I bummed a ride on a C 130 to Da Nang, hoping to find another flight to Cam Ranh from there, but no flights were leaving in the foreseeable future. The Air Force ran the club at Da Nang and wouldn't let us in, because it was their Thanksgiving celebration. (I always thought they were a bunch of pansy as &*%\$*&%\$). Somehow, we found our way to a French restaurant just outside the base. We celebrated with another guy over some wine. We truly had something to be thankful for, we were on our way home. When we returned to the airport, it was deserted and dark, but we found a cargo flight going to Cam Ranh Bay. There were no seats, just cargo, us, and four or five Vietnamese that looked like farmers and probably had no business in the plane. We flew through the worst storm I've ever flown through. The plane even leaked. I think we landed about 2:00 a.m.

John Sharpe

Christmas

The National Archives has 2 documents relating to a gift of foodstuffs that arrived at A 4/12 Cav HQ on November 27, 1968. They were a Christmas gift from Brownie Troop 198 of Pueblo, Colorado.

Captain Kenneth G. Carlson, C.O. of A Troop, declared the Brownie Troop honorary members of our unit..

In November 2004, Captain Carlson wrote a letter to the editor of the PuebloCheifitan newspaper about the Brownie Troop.

My most memorable Christmas in Vietnam was Christmas Eve, 1968. A Troop, or at least most of it, was working on the road over the mountains and into the BaLong Valley. We had an engineer unit and an artillery battery attached to us, making us almost a battalion sized outfit. 1st Brigade had decided that our little operation was large enough to call our headquarters "LZ Carlson." Coming



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out of LZ Sharon to the Southwest, we followed the Thach Han River until we came to a small stream called Khe Trai. There, the engineers built a pontoon bridge and we set up HQs across the stream towards the hills where we intended to build the road. (YD265440, for those who want to check the map.) We had been there for at least two weeks when Christmas Eve arrived. Earlier in the day, a monsoon had hit us and we lost a 2 1/2 ton truck which slid over the side of the road we were building. I had to declare it a combat loss because there was no way to pull it back up the steep cliff. We blew it in place. Our biggest problem was that the monsoon had turned the small stream into a raging torrent, and the pontoon bridge was washed away downstream. We were on the wrong side of the stream, stuck in "Injun Country" until a new bridge could be put in. On Christmas Eve, COL Frank Borman and the crew of Apollo 8 were making mankind's first trip around the Moon. As the officers and I sat in A1A, my track, soaking wet and trying figure out what we were going to do, we listened on one of the LT's transistor radio as Apollo 8 saw it's first "Earthrise." From 70 miles above the surface of the Moon, Astronauts Borman, Lovell and Anders took turns reading the first ten verses from the Book of Genesis, the story of Creation. They ended at Verse 10: "And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called He Seas: and God saw that it was good." And as the spacecraft began to disappear again into the silence behind the Moon, COL Borman paused and said, "God bless all of you on the good Earth." I looked around the cramped space of the track. All of the officers had tears in their eyes, me included. Just then, PSG Jim Platt opened the back of the ACAV and looked in at the scene. I don't know what went through his mind as he saw all of his officers crying, but I recall he reached in his pack and pulled out a small bottle of scotch. "Here --- you guys need this more than I do." Then he closed the ACAV door and left. Next day, Christmas 1968, was the only time in my 26 year military career when my unit did not receive Christmas dinner in the field. The rain and wind was just too severe to fly out our meal. But when we returned to LZ Sharon some 6-7 days later, our cooks had Christmas dinner waiting for us. The road into the Ba Long Valley was never finished on my watch, but it wasn't for lack of effort on the part of A Troop. We went places and did things, others wouldn't even consider. You guys were superb. May you all have a Merry Christmas and Joyous New Year. Ken Carlson A Troop Commander 1968-69



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1969

Wednesday, December 25, 2002 9:36 AM To: ALL TROOPERS

My family and myself want to wish you the best Christmas ever as we pull together after all these years to meet again, looking back together, at the memories we made together. It's a time to rejoice and share with the family, and I feel the Cav is my family, and at this time of year I always remember The Little Tree that made Christmas in Viet Nam seem so real but so far away from loved ones that it was painful, but thanks to my grandmother, (now 96 yrs. old) The Little Tree made Christmas for me and my platoon, it was a surprise that came in the mail, but it made a lot of us happy to be able to have some semblance of Christmas as we decorated it and done our photo shoots with it. I chose this pic with a fallen comrade we all respected very much, and as I reflect back on this Little Tree and the cav, I wish I had taken it around to the whole troop so everyone could have shared The Little Tree, and made their Christmas more special for all.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND GOD BLESS
MIKE AND FAMILY



I got one of those trees also!! Thanks for the memories!! God Bless!
kid

Hey Mike(s)... I was in 18th Surg after my hand was crushed at Charlie 2. A homeboys sister sent me a small pine branch which hung from the IV stand my cast was attached to. I remember Jesse Esparza, the cook who was burned when that stove or immersion heater blew up, coming in. God was he hurting. I was given two beers and a kiss from a nurse on Christmas Eve. Had to drink them

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both before I kissed her back. Flew down to Phu Bai on Christmas day for the Bob Hope show, and was seated about six rows from the stage. Bittersweet memories...

Jim C.

Mike, great picture of Sgt. Di and your little Christmas tree. And God bless your 96 year old grandma. She must be quite a woman! I remember the holidays (Christmas and New Years) spent on the DMZ. Does anybody remember the flare show on Christmas Eve and New Years Eve. I believe we were pulling perimeter guard in Charlie-2 and around midnight of both those evenings, Alpha 4 must have sent up dozens of flares to brighten the northern sky. Now maybe they were being probed at the time but I like to think they did it for the holidays. It was one of the coolest sights I ever saw. But thanks again for sharing that picture of our late great Platoon Sgt.

Turtle

"Does anybody remember the flare show on Christmas Eve and New Years Eve." I remember. I was still an FNG in December 1969 but I remember that on New Years eve we were in C-2, and pulling perimeter guard. Before we went out to the bunker line, we were told not to shoot flares at midnight. The leadership had not been amused when everyone went through a month's worth of pyrotechnics on Christmas eve and they didn't want a repeat on New Years eve. Oh well, at least they made the effort. It was an impressive light show. Once was enough though, not worth extending for in Viet Nam to see the 1970 light show. I'm sure glad we didn't get hit at 0200 New Year's day, because we would have had to light our zippo lighters for illumination, we'd blown the basic load of flares at midnight.

Jim

Hey Jimmy,

I was at that show also, Sgt Barrows raffled off two tickets and I won one of them,



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I can't remember who the other guy from our platoon was. Camp Eaglesure was a long, long way from C-2 in more ways than distance.Ê That was a nice Christmas day. See ya
Wally

One day in December 1969, I think it was around Christmas, HQ platoon set up a memorial for those troopers who had died or left us because of wounds. They had attached bayonets on M16's and placed helmets on the rifle butts. I was astounded at the amount of people that we had lost; most of them were so new at the time of their casualty that I didn't recognize their names. A catholic priest presided over the ceremony. As part of the ceremony, the priest asked if anyone would like to have communion, and if so, he would give us "general absolution. When I asked what that meant; he said that our past sins were forgiven without us having to go through confession because of the extraordinary circumstance we were in. We had a clean slate. I lined up immediately. My last communion was nearly 10 years ago, and I felt that if all my sins were forgiven without me having to confess, it was the best damn thing the church could had done for me, and now I could die as pure as the driven snow, sin-wise. It was still raining. It was still muddy.

[New Year's Eve](#)

Subject: Sitrep: New Years 1969 Around New Years of 68 I found out that I was being sent to the 11th Cav. At that time we were told that that would be trained on the Sheridans that the 11th was receiving. I always checked Stars and Stripes to see what kind of shit the other units were getting into and it always seemed that the 11th was always in the middle of something. New Years Eve of 68 was spent at Red Devil. 1st Plt was partying hardy that night and brought the New Year in as only a Cav Trooper can. From what I can remember that was the last contact I had with the platoon as I and the others that were infused to other units started outprocessing. Never did have a chance to say farewell. Hope everyone



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had a safe New Years.
Jim M.

39 might have been in Quang Tri alone for repairs - or our whole platoon might have been in, but I know Matthieus and I were in the 75' guard tower on the QT perimeter New Years 69/70. We added a few flares and star clusters of our own to the celebration. You're right Turtle, great memory and impressive sight. I've longed for a few of those star clusters on several holidays since (especially if I could keep getting them paid w/ those "unreal tax dollars")... wheeee.....

Skee



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Personal Hygiene



SP packs (Sundry Packs) were sent out once or twice a month to the field they also had cigarettes and candy in them. Sgt. Bills the FO Sgt and I use to make out since we were the only ones in HQ that smoked Camels. Other than that my memory fades as to their origin the just seemed to appear on the supply tracks or choppers.

Keith

"Hogpen"! I think that about says it for me.
okie/hogpen

One time at Cua Viet I was standing on a track when the Colonel landed and told our Lt. to "have that man get a haircut" pointing at me (we were out in the field). So I said "not many barber shops around here. Then we went back to Cua Viet, and I went to the barber shop because the Lt. said for me to, but they would not cut my hair because it was filthy. So I went back to the Lt. and told him they wouldn't cut my hair because it was filthy. So he told me to "take a shower and wash my hair and then go get the hair cut". So I took a shower and went back to the Navy barber so then he cut my hair, even though I had my M16 with me (but I just laid it against the wall).

Bob Taylor



You're probably right. It smelled like seventy. One day working outside Cua Viet, we were looking really bad. One tank with a blown engine, another with mine damage and some higher higher came down in a chopper and started giving shit to Perrino and Sgt D. D had the type of beard that if he didn't shave for a few days made him look like he was growing a Goatee. I kind of thought he looked like Mitch Miller. Anyway, work got back to the illustrious Capt. Smith and we were ordered



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to shave. We each got a steel pot full of water and a pound of C-4 to heat it with. I still think it was the most expensive shave I ever had. About a month later the same brass was passing out bronze stars to our platoon. John Sharpe

Ya see, if you guys wouldn't have shaved, you never would have gotten your war hero medals. You oughta be grateful to those brass hats for providing the proper motivation to shave so that you would be ready to do your duty of killing commies when the time came. My goodness gracious, you couldn't be expected to hose the little buggers down with your machine guns if you needed a shave, now would you? :-) Jim Good



Boy SP were a big Deal. One box for ten men.
ten cartons of cigarettes
one box of cigars
three pouches of chewing tobacco
shaving cream
Castille laundry soap (Bar form)
Boot laces
double edge razor w/blades
tropical chocolate bars
Chiclets chewing gum
Life Savers
bar soap

Once I remember getting Juju Bees and lost two fillings from my teeth. Merle and the guys on 28 always got the chewing tobacco.

My sister send me a care package from home. Deierling said, "Your sister is really on top of things we get in Nam." As I put a box of Chiclets Chewing Gum and Life Savers into an almost full Duster 40mm ammo box with the other Live Savers and Chewing gum. It was always good trading material with the gooks or stuff to throw to the kids, when we were passing through Quang Tri.

John

P.S. Try to remember the 12 selections in a box of C's or the 6? LRRP selections. I



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remember the LRRP rations were things like chicken catchetoire? You poured a canteen cup of water into the plastic bag and kneaded it for about five minutes. Took one look at it. Lost your appetite and threw it away.



I know who invented "burning shit"it was SGT. Peterson, the Motor Pool daddy. Wally

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The Rain

FOXHOLES LTeeF, I can remember after being there for some months we started putting a firing position between the tracks every night. Easy enough in the sand at Qua Viet but a real pain in the ass in some of the soil out west. I started taking the tankers bar and sledge hammer and punching a hole down about 12 inches into the ground with the tankers bar and them stuffing it full of C4. A quick placement of a claymore blasting cap and a walk to the other side of the tank and BOOM we had the finest foxhole US taxpayers could buy. You remember that? Malan

Hey Jerry,

I remember we used to cheat.....we would dig under the APC about 8 inches of sand from under the bottom of the APC, between the tracks, made for a nice, out of the rain sleep in comfort foxhole G.I.'s are so resourceful...:-)

Wally

Wally, I remember doing that as well. Can't remember doing it during the rainy season. Don't remember it ever turning into a swimming pool under there do you? Jerry Jerry,

I remember it was during late January to early April, we had rain, but I can't remember how much during those months, I do know it rained like a cow pissing on a flat rock during December and early January 1970.

Wally

RAIN Wally Mendoza wrote:

I wonder how many of our troopers suffer from the same stuff, it makes me crazy because I have no one to share it with who really understands except you all out there on this net..

The rain,
The dark,
The quiet,

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The little noises,
The movement in the hedge,
The imaginary gooks,
The real gooks,
The tension,
The artillery,
The commo checks at 3am ...

Hi Wally and all Cav Brothers, When I spoke at the first reunion, I simply mentioned thoughts and memories that have been stored in my soul for all those many years. You are quite right that only those who have been there and done that would understand. Many times since then, as I see and listen to the rain, I think to myself "Thank God I don't have to sleep in this shit tonight". Not to mention all the other things that went along with those long nights, such as being scared, nervous, and wondering if this might be the night some of us may buy the farm. Hearing that others have the same thoughts, memories and feelings as I have validated my own. EARL (40)

Hi Wally,
You are so right about the rain. Trying to stay dry, and the mud! I remember the day four or five of us were sent to ATroop, it rained all day. Got to Quang Tri and the First Sgt. pointed to this new tent still folded up, and said this is your home. Put it up! Nice to just look out the window now.
Mack.

Can't figure out the problem with the rain. I was talking to my office staff about it today and I was telling them that it is so strange that Nam vets have a problem with flashbacks and little sounds, and the sounds of rain, and the smell of diesel and all that shit, and I was saying how it does not affect other veterans from other wars as much as us.... I mentioned that perhaps it has to do with the distance from home we were....Korea was just as far, North Africa was as far, Europe was far as hell also, but Nam was not only far from home it was....."10,000 MILES AWAY!!!!!" I don't give a shit how far Korea was or the Aleman, "10,000 MILES" is a long f___g way from home. And that is what we heard from the beginning of AIT until we left to come home. Somehow I think that played into our Psych)did I spell that right?)we were just kids then and I



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don't give a shit if its true or not, but 10,000 miles is a WALLY NOT ON MY WATCH Wally, I particularly liked this part of your recollection, it's right on, it matches what I think of as our typical Nam experience. Other stuff comes in flashes - contacts, weapons, unusual situations, interesting characters, bizarre sights, things imprinted by the feeling "Wow, this is weird but it's real." But dark and quiet can bring back the imaginary gooks, and rain - well, then you can't even HEAR the enemy sneaking up. I wonder how many times there was somebody out there who was just checking out our position looking for an opportunity. Stands to reason, many times I think. Though I don't usually dwell on old combat experiences, I recognize their importance in my life. They were important to me, at the time vitally important to others as well, and thus???



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Sensory Overload

Hey guys,

I've mentioned this to a couple of you before, but it's worth another mention to satisfy curiosity. What sounds or smells in particular remind you of your time in Nam? And what tunes do you particularly associate with that time?

A helicopter overhead still gives me the creeps, even though all the choppers were ours! And there's a damned air raid siren in the middle of my town which goes off at noon - three days ago I made the mistake of coming out of the library right near by just at 12 noon, off went that damn siren. I was at Nancytwice when the sirens went off for mortar/rocket attacks, and I still react! Very unpleasant. But rain on the roof I like - reminds me I DON'T have to sleep in a damn hole in the rain!

The smell of diesel fuel reminds me, and most especially the chemical that used to be in OFF! insect repellent until (apparently) the formula got changed. Same chemical we had in bug juice, reminded me strongly of nights on watch every time I smelled it. For that matter, peaceful nights with few lights cause me to scan around without thinking, guess I'm looking for somebody trying to creep up on my position. We all had those kinda nights back then!

As to tunes: In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida was like a "theme song" (thanks 1st Platoon!), Joe Cocker's cover of "With a Little Help From My Friends" was something I played often in base camp, and when I got back to the World "Spirit in the Sky" was playing. Just a few of my fav old tunes!

How about for you guys?

Frank ~

Choppers sound good to me...real good. So does a chainsaw....all that's missing is the solid ribbon of red tracers coming from the sky.

The Doors...Jimi Hendrix...Cream....The Beatles White Album....to name some of

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my favorites. We don't listen to them much at all anymore though): But I have VERY fond memories.

Smells...of course, diesel fumes. I like that. Seedy truck stop restrooms with the smell of raw diesel fuel tracked in strike up less pleasant olfactory recall however. Wet leaves and damp loam bring the smells of laying on ambush back....as does a rain in the summer woods.

Let us not forget smokeless powder (?cordite?)...that smell...the sound of choppers....with a cut from the Fresh Cream album playing in the back ground.....

This has me thinking more about this than I have in years. How about hot motor oil...remember dumping it on our M60s to cool the barrel? 50 cal's too. I remember it getting so hot it just flashed. Not good. Then you REALLY stood out, and by then, the barrel was shot out anyway.

Any damp, musty smelling clothing or bedding. Seems like nothing dried out for months! Smells....hmmm....burnt toast. Not everyone would know that one though (: Damn but it's been a loooooong time.

I live in the Midwest (black dirt) so when we visit the south with areas of red soil I always think of the raw red firebases ripped from the top of a hill.

How about food. Fruit cocktail? Round salad crackers? Cheap peanut butter?BLACKBERRY JAM? Canned baby lima beans?

And don't forget the paper towels in a bundle setting on the sink in that truck stop restroom I mentioned...remember the smaller version with 3 or 4 sheets? You'll need them after you eat.

Amen to all the sounds and smells you guys listed.



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- I'll never forget the hot, humid air that engulfed me when I got off the plane after landing in Vietnam. I experienced the same feeling when I landed in Fiji a year ago while on vacation. All I could do was stand on the first step of the plane stairs and remember everything that happened to me that day in Vietnam. I sure got a lot of strange looks from the other disembarking passengers.

We had a guy in my platoon who scored a copy of the latest Janis Joplin album - "Pearl." I think his girlfriend sent it to him. He played that thing non-stop. To this day, every time I hear "Me and Bobby McGee" or "Mercedes-Benz" I just drift away back to those days thirty years ago.

I can still easily identify a "Huey" helicopter over any other by their sound alone. There are also fewer flying around. The smells are the things that I think about. I work in an area where there is a lot of diesel exhaust and the smell reminds me of the field all the time. Remember in the monsoon season, we would try to dry our equipment in the exhaust of the tanks and tracks. Here's another smell. When you went to Quang Tri and picked up the laundry you left 2 months ago and the gooks dried it over burning buffalo shit.

Viet Nam always had a smell, burning shit, incense, rotting vegetation, but the shock of getting off the plane in Ft Lewis after a fresh rain and the smell of pine trees was awesome. I never smelled anything since that matched that.

I have very few friends that had the Viet Nam experience. I'm not a hunter, but many of my friends are. I don't talk about Viet Nam with them much, because I think they feel a little guilty about dodging the draft or perhaps they don't believe some of the things. Like I clearly remember things like releasing the butterfly trigger on a 50 and having the rounds cook off. And like Rebbec, pouring 30 weight oil on the barrel and have it ignite.

Smells? I recall landing at Cam Rahn Bay at 2300. It was 98 degrees and 99% humidity. The stench of EVERYTHING rotting was like a punch in the face. Diesel fuel everywhere, including on our hooch floor to keep the dust down. Burning shit.

Tunes? We Gotta Get Outta This Place, He Ain't Heavy (Youngbloods), and



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the Beatles Hey, Jude. I can hear Jimmy Mann and Don Huey tuning their guitars now...

I don't think I've been anywhere with darker nights. Glad I shared them with you guys.

Right, most everybody says diesel fuel, right down wind from the latrines, I can still smell it, sounds, i live right close to disneyworld, they shoot off fireworks three and four times a night, right across I/4 theres a tourist helicopter ride,flies over the house all frigging day put those two together and its flashback city,Nam was queiter than this place,I gota move out of this place..TUNES Steppinwolf,Doors etc, i wish they had CDs back then.....

When I first came home, any time I saw shrubbery, I wanted to take a piss! That was one habit I had to put on the shelf ASAP. If a fighter jet streaked overhead, (we have a lot of military flights here in Honolulu) I would duck my head and raise my shoulders involuntarily because, damn, jet noise moving fast overhead sounds just like Incoming to me. Worse, remember that certain odor that large army tents gave off? That wet dog/sharp cheese smell? Running into that smell would give me a sense of deja vu.

Speaking of which, a bunch of years ago, my wife asked me, after watching yet another T.V. show where a deranged Vietnam vet was running amok, "how come you don't have flashbacks?" I don't know, I said, "maybe not enough time has passed, or something." I feel very cheated. I would love a flashback! You know, I would suddenly think I was back riding in the grenadier's seat behind the driver yelling at him to concentrate on staying precisely in the track of the PC in front of us. It would be like a movie or something. I should carry popcorn in my pockets just in case a flashback happens.

I actually do have a recurring nightmare; it has nothing to do with anything I experienced in Vietnam. This is true, I have this dream every few years or so, that I'm back in the service. Somehow, I get reactivated or something,and I'm back in the 2nd Armored Division in Killeen, Texas. Yikes! That was an experience that gave me more trauma than anything that happened to me in the Nam. While assigned there, my talent for avoiding details or army work was stretched to the limit! You can't imagine



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how stressful it was to hang out at the snack bar, bowling alley, or gymnasium day in and day out and not arouse the suspicion of anyone who outranked me. But then, I was just a humble draftee, who was drafted out of college because he dared to protest the war, that didn't want to be there in the first place.

Looking back, though, the only thing that was worth anything during my service in the Army was my time in the field in Vietnam. Though I hated it with all my heart, I loved it with all my heart too. I never felt = freer and more competent in my life! It was a gas riding around the DMZ, armed to the teeth with "In-da-gadda-da-vida" playing on the eight-track hooked up to the battery. We were ready to bring it down on anyone who tried to fuck with us! I mean we bristled with 90mm cannon, grenade launchers, M-16's, co-ax's, 50 cal machine guns, M-60 MG's, and murderous intent. It was great to be in combat arms. And remember, when we went on R&R, that we discovered that combat soldiers were a rare breed? I didn't run into very many of us while waiting for a flight out in Danang! There was just REMF's. HA! Those bastards were busy shooting smack and making up war stories so they could feel as if they had balls. We have all kinds of veteran plates here in Hawaii. We have several distinctions: Veteran, Combat Wounded, Vietnam Veteran, and Combat Veteran. I chose the Combat Veteran plate. There are hardly any of those plates around.

I agree with what you guys are saying and MAN are there similarities. I understand when you say all else pales...it does. I don't know about that post Viet Nam disorder either. When I see Vets from Nam "traumatized" by their experience I always wonder. My wife's cousin married a Vet that is really screwed up. Total disability from emotional wounds! He SAYS 4000. tax payer and Chrysler Corp.(he did work for several years) dollars a month. As I've gotten to know him I am of the opinion Nam is a great excuse for being #@&%ed up. He didn't see much more shit than we did. We were SO lucky...at least I was/am. We're combat veterans that got a little taste of it all; from the tracks (tanks for some) to foot patois and of course the night ambushes. I can identify with the guys on Rat Patrol and Combat reruns, the history channel Darby's Rangers and of course the Rambo movies. I kinda, sorta, just a little bit, had some of those experiences. And because I did I feel much better about me. I realize some guys in the troop died and some took the experience more deeply than I, BUT when I watch (last night!) our guys on Hill 275 or see movies of D-Day, or Tripoli with



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WWI trench warfare, or any of 10,000 other battles I know I had no clue how brutal war could really be. thousand times I am so glad Viet Nam was my war. I wouldn't have wanted to be with any other unit in any other war! When I think back about when I was on the Repose (hospital ship) and try to imagine the terror I would have felt if it were part of a sea battle....sheeeet...not for me. Damn...look at Braveheart or some of that other medieval crap...THAT would REALLY suck! When I came to Nam I had no clue (still don't say some). I didn't know what a joint was or any of that stuff. My first night at LZ Nancy the 'advanced party' had me drinking from Beaufort (their VC skull) Two guys.....taught me what a joint was some months later. I liked that better than hot (or cold) beer. And this all gave me the opportunity to come home and do a little "Easy Rider". Yes, I had me a chopper. Partied plenty hard for a few years. Been in the car business ever since I got off the GI bill and went to work. I don't smoke anymore but I do drink. I too love firearms and have a small arsenal. I collect and make custom knives (mainly switchblades...honest), watch the war movies, the history channel, and do a bit of drag racing. We have a motor home and love camping with a microwave. Life has been good to me ...very good...but I do agree with who ever of us said they felt something when the Dessert Storm boys came home to all the flag waving for a few weeks in the sand and I STILL feel my worst foes in Nam were the people at Berkley and Kent State. And the liberal sons of a bitches that spawned from there!!! Oh well...what do I know or care.

Damn, for somebody who says they don't know or care, you sure said a mouthful. You are 100% correct when you say we got a taste of it all. I went to Nam as an 11Bravo and counted my lucky stars when I was assigned to a Cavalry outfit (even though I wasn't sure what a Cavalry outfit was at the time) but it sounded better than a straight grunt unit. Yes, some times were better than others (I know I liked LZ Nancy way better than Quang Tri base camp. It's like we had our own little corner of the world at Nancy. I liked Cua Viet duty a lot better than the DMZ even though ambushes across the Cua Viet River kind of sucked. I wouldn't trade my experience over there for anything.



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I was a sergeant by now and we were in LZ Sharon one night for just an over-nighter. We all got cocked and decided to borrow a jeep to get back to our location on the perimeter. We get caught and they lock a bunch of us up. They get a hold of old man Robinson, he's at the Officers Club and really hammered, and he comes down to get us out. The officer of the day was a Capt. Luce. The old man always wore Cavalry crests on his collar and in the dark this Capt Luce thinks the old man is a Major. Robinson keeps calling this guy Capt Louse and is jumping all over this guy's rear end. Robinson says that he ain't about to leave in the morning without us because we are all good men and he needed us. He finally bs's us out of jail and promises this Luce that he will bust me because I was the ranking guy in the jeep we borrowed. We get back from the mission about a week later and the old man calls me in and tells me I'm too good a soldier to be sent back to the states less than a sergeant so he never did anything to me, except I think he got me a beer that night.

One day we were set up as a blocking force for some unit that was doing a sweep. We were to stay in this one position all day long. I got bored and made a bolo out of a pair of socks, some dirt, and a length of cord I had around. The area was flat and there were no targets to practice throwing this bolo at except the antenna on the tank so I used it as a target. I got pretty good at hitting the antenna over the course of the day. Late in the afternoon a Vietnamese kid comes by us driving a couple of water buffalo with a stick. I think the buffalo is a perfect target for my new bolo so I grab it up and start running towards the buffalo swinging this bolo and taking careful aim at one of them. When I release the bolo it comes out of my hand before I intend it to. Had I been aiming at the kid I couldn't have made a better shot. The bolo opened up and the string hit him in the chest. The two socks full of dirt wrapped around him a couple of time and both hit him in the chest. The kid went down like a load of bricks. Boy I felt bad that day. The kid wasn't hurt badly and was happy to be bought off with C-rations. Probably joined the Vietcong the next day.

I think "Bastards of the DMZ" fits the description of the troop very accurately. When we got a stand down day a lot of the time we didn't even get to our base camp. We had the pleasure of going to someone else's and got to watch them eat hot chow and shower while we ate C-rats and stunk. The one thing I thought they did a pretty good job on was keeping us in beer and ice. On



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A17 Jordan didn't drink beer and between J.B, Sgt Barrows, and myself we averaged 4 cases a day. I'm pretty sure that's why I haven't had any Agent Orange problems. Would probably be dead if I had drunk the water.

I remember the first time we sat up with straight leg infantry (1/11?). It was late afternoon and we had just finished our C-ration dinner and we had some odds and ends of stuff that none on A17 would eat (even the gooks would throw some of that stuff back at you), so I threw it off the side of the tank. These grunts looked at that stuff and then at me and ask "you throwing that away? Mind if we have it?" I felt bad for them...2 beers 1 little piece of ice, starving to death. I let them have the garbage and swapped ice-cold beer out of our cooler for their hot beer. We struck up a conversation and I told the I was sure glad I had my job VS theirs. To my surprise one of these guys says he wouldn't trade jobs with me on a bet. So now I'm thinking this guy has sunstroke for sure or he's so malnourished it's affecting thought process. I had to ask him why he wouldn't trade flat footing for riding with cold beer and more C-rats than he could eat. He said when the shooting starts my ass will be below ground and you guys will be a very big target with no place to go. Guess it depends on your perspective.

Man I never felt that I was nothing but a good soldier. I served with the greatest group of men one could ever ask for. In Ken Dye I had a true born leader that not only knew his shit but truly cared for us guys as his brother. I would have followed this guy to the end of the earth and would never question anything he told me. In Lucky Lou, our driver, we had the best damn guy to ever handle the steering sticks of an APC. This guy could drive the shit out of anything with or without wheels. Not only could he drive, He was the luckiest SOB I ever met. I knew as long a Lou was driving I was safer than being home on the expressway. As for the rest of the guys I pounded ground with, well I could never say enough to do them justice. Sniper Tom, Paul Schiano, Preacher, Dan Lohman, Kerry Pebble, Frank Long, Rat Gilcreast, Clarkie, Al Hall and any other trooper that I pulled Ambush with were some of the best soldiers the USA ever produced. It was an honor and a privilege to have served with these guys and I would still to this day trust my life and the lives of my family with anyone of these great Americans.



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I really felt I was invincible as long as I was with this group.
Peace, Rag

I just had a question about an incident that has haunted me since I returned. This has nothing to do with Smith. I witnessed a terrible incident when I was in country not long and it has been with me ever since. I think it was out behind Nancy or Sharon, not really sure. I was riding a PC and kinda riding shotgun on the side deck, right behind the drivers hatch. Mostly to hang on to the TC cupola. Or maybe the wind was blowing the exhaust smoke further back and gassing me? We followed a river and then left it and crossed this big field, kindaroly-poly. As we entered the field I noticed a couple of Viet civilians. Man in his 40's and young girl possibly in her teens or maybe younger. I could never tell the age of those people. Any way's they were walking toward our column which was following an old tank trail, traveling at about 15 maybe 20 MPH. As the PC I occupied approached them (the civilians) it had caught up a roll of concertina wire, somehow that wire was already rolled out on the ground or maybe it had fallen from the PC, I don't know. But it ended up extended out a hundred feet or so, as long as a roll of concertina was ? I don't remember. IT had become entangled in the rear sprocket or one of the idler wheels on the side opposite me and the driver. It turned at the same RPM as the wheel it was attached to, and was whipping the ground to our right rear. Just about the time I had noticed it sticking out rolling along and flailing the ground as it bounced 2 or 3 feet above the ground. It was picking up grass and sticks and spinning them into the air. The whole thing was surreal to me at the time, you know how you see something happening and you can't do anything about it, and you know the results are going to be catastrophic? My head turned forward to gauge how far away the ole man and little girl were away, and to see if they might escape the impending danger. I saw the ole man yell something to the girl, and then I saw him jump over the jagged razor wire leaving the girl to fend for herself. The poor child was immediately caught by the flailing wire and wrapped in a tight cocoon of sharpened steel. Kind of like those Mexican finger trap things. This whole thing happened in a matter of seconds, and I sat, either on my butt or was stooping-squatting on the deck or near the TC cupola, behind the driver. I reacted as fast as I could, without thinking almost; I extended my right leg and kicked the driver square in the back of his head. That was the first thing that came to my mind. I really didn't have any time to do anything else. Well. as you can expect the driver,

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threw out the anchor and we just about did an endo by the time we stopped. You remember how the suspension was on those PC's when you stood on the brakes. As the vehicle rocking back forward following the initial stop I was practically running off the plywood cow-catcher or shield located on the slopped front of the of the old PC's. I made tracks over to the place where the girl lies in her cocoon bleeding profusely. I tell you, It made me sick! I thought she might be dead meat, but I think she survived! At least as long as she lay there, waiting for us to cut her out. An other vehicle must have witnessed the whole incident transpire, maybe several others. I remember others ran up with their wire cutters as she wailed and began cutting her out. I still remember that I had thought it was really quite a fast response from the guys who had to locate their wire cutters rolling around in the bottom of their vehicles and beat feet over to the scene of the accident. But it seemed to take a long time to cut her out. As soon as my driver had been able to free himself from his CBC helmet and secure the vehicle he came looking for me, with blood in his eye. I found myself trying to explain my kicking him in the head with vigor and haste. I remember he still hadn't grasped what had happened, as he ran up to me. I really thought I was going to get my ass kicked, but he finally understood my dilemma and spared me. I remember the ole man came up and was greatly concerned for the girl I assumed at the time, was his daughter or granddaughter. It seemed like forever till the dust-off arrived, and when it did they had to take the ole man too (I think). Maybe she was so young she couldn't communicate with the medical people or that was their concern. Anyway, I think they did take him on the same Huey. I never saw either again. I have always wondered how that turned out. I can see the whole experience in my minds eye even today. I remember being really angry at the ole man for jumping and leaving her. But in retrospect maybe that's all he could do. And I think they would have both been better off if they had laid down and put their faces in the dirt? Who Knows? Like that picture of the little Viet teenage girl shone on the cover of Life magazine, Naked, screaming, burning with napalm. How could anyone forget?

I believe we all did our best, but I always wondered if maybe I could have had a better sense of what was about to happen, and done more to avoid it. I think the driver was Jim Mann. Or someone with about his general build. I have no idea who the others were, guess might be, SS maybe PR? I just don't remember. Do you have any recollection of this incident and who the missing faces might be? I



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would be interesting to find out who they were and also about how they remember that day? Sorry to burden you with the gory details, thought you might remember? Anyway that's all for today. That's enough, right! Wild Bill Dodds 'Peace Bro.'

Bill, That is one awful incident to have witnessed. Nothing else the old guy could have done but yell and jump. Give him the benefit. Nothing better for you to do but make the driver stop, however you could. You did. Give yourself the benefit. I have no further info, wasn't there, never heard of it. Keep in mind, though, however sorry that incident was, you did what you could. Violent times, bad things went down. That's the nature of life-and-death struggles involving a lot of force. The thing is, you were there, you dealt with it as best you could, better than an SOB who didn't give a shit and just thought, "Oh, lookit that, poor gook kid caught in the wire." Better for her that you were there and not somebody who had no heart and didn't give a damn. Don't put too much weight on that pic of the little naked girl on the magazine cover. There was a story behind that photo op, too bad I don't remember it anymore, could be researched, but the situation was not what it supposedly depicted. Ditto that photo of the vietnamese officer blowing the brains out of a VC. There's a story there. You never know when what you see in the press is propaganda of some sort or another. But you have a pic in your brain, and you know how you personally reacted, and nobody but you, Bill, can pass judgment on your actions. Looks clean to me - if that young lady still walks the earth, and she knew the whole story, she might even thank you. Think of it - you were called upon to do something or not - was it not good that it was you who had the responsibility? LTF

LTee,

Great note. I know exactly how you feel. As an NCO my biggest fear was to have someone under my command get hurt or killed. I spent many a sleepless night wondering if I was a good enough leader to keep my people safe and out of harms way. I was very lucky to have been assigned to a unit that was very well trained and had some of the brightest and best leaders a soldier could ask for. Ken Dye trained us all well and we operated as a fine tuned machine. About a year ago I called Don Barnes and the first thing he said to me was Thank you for training him so well as he felt that is what kept him alive in Nam even after I left. Now that is the ultimate compliment any soldier could ever give to another



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soldier. I told Don it wasn't me that should get the credit as he was smart enough to listen and learn and that is what saved his life, not me. Rag

I can honestly say that back in 1968 Vietnam was not a very important part of my life, I feel that the two above commo net messages reflect the feelings of many of the Troopers who were responsible for the safety and welfare of other Troopers; at times you had to be a real pain in the ass, at times you had to face your limitations, and at times you had to know when to look the other direction. Now, 30+ years later I think this also plays a part with these very same Troopers attending or not attending the Reunions; living down or living up to your past.

The reunions have been, and will continue to be events that I truly look forward to so that I can be with a group of true American Heros that mean so much to me. I was deeply honored, personally, when my wife and daughters attended the last one in DC. Up to that point they knew very little about what we did over there. They simply knew that it had an enormous effect on my life. Talking to other Troopers and their families, helped them understand why and how some relatively normal everyday things and events have the effect on me that they do.. Guess they feel the ole man isn't as weird as they thought ! EARL 40 Any trooper reading this who has not been able to attend our reunions should really give serious consideration to doing so. Not so much for the war stories but for the opportunity to be with the guys who been there, did that, the same as they did. The experience is priceless ! I know from personal experience that family members who attend, that they feel the same way. Wally, the rain will end soon, but the memories will not. EARL 40

"For my own part, I had been a volunteer, enlisting the day after high school graduation, and then a couple of years later going to West Point on an enlisted man's competitive appointment. So, I never really felt griped about being in the 'Nam. (Felt as though I had taken the King's coin and elected to wear His uniform, so it would be hypocritical of me to bitch about doing His bidding, you know?) However, one of my strongest reactions to VN was an abiding anger at a Congress and a country that would not let the boys from Yale or Princeton or similar such stations have the same "opportunities" as the boys from



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Appalachian coalfields, Harlem, blue collar families (such as my own background). I never figured out if I made a horse's rear end of myself as a platoon leader or a company commander...I always tried to do honorable justice to meeting the needs of the military organization and its mission, but with an overriding sense of not wanting to put my fellow troopers in harm's way for what seemed like an obviously unsupported and restrictively prosecuted war effort. (Maybe I didn't serve either very well that way, but what was it Cronkite used to say?... "And that's the way it is, folks" ??) " Thanks, Hank [Henry, "Hank" Gregor, was a platoon leader in the 1st platoon, 1969-1970]

Rag you mean there were non-dopers? As I recall everyone either drank or smoked or both. On Barrows tank only 3 of us drank beer and we drank about 4 cases a day...couldn't handle the Fresca or the "potable" water. And they say firearms and alcohol don't mix. Seems to me I saw you with a beer in your hand more often than not. Malan

That must have been my evil twin. I was always a juice freak as they used to say and still like my beer today. There was no pot on A15. We all drank and most of us smoked, but no dope. Lou Dossey, God rest his soul, and Ray Peterson were the two big potheads that I remember. After most of the advanced party guys left I ended up TC on A14 and of course still pulled a lot of ambushes at night. The lucky thing was that I usually got to pick whom I wanted to go out with me and I had some favorites. Kid was always with me cause he could tote an M60 like it was a bb gun. Mike was, and still is, a good man. He was a quick learner and he never questioned any decision I made. Sniper Tom was another of my favorites. He was with us on A15 and knew his shit. Besides if something happened to me I knew Tom could get the guys out alive. I was trained by the best, Ken Dye, and I wanted guys as good as the old A15 group with me. I was getting short then and I always figured if I was going to get killed I should have done it when I first got there, not at the end of my tour. Rag

I think about the Cav every time I see the movie Platoon...hit base camp and the juice freaks went one way and the heads went the other. I think everyone had their own way of dealing with the stress...some smoked...some drank...and some shot themselves to get out of the field or went "crazy" and were sent back to base camp for duty. Took some balls to face the shit we did everyday. Jerry



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I guess you're right. Everyone handles stress differently. It sure was crazy. When you first get there you don't know anything and your scared shitless. After your there for a while you keep hoping your luck doesn't run out and things become a routine. Then you finally make it to a Two Diggit Midget and your scared shitless again because you know too much and you know your number could be up at anytime. Didn't do much drinking in the field, as I wanted to be ready if the shit hit the fan, not to mention we didn't get many supplies in the field anyway, but I made up for it when we hit base camp. Rag



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FSB – LZ – BASECAMP

The PX barbershop at Quang Tri Combat Base is shown behind two cav troopers, Chuck Lea and Carter Fuller. Though just another of the standard plywood buildings that were found all over bases in Viet Nam, the shop sported a traditional striped barber's pole out front. In addition to a good haircut, the scalp, neck, and shoulder massage was relaxing. The popping of finger joints by the barbers usually came as a surprise to new troops at the end of their first haircut. All in all, a pleasant experience.

(Jim Good)

Pineapple (George),

Not dead yet. The last time you saw me at the hospital compound I had less than a week left in country. Most people got out of the field 20-30 days before they left...not me! For 7 or 8 days before my DVE date Alpha 1-7 went down and I just knew I would get to go back to base camp. Instead they put me on an APC. I was hot and had the 'pucker factor' to the max. I was riding on the back of the APC when it went down into a depression and suddenly up a rise. I fell off the back, and while lying there looking face up at the sky, decided this was my ticket out of the field. Went to the hospital and stayed until I had 2 days left in country. I figured no way would they send me out with 2 days left so I recovered and went back to HQ. They assigned me to shit burning detail! What a slap in the face. I could not let such an injustice go unpunished, so I pulled the 3 barrels out about 4 inches from the outhouse and filled them with mo gas. The shit burned nicely but 4 inches was not enough distance to prevent the outhouse from burning as well. There is a picture on the 4/12th web site of the outhouse burning...I forgot my camera or I could have had a MUCH better picture. There was a guy in the unit who bought a 38 revolver. He was an APC driver who wore thick glasses. He only had a limited number of 38 rounds, which he made dum-dums of. Were you my co-conspirator in stealing his .38 ammo? What a trip. Bill (William?) Dodds from Portland, OR was on Alpha 1-7 for a while. Talked to him 15 yrs ago. Got his number from directory assistance. Ronald Congleton from Paterson, NJ was the driver for a while. Was never able to contact him. Someone stole my photo

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albums from my footlocker at Quang Tri right before I left so I have less than 15 pictures of my time there and only 3 of me. Sgt. Robert Barrows the platoon Sgt and TC of A1-7 has hundreds of excellent pictures. If we could find him I would like to get some copies. I have some good shots of the new Sheridans I will try to get on the site. I couldn't ID any of the guys whose pictures are on the web. It's been a long time and very few were 1st platoon people. Do you have pics of 1st platoon during our era?

Jerry Malan

The Finance major woke me up early one morning, around 3 a.m. He told me to get dressed, bring my flak jacket, my weapon, my helmet and my rifle. I was to meet him at the helipad ASAP. He left to wake another soldier. While I stumbled and dragged all my stuff to the helipad, my brain still befuddled with the lack of sleep, Jerry Malan stepped out of the shadows, "Hey Pineapple, he said, "Where are you going? He was the last person I expected to step out of the shadows to ask me. "I don't know, I honestly said, "I have to go to the airport. "You're going to get new MPC, Malan said. He disappeared back into the shadows as I walked on. Was I still sleeping? How did Malan know? Was it true? I met the major at the helipad and we took off immediately, heading on a southerly bearing. As soon as we were in the air, the major revealed our destination was DaNang, our mission, he said was to pull security and help him with picking up the new MPC. We were going to have a currency change in the next few days. It was top secret.
(Pineapple)

The people at momma-sans whore/drug house knew about the MPC exchange 3 weeks before it happened. No doubt before your major did, and since I was a frequent flyer I knew too. Do you remember Sgt. Barrows calling in a chopper for me to make a P.X. run while you were with 1st Platoon? I didn't go to the PX, I went to momma sans for the supplies the troopers really needed. I remember Cua Viet Navy Base and leaving there with the turret full of Navy C-rations. We would have been main gun-less had we been attacked because no one could fit in there. .
Malan (Merk-merk)



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Hey John, I remember Weaver, he used to stand at the hooch door so all you could see of him was his top half and roll that grenade of his down the isle and we all would run like hell, then we got smart and painted his toy fluorescent orange or pink or something like that so we would know it was that dummy grenade of his, well he rolled that bright orange toy of his down the floor one night just a laughing his ass off, we took one look at that thing and then looked at each other and then ran like hell.....

Duke, 2nd plat 69

I agree too...Cua Viet was good duty...SUPER food...OK bunker guard, and a boat ride to ambush. Except that river seemed awful wide when the boat left. Very lonely out there on the other side of the river. Seemed like it rained almost every night I went out. The drag races on the beach were cool though!!! Nancy was a "homey" LZ. When we went to Quang Tri I felt like we had moved to the big city.)- : ???

You're right Turtle, my least favorite place was, I THINK, A2. Or whichever one we were at closest to the DMZ. (C2 was a bit south, right?) It was the rainy season and I never did get warm. Nothing but red mud and sand bags. I always liked the field better than any base camp anyway. I'll never forget WATCHING those 175mm rounds when they fired the ARTY. Unbelievable to me, to be able to SEE the rounds go out..and out ... and out...WAY out! What was their range?

Bob Rebbec

Speaking of Cua Viet, I remember in November of 69 that the troop had to go back to Quang Tri for some type of inspection. The three mortar tracks were left behind at Cua Viet. We had to pull fire missions every third night. The nights off were spent at the club listening to Three Dog Night and the like. The only



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problem, it didn't last long enough.
Bob Taylor

Does anyone remember the guy who came to the Troop sometime during the middle of 1970 from the rangers, P/75th? Seems like he had been in some really bad stuff, got stranded above the pink line of the DMZ for a few days when the rest of his team all got killed. He refused to go out with P/75th again after that, so they sent him to A 4/12. The first sergeant made a deal with him, and in return for being the permanent shit burner at Quang Tri, he didn't have to go to the field with us, either. Once he showed up for formation stark naked. I don't know if he was trying to make like Cpl Klinger in MASH and get a mental discharge, or if he just truly didn't give a damn anymore. One night he apparently got tired of burning shit, or perhaps he was just angry at the world. He filled the cut off 55-gallon drums in the bottom of the latrine with fuel, and tossed in a frag. Really made a mess of things. At first it seemed a bit weird, but after that lots of people probably chuckled a bit and wish they had been the one to do it.
(Jim Good)

Hello from Memory Land,
From the e-mails floating by today I do remember the larceny in the hearts of all 4/12 troopers. I remember a certain summer at A-4 when FO and a group of Troopers went down to C-2 to look into the possibility of improving rations for the troop. The PC was loaded to the gills when the Mess Sergeant of the Artillery Battery caught one of the guys. I can't remember who it was but the Mess Sergeant had us by the short hairs. As we unloaded the PC from the back hatch two cases of goodies were stacked back in through the drivers hatch. (Those Arty guys never were too swift.)

That evening in front of the main bunker at A-4 we had one of the best cookouts ever. Steaks were cooked over an open fire. C-Ration Crackers were made in to the best canapés. Accompanied with sardines, cheese and pickled eggs. Every thing was washed down with the coldest beer that could be found.



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Can anyone ever forget the taste of hot Fresca? That has to rank right up there with anything you wouldn't drink today.

30 Yankee Signing Off Read you 5 by 5

Whoo-ee! I was there! I remember the cookout! The best steak ever! Never had better in the army! I was a little nervous as the cookout went on and on as it got darker and darker. I kept expecting the NVA to send over .122mm guests, but nothing happened! Thanks for bringing it up! We used somebody's RPG screen for a grille. We kept eating and drinking and talking far into the night w/Capt. Robinson. (That scene in Apocalypse now: with Kilgore and his airmobile bunch making steaks rang true) I also remember earlier in the day, watching a mock tennis match between a couple of guys swinging imaginary rackets and hitting an imaginary ball. A crowd was watching and applauding the good shots. We were a very weird bunch. And hot Fresca was just the thing to hit the spot when you ran out of warm Schlitz.

Pineapple

One of the ways we acquired grass was to drive out of LZ Nancy at a breakneck clip, up to the people that hung around the main gate selling cheap mirrors and plastic bowls. As we passed, we threw a case of C-Rations out. We went about 200 meters down the road, turned around, at the same speed, we flew back. The gooks would then throw huge bags of grass at us as we passed. Easily, these bags were worth about \$100 in 'Nam, maybe \$300 back in the world. It was the best, most high quality shit available! We called it the grass run.

(????)

???? you write about getting grass at the gate of LZ Nancy for C-Rations. One case of rations got you \$100.00 bag of dope. (We all realize that we never inhaled and only did that stuff to let the brothers know we were cool) Let me refresh your mind. A case of C-Rats was worth \$5.00. A case of cigarettes was worth \$5.00. A shot of momma san was \$5.00. a pack of ready rolls was \$1.00. A \$5.00 bag was



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about all you could fit in 2 Ziploc sandwich bags. A kilo (2.2lbs.) was \$20.00 that would fill a waterproof bag. Cigarettes were free out of SP packs, cost \$1.10 a carton at the PX.(did get some for \$1.00 on that LST and got greenbacks in change for a \$20.00 MPC which were worth 3MPC per greenback). I recollect it very reasonable. Name withheld by request. merk, merk.

Remember Capt Robinson? When we would pull into a base saying we could get most anything we needed here...Lots of nights out in the bush enjoying dehydrated steak and shrimp etc., that came from someone else's mess hall. Barrows says we stole a bunch of food and some of those insulated cans from some unit and under threat of CID involvement had to bring the cans back but was allowed to keep the food. I figured they deserved it since they wouldn't feed us or let us use their showers. Malan

Remember how the jeeps use to get borrowed? Got so bad they started chaining the clutch pedal to the steering wheel. Seems to me the CO had a hot one he kept for along time. Malan

Then during the Typhoon we rode out at Cua Viet (Nov? 69) I was on bunker duty. The wind was blowing the rain into the bunker sideways and was cold as hell. One of the guys on the bunker with me got into his sleeping bag behind the bunker to block off the wind and went to sleep. In the middle of the night the Lt (Canda?) came around on an APC to check on us and ran over the guy in his sleeping bag. Lucky guy got rolled under the belly but wasn't hit by the tracks. Malan

I'M SURE we were at Cua Viet for Thanksgiving because I remember a Holiday dinner in the field and I was in DaNang for Christmas. Don't know the month but we still had the M48s. 1st platoon alone was north of Cua Viet it had been quiet



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and I was bored since it was not a free fire zone there. I told Jersey (Congleton) who was driving that I wanted to drive that day. I threatened to empty the coax ammo box the next time I had a chance and he let me drive (he had sensitive ears). We left our NDP that morning and hadn't gotten 200yds in the very tracks we had come in on the evening before and we hit a mine. BOOM! I didn't remember it (most likely concussion) but Sgt Barrows said I had a .50 cal ammo can hit me and knocked me a little silly. Took forever to get A17 back to the river. We tried every which way to get 17 on to the navy 8 boat they had there. They could carry one tank and one APC only. We ended up getting an LST from somewhere and finally got her back to the navy base. The picture on the website of A17 in the water was taken when we were trying to get her loaded on those small boats. The road to Quang Tri was washed out and the NVA had control of the area so they couldn't get a flat bed trailer in to take 17 back to Quang Tri for almost a month. I stayed with her at Cua Viet during this time. Had my own hooch, had my own perimeter around it to keep the Navy who weren't invited at bay, ate 3 hot meals a day out of the navy mess hall, rode the river with the navy (out of sheer boredom), and enjoyed a hot shower when I wanted to. Best damn month I ever spent in the army. Malan

THEN there was the time at alpah4 during the monsoon I was sleeping under a poncho on the back deck of the tank. Sgt Barrows shakes me awake and ask me if hadn't heard that? I ask "Heard what?" He says that mortar round that went off. I told him I hadn't heard it. He points to mud and crap all over my poncho. I get up and see where the mortar round hit a few feet behind the tank. That's tired. Malan

Another funny story... Barrows always pulled last guard shift from 5-7 AM. We were working out of either C2 or A4 and the NVA had been shelling the place daily. A rocket had hit near enough to an outhouse that Barrows used to ventilate it. We started to tease him that he better quit using it as the NVA had it zeroed in. One morning he woke me up to take his place on guard at daybreak so he could go to the outhouse. He had enough time to get his ass planted when the rockets



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and mortars started hitting very close to us. Sgt. Barrows came running out of the outhouse with his pants down around his ankles. He was trying to pull them up and run at the same time. He had to run maybe 50 feet to a bunker. He never got the pants up above his knees during this run. They might consider adding this event to the PT test stuff you do in basic training. You know 100 yd. man carry, etc. Malan

Jerry Just to help you with memories of Viet Nam I used to pull the 0300 _0700 Hr shift all the time because I had to make sure the Platoon was up and ready to go early every. To make up for pulling the last shift I always pulled a 4 hr shift. That morning at the outhouse we were going to escort the Engineer mine sweep team on the daily sweep back to Charlie 2 from Alpha 4. I was attacked by a case of "Gotta Goes when that mortar and rocket attack started. The rest of the story was pretty accurate
(Sgt Barrows)

Then there was my R&R story. I waited until I had about 8 months in country to apply for R&R because I wanted to go to Sidney and someone had told me the longer you waited the better your chances of getting your pick. When my orders came thru I got Thailand so I was not a happy camper. I flew to DaNang and lined up at the R&R center behind 15 other guys in front of this Navy guys desk. After awhile it was my turn so I walked up to this guys desk and set my paperwork on top of it. This shit head jumps my ass and says if he wants my paperwork he will ask for it. (The bastard had looked at everyone's' paperwork that had been in front of me). This guy was an E-6 who must have weighed 300 lbs. and was all of 5'6" tall. It was all I could do to keep from breaking his neck on the spot so I picked up my papers and left. I went to Red Beach and found me a momma san for that week. When I got back to the troop they said because I had not gone on R&R the troop had lost an R&R slot. So if any of you guys didn't get R&R after that it was all my fault. Malan



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OK more B.S. bout Nam, like the time Sgt Barrows came into the bunker at either Charlie 2 or Alpha 4 with his .45 caliber pistol in hand, pointed it at the floor and pulled the trigger. Boom it went off and scared the shit out of several of us including Barrows. I think he said "so much for the firearms safety lecture." Malan

Can't remember where we were but I'm thinking Charlie 2. Sgt DiSanto on A26 and Sgt Barrows on A17 get an offer form one of the Mech. Infantry company's (1/11?) for breakfast. They had an APC hit a mine the day before and while trying to retrieve it had another APC hit a mine. We got real eggs for breakfast and all we had to do was go out in the middle of a minefield and retrieve those APC's. In hindsight I think that job was underbid. Sure would have been if we had hit a mine but we were lucky that day. Malan

Cua Viet Navy base was the only place in northern I corp where one platoon actually got a night off every 3rd day. The Navy issued C-rats to the guys who ran the river but most of them managed to make it back to the base for the 3 hot meals the mess hall served and as a result they had a big fenced in area full of C-rats. I can remember leaving Cua Viet with the turret so full of C-rats that we would not have been able to fire the main gun if we had to. Lucky we never had too. Malan

You guys who were tankers will no doubt remember when we first got the Sheridans. They set up a firing range for us to train on. We were all a little worried because they told us the front end on the Sheridan jumped about 3 feet off the ground when you fired the main gun. Sgt Barrows, brave soul that he was, got in to fire the first round to show us there was nothing to worry about. He fired the damn thing and came out with blood running down all over his face. He had flipped the site cover half way up so that the sharp edge of the cover was over his forehead but the foam forehead rest kept him from feeling it. This put the sharp edge maybe a quarter of an inch away from his forehead. The recoil of



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the gun forced the cover towards his head and cut him all the way across his head just over his eyebrows. Nobody wanted to shoot after that. Malan

When I first come to Vietnam I hardly got time to see L.Z. Nancy before I was trucked up to Alpha 4 for my baptism. Hell of a place to break in. Couldn't believe you could see that NVA motor pool across the DMZ with that damn red flag flying above it. I always wanted to take a shot at it especially since I figured they were the ones that shot the rockets and mortars at us all the time. Anyway during the nights there I kept hearing this whoosh, whoosh, whoosh, noise going overhead and thought it must be a bird or big fruit bat or something. After a week or so I ask someone what the hell that noise was. He said have you seen those five foot long 100 pound pieces of shrapnel laying around on the ground around here? Jesus Christ! There weren't any bombs dropping close to us, that stuff was coming from WAY OVER THERE and flying over my head! . Malan

I don't know why but for some reason around the time of the move from Nancy to Quang Tri I was back at Nancy for some reason. There was a bunker there that wasn't on the original blue prints and in typical military fashion somebody decided it had to be destroyed. There was a brother in the camp maybe had a base camp job who was assigned to destroy this bunker. The plan was to burn out the wood supports and let the sand bag roof fill it in. This job was given to the brother who pulled the MO-GAS truck up to it and proceeded to run a bunch of gasoline down into this bunker. Good plan so far. Where he went wrong was standing directly in front of the entrance and throwing a trip flare down there to light it up. Burned his face, hair, hands, ect. I saw him sometime after that and other than having a bunch of pink spots all over where he was burned he was O thay. Anyone remember his name? Malan

The C.O. of Personnel and Finance at A75 Support was some kind of frustrated Green Beret Airborne Ranger dude. He has the airborne wings and the ranger patch. The major would send for me at least once a week and make me ride with



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him in a helicopter up to the DMZ, then to A4 or C2, where we'd land for a few minutes, then take off and look around the bushes and paddies a bit more. I'm a little puzzled since there are 2 other combat guys in finance, one from the 1/11th and the other from 1/61st, but he doesn't make those guys fly around with him. I'm very afraid, but I must hide it well. I wonder how many of these rides do I have to take before I can put in for an air medal? I love flying in choppers; the ride is fantastic. The major likes riding those little Loaches. I do too. I think he's crazy. We've never seen anyone on our little trips around the bush thank God. All I carry is 2 bandoleers of ammo. I guess in gratitude for me riding shotgun for him, the major made a call to the Cav to ask why the hell I hadn't been promoted to E-5 yet. He said he had Top schedule me for the next board. I was shocked, I didn't want to be promoted, I wanted to stay in Finance for the rest of the war. If I were promoted, I would have to go back to the field. I asked Top to ignore what that major said I didn't want it. (Pineapple.)

Do you remember the time they let the whole Troop stand down at the same time in Quang Tri? We all went to the Brigade NCO Club together and between everyone there must have been about \$500 -\$600 dollars of funny money anted up in the middle of the table and one of our young NCOs walked up to the bar with his boonie hat on and they were demanding that he buy everyone at the bar a drink !! (about 60 people) and we hollered "After the Fight" and all Hell broke loose, I remember someone shoved all the change in the pile to the waitress and told her to keep it. They brought in two trucks of MPs to break it up and that was the last time they ever let us stand down at the same time and I think they put the Brigade Club off limits to the Cav . HA!!

(Robert Barrows)

Hey Bill, You where saying something about the barber we had at LZ Nancy. I remember after he gave us a shave and a haircut, he would crack our necks. It felt good ,but I always thought that he might be a VC. Could he have twisted our necks a little farther? I heard he was killed on a VC trail with the rest of the gooks. Big Al



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The move from LZ Nancy to Quang Tri

Keith and Rag, I remember when we gave LZ Nancy back to the ARVN some shit head higher up said we had to leave Nancy the way it was when it was built. That is what the TOC had to go away. I was around there for some reason about the time the TOC was destroyed. There was a black dude who worked in base camp doing something and his job was to burn out the wood supports in the TOC so it would fall in on its self and the roof sand bags would just about fill it level with the surface. He didn't put diesel in but backed a mo-gas truck up to one of the 2 (I think) stairways down into the bunker and loaded it with a hundred or so gallons of gasoline. Then he stood in front of the stairway and threw in a trip flare to ignite it. Damn thing looked like a Dragons breath coming out of the stairway. The black dude was burned pretty good where he didn't have clothes on. His hair was burned off below his ball cap. He survived it because I saw him later and he was black and had pink spots mixed in everywhere he was burned. Strange look and hope he returned to his original color eventually. Jerry Malan say night night.

Keith Eaton wrote:

Rag,

I'm with you, Don't remember much about the move just remember the great fire we made when we distroyed the TOC at Nancy we pored a shit pot full of diesel in side and threw some thing in to ignite it. The Toc went up in a fine blaze. The one thing we hadn't counted on was the amount of ammo that had been lost dropped or just left inside so we had rounds going off right and left.

I do remember that it was kind of nice at Quang Tri there was a seperate hootch for the radio operators the commo sargent slept in a different hootch and there was a seperate commo/radio shop. Also we were not on top of the hill like at Nancy where the hootch always seemed like a big target even though it had a great view.



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One other observation was when we got to the new area I couldn't believe all of the sandbags the Marines had filled around the area had never seen that many in my entire tour.

Take Care, Keith

jazrinaldi wrote:

HELLO out there. Where the hell is everyone today? It's been real quiet here lately. Lets see if I can get another good conversation going.

I don't remember much of our move from LZ Nancy to Quang Tri. I was getting to be a shorttimer and don't remember much of my last few months in the Troop in Nam. I was trying very hard to stay alive and in one piece. Plus I had the responsibility of keeping the crew alive and well also. I wanted to make sure I taught Hall, Baynes and Barnes all I knew before I left. Sniper Tom was with me for awhile but by then he already had his shit together. I always figured if you were going to buy the farm you should do it early in your tour and save having to spend all that time there just to get killed in the end. Does anyone remember when we made the move? I also don't remember spending much time in Quang Tri as we didn't seem to spend much time in base camp anyway. I do remember that Quang Tri was like a 5 star hotel compared to Nancy. I was then the TC on A14 and I do remember that it was a real clunker. We couldn't seem to keep an engine in that thing. We changed three motors that I could remember and that thing never did run right. I always wanted to TC A15 "Playmate". That's where I started and I always thought of Playmate as my home. Now there was a fine running track. Other than track and road wheels A15 was all original and old Lucky Lou Larson had that thing running like a watch. I have a lot of great memories from Playmate. We had a great crew and we worked very well together, as all of the crews did anyway. I never got hurt while on Playmate but it seemed everytime I rode another track I got hit. So dust off the memory banks and start talkin Brothers.

Peace, Rag



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NDP – OPS – PARTOLS

North and West of A-4

Sgt. Barrows/others where were we when we found those NVA guys who smelled sooo BAD? I recall we smelled them long before we saw them. I think the artillery had killed them some days before and they sat out there rotting and waiting for us to find them. We were told to take off their gear. I put my gas mask on and still couldn't stand the smell. Guess I got a profile not to take the gear due to extreme nausea. Malan

Yea they definitely had a severe case of BO. Evidently stood to close to the impacting rounds as they came in. We could smell the bodies from at least a qtr of a mile away. That was my first day's introduction to Viet Nam. Jog my mind, but later was when the Troop Cdr past us "leading" and backed over the mine about 25 feet in front of us! I believe we were near "Mutha's Ridge when that happened!!. Barrows

I can't remember the COs APC hitting a mine that day we Found all the NVA bodies rotting but I was sick enough of the smell I can't remember anything else. If that was your first day in country the only thing you may have missed was the rockets and mortars that were usual for breakfast. Malan

We were on a hellacious dismounted patrol the day before. For some reason, we picked the hottest part of the day to go walking in some of the toughest brush anyone could have thought of. JB was leading the patrol, I still remember that Duffy kept saying, "what they gonna do, send me to 'Nam?" We had to rotate the point, at first every 10 minutes because the point had to chop away at this incredibly thick brush with a dull machete, then we went to every 5 minutes, then every minute as we spent our energy at an alarming rate. Near the end, the obstacles in front of us were mainly thick elephant brush and we flung our bodies at it to beat it down. We were making a cloverleaf pattern search, trying to join up with two other leaves from 2 other squads. Mutter's Ridge (found out the correct spelling just recently, named for an infantry captain from the Marines) loomed menacingly in the background. When JB finally called it quits, we were

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about 500 yards from this oasis of trees that was to be our end point. It was useless to continue, the three squads were totally wasted from the effort of getting through that jungle. I remember sweating in places I never knew you could sweat, like my elbows and fingernails. JB faked seeing movement in the trees and called in an air strike. They lay in the napalm exactly into the Oasis. I was too tired to watch, all I could do was lie on my back, wheeze, and stare at the sky.

The next day, we went back to the Oasis, where we found 15 or so NVA in the crispy critter mode. Some bodies looked like they were trying to ward the flames away as if it were just raining, some were in running poses. It was an awful sight and the smell was so bad, it had it's own APO address. Then there was an order to search the bodies. Fuhgedaboutit, I moon walked back to the 1-2 and left the ghouls in the platoon free to do their happy task.

Apparently the NVA were waiting in ambush for us, and most certainly would have wiped us out, had we had the energy to walk there. Pineapple

You sure this was the same gooks? These guys smelled like about 3-4 days old and don't remember and burn damage. Pretty sure this was artillery defcon stuff. Malan

oh yeah, it was napalm, you remember craters and blown apart bodies, or were they all intact? I rest my case. Pineapple

Actually, it was hot as hell and the bodies were bloated, but as far as the smell, it was the normal fucked up dead body smell that we've all smelled before, Theyweren't 3-4 days old with maggots or anything. Pineapple

The temp was way over 80 and they had begun to ripen. The guys had to collect all weapons and ammo and strip the uniforms off of the bodies. We threw all of the bodies in a bomb crater and covered them up. All of the shit we collected was sent back to S-3 for them to analyze. I will never forget the smell.

Keith Eaton



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I remember a time out round Con Thien or around there somewhere on a NDP one night we had our one of our claymores stolen and in its place was left a piece of paper with a poem on it about some river up north somewhere, it goes without saying after that we became a lot more proficient in our own booby traps making and for awhile there we would get one of those little sneaks in the middle of the night. Do you remember what tank that got all cleaned up and painted so nice? It was for some visiting senator or something I can't remember' hell I can't hardly remember my own name sometimes. Later.

Duke

Does anyone remember when the troop was operating around an abandoned LZ called Angel (I think that was the name) somewhere up near Charlie 2 in late 1969 or early 1970? One day the company dropped off around 8 of us from each platoon to form 3 separate night ambushes. The rest of the troop then went back to wherever and was going to pick us up the next day. I was with the second platoon and carrying a M79. Our Sgt. was one that we called Paul Revere because he always wore a patriot style hat. I can't remember his real name. Anyway we formed the ambushes and had rendezvous locations in case we engaged and had to leave quickly. I remember that the second platoon was just off a well-used trail. Our claymores were placed real close to us. Luckily no one came by that night and we all hooked back up the next day and waited for the troop to pick us up in the afternoon. It was one scary night to be that far from our friends with the ACAVs and tanks.

Bob Taylor

Ya Bob, seems REAL familiar...but I went on what seems like a lot of ambushes...some were really scary, hell they ALL were scary. Just real lucky they were mostly all just 'camp outs'!!!!!!!!!! I remember we did blow the claymores one night when we heard voices moving into the kill zone and laid there the rest of the night scared shitless until we could get back into the womb in the AM.

Bob Rebbec

John, I remember the night well. I can't remember if I was on the mortar track or another scout track. The mortar track didn't run most of the time. I remember that it was a badass place to be after dark. I think that we all hit a mine or two. I was on the Passion Wagon, I think 23, when me Scotty and Dierling hit a mine



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near Rocket Ridge. We had our scrawny mustaches burned up, but no injuries. That was in July of 1969, one month after I got in country. Because we were short on APC's, I rode on a tank for a while. I believe it was 26. APC's don't fair well when the mine hits. It sounds like we are going to have a bigger reunion this year! I joined the Society of the Fifth Division and read the article from the chopper pilot but didn't connect it with Wally. I also received the M48 and an ACAV model. It was interesting hearing the story of Capt. Spruill and the War Lord.

Bob Taylor

John, I remember Ferguson well, that night we got hit in Cua Viet; he was crawling around and asking everybody if they needed water or ammo. He was different but he sure helped that night.

Bob Taylor

I remember when we went on that big task force operation out by Khe Sahn, then back through the Ba Long Valley in the summer of 1970. They had a 175mm unit inside our perimeter while we were at the old Marine firebase Van der Grift. One afternoon they were using the 175s to do H&I fire. They were shooting into the wooded draws along a ridgeline to our west, probably less than a mile away. One of the rounds must have hit right at the base of a big tree. BIG TREE. Hard to say how tall it was, but it looked like a tree that was 3 to 5 feet in diameter and 30 to 50 feet tall. That big old 175mm HE round launched the tree straight up. Looked like a rocket taking off from Cape Canaveral. The tree went straight up in the air about a hundred feet, then sorta hung there for a moment, and started flipping end over end on the way back down. Some of those toys the U.S. taxpayers gave us to play with back then were pretty cool. No idea what the exact range of the 175mm was, probably something just over 20 miles.

Jim Good



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One morning, Capt. Kaufman lines up the troop, line abreast on the road between C2 & A4, facing west. It is a glorious sight, but it is raining and we're looking at low elephant grass covering a sea of mud. He gives the signal to "charge. The old 1-2 is slow to move. Everyone else who does decide to "charge gets stuck. The troop spends the rest of the day pulling tanks and tracks out.
(Pineapple)

While operating near LZ Nancy, Kaufman decides to lead dismounted "night patrols into the jungle. It happens that he picks a succession of moonless nights. No one can see. People have to have physical contact with the person in front of them, and even then, the person in front of them often disappears down unseen bomb craters. It is very slow going. One of these patrols gets horrifically lost and opens fire on an ARVN outpost when Kaufman hears Vietnamese voices and orders us to shoot. When the return fire sounds like M-16's, we flee. The next morning, we discover that we have caused KIA and WIA on an ARVN outpost. The night patrols are stopped, and nobody is the wiser.

The 1st platoon scouts are offered LRRP rations and camouflage fatigues if they volunteer to make long range dismounted patrols out into the bush from Nancy. Our patrol goes out and makes camp as soon as we're out of sight, a few hundred yards downrange. We give fake sit reps of our travels around the AO, while we chow down on that great LRRP dried rations. .
(Pineapple)

BR: "I dropped off the track like the experienced IDIOT I was (I'd been in-country almost 13 months), took an M79 into a wash-out and ran smack into a GOOK. The '79 chose then to miss fire! (lucky for me really. We were only about 6 or 7 FEET apart!) The Sarg had followed me in (which I didn't know) and covered me as I ran for my life!!!!"
(Bob Rebbec)

Was that the day after the new troop commander took over after CPT Smith? Would have been the summer of 1970 sometime. If it is the incident I'm thinking of, the 2nd Plt was on the northwest side of a stream, and sent some



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people in to check it out. The 3rd Plt was on the southeast side. After you guys ran into the gook(s), I saw 3 of them in the open through the sights of my Sherridan. Unfortunately, one of our 3rd Plt tracks was right in line between me and the gooks, just downhill a bit, and the second platoon was straight on beyond the stream. I wanted to fire up the 3 NVA, but the new troop commander and my TC said not to. That was one of only two times in Viet Nam that I clearly saw gooks in the gun sight. Didn't get to fire either time. Oh well, long time since that happened. I wonder if the gooks ever realized how close to getting waxed they came that day.

(Jim Good)

A couple of unlucky NVA troopers, an RPG team, were crawling up to our NDP one afternoon in July 1969 when we were working to the west of LZ Nancy doing "blocking" assignments. Track 1-3 neglected to retrieve their claymore ambush from the night before. Their philosophy was: if we aren't going nowhere(& we weren't because we were waiting for a mechanic to install a needed part for my track) why bring in their stuff? Ka-boom the NVA ran into the ambush. The rest of us thought that it was incoming and dove for the dirt. 1-3 started firing wildly into the bush because they knew what it was. To make a long story short, that night, when it was my turn for guard at around 3 a.m., I sleepily took a look around the perimeter and saw Jerry buck-naked walking around with an M16! I thought I was hallucinating. What made it even weirder was that the mosquitoes were tearing me up and Jerry seemed unaffected. Let's see, 2 dead NVA, and a naked Chieu Hoi =? Is it any wonder that I haven't thought of these matters for 30 years? ???

Drake was one of my first tank commanders in Viet Nam. A mine north of Alpha Four one day in December 69 or January 70 messed him up. We had a vehicle down in third platoon, so they sent us to one of the other platoons to pick up a tow bar. We had strapped the tow bar onto the back deck of our tank, and were backing up to turn around, when ***^BOOM^*** an ear splitting explosion went off right beside the tank. I don't know if they ever figured out whether it was command detonated, or if we ran over a trip wire. Being very new in country, I relied on the training that I had gotten by watching the TV show "Combat" when I was a kid, and did the only thing I could think of. I yelled "Medic!" Drake was covered in blood. He was in the TC hatch, I was the gunner and sitting on the



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loader's hatch, and our loader was sitting on the bustle rack. No one else got a scratch. Holes in our marmite cans, water cans, and everything in the bustle rack. Drake had something like 23 pieces of shrapnel in him, and he was a hurting puppy, though he stayed awake throughout the ordeal. The medic from the platoon we were getting the tow bar from patched up the holes in him as best he could and then called a Medivac. Kent went to a hospital in country, and spent about 3 weeks there, but remained in Viet Nam and completed his tour. He is now living back in Three Rivers, Michigan -- his hometown. Bub Pollet is also still living there and Kent said he sees Bub from time to time. They completed their tours in Viet Nam in very early 1970.

(Jim Good)

Got an E- Mail at last. Even learned how to check it. Need to send Sgt Barrows the history of the cav. We were talking the other day and we've both got stuff to add (pages). Some you may not want to publish, but a lot is humor, like Jordandriving A17 with the umbrella to keep from tanning. JB was the gunner on 17 when I got there in June 11th 69. TC was Cooper E5. The first firefight we got into I had to pull the 90mm cases out of the main gun as they only ejected half way. After it was over I ask JB when he had last cleaned the chamber (screw the bore) and he said, "Never cleaned it". I took over that job from then on. Malan

One time on the Z we found a tunnel and using a tank jumper cable lowered Lt. Canda down the hole with his .45 caliber pistol. Was really steep. While he went to explore the hole, Dodds and me pulled up the cable and let him sweat for a while, yuck, yuck. Malan

The entire troop was working one day on the Z, we were heading for a ridge line and ran into muddy dirt and had to detour about 400 yards to the left. As we were turning back to the ridge 5 or 6 large blasts went off on the ridge where we had 1st approached the ridge. The NVA had set up claymores and would have peppered us if we hadn't had to move to the left. Barky was in the air and radioed he could see the NVA running on the other side of the ridge. The entire troop pulled on line and opened up on the valley. We shot all of the main gun ammo in the turret, called in air strikes with F4s, arty etc., When the smoke cleared a bit



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the CO told 1st platoon to sweep the valley and 2&3rd stayed on the ridge. The 3 tanks were out in front of the APC's by 30yds. or so. Barky or the CO was talking on the radio saying we were about to run over the NVA we were so close to them. I couldn't see anything but jungle thru the sight on A17 but fired several canister rounds anyway. Sgt Barrows said the barrel was pointing down when I fired and Bamboo and crap flew all over the place...he thought we had been hit for a minute. After a couple of rounds I shouted to the loader I wanted another canister round and got no response. I looked over and the loader was gone. I ask Barrows where he was and he said "the back deck". I told him to tell him to get back inside. He wouldn't get back in. I think this was Dodds when he was fresh off an APC. Anyway I loaded and fired several rounds myself. About this time an NVA stepped out from behind a bush and Sgt. Barrows shot him 2 times with the .50 in the upper leg. The CO called down and said if he was alive S2 needed prisoners. We pulled up beside him and he had his hands underneath him as if he might have a grenade. We let him bleed for a while due to this danger. In the meantime the 1st platoon had stopped the sweep. Lt Canda's APC was to our right rear about 20 yards away and there was a bomb crater between us. The Lt. dismounted and was walking around with his .45 pistol. I had left the turret and was sitting beside Sgt Barrows with an M16. Sgt Barrows always kept his .45 under his .50 cal (use to tease him that the only thing it was good for was to shoot himself to prevent capture) and I suddenly see him pull his pistol and begin to swing it back towards the Lt. Knowing something was up I followed his swing with the M16. As Barrows came down just about in line with the Lt. I see an NVA crawling out of this bomb crater maybe 10 feet or so from the Lt. Barrows popped him with the .45 and I emptied the clip on the M16 in one burst...Poor Lt started shouting "it's me, it's me!" as if we were shooting at him Yuck, yuck. Malan

Then there was the time Aug? The brains from higher up came up with the mounted ambush. Three M48s sneaking up on the NVA and ambushing them...go figure. Anyway we were south of Nancy as I recall and the spot they wanted us to go was low land by a creek with several hills around. We set up on a hill and notified HQ. of our position change. It was an hour or more before dark when we were finally all set up. We were relaxing around the turret when this strange noise that sounded like a locomotive running out of steam and passing right next to us occurred. As I was trying to imagine what it was, the area where we were



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supposed to be exploded. It was a very large explosion indeed. We were taking big incoming artillery. Sgt Barrows got on the radio to base camp to tell them we were taking fire (this was too big to be Charlie's), the base camp said no one was firing that they knew about but that they would check it out. A few minutes later this whoosh, whoosh, steam engine sound started again. This round hit in line with us but on the other side. Both had been 3 or 400 yds away. Barrows got back on the horn...same story they didn't know who was shooting. I joked to Barrows that they had us bracketed in. The whoosh, whoosh starts again and this time you can hear it's a lot closer...in fact I thought it was going to land in my back pocket. We were huddled inside the tank, flack jackets and steel pots on. This round landed in front of the tank maybe 50 yds away. When it went off it pulled the steel pot off my head 5-6 inches as it sucked the air out of the tank.

Last week when I was talking to Barrows he said he remembers trying to crawl into his steel pot. It stopped after that 3rd round. It was 8-inch gunfire. I recall it was the South Vietnamese being trained that fired on us. Barrows remembers it was our own guys. Either way it was a hell of an experience. Malan

I can't remember where we were but we were out in the field somewhere and sat up the NDP late. We had fire support from a 4.2" mortar outfit that night. Sgt Barrows called the mortar group on the radio to request an airburst marker round so we could get them on target. A few minutes later we heard a THUD out in front of our tank. Barrows called the team to tell them that the round was a dud and ask them to repeat the airburst. That round worked perfectly. The next morning I went out to pick up the trip flares and there was a 4.2" high explosive round sticking in the ground about 20 yards in front of A17. We had all been sitting around on the top of the tank when it hit and surely would have been peppered if the thing had gone off. Those guys must have been hitting the booze or smoke pretty heavy that night. Malan

Pineapple after we got the Sheridans and Sgt Barrows started getting the short timers increase Sphincter tone syndrome we started letting some of the other tanks take point. I think it was SSgt Skolnzovch in his Sheridan that hit 2 mines in about 2 weeks. The 1st one blew him and his entire .50cal turret off his tank with



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him inside it. Seems the next one was sort of a dud. A W.P. round went off under his tank. Seems that someone had stepped on a mine during this same period while dismounted. If memory serves me this SSgt had only been in country for a short time. He would hang his butt off the side of the tank to take a dump so he didn't have to dismount. Malan

We were set up in NDP out towards the beach somewhere in the middle of nowhere and as I recall only 1st platoon was there. I was sitting up on top of the turret behind the .50 cal doing my guard shift looking at the fireworks here and there when I notice a twin 40mm open up. It was a long way off and looked like it wouldn't come close to us. I was watching the tracers burn out different colors at different ranges and began to realize it was going to impact closer to us than I first thought. The guns were still firing when the first rounds hit maybe 60-70 meters out to the north of us and proceeded to sweep his fire through the platoon and stopped firing a little south of the NDP. After a few minutes (reloading no doubt) they started firing again and sweep back thru the platoon. Don't remember anyone getting wounded, do remember itching to squeeze off a few 90mm rounds to return the favor. Do you remember where we were Sgt B? Malan.

Jerry Are you talking about the time we were on the North side of the Cua Viet River setting up our NDP and the Riverine Boat came down the River and was firing the twins. Cpt Merk Merk called for the Mortar track to pop illum and I was screaming No NO!! but they popped one and the Navy thought they had found a good target, Us!! Everyone was up under the tracks while they were shooting the Hell out of us. Finally got them stopped. That incident definitely stands out in my mind!!

Sgt B

My 19 track was with me all the time. Don't ever remember calling for mortar fire except for one night we were called out to secure an AVLB that was stuck in the field (what it was doing I never had a clue!), but we were called out & set up a defensive perimeter. When it started to get dark they really didn't want to spend the night (I'm thinking we were at C-4 at the time, but not positive) so I had Sgt Lawrence fire illum so they could keep working. He fired every round they had and they finally got the damn thing unstuck. On the way back I got a call that



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there were friendlies in our area who had been sent out to back us up if necessary.

I had to tell my platoon not to fire and we passed about a platoon-sized group of grunts that was going out to set up an ambush in case Charlie showed up to see what the fuss was about. Never did hear if they had any luck. I just don't remember having any targets to use the mortars on. I think I used to hook it up with the 15 track and use them as scouts. The platoon sergeant and I used to let men move tracks or tanks if there was a need. I think I had an 11Bravo that became a tank driver. Does anyone remember if that was Troy?
(Kershner)

Thanks six, I'd written what I knew about it, but as Jim said, we were just pawns doing what we were told, never had a clue what the overall purpose was, who else was involved or half the time, even where we were. Great to have the big picture. One incident I didn't write in my journal (but I know happened) and haven't heard anyone else reference, was the big perimeter fire that happened on that big 5th Div. sweep where we had more of the 5th in the bush than back at Quang Tri. Jim, (or Six) you seem to know all the details - still envious of your memory - but weren't we real close to Laos on that one? Anyway, someone's trip flare went off and lit up the elephant grass and the wind caught it and we had to scramble to get as many claymores in as possible before the fire got there. One track (tank?) was surrounded by fire and they used a dozer to push dirt against it. We were beating back flames w/ our shirts and anything else we could get our hands on. Wild & crazy night.

Skee

The big grass fire was in the Ba Long Valley, as we were returning from Van der Grift & the Rock Pile to Quang Tri via the scenic route. The operation was "Task Force 1-77 Armor" and it took place during the summer of 1970. As you said, half the frickin brigade must have been on it. During the part of that operation where the fire occurred, the artillery had already gone home via QL-9, and the Cav, and I suppose most of 1-77 Armor and 1-61 Infantry along with maybe some other support elements, were headed back through the Ba Long Valley, then over some



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hills, and finally across the Quang Tri river near the big bend south of the French Fort. We were out in that area for several days. If I recall correctly, we had been starting fires during the day with WP to clear out any cover that the bad guys might have used to set up ambushes behind. I don't know if the wind changed direction at night after we set up the NDP, or if a new fire was started by a flare or WP round while registering Def Cons. It seems that at least one daisy chain of claymores went off in the fire, though I don't think anyone was seriously wounded by it. Big excitement, that night, however. After the night of the fire, I think we were still in that area for a couple more days. There were some AVLBs that we used to cross a couple of very deep streambeds in the hills when we continued back toward Quang Tri. If I recall correctly, we spent at least one more night in the hills on the way back before returning to the Quang Tri area. I know the 3rd Platoon stayed on a hilltop over-watching an AVLB one night, and we had movement in the streambed, and fired up the area with one or more mad minutes of machinegun fire. The next day, the AVLB crews had a hard time raising their bridge because of all the damage we had done to it with small arms fire the night before. That was the first time that most of us had been anywhere near the Rock Pile, Van der Grift, or the Ba Long Valley. At the trooper level, we really didn't know very much about where we were, or what we might expect to encounter out there. We did know that we were close to Laos, and pretty well out in Indian Country. Pucker factor was rather high throughout that operation. LT Schorpp and I talked about this operation when we were at the reunion last year in Las Vegas. Earl Schorpp thinks that it was done as a dress rehearsal for the Operation Lam San 519 or whatever that cluster fuck was right after the first of the year in 1971 when the ARVNs went into Laos and got their clocks cleaned. There is a picture that I took of that grass fire in my slides on the picture site, on page 3 of the photo albums.

Jim Good

Dang you and that fantastic memory of yours!! You still remember more than I ever knew in the first place!! - even if it is a "refreshed by Lt." memory. Thanks a bunch for the info, I'll print it and add it to my collection. As I remember, we went there at almost the same time they were crossing into Cambodia down south with much success and the general feeling was that we might be going to try the same thing w/ Laos - but then after sitting around on our thumbs for a few days w/o the top brass knowing the next move - which further led to the belief things



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were coming down daily straight from God, the Pentagon or somewhere up high, we just packed up and as you said, took the scenic route home. VERY anti-climatic!!

Skee

1st Platoon was guarding Hwy. 1; we were facing the Rock 2nd or 3rd Plt. was to our left rear on another hill as you face the Rock. They were overrun with NVA and had to call for our platoon to fire on their position with small arms and mortars. They had dug in and had constructed bunkers while located on that hill for two weeks. Charlie was trying to dig into their bunkers that night. We could see gooks running in the perimeter as trip flares were burning. Our orders were to fire at anyone we saw in the light--for all our guys were either in bunkers or dead. Our position got plastered by incoming rockets every afternoon about 3:00 o'clock. One guy (Greg Sessions) from my track (12) and another guy along with a FO were airlifted to the top of the Rock to spot the location from where the rockets were being launched. Arty from FSB Vandergriff would plaster them. Khe Sanh was an adventure and a nightmare! [Buddy Puryear]

Wally

Welcome to the Club. I was on 13 in Feb of 1969 when it hit a mine and I still have two scars on my forehead and one across the bridge of my nose that reminds me of that night almost everyday. I couldn't even wear a baseball cap for years as it would bother me. That is one club I really never wanted to join, but thank God I only got scared and didn't lose anything but a lot of blood. That was the first time I ever rode on a track that Lucky Lou Larson wasn't driving and damn if I didn't get hurt. I only trusted riding with Larson and Ken Dye after that night. I'll also never forget the reception I got about 5 days later when I returned to LZ Nancy from the hospital and all the Troop saw me walking down the road to the front gate. They didn't know if I had lived or if I got sent home and would never be seen again. That day really proved to me that I was in a SPECIAL unit with the greatest guys you could ever serve with. I truly felt that every guy in that unit was my real Brother, It's a feeling I have never forgotten and thank God all the time for letting me have it and still be here to appreciate it,



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Peace, Rag

. You also were saying about land mines. One day i was behind one of our tanks on a convoy and he turned a sharp turn and pryed a land mine out of the ground in front of me. What a close call! Another time up at the D.M.Z. i threw a track on my A.P.C.. The Captain left me and a tank there by ourselves untill i got the track back on. When we where leaveing the tank backed onto an anti- personel mine. I thought that was the end of the line for us. I don,t remember the tank number, but i remember that the sgt. was shot and served another year in Nam.. Big Al

Big Al The tank commander I think was Sgt D [Jersey]

Sitrep: How we did it in the Cav

Well said Jim.....it definitely was not a 'one size fits all'.

Been a few years, but if memory serves me correctly, this is how we conducted recon by fire when doing dismounted patrols in Viet Nam. Like I said, however, it has been a few years and some of the facts may not be 100% right about this particular tactic. . . . Jim

As you said it's been a while.....but what's this "we" stuff? I don't remember Tankers on dismounted patrols. That was the realm of the Infantry and Scouts.
Bob

...don't dis us tankers; after all, we kept the coffee hot while sitting behind the .50 cal waiting for you guys to finish your nature walks. Jim

I didn't mean to dis tankers. Having someone behind the .50 cal., keeping the home fires burning was very reassuring....Bob

Bob, if you remember it was always a tank that lead your platoon and usually took the mine hit. After the NVA got the mine to go off after the 2nd vehicle ran over it there were 2 tanks in the front. Sgt Barrows lead 1st platoon in our tank until he got damn short because he would not ask someone to do something he would not. Also you got better at spotting weird shit the more you were out in

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front. I remember shooting a case of M-79 in a single day leading and had a sore shoulder more than one night...have to say I loved that shit at the time tho. Malan

John, I always liked riding on your tank. It had the fastest firing and sweetest sounding .50 Cal in the platoon. Zero

Yep, went out on several myself like John said it was When Sgt D was in Hospital and we were at Cau Viet. I cannot remember the Name of the Sgt. that stood in for Sgt D I sure didn't care for him much. I remember one Night we were set up close to the River and a couple of new guys were out there with us one of them stood up and was shot by one of our Guys anyone remember that. Merle A28

Merle there was a black Trooper shot while on ambush by one of our guys but I can't remember Troopers involved. John.. Also a lot of Tankers didn't like him mostly because he thought tankers were babied. We did what he wanted but under protest. John

Joe I do know that we were a tight group of guys and did whatever was needed. We never really had a problem with what MOS one had only when the shit hit we were together. John

I know who you are talking about but I wasn't aware of any of the other conversations that went on. I know that I wasn't told anything and none of us got involved Joe

I do not recall any tankers being ordered out on foot patrols. I believe that some of the tankers went out periodically because they wanted to. Regardless the CIB was awarded only to those soldiers slotted in 11B, 11C, and 11D positions and Officers who were assigned to an infantry slot. As an armored cavalry officer my MOS was 1204 not eligible for a CIB even though I walked my fair share of foot patrols and the other soldiers on my track were 11D scouts. Just the way it is. Zero

Hey Coop, You implied your Tankers went out on foot almost interchangeably with 11B & 11D or something to that effect. That MOS wasn't the first consideration. I understand and appreciate the willingness of all good Troopers



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to do what they are told....pitch in where need and all that. But the more I thought about what you said it seems kind of....well, like a poor leadership decision. The argument could be made that 'anyone' can do a patrol. Maybe so, but if you get hit then do they know what to do? I was always told that's when training kicks in and 'saves your life or the life of your buddy'. There is no time for OJT at that point. BUT the real core of my concern is not the just Tanker out on foot mucking up.....it's ME an 11D trying to fill a Tanker slot if I had to. NO WAY could I aim, load or fire the big gun. Have NO clue how it goes. Nor could I drive one....at least I never did. We'd be well and goodly screwed with me on a Tank. Tankers were smarter than I am anyway, they did more complicated stuff, that's how I got 11D, and I almost ended up 11B!!!! It seems a better idea would be to keep ones men where they know what they are doing. Putting and 11D on a Tank while an 11E was on LP makes no sense what-so-ever in a combat situation. Bob 11D

John I was just an E-4 and did end up taking out a patrol or an LP or an ambush on occasion. BUT I knew how. I was trained for it and had some awesome "instructors" OJT-ing me early in my tour too. Put me on your tank and I'd just be in the way!!!!

Bad idea mixing things up to much...IMHO. Bob

I was an E-5 and I sure did not want to take out a patrol by myself. I would probably got us all zapped. John

Bob when we did go out with you guys it was a pain in the ass for you guys always telling us what and how to do things. Such as spread out, don't get to close, don't highlight yourself on paddy dikes. I guess there were a few more things but you guys did take care of us and brought us back in. John

Coop, Tankers going on foot patrol must have ended in late 1969. I heard some of the earlier guys say that tankers had been going on foot patrols, but the practice of doing that ended before I got there. It only made sense, because tankers didn't really have any training in dismounted tactics and operations in AIT like the 11B and 11D guys did. We did go outside the wire to set up claymore ambushes and trip flares, and from time to time we would go away from the vehicles to check things out, but I don't remember any tankers from 3rd platoon going on an ambush, LP/OP, or any other formal dismounted operation while I was there. It



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seems that I remember hearing something about tankers complaining that they did not get CIBs, and the brass said that men with the 11E MOS weren't authorized a CIB. The tankers then said, if we don't get a CIB, why should we go on a dismounted patrol? I guess that it was a hot topic shortly before I got in country in December 1969. I don't think that any of the tankers would have refused to go on dismounted patrols if ordered, but I sure don't remember any tankers doing dismounts on a regular basis while I was there. Jim 3rd Pelt. Dec 69 - Nov 70

There was a discussion about it and that's about as far as it went. I certainly don't remember any 2nd platoon tankers on dismounted ambush. I also remember the discussion about the CIB and I think the final decision on that was if a tanker did participate then he could be put in for one. I don't recall that ever happening though Joe

Joe I was a Tanker and when I got to the Troop Sgt D. was on the Hospital ship and from what the guys said he was a Tanker and Tankers did not go out on foot. Ok while he was away we got a grunt PSG and he said we all were in a Cav unit so we all did what we were told to. I can't remember his name but I know when Sgt D. came back he went to the 1/77 and got killed by an RPG. He had us go out on mine sweeps and I went out with him on an ambush after losing an argument about tankers not going out and he said if he went we would and I did. We did argue about the CIB but they said no to Tankers. I don't recall any Tankers going out on Patrols and when Sgt D. came back the 11b shit stopped. Did I leave anything out? John

Merle, Barrows and I were with him at Ft.Knox, but in a different company and I can't think of His name either. He requested to go back to 1/77 after "D" got back. It seems to me he had an Attitude.

Hey there LT. The night we were hit while out on night ambush, Barnes and I were 11b10 two were tankers, and one was National Guard....go figure. Take care Wally



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WOW two 11B E-3's? (11B-10 equals E-3. 11B-20 is E-4) The rest not even qualified to be out there???? That doesn't sound very bright to me!!!!!!!!!!!! Who was patrol leader??? Who sent out a mix like that? Bob

Well John I sure didn't mean to scratch any scabs but you got to admit, from the information Wally provided it sounded like a poorly chosen ambush. No knowledgeable leadership and three guys with no business there in the first place. Bob

First I'd like to say that I believe most all of the line troops, meaning not supply or the mess group, were smart enough to learn most any of the jobs we had. I had never trained on tracks or tanks being an 11B but with some one on one and a little practice I mastered driver, loader and fired weapons I had never even seen before. Pretty much most of whatever we were taught in AIT did not apply in the real world. I pulled many an ambush with Ken Dye, Clarkie, Paul Schiano, Dan Lohman, and Frank Long from the 11th Cav and we worked as a team because we trained as a team in the field every night. We had our own system and everyone knew his job. We had our own hand signals and moves that became standard and we always knew what the other guy was doing and thinking. After all of the advanced party rotated back to the states I had a new batch of guys with me and I was now an ambush leader. I could have and did train everyone I ever took out on an ambush and had them right up my ass the first few times we went out. I was trained by the best and just passed down what I had learned or experienced myself first hand. If Wally went out with Don Barnes then he had a guy that knew his shit. I had well over 100+ ambushes under my belt by the time Barnes arrived. I pulled many ambushes with Barnes, Ronnie Baynes and Al Hall before I left and they knew their shit. Mike "Kid" Davis was also one of my regulars on ambush. I trusted my life with every one of these guys and I felt as safe as I do today sitting in my living room. Attitude and your willingness to learn and survive were as important as any training you ever received. The guys that came before you would teach you all they knew. You just had to be smart enough to pay attention, listen and learn. Your MOS didn't mean shit nor did your rank. I remember one time when we had one E6 and four E5's on the infantry track, A15, and we never once worried about rank. Everyone had a job and we all did what we were supposed to do. One thing about our Cav unit is we had guys from all walks of life, different age groups, almost every state in the union and just

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about every MOS you could think of. I can only speak for the 1st plt but I imagine that the rest of the Troop was pretty much the same. We were all in it together and we relied on each other to survive. I'd also like to say that shit burning was also my favorite. It sure beat the hell out of KP or perimeter guard duty. Peace, Rag

PS Bob, I don't think anyone took offense to your post but it sure did get a good conversation going. I'd also like to say that I didn't envy the tankers when they hit a mine and had to replace track and road wheels and that drive gear was a real ball breaker.

Bob, I did not imply anything with regards to Tankers and 11B; I simply stated how it was. During the period of time when the first group of Troopers were heading back to the states the Troop was under strength. We had tracks with as few as 3 or 4 Troopers, as an E5 I was tank section leader. It was during this time that I remember having to send Tankers out on ambush patrol - instead of sending an FNG out I went in their place. It was not a question of poor leadership or etc it was doing what had to be done to get the job done. Coop

Reading all of these messages about pulling ambush patrol and tankers not getting awarded the CIB is causing me to tell my story. As most of you know, I came to A Troop from the 11th Cav after my Squadron in the 11th Cav deactivated in February 1971. My MOS was 11E (tanker), but I was assigned to drive an ACAV because all of the tanker slots in my platoon were filled. I told my new TC that I didn't know anything about driving one of those things and he just smiled and said, "Welcome to 11D." Well, being on an ACAV afforded me the splendid opportunity to go out on dismounted night ambush patrol every third night or so. I didn't pull as many night ambushes as Rag, but I figured I did at least 90 of them while I was in the 11th Cav for the first nine months of my tour. Hell, I found myself wanting to go on those patrols; I even was in charge of several of them (as a SP/4). One day we were told the Regimental Commander was coming out to our NDP to give out some hero badges, so about half of the troops stood in a half-assed formation looking our best (as good as we could look out in the field, anyway). My first sergeant told me to get in the line of the men receiving awards, and when the Regimental Commander got to me he pinned on



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the usual Bronze Star, Army Commendation Medal and then a CIB. Right away, I'm thinking to myself that I'm an 11E and not authorized to wear the CIB. After the formation was over and all the brass left I corralled the first sergeant and asked him why I was awarded a CIB. He told me that if a soldier works in an MOS other than his primary MOS for 90 consecutive days he is entitled to have that MOS assigned to him as his secondary MOS and can receive all of the awards that MOS is authorized. The first sergeant then gave me the necessary orders awarding me 11D as my secondary MOS along with orders for the CIB. I was stationed in the 2nd Cav in Germany after my tour in Vietnam, and I used to catch all sorts of shit from the officers and senior NCO's about wearing a CIB as an 11E. I got to the point where I carried around a copy of my orders and just whipped them out whenever someone questioned my CIB. I have to tell you though, if someone was to take away everything I brought back from Vietnam, along with all of my memories from that place, and just left me with my CIB, I would be extremely happy and proud because it is my most prized possession from that time over there. Just as a side note, the 11th Cav was different from most Cav units in that just about every swinging dick assigned to that unit was in the field. The only guys back in the rear were an NCOIC (usually an E-6 who had been wounded), an armorer/supply sergeant, a Troop clerk and the cooks. However, the cooks came out to the field each evening on the resupply shithook with their hot chow, and they spent the night and cooked us hot breakfast in the morning. This was no problem since we were a self-contained Regiment. During my time with A Troop (three months) I think I went out on at least a dozen dismounted ambush patrols. Since I was an 11E I didn't have to go on those patrols, but I volunteered to go. I even went out on a couple of three-day forward observer missions when we were around the Khe Sanh area. Hell, back then it wasn't nothing but something to do, I guess. Anyway, those are my two cents worth. Take care, J.T.

JT, I have friends who went to the armor school and were tankers -1203 MOS but were assigned to infantry positions in Vietnam and they were awarded the CIB because it was their duty position as was yours when you were assigned to a scout track. Zero



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Lt I wanted a CIB but I didn't go out enough to deserve one. That is something earned not given to make you look good. A Tanker and proud. John

As for crossing MOS I don't remember much of that at all. I think we were short a guy on the mortar track and they put a tanker or scout on the mortar track, and there may have been an 11B on a scout track or an 11D on the infantry track, but I don't remember anyone other than a school trained 11E on any of the tanks. I suppose the way we operated changed over time, and depended on the personalities of the platoon leaders, troop commander, and the senior NCOs. The Cav was not a one size fits all experience; everyone lived their own wartime experience and has their own memories of it. Jim

Things did indeed change a lot over time. When I got to the Troop all of the original advanced party was still there maybe minus a few guys that had rotated back to the states. These guys had been together and trained together as a unit back at Ft. Carson so they really worked closely together for a long time before going to Nam as a unit. When we had the infusion with the 11th Cav this really shook things up. I was an 11B and I rode on and at times drove A15. I rode on the tanks a few times and even was a loader on occasion. Eventually I became the TC on A14 so I actually was in all three MOS's at one time or another and we had plenty of guys that did this. If one of the tracks or tanks were short handed we moved guys around to fill the slots. Rag

I was under the impression the last remnants of the Advanced party were still there in May of 69....what it may have been was the earliest replacements, guys like you Rag and the people a few months ahead of you. I know some of the guys that helped me the most early on rotated out in Sept. Oct. & Nov. To me as a FNG the guys in second plt. Seemed to have their shit in order. There was a hand full that seemed especially good and I was fortunate enough to be able to learn from them. But for some reason we didn't interchange tank/track personnel much. The tankers did their deal but the tracks were totally interchangeable. 11B or 11D didn't make a bit of difference. Usually a Scout drove the track but from there on it was like a combined MOS. 25 sometimes had a fifth guy but usually all tracks had just four. The scout tracks always just had just four. In fact, as I think about it, the only time even 25 had five people was when another track was



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down and they spread the gunners. Left the driver or the TC back with the track but the rest went out with the troop. Bob

Bob, I was TC on the mortar track as a PFC. Smitty took over around November of 69 and I went to driving it. I pulled night ambushes before 29 got running but after that mostly day patrols. At night, we were needed to man the tube. I think the most fun was as M79 man on a tank after 25 hit a mine. We didn't get a new PC for awhile so I rode on the tank. 29 didn't operate effectively until around Sept/ Oct of 69. They had to replace everything except the body to make it reliable. Before that it wouldn't make it 200 yards. Bob 2nd Platoon, 69-70

Bob, it was just you and Smitty on 29 then? Bob R

Jim Kuntz was on it too but I don't remember when he got there. He was 11C also. Smitty and I trained a new crew around May of 70 because we were leaving in June. I believe one of the guys was JD Holstien. Bob 2nd Platoon, 69-70

Things did indeed change a lot over time. When I got to the Troop all of the original advanced party was still there maybe minus a few guys that had rotated back to the states. These guys had been together and trained together as a unit back at Ft. Carson so they really worked closely together for a long time before going to Nam as a unit. When we had the infusion with the 11th Cav this really shook things up. I was an 11B and I rode on and at times drove A15. I rode on the tanks a few times and even was a loader on occasion. Eventually I became the TC on A14 so I actually was in all three MOS's at one time or another and we had plenty of guys that did this. If one of the tracks or tanks were short handed we moved guys around to fill the slots. Rag

Bob, I think most all of the advanced party, except for Coop, were gone by May and June of 69. The infusion with the 11th Cav sent us a bunch of guys with much less time in country as our advanced party so you probably had guys like me and some folks from the 11th Cav. I can remember as many as 9 or 10 guys on A15, the infantry track, at one time or another. I don't think we ever had less than 6 or 7 guys. After the infusion we got two E5's on our track, Frank Long and Kerry Pebble. Kerry eventually became the R&R NCO. His wife had a baby and he was a nervous wreck so Ken Dye got him out of the field. After the fragging in LZ Nancy, Paul Schiano from A15 became the Troop clerk when Coles and Jackson were

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killed. But like I said we were never below 6 guys on A15 the whole time I was on her. And we did move around. I rode on 1st plt Sgt Mac's tank a couple of times out in the field and I was on A13 when I got my first Purple Heart after we hit a mine. I can also remember driving A13 and A14 a few times before I became the TC on A14 with Al Hall as my driver, Baynes, Barnes and sometimes Sniper Tom rode with me. You were right that when a track was down usually the Driver and or the TC stayed behind and the rest of the guys went to other tracks or filled in for guys on R&R etc. I really believe that because we rarely worked together or as a whole Troop each platoon kind of did their own thing. I never served in any platoon except the 1st so I don't know how things were in the other platoons. I know that I would have done anything I was asked to do because we were a team and I had no problem working with or riding with anyone, other than Lt Fallon (Thunder chicken). He and Kaufman were the only leaders I didn't like much. But then again I was spoiled after serving under guys like Ken Dye, PSG Mc Neil, he was a drunken lifer but he knew his shit, Lt Canda and Lt. De Somer (Shadow). They were a great bunch of guys and it was an honor to have served with them.
Rag

I was trained as 11C, but drove, M60 gunner, rode on tanks and was a mortar man. Smitty was a recoilless rifleman and did a bunch of different things too. It sure beats walking!!! Bob, 2nd Platoon, 69-70

I can't imagine 9 or 10 guys on a track. I saw it once when we were around the, was it first if the 11th Infantry?? Anyway, all they needed was a chicken or two to look like a Mex tour bus, people hanging all over. Sounds like you had an over abundance of NCO's too. As I remember it at least one track and often more had an E-4 in the TC slot most of the time. When Boshell and Hunter got to the Platoon in Dec. and Jan. of '70 (BOTH those guys were as good as it gets!!! IMHO) they were the first E-6's I recall seeing on our tracks. The tankers always seemed to have at least a couple E-6's and a few E-5's. Bob Taylor ended up the motor track TC as an E-4 and did that for several months I think. As he said he was all over but mostly I remember him and Neil Smith on the motor track. I don't recall if they even had a third guy. Turtle was another M-60 gunner; we were on the same track quite a bit too. It was like shuffling a deck of cards much of the time. And yes we all did what was asked....mostly. I remember the one time I truly regret acting cowardly, when four of us tried to refuse to go on LP/OP/Ambush



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(whatever it was that night) when we went into the Bi Long Valley. We were scared shitless and convinced all the hills that surrounded us were crawling with NVA. I think everyone was convinced of that, not just those of us sent out that night. After heavy duty threats and VERY DIRECT orders from Lt Perrino we went...well one guy didn't but Zero made his threat good and sent him to LBJ. I think that night was the most afraid I've ever been in my life. Bob

It could get a little crowded for sure. We always had an ambush patrol so it was no problem sleeping anyway. Ken Dye was the TC and he was an E6. I was a TC as an E4 also but did get my stripe after a month or so. Had to face the E5 board before I could get the rank. I worst part about being on the Infantry track was we always were at the end of the column so we ate a lot of dust. But we had a great group of guys on A15 and we all got along really well, even with all the NCO's. We also didn't have a lot of turnover so we worked together for a long time. Rag

A Troop was official alerted for deployment to Vietnam on 25 March 1968. With only a 12 week notice, an intensive training program was initiated. A Troop took time out for Civil Disturbance Training and deployment to Washington D.C. in the time fame of March and part of April. A Troop (1st Brigade) concentrated its personnel and loaded its vehicles on railroad cars for departure to Southeast Asia in June 1968. The advance party of 1st Brigade 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) included most of A Troop 4th Squadron 12th Cavalry (which consisted of 5 officers and 220 enlisted men). They departed from Peterson Field in C141 Aircraft July 1, 1968. First elements of the 1st Brigade 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) arrived in Vietnam 2 July 1968 and proceed to FABULOUS Wunder Beach in Quang Tri Province. The balance of A Troop departed with "Task Force Diamond" (1st Brigade 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized), directly to Da Nang during 22 - 30 July, the second largest airlift in history (at that point in time). With the 5th Inf being send to Nam despite not being ready for combat operations (that is one reason we sat on the beach for so long). It seems that the Division had been wrapped up in riot control and was behind in their training and in the outfitting of equipment to be used in Nam. So it was held back until sometime in September before the whole unit was declared fit for duty.

According to "The Rise and Fall of an American Army" by Shelby Stanton (1985, Novato CA, Presidio books), the 5th I.D. (Mech) brought 1,072 armored vehicles with them. Once there, they received 140 APCs, 8 mortar carriers from Fort Hood



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and a total of 67 M48 tanks from Ft. Knox and the Letterkenny Army Depot in Chambersburg, PA. During the shakedown period, the division's readiness was complicated by the September monsoons which temporarily isolated the division on the wrong side of the Cam Lo main bridge. But the day was saved by aerial resupply. Some elements of the division came into enemy contact in August

January 1969

Most of the advanced party, including Swinny and Mills, were sent to the 11th ACR

11 July 69

Troy and W.P. left for the world; these Troopers were part of the original crew of A16.

16 July 69

LZ Angel Shadow comes up to tank and wants one man for AP; I went because 2 of my crew are on R& R and the third is new. This will be my first AP, out of eight men seven were first timers on AP. I stay awake almost all night.

19Sep

I am TC on A15 now (an old Tanker now a Grunt). Coop

I really wanted to be TC on A15. I had spent all of my tour up to that time on "Playmate and really wanted to stay with her. Dye, Larson, Clark and Long were all gone by then. Who was left on A15 when you took over Coop? Should have been Dan Lohman and a kid we called Preacher, Can't remember his name. I do remember Troy Gullion, Bill Wilson (Willie Pee), Jim Taylor, I still can't find these two guys, but I don't remember how I ended up on A14. Rag

There is only one way to get a CIB..

“my CIB is one of my prize possessions.” “my most prized possession”

“my CIB means more to me than anything”

Yup, the cav is special and A Troop most special of all!!!!



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And as far as I was concerned, my Cav brass and a unit patch on my right shoulder was at least as distinguishing as a CIB!

I do know that we were a tight group of guys and did whatever was needed. We never really had a problem with what MOS one had only when the shit hit we were together.

I always felt there should be a special MOS for Cav Troopers because we were a mix of 11B, 11D and 11E. We all crossed MOS's at one time or another



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INTERACTIONS: Troop – Troopers – Officers

Yeh, I knew that Bob and I were reliving the past. Joe - It gets better each year doesn't it Joe?? (-: Bob - Yep it sure does Bob.

.... I'm really glad that this little band of brothers has found a way to communicate. Let's keep it going for another 40 years or so. Jim Good

I got to A Troop on Dec 10th 1968 and most all of the originals were all still there from Ft. Carson. They were a very tight group and we FNG's were welcomed into their family with open arms. Not much pot out in the field had a few heads but they kept to themselves. There were more potheads in the rear but we had very little to do with them as we were rarely in base camp. We NEVER had any race problems. One of my closest and dearest friends to this day is Gene Clark. Black and white was never even discussed. We on the Infantry track were as tight as you could get. Clarkie pissed Thunder Chicken off and he threw him of the command track and sent him to us on A15 as punishment. Gene Clark was welcomed as we all were and we all pulled together. To this day Clarkie is closer to me than my three blood brothers ever were and when we call each other Brother we really mean it from the heart. We were always there for each other and still are to this day. Ken Dye was our TC and he made a fine tuned machine out of our group. I owe my life to Ken cause he taught me how to survive and stay alive in Nam. This helped me a lot later when all these guys rotated back to the states and I became the TC on A14. I was also there when we made the big swap with the 11th Cav. I really missed guys like Jim Mills and Sweeny Swinford after they went to the 11th but we got a bunch of good guys in return and the Troop hardly missed a beat. I have heard a lot of bad stories about the Troop after I left and it's to bad. A Troop was a crack fighting unit when I got there and everyone knew each other cause they had been together for so long. I never met a better bunch of well trained, kind, helpful, caring straight shooters in my life. It was an honor and a privilege to have known and served with these great Americans. The two things that still stick in my mind today is that I knew anyone of these guys would die for me and that they would never leave me behind. That is a bond that very few men will ever know in their lives and it is a bond that can't be put into words or ever explained to someone that never served in combat. Peace, Rag

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The Troop was always a crack unit. You and the Original guys were from, literally, a different Generation of sorts.... those that came later were a bit different, but the Troop remained a crack unit. When the shit hit the fan everyone was up to the task.... See ya Wally

Bob, Rag, Wally, Joe, and All Cav members who have attended the reunions, I have always felt it to be an honor to be a member of the Cav. The advance party set a great foundation for members like myself who had the responsibility to carry on. From my first reunion I felt like I was with you guys during your tour. This is a special bond that future attendees need to experience. Regretfully I won't be able to attend this year, but I'll be there 2008 with bells on. Please say a prayer for Ken Pennington's brother; I was in route to visit him when he called me of the sad news of his brother's heart condition. This was my 07 reunion but I did make contact with Roy Cannon 3rd Plt 70-71. I'll continue to work on him and others to attend. I know from experience you have to attend a reunion to know its impact on you. To The Brotherhood of the Cav. Trap

Hey there Gary, Those that came and remained after us, carried the Cav flag just as proudly and honorably as those who carried it first and before you...Lots to be proud of. Gonna miss you this year, look forward to seeing you again really soon. hugs to Peg, wally

I can't exactly remember when, I think it was in June or July of 69. Anyway the whole A Troop would have been rotated back to the states at about the same time and that would have left about 20 or so of us guys that weren't in the advanced party there. So higher ups got this idea to swap a certain number of our A Troop guys, can't remember exactly how many, maybe about 30 or 40, with the 11th Cav which wasn't going to have the same problem because they were a much bigger unit than we were. With this move we acquired guys with different rotation dates and the Troop was then able to get smaller numbers of FNG's as these guys rotated back to the states. It made a lot of sense but we really didn't like it cause these guys were family. We lost a lot of good soldiers but we picked up some pretty good guys also. It was a lot harder on the advanced party guys than on guys like me cause these guys had been together for a long time. If you make it to a Reunion remind me to get one of the guys to explain it to you better.



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I don't even remember how the decided who would go and who would stay.
Hope this helps. Peace, Rag

Rag, I still remember the day you left....I often wondered if I would ever see you
again....great how God works. Wally

Wally, I agree with you but I've heard some stories about how bad things got
near the end of the Troops tour and I always found it hard to believe. I never had
any of the problems some of the guys in late 70 and 71 talk about. Even after all
of the advanced party guys left A Troop was a crack fighting unit and still was
when I left in Dec. 69. Rag

Rag, I got there in July 69 and my first impression was that the troop was pretty
stable manpower wise. Because everyone went in different directions is was
hard to determine who was new and who had been around. I'm going to Tunica
so we'll get together. Joe

Wally, God sure does work in some mysterious ways. I remember the day I left
too. It was really a hard thing to do. I wanted very badly to get out of there while
I was still alive and in one piece, but I also didn't want to leave you guys. I figured
I would probably never see any of you guys again and that really hurt me to think
about it. I remember I stopped and talked to LTee for a long while and he told me
one time at a Reunion how much that meant to him. We became very close in the
time we were together and it's hard to say goodbye to people that you are that
close to. I also remember the day I got a letter I wrote to Al Hall back from the
Red Cross telling me he was KIA and they could not deliver the letter. That really
knocked me on my ass. It ate away at me for years thinking maybe his death was
my fault because I wasn't there or I forgot to tell him something that could get
him hurt. I never found out about Al's death until I talked to you Wally at the first
Reunion. I'm glad I also had a chance to go to see Al's Mother before she died. It
was very healing for both of us. As a TC my biggest fear was losing one of the men
under my command. That kept me up a lot of nights with worries. I never wanted
to live my life knowing someone got killed or seriously wounded while they were
my responsibility. Like they say, It's
lonely at the top. I can't imagine being a platoon leader or Troop commander. I
thank God every day for bringing us all back together again. Seeing you guys each



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year at a Reunion is the best thing in my life and it sure helped me get over Nam.
Peace, Rag

Rag, Lt was easy to get close to.... once you got close to him, if you know what I mean. It took him over a month to stop calling me "hey you"!! I did not blame him, I was really a pain in the ass.... and then to top it off one day I asked him to let me write to his sister...he thought I was out of my frigging mind, but after lots of coaxing he let me write to her.... the rest is history, to this day she writes to me daily. Al's death to this day haunts me.... I was sitting right where he sat after I got up to go sit with Big Daddy.... one of those things... He once told me if he got killed in Nam he wanted to die with a 60 in his arms blowing away gooks.... his words.....two months later he was dead, shot in the back, accidentally. Incredible stuff. January 9th is not a day that I can forget. These are the things that PTSD is made up of, we all have it to some degree and it effects us all in different ways. Take care buddy. Wally

Wally, Yeah, LTee was a hell of a man. He and I kind of hit it off right away for some reason. I liked him from the first time I met him. He always told it to you straight, without the bullshit and that was rare in the Army. I had a lot of respect for Frank and I still do. I really miss him at the Reunions. Al's death really set me back. Your number just wasn't up that day Brother and poor Al was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Fate is a very funny thing. I was really amazed at how little Al's Mother and family knew about his death. He was a pretty bad kid when he was home and his Mom said he was always in and out of trouble. Al was a lot younger than is brothers and sister and just a hell raiser. I let them know that he was a good soldier and never gave me any problems. I really wish I could get Don Barnes and Ronnie Baynes to a Reunion, as I'd like to see those two again. I've talked to Don a few times on the phone but can't seem to get him to come. He's been married a few times and he tells me his ex's have all his money. I've offered to bankroll him but he hasn't taken me up on it yet. Take care Bro. Hope the rehab is coming along fine. You're in my prayers. Peace, Rag

Hope you guys won't mind my coming in on this thread. I read Rag's words and it reminds me of one of the reasons I got out of the Army.... I hated having to spend time with what seemed like two wars. One was the VN war and the NVA, VC, etc. The other was the unacknowledged one with the system - at least for me and I



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think perhaps for others as well - which involved trying to stay appropriate to the sworn duty to perform the duties one was commissioned for, and the other was to do the best to protect one's troops from the inanities of a war that for various political reasons wasn't being conducted and supported the way an action in WWII would have been. I remember once, as CO of C/1-77, a field grade did the usual thing...chopped down to walk over and make some ridiculous comments and suggestions. I was asked for an opinion, rather than told what to do. So, I gave an opinion, which was if that's what he wanted me to do, then he ought to relieve me right then, because I wasn't going to order the company to do that I figured he wouldn't though, 'cause we had the best maintenance status of the battalion (the "reward" for which was being out in the bush for more time than the other companies, or so it seemed anyway. I didn't get relieved but I guess you could say I figured out then and there I wasn't bound for future military career success, heheh. Whenever I heard the sound of choppers, I'd cringe.... not for concern about gun ships, actions or dust offs, but out of concern for what piece of upper echelon BS would come down with one. BTW, my initial battalion CO of 1/77 was LTC John McNamara...no finer gentleman ever put on a pair of Army boots than he.... he was not the fellow to whom I offered my comments. I believe LTC McNamara caught hell from above too, for pushing for the right support systems for his troops, though I can't validate that with certainty. He was a very very admirable man. I'm grateful he was my CO, and hope to this day I justified my existence with the service I rendered him. Hank

JT, I knew there was a name for it I just couldn't remember they called it the infusion. It really made sense to do the infusion but we didn't like it. You know how you kind of get in your little comfort zone and you don't want anyone rocking the boat. They say change is good but most of us don't like change. I didn't like the infusion but I wasn't one of the ones that got moved. I can only imagine how they must have felt. See ya at the Reunion Bro. Peace, Rag

Hank, I echo your sentiment wholeheartedly. I too got into more than one pissing contest with some highers. One in particular involved our return from the Ba Long valley operations. This guy was overhead observing 3rd doing some recon by fire across a rather deep ravine. He got on my freq and ordered me to do a left flank movement and assault the "enemy positions". I initially tried to explain that we were not in contact, were conducting a recon by fire and the terrain was



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impossible to cross. Apparently he wasn't aware that from the air, most ground looks flat. As the transmissions grew more heated, another party entered the conversation. It was Red Devil 6 (Gen. Burke) himself. He knew that A troop had it's shit together and after asking for my assessment, he firmly told the "other guy" to leave our push and meet him back at the Brigade TOC. When 3rd finally got back to Quang Tri, after another week or so, I went to the Brigade TOC to engage in a further conversation with the "other guy". When I asked the RTO where I could find this individual, he chuckled and replied that he had been relieved and transferred out of the Brigade. The RTO explained that apparently this dude got into a pissing contest with some LT in the field and was no longer available. I politely thanked the RTO and promptly left with a big shit-eating grin on my still filthy face! I also agree that LTC McNamara and his predecessor, LTC Baird were two very fine and concerned commanders. I felt very fortunate to have served under them. However, my greatest experience was being a part of A Troop. Best regards to all.

Earl (40)

Glad to hear your tale Earl...it's a good one. I'm also glad you wrote for another reason also, and that's to give a tip of the hat to General Burke. I agree with you he was a fine CO, and I am glad you named him, as I should have when I mentioned colonel McNamara. I assume Burke had picked McNamara, though it's not always the case that the general always picks the battalion CO's. In any event, one was a reflection of the other, that's for sure. My understanding is that General Burke got a second star and was sent South to command the 4th Inf Div. Incidentally, I have always admired McNamara for when he, as a battalion CO, obviously in a crucial position in his career, told the assistant brigade commander to take a hike...situation was, C 1/77 was in base refitting for a couple of days. The brigade assist. (an artilleryman by background, full colonel, never had worked with tanks or armor) came to the motor park and told us we were going to have to take all the fifties mounted on tripods welded to the top of the M48 turrets off and reinstall them inside the turrets. (Apparently he and the CG who replaced Burke had looked at the pictures inside the maintenance manuals.) Mac tried to explain to him the 48's and especially their turrets were pieces of crap and no turret stayed functional after traveling more than a click or two out in the AO's. To put them inside would cost the unit the use of the weapons, and the tankers their lives.... tried to tell him nicely, Then tried to tell



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him not only was that view based on what was happening their in I Corps, but what was also his (Mac's) experience going back to when he was an instructor, NCO grade I believe, back at Knox over several previous tours. When that didn't go down, he then told the other guy putting the fifties inside the turrets wouldn't happen on his watch, cause he (Mac) would not give the orders, no matter the outcome for himself. I always admired him, for a lot of reasons before that time, but obviously that incident only added to his luster in my opinion. He didn't get relieved, and we left our fifties on top of the turrets. However I believe that was a fall on the sword that cost LTC Mc big time for his career interests. As I said, I admired him then and still do. Hank

Hank,

I forgot to mention that then LTC Niven Baird was assigned to the War College here at Carlisle Barracks in the early 70's. He made O6 and retired here. He and I bump into each other from time to time. I try to keep him updated as to our A Troop reunions, etc. I don't think he is interested in casinos and Vegas. Perhaps in the future if we have another reunion in the DC area, he may be interested in attending. I also gave him the address for the Troop web site. Regards, Earl

Earl, I think LTC Baird finished his tour just about the time I arrived. I remember the name, but not any personal contact with him. I hope we get to meet at some future reunion. Thanks, Hank

Earl, I think LTC Baird finished his tour just about the time I arrived. I remember the name, but not any personal contact with him. I hope we get to meet at some future reunion. Thanks, Hank

LTC Niven Baird was the CO of 1/77 Armor 69-70. He followed LTC Thomas Miller and preceded LTC McNamara. A Troop was "attached" to 1/77 for operational control. As someone said on a recent email, the Battalion CO used A troops 3 platoons as he used an entire tank/infantry team, ie a company-size unit. Regards to All Earl (40)

I arrived in February 70, so was interviewed by him on arrival and must have seen him thereafter, but its McNamara that stands out in my memory.... just goes to show, time marches on and CRS. H



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Hank, I know exactly what you mean. I never considered the Army as a career mainly because of the bullshit. Seems like some higher up know nothing and do nothing, was always on your ass to do shit you knew was either wrong or just plain stupid. I always had a hard time keeping my mouth shut especially if I knew I was right or if they asked me to do something stupid that would endanger the men I was responsible for. I started at the bottom so I knew what the PFC's were going thru. I always felt that a man's trust had to be earned and as an NCO the men under me needed to trust me and know that I was looking out for their well being. Every one above me in A Troop made me feel secure knowing they were looking out for me so it only made sense to do the same when I got in a position to be in some type of command. Nam wasn't to bad but stateside sucked. They were always playing little chicken shit games and trying to mess with your head. Two years was enough for me. But I must say that I'm glad I did it cause I met a lot of wonderful guys that are very close to me to this day. Peace, Rag

Agree with all you say, Rag. And I'm glad too for all the interactions I had with so many good people from all walks of life...that's one of the great benefits of military service. It bothers me that so few of our congressional members have ever served, or for that matter, worked a job or run a business outside of politics or law. Hank

Hey Lt. (Earl) I was only an E-4 at my highest rank and even I recall getting into some pissing contest with higher higher.... I recall one particular one when I was back in the rear and the General came to do the GI inspection on the motor pool... such bullshit...no mechanic in the history of war worked harder or more diligently than our group of guys torquing wrenches... Well anyways here they came in their starched stuff in 198-degree weather and Sgt Peterson was walking around like he had a stick up his tail.... with his saluting hand stuck to his forehead...I was standing by my desk as if I was back in the block...Sgt Pete chewed me out right then and there...the General told me to stand easy... loved it...such crazy shit. The second story is one of my favorite Capt. Spruill stories... We were out on the field and had not had mail or hot chow for about 10 days, Capt. was on the horn with Battalion radio... The Bat. radio guy said we would not be getting hot chow or mail again this evening... Capt. asked why...the reply was because "higher higher says we are not able to send it out". ...Capt. Spruill, with a very stern and loud voice responded.... " You



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tell higher higher that if I do not get hot chow and mail tonight, for my men, I am going to come in and personally kick his ass..."... You talk about inspirational.... to this day I use that phrase..."I will personally kick your ass".... of course I am a lot of talk, but The Capt. was serious as hell... Take care buddy. Wally

Wally,Hank,et al., These pissing contest stories brought back another recollection about the time I was the mortar platoon leader 1/77 and had 2 guns with me at A4 and 2 guns with my platoon sgt at C2. Someone higher decided to have a Command Maintenance Inspection at A4. When the chopper landed and they explained why they were there, I quickly advised them that we were in a war zone and that not only did we not need their damn inspection, but we also did not need the NVA mortars that usually arrived shortly after any chopper landed. Took about 15 minutes, in came the mortars, out went the inspection team! Never had another CMMI in the field for the rest of my tour. I guess some people regardless of rank are just slow learners! Regards, Earl

Hey Lt., Those dammed inspection guys used to show up looking and acting like Hot lips Hoolahan.... if you know what I mean...saluting their asses off, looking all spiffy and making sure that someone at higher higher knew they were doing their job...funny bunch. Wally

Joe, We got the Sheridans when I was still in the field...I remember thinking that they were a piece of shit...they reminded me of a Falcon compared to a Cadillac....It was march and we were at Cua Viet... I left the field in mid April and we had that bullshit inspection sometime in late May.....can't forget that..Sgt. Peterson made sure of that. Wally

I remember Sgt Peterson.....he had no sense of humor what so ever when it came to how we treated "his" tracks! The only time he could keep tabs on us was in Cua Viet where he hung out in a guard tower. Bob

Wally, The one I remember most was a night we were out on ambush, Ken Dye, Gene Clark and two or three others. Can't exactly remember who else or where we were but Ken knows. Anyway we setup a claymore mine ambush on one trail and the 5 or six of us got down into a ditch along another trail close by. Things were quiet for a little while and then all of a sudden we hear Gooks talking. Soon we see some NVA coming down the trail. They are all carrying motor rounds on



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their backs and they are booking down this trail like they were in their backyard. Ken gives us a signal to get ready. Well there is no end to this group in site. I quit counting at 105 and they were still coming. Ken had reported to higher ups that we had positive NVA troop movement when we first heard these guys coming. All of a sudden some A-hole from Battalion Hdq gets on the horn and says "Spring the ambush" like there was 2000 of us out there. They keep telling us to let it rip and of course we knew it was all over for us if we did. We never did anything and to this day I'm pretty sure that the Gooks knew we were there. They were close enough to us that we could have reached out and touched their feet. These guys kept coming until almost daybreak. I never saw so many enemies in one place during my whole tour. I couldn't believe this jerk wanted us to kill ourselves as we probably would have only got a few of these guys anyway. They had our position and they could have sent a fire mission down on these guys if they wanted to. But nothing was ever done. All I can say is our pucker factor was as high as it could get.

Another ambush I remember was about the same setup. Claymore mines on one trail and us on another. About 2:00AM the claymore mines go off. One hell of a noise. We get ready and nothing ever happens. Finally after what seemed to be a lifetime it gets light out. We slowly move over to the other trail and here we find two water buffalo all blown to shit. About 5 minute later here comes this old farmer down the trail. He sees his two buffalo all blown away and he starts jumping in our shit. Man was he pissed off. We can't understand what he's saying and Ken can't seem to get him to understand what happened so we just pickup our shit and head back in. I never saw a guys so pissed off in my life as this farmer. We just blew away his tractors so I could feel for the guy. We know that buffalo don't move by themselves at night so some VC must have been out there, but we never saw anyone but this farmer. I was always amazed at how the rear higher ups didn't give shit about your situation in the field as long as you gave them a body count. Rag

Hey Rag, they wanted you to spring the ambush so there would be a whole lot of shooting.... then..... In the morning Higher Higher would have flown in on a helicopter and "assess " the situation.... take a few pictures or have a few pictures of him taken by his camera crew and then put his sorry ass in for a medal. S.O.P.



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I remember people when I got to LZ Nancy. People no one mentions so maybe most of you didn't know them.... second platoon troopers...the Kid...truly was a kid, his name was John Moore. Fast Eddie from Baltimore...real name Luther. John Richardson.... the one from Kentucky. Judd. That's all, just Judd from, I think, Arkansas. Scotty from Baltimore. Bradford from St. Louis. There are lots of others too. Bob Taylor will remember and add a few names to this list. They mostly rotated out before the end of 69. They were the ones that taught us how to survive. Luther "Fast Eddie" is dead. So is Moore "the Kid" (best drag man on patrol I ever knew). I cried when I found out he died and how. I talked to his Mom. We drove through his hometown in Florida cracker country once, that's when I cried. I've tried to find the others; I've had the "troop snoop" on the job but nothing yet. No that's wrong, we did make contact with Richardson but he wanted no part in this. I suspect Bradford is dead too. Scotty seems to have evaporated. There are lots more. Kind of the lost generation of second platoon it seems.

We all remember the same thing differently like Jim Good said. If there were a favorite time or place in Nam mine would be when we were working out of LZ Nancy and Sharon. I don't know why but it is. Maybe it is because I was new and was a bit in awe of all the "seasoned troopers"...Bob

Bob, you are right about the names you mentioned. Scotty was on 25 when we hit a mine in Aug 69. Mike Dierling was the TC. All of us were E3's with varied MOS's. The first memory of LZ Nancy was seeing Capt Robinson firing a 45 cal grease gun in front of the orderly room. I recall him sitting in a chair and firing full auto out towards the perimeter. He probably had a beer close by. I thought, what kind of place is this? After that everything came together. bob t

Bob, I just have to smile when I think of Robinson. I don't know if he was our best CO at all, probably not but in a combat situation, I never served under any that gave me as much confidence. He sure wasn't a REMF officer. It seems we were kind of a cross between F-Troop and the dirty dozen in those days. Leaning heavily toward the dirty dozen. (-: I doubt the 'brass' liked Robinson at ALL! Bob

Cpt Robinson definitely the fair-haired boy around there. He stood up to them all. The 77th

Was notorious for putting us at the bottom of their list. I heard 1sg Church talk



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about things like that. I do remember one time in particular they told us no ice was coming and Cpt Robinson went ballistic. We eventually got some, not much but some. I also 1SG Church was not the CSM's favorite either. Top would get wind he was coming to the area he would say he was going to the motor pool, then head for the mess hall. He was always one step ahead of him. It all started when we went down to Camp Evans and stole the generator set. Ah the memories. Joe

Joe, I have a lot of great memories from my time with the Troop. I too enjoy these little conversations as it jogs my memory and I think of some of the shit that happened over there.

Which reminds me about another story about Capt. Robinson. We were in LZ Sharon and I was sitting on top of my track when some officer comes over and asks, "Is this A Troop?" I replied yes and he said would you please go over to the Officers Club and get your Troop Capt. out of there before he kills someone. So I wander on over and here is Robinson drunk as I have ever seen him waving his 45 around. Now most everyone in the place is under the tables. It seems one of these rear assholes pissed him off and he unloaded his 45 into the roof of the place. I walked in and said Sir I think it's time we headed back to our AO before all the food is gone. He tells the bartender to give me a drink and of course the guy says I can't serve him he's not an officer. So Robinson says he isn't leaving till I have a drink with him. Then he tells the guy there isn't an officer in this place that would make a pimple on this NCO's ass. He's a better soldier and leader on his worst day than all you assholes put together. Robinson was a good man. He knew his shit and he was very concerned for the welfare of his men and that meant a lot to me. A lot of people didn't like him, especially upper command, and he took no shit from anyone. I'd love to get his ass out of Alaska and to a reunion someday. Rag

Bob- Capt. Spruill followed Capt. Kaufman. Wow, what a change! Robinson was the CO when I arrived around August 1st, 1969. I came over 11B and went into HQ platoon. Eaton and Allan Anderson trained me as a RTO at Nancy, then on the commo track. Hal Pierce was our driver, then TC. I got to meet Cpt. Robinson in his heyday. On a stand down day at A4 Robinson took A2, another PC, a tank, and the LTR to recover a 1/61 track that had hit a mine. Robinson was riding on A2 because his track had hit a mine a few days prior. On the way back to A4



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Robinson was sitting on a loose plastic seat on the drivers hatch. He had a beer in one hand and his M79 in the other. We were traversing the side slope of a hill when he got off balance and tipped off his seat. He didn't want to drop the 79 to hold on, and you know he wouldn't drop the beer, so he wrapped his arms around the whip antenna with the spring base. In slow motion he slid down the bending antenna and fell over the side. The track stopped and a few seconds later Robinson stood up. His helmet was twisted on his head, his glasses were hanging on one ear, he had grass on his face, but he still had the 79 and the beer. Keep in mind, I had only been in country about a month, and was just getting over being scared to death all the time. He looked hilarious to me, and I laughed so long at him he started to get really pissed. That incident relieved a ton of stress, although I didn't realize it at the time. I thought the guy was awesome, and he personally taught me a lot about maps, artillery procedures, and how to act in Nam. I'll never forget him. Jim C.

He was good wasn't he Joe. Remember when we couldn't get road wheels for the PC's? Didn't he "re-allocate" a truckload of them from...who knows where...1/77th? Doesn't matter we needed them. I had a great visit with him last year. No way to a reunion.... not cause he doesn't care (he sent the guideon) he just doesn't want to set foot in the lower forty-eight. Maybe he can't. Legally. ??? He was crusty as ever; ready to take on all comers. Definitely a don't f%#k with my boys attitude. He reminds me of Lee Marvin in the Dirty Dozen. Leading a snarly group on an impossible mission that no one wants them to carry out. But, they do. Oh I love my memory.... selective as it may be. Bob

P.S. Joe did you know Captain Robinson retired as a Captain? He must have really pissed off the wrong folks somewhere along the line. I don't know if I dreamed this or not but I think he crossed the wrong folks when he was in Nam with us. According to my remembrance of the conversation with Robinson, "They" sent Capt. Spruill to 'straighten us out'.... and have a 'by the book' CO that listened to the brass...any thing to this??? Maybe it wasn't Spruill but I think it was. Spruill had a hard act to follow if it was him!!!! I really don't remember Spruill much, I don't think he was there very long and I spent six + weeks on the Hospital ship Repose at the end of '69 and early early 70.



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Bob, Capt. Robinson may have had a beer near by but he really was a wino. My older brother worked at Continental Can Co. when I was in Nam and he used to send me unlabeled juice cans filled with my Dad's homemade Dago red wine and other whiskies. They always got thru the x-ray equipment cause they just looked like cans you'd buy at the store. Robinson loved that wine. Drunk or sober he was a hell of a leader and a real soldiers soldier. Next to LT Shadow he was one of the craziest dudes I ever met. And Jim Blair was also pretty nuts. Rag

Bob, Cpt Spruill replaced Cpt Kaufman. Anyway it's funny I was stationed in Alaska 3 years, never dreaming he was there. It would have been great to see him. I remember that I was on the receiving end of one of his blasts on the DMZ. He told me to skirt around a rice paddy, and I told him I couldn't because I had a berm on my left and it was real soft. He said to Just kick it in the ass it wasn't that bad. Meanwhile Duke was telling me it was too soft. Anyway he punched we rolled about 20 feet and that was it. My gun tube was straight up in the air. There was a lot of elephant grass to our left and we started takin Small arms. What a mess. Later on after we got pulled out he chewed my ass. I told him hell, you told me to do it, and I tried to tell ya. Was no sense in going any farther with the conversation. All in all I had a tremendous amount of respect for him. Joe

Ya know Wally, I told some of the guys at one of the reunions but I don't know if you were around or not. I left Vietnam and went to Germany where I was assigned as a commo chief in an Engineer unit, and of all places Baumholder (the armpit of Germany). Anyway it was a construction Battalion and damn near every vehicle was deadlined. I mean nothing work so all we had to do was go to the motor pool Check oil levels and lights and air pressure, 2 times a day 5 days a week. God I hated it. Well somehow or another I found out that Cpt Spruill was a Troop commander in the 14th Cav in Fulda. I called him and he pulled some Strings and got me up there. A little later it was redesignated as the 11th Cav, after they left nam. Funny huh? Anyway I consider myself Very fortunate to have known and served with him. Although we were not in combat he ran that Troop as he did A Troop, and also had the respect of everyone. (Well almost everyone if you know what I mean) Joe

Rag, When the shit *really hit the fan* can you think of anyone better to be with than Robinson and Shadow? Bob



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Rag, there was also the time guys stole a jeep for Capt Robinson. I think it was a battalion jeep and was taken to our area and repainted. Also, the time at Sharon when we, as a troop, were asked to leave and not come back. Don't remember the date but it might have been Capt Robinson's birthday. We were shooting pop up flares at their hootches and I remember going out with some guys to steal M60's and anything not bolted down. bob t

Bob T that was quite a night at Sharon. Our NCO's were passing out collar tabs as we pulled in. I don't think there was a guy in second platoon under E-5 that night! That little trick got us all into the NCO club. Which got us all drunk. Which got us all kicked out of Sharon. Remember the stolen jeeps.... so we didn't have to walk back to the tracks? And Bob those flares weren't being shot at just any hooch.... across the gully by where we were parked was the COMMO hooch! In retrospect it is funny and was at the time...but it is possible that we went just a bit to far. (-:

BobR

Bob, I too remember a lot of guys that aren't talked about much. You later guys might not know any of these guys, as they were all there when I got there in Dec 68. The guys I'd like to find are, Ray (Rat) Gilchrest from NY city I think, William P Wilson (Willie P) Ohio I think, James Taylor (Speedy 5), a tanker that was always on the infantry track for some reason, Herb Parsons, a rebel, that was the driver on A13 and he got me my first Purple Heart, Ray Peterson, CA I think and a few others. Been trying for years to find these guys but no luck yet. I'd also like to see these guys that have been found at a reunion, Jim Blair, LT DeSommer (Shadow) next to LTeeF the best damn Plt leader I ever served under, Capt Robinson, the craziest SOB I ever met but one hell of a leader, Don Barnes, Ronnie Baynes, cause they are all that's left of my crew on A14 except for Sniper Tom and a few others that I can't remember. There are a lot of great guys out there that we served with that we need to find and then get them to a reunion. The worst thing about A Troop was that we rarely had the whole Troop together on an operation so a lot of guys from the other platoons don't know each other even if we served at the same time. We were so damn good they could send us out at platoon strength and we'd do the job of a whole Troop. Either that or they split us up cause nobody could handle all us crazy bastards at one time. We had a lot of guys that just didn't fit the Army mold and we loved to ask



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questions. I know and have talked to a lot of Nam Vets and none of them seem to have the bond, love and respect for each other that we of A Troop have. I live the year just waiting for the reunion and I have a better time each year. I haven't missed one yet and don't plan on missing one as long as I'm still here on this earth. Well I have to close for now before I start to cry just thinking about all the great guys I met, all the good times we had, along with some really bad shit too, and all the guys I can't see anymore that have gone to Fiddler's Green, LTee F, Al Hall, Peter Rabbit, Lou Dossey, Bob Barham, Big Daddy, and PSG Mc Neil just to mention a few.

Peace, Rag

Rag, You are right in that we worked so much at platoon level that we never got to know each other. The trooper rotation was an issue too. Most of the regulars at the reunion I have never heard of before! Like you. Wally. Pineapple. The other "The Kid", Mike, Ken, ect. But I feel I've made new friends that mean the world to me. Like you. Never heard the word Rag in Nam but you know what...I am proud to say I was in the same unit you were and I wish I would have known you there. Bob

Thanks Joe, I stand corrected. It was Kaufman sent to get us back in line, right? My tour seems like I did two tours...July through December of 69 then late January through August of 70. It is really weird because so many faces changed while I was gone that short time. It just was different when I came back. My old track hit a mine and the sub-driver lost (I think) his foot. I don't remember whether it was 24 or 25 anymore. I THINK I was the driver on 24 then moved to 25...shit, I wish I'd have kept a diary!!!! Bob

No Bob, Cpt Spruill was sent to take control, he replaced Cpt Kaufman. I don't know if you remember or not, but I had a cast on my leg and Top put me back in commo. During that time we had a CMMI & AGI inspection. I know they went to the field to inspect some platoons, because everyone was pissed rightfully so. Meanwhile in the rear some of the guys decided to stencil things to make it pretty, like Rocks, Steps, etc. Well when the team arrived they did an about face and shortly after that Cpt Spruill. I can't swear to it but it was only one or 2 days at the most.



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Advance word was boy our shit is weak and we're gonna pay for it. Fortunately we got Cpt. Spruill and in my opinion and a lot of Other NCO's is for the best. Joe

Correction: I didn't have a cast then it was earlier. Don Olsen had taken over A-27

And I went to commo. Sorry. Joe

Ok Bob let me think about it. I was thinking about it this afternoon, because we had just received the Sheridans, I'm gonna say around March or April. I know someone else remembers this, there had to be at least one platoon at Quang Tri when this whole inspection thing went down. I'll put what's left of my brain to work. Wally fill up that glass and help me remember Joe

Joe.... as a lowly peon I was privy to very little except when I was to pull guard or if I was to carry the M60 or walk point (-: If you have time to write up the timeline of all this.... say, maybe it's on the web sight. I'll look. By the way, THANKS to you (and Wally) for standing guard over us in the wee hours. Bob

Joe, I was in the rear for something, I don't know what.... I remember hearing over the grapevine that we were getting a new C.O....and he was going to bring smoke on our sorry asses... I clearly recall Big Daddy and I walking from our Company area across the muddy field to the Quang Tri PX and here he came.... accompanied by the then FO, don't remember his name, but it was not LT. Malm...anyways...I recall the steel eyes, the Helmet pulled over his eyes, wearing his flack jacket and a Jim Bowey knife bigger than my .50 cal. I remember Big Daddy saluting and saying Good Morning sir, up to then we did not know he was our new CO. I knew then we were in deep trouble and he was gonna set us straight...SURE ENOUGH!!! thank God we got Capt. Spruill when we did. Wally

He got himself "gone" when we went up to C-2 in October 1969...one afternoon when everyone was standing down and lots of guys were playing poker right after Pay day...he had a couple of tanks "test fire" their weapons into the hills.... without checking out the area first...the tanks were firing their small weapons and the LRP team had to hide behind their packs to keep from being killed...They came in a couple of hours later, pissed off like African Bees.... Wally
Wally, Boy do I remember that day. A-17 was on the left flank of the troop when



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we fired out weapons. I had a .50cal on the loaders hatch I kept for a tank we had combat lost and I picked out a some bushes about 300yds off the left flank of the tank and shot off the 100 rounds I had in the can into it. That's were the LRP team was. They fired off red star clusters and we took them back to base camp with us. No injuries but their radio was FUBAR. The Col was waiting for us when we got back to base and told me to take the unauthorized M2 off the tank. I pulled the pin and moved it to the bussell rack...he said no he wanted the mount off as well. I told him we didn't have a torch in the field and he said you have a hacksaw cut it off. The Col. chewed the Capt ass in a very loud voice while I sawed the damn thing off. I thought we kept him after that until he ran over the gate at Cua Viet in the middle of the night so he could go swimming but maybe that happened first. Jerry

Bob, Ken Dye and LTeeF would also fit this situation very well. Had a lot of respect and trusted all four of these guys judgment. I can also think of a lot of guys that I would want with me when the shit hit the fan. Now you may not know some of these guys and they were mainly from the 1st plt. Gene Clark, Coop, Al Christine, Frank Long, Dave Larson, Kid, Wally, Baynes, Barnes, Sgt B, Big Daddy, Mills, Sweeney, Peter Rabbit, Rat Gilchrest, Blair, Dan Lohman, Sniper Tom, Just to name a few. I never served with you, Joe Byrne, Ken P, Trap and a lot of others guys I've met at the reunions but I kind of think from talking to you guys you would also be on my list. Really only can remember a few that I wouldn't want mainly cause they were dopers. Rag

Joe, keep up the memories, I remember going with Robinson to LZ Sharon where we picked up a small tank recovery vech. He drove it back to Nancy I think he made new bumps in the road because no road could be that rough. Take Care, Keith

Jim, The list would be a long one...I can add a lot from second platoon. The there is third. Lots of first class troopers in all platoons. I guess Robinson, Shadow, Bushel and a couple of others stand out as, what did you say, a "soldiers soldier". I meant no put down to anyone.... and I'd be proud to be on your track too. Bobr

Bob, I know how you feel. As I said there were only a very few I would not have wanted to be on an ambush patrol with. Most of the Troopers were good men



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and good soldiers. Like I said before when I got there most all of the advanced party was still there and these guys all trained together and had been together for a long time. A Troop was always a crack unit and as far as I'm concerned we did the 12th Cav proud. Rag

Rag, I don't remember exactly what the figures were for the infusion into the 11th cav but I think it was somewhere around 20% of the personnel. About 20% of the troop had less than a full year of service left when we deployed. I think they figured another 20% casualty rate for a "green" unit so that only left 40% to rotate at the same time and with some of those extending for an early that brought that figure to even less than 40%. I know I gave up three guys off my track, Bob DeMartine, Ron Brundage and Gerald Stephens, and only got two in return, Frank Long and Kerry Pepple. Gerald "Cookoo" Stephens got killed about two months after he went to the 11th Cav and DeMartine was diagnosed with type one diabetes and sent home, after recovery in a hospital in Japan. I don't know what the actual criteria for choosing who went was but I do know that I wasn't consulted. I do remember a lot of shouting matches about who went and who stayed. I just wanted to keep all my guys together. I can't help but wonder if "Cookoo" would still be alive if he hadn't had to go South. Dye

Ken, I remember DeMartine and Brundage but I don't remember Cookoo Stephens. I was on your track when this went down and I remember Long and Pebble coming on board. Knowing the Army (Government) the way I do I would have figured that none of the NCO's would have had input. It was a done deal and nobody needed the opinion of some lowly line Trooper. Now as far as Stephens still being alive if he had stayed, that's a hard call. I always figured when your number was up it was your turn. Fate is a funny thing. Some days you're in the right place at the right time and other days you're in the wrong place at the wrong time. Wally can tell you about that. He moved his seat at a USO show; Al Hall sits down where he left and is shot to death by some guy with a loaded weapon behind him. Talk about scary. If Big Daddy hadn't called Wally to sit with him, Wally would not be here today. Rag

Hi, Is this the Sgt Dye that used to be in charge of the infantry section in the 1st platoon? If it is then "Charlie Brown" would like to say welcome home and tell you that you were a damn good NCO, Do you remember who I am??



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Bob, You mention that it felt like you did two tours; not only did I do two tours I had two names. A short story made long follows:

BASIC AIT NCOC (SHAKE -N-BAKE) STATESIDE A 4/12 - PART I NAM - PART II NAM

As you can see I spent almost 9 months in some type of school or training (and talk about being a lowly peon that had been my life until I joined the Army - never took school seriously - too small for sports - way too ugly for the girls the Army was my ticket out of town) before the Troop was shipped to Nam. I was assigned to the Plt Sgt tank as gunner (unofficially I caught all of the shit details that the McNeil did not want to do - ie if someone had to burn shit - pull guard duty - etc Mac had me give them the bad news. Hence I picked up the nickname BUMMER (I could empty a room by just showing up). This went on until we started trading Troopers with the 11th Cav and I ended up with my own tank and later on as Section Leader (this was just before Barrows came into the platoon) Jerry was my tank for a short period of time before I moved over to 15 track. Once I landed on 15 this is when my second tour started and I picked up Coop. Very few Troopers remember me as Bummer or they are kind enough not to mention it; the ones who do remember do not always have fond memories of me. Yet my first reunion when all of the 1st Platoon Troopers show up Red, Duffy, Maggot, Kid, PR, Pineapple, SS, Sniper Tom, Ken, Rag, Wally, Jerry, Jersey, Jim Davis, and LTF it was (and still is) one of the best days of my life. Good or bad my time spent with the Troop has had nothing but a positive impact on my life - Right Place - Right Unit - Right Time. Coop

Coop/Bummer or whoever you are (-: lots of Troopers probably feel the same way. Some event creating a change. I can only imagine what it was like for the guys that were transferred to/from the 11th Cav. Different people, different AO. Wow! Bob

Coop, I don't remember the name "Bummer" I just remember that I wouldn't have traded you jobs for the world. When you were on "Mac's" tank you ended up being the platoon Sgt,, you were one of the primary reasons that 1st platoon had their shit together as well as we did. In my book you've always been a soldier's soldier and still are. Ken Dye



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Good story Coop. You feel the same way I do about the Troop. I was lucky as hell to have ended up with you guys especially with an 11B MOS. My time in Nam with the Troop had a lot more upside than downside. It made me a better person and it gave me a family I will cherish till my dying day. Now old McNeil was a real card. The first day I showed up at LZ Nancy, Mac was the second guy I met. First I reported to Top and he was so pissed off cause there was me, Paul Schiano and Phroneberger and we were all 11B's. Top was mad as hell cause he wanted scouts and tankers for replacements. Well in walks Mac and top says take these 3 sorry asses and do whatever you want with them. First Mac was gonna make me the loader on his tank but somebody else, a tanker that I can't remember came available and he told Paul and I to report to Ken Dye on A15. He said we may as well keep all you grunts together. I was sure glad for that move. Old Mac was a pisser. I never and I mean never saw that man without at least one beer in his hand. He always had A15 at the end of the column and we ate a lot of road dirt. Do you remember the time we were doing thunder runs from Quang Tri to Dong Ha and Mac was drunk and somehow got the main gun on his tank moved from pointing to the side of the road out into the oncoming lane and he caught a dump truck with it? The main gun went right thru the windshield and Mac's tank was pushing it down the road backwards. I'll never forget the look on the truck drivers face. He was white as a sheet and that main gun didn't miss his head by more than a 1/4 inch. I was sorry to hear old Mac died. I would have liked to have seen him at a reunion. Rag

Rag, Mac was a lifer and this was his 2nd tour in Nam; Mac needed his beer to start the day - still I learn a lot from him. I do not remember the dump truck - that does not mean it did not happen. Mac did not like the locals or ARVN for sure. A couple of incidents that I recall match up with your dump truck story. You remember how narrow the bridges were over there - A16 has started across one of the bridges and here comes a ARVN APC from the other direction - neither track give way - just before we met head on the ARVN flinch and move over but there was not enough room - A16 left track tore into the right side of that APC and just ripe the shit out of it. Another time - another bridge and this time one of those 3-wheel taxi tried to bully Mac - this time the left track crush that taxi's right side - there was nothing but assholes and elbows jumping off that taxi. Coop



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Coop, I do remember that Mac was a Lifer and he was on his second tour, but you were right about him, even drunk he knew what he was doing. I too learned a lot from Mac. He was a crusty old boy but I liked him. Mac figured he had one of the biggest vehicles there in his tank so he rarely moved over for anything. He never pulled any punches and he told it like it was. I can only imagine what he was like stateside It's too bad he never made a reunion cause we could have gotten some real stories out of him. Rag

I really liked Robinson, or should I say I thought he inspired confidence. I didn't see him as a superior 'military man' but he was a 'soldier'. He was also my first CO and I didn't know diddly so maybe I was not seeing him straight. You'd had some time in country when he arrived. What did you think of him? Bob

It's too bad he won't make a reunion as I would like to see him one more time. I guess I'll have to get back up to Alaska someday and visit him. I wish I would have known he was up there when I did get to Alaska a few years back because I surely would have tried to look him up. The old man was really not the Army Lifer type. He was a little too wild most of the time. He loved his booze and red wine was one of his favorites. I remember one time at LZ Sharon I had to go get him out of the officers club after they tried to shut him off and he shot the place up with his 45. The man was crazy but I trusted his judgment in the field. Rag

I talked to him at length when he sent me the A Troop Guidon he brought home from Nam. Reunions.....not that he doesn't want to see us or be part of us again....he just won't come to the lower 48 anymore. Hell, maybe he can't. He retired as a Major....just one jump up from what he was in 1969 so he must have pissed off somebody!!!! Big Time. And I can see how, based on some of those that we had after him. Capt. Robinson was not conventional Army.....but in the field I knew none better. Bob

Robinson was a good man. Probably not as spit and polish as a lifer but a guy I trusted. He knew what he was doing and crazy enough to never be scared. He also never threw his weight around. By that I mean if we were out in the field and he gave an order it wasn't cast in concrete. If someone came up with a better way he was open to try it. I had a lot of respect for him because I felt he respected everyone in his command. And you could also talk to him. He never pulled rank



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on you unless you screwed up. I wish I could get him to a reunion but I don't think that will ever happen. Rag



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KIT CARSON SCOUTS

Been reading the thread about Kit Carson scouts. When I came in country, we had a guy named "Jerry." He seemed to be really tight with our Lt. & Platoon Sgt. so I accepted him. Screeching stop! Jerry worked with us, Tom worked with 2nd platoon. Tom & Jerry? Ha! How come I never noticed that in 'Nam? ???

It was a super sad & poignant day when Jerry left us, apparently for another assignment. He came around and shook everyone's hand then said a big "Hello" and left. Apparently he got the words "hello" and "goodbye" mixed up. We answered "hello" back and waved goodbye. "Where the hell is he going?" the Ltee asked. "I don't know." was the answer. ???

We had several more chieu hois, but the scariest was a scarred, unsmiling, hard-faced guy who showed up one day. He looked like he had been fighting a war since he was an infant. Was this guy a real chieu hoi, we thought? He just emanated a huge dislike for us Americans. We gave him a wide berth. That very night, he disappeared, back to the NVA, we assumed. ???

One of the real neat things that is posted in the picture site are the Chieu Hoi safe conduct passes that used to be all over the ground on the Z. The one propaganda thing that I wish I kept were those NVA Christmas cards that mysteriously appeared on the ground everywhere in December 1969. They showed a drawing of Santa Claus pointing behind him and the caption was "Go Home." On the reverse side was a drawing of a woman sitting at a desk with a picture of a G.I. the caption was "Wish he were home." Anyone lucky enough to have one of those souvenirs?

Pineapple (Cooper has a copy of this on the website)



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FROM 31 MARCH 1971 TROOP ROSTER

1st Plt

Tham

Minh

2nd Plt

Nghem Tam Bang

Tham

3rd Plt

Vo-Hue (HUE)

Tham Nhen (Seymore)

Phan Set

From Buddy Puryear:

Scout Mien was a former NVA Lt. who came over to our side. Another scout was named Billy -- he really never had converted to our side and was KIA in a fire fight. Don't know to this day if Charlie got him or someone in our unit! Mien was OK. I have wondered what happened to him after the US pulled out of Nam.



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ANIMALS

March 1969

from Bill McShane:

First let me say that I was on the patrol with Freyler, when he got the constrictor/ python or what ever. I was given a mission to go out west of Nancy I think, to the foothills, cordon up the platoon and take a squad of infantry out and patrol on foot to see what we could find. After humping in a few steps, there were nine or so of us and a Chu Hoi, Freyler, on point, opened up. I crawled to his position to find him saying I got it, etc, and then see him get up and run into the bush and grab the snake by the tail. The damn thing had gone under him and the head came out of a hole behind him and bit him in the foot if I remember right.

[Was it 17 feet long snake](#), or shot 17 times or both. Made the Stars and Stripes





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COMING HOME

Wally

Date: Thu, 29 Aug 2002 23:47:42 -0700 (PDT)

Hey all,

This is my coming home day, 32 years ago today I came home from the war. Came home on a beautiful summer day to one of the most memorable riots in L.A. history, and we have had some memorable ones.

The day I came home is still vivid in my recollection, all my friends were at the airport, some had made banners, it was a really cool homecoming.

I was glad, I was home. Uncertainty was in the horizon. I was not sure what my life was going to be like from then on, here were my old friends from the block, we now had little in common. I had just left behind my new friends from my new life, that was also though. I was suffering mixed emotions.

I remember Sgt. Barrows saying goodbye to me at the Seattle airport, he said, "Mendoza, you take care of yourself," and he was off, I have not seen him since.

On the flight home from Seattle I met a man who owned his own business. He told me to look him up in Burbank when I got out of College, I did, but he was too busy to see me then. I will never forget the look on my mother's face when she saw me, first thing she said was, "you are so skinny". She made sure I was not skinny for long.

I was feeling melancholic this evening so I went on a long drive just to feel the wind in my face. As the sun was going down behind the San Gabriel Mountains I could not help but notice how much it looked like when the sun was going down behind the mountains near the DMZ. So much has changed and yet so little has changed.

Many of us have not left the Nam behind. Some of us have left it and never recalled it. I, every August 29 recall that day vividly so I will never forget what it

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was like and how it was.....The Faces, The Sounds, The smells, The Silence, The mosquitoes, The good times, The lousy times, The parties out on night operations outside of Nancy, the stews in the steel pot, the football games out on the field, bunker guard, night ambush, incoming, the heat, the wet, the gook kids, the water buffaloes, the red clay, the dirt, c-rats, mail call, chopper blades, Napalm, Supert Sport laughing, Al Hall singing, Smokey Lane dancing, Capt. Spruill kicking ass, Capt. Nice bullshitting, 3-0 Yankee "repeat that", Kaufman "DON'T SAY REPEAT ON THE RADIO!!", R & R , burning shit, writting home, flicks from home, dear John letters, letters to penpals, being short, Peterson standing at attention, my dog, Jim Clark, Big Daddy.

I never want to forget, I would like to see all of you again someday.

Love ya all,

Wally

My Son Justin works full time, and attends Bible College in Texas. Yeah Coop right close to you all!! Anyway here is a paper he wrote for one of his classes, and I wanted to share it with you all! Kid

What Shapes Us

There are numerous events we go through in life that shape us into the people we are. I believe two of the most influential are the traumas we experience and the handicaps we are born with.

Trauma is defined in Webster's Dictionary as "a bodily injury" or "a mental shock." Roget's Thesaurus defines it as "severe mental or physical pain." Agony, anguish, confusion, derangement, hurt, injury, shock, stress, suffering, torture, and wound are all words that signify trauma.

A handicap is defined in Webster's dictionary as "any encumbrance or disadvantage." Some of its synonyms are affliction, burden, disability, hindrance, impairment, limitation, restriction, and shortcoming.



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I was born with club feet. By the time I was a few months old, I was wearing my first set of casts. Before I could walk, I dragged myself around like a seal, towing my casts behind. I had corrective surgery on both feet, before I was four years old. The surgeries corrected the deformity but left me with irregular looking feet and obvious scars. Up until the age of five, I was in and out of casts and corrective shoes. Wearing casts on and off through one of the fastest growing stages of life left my lower legs atrophied. Upon entering kindergarten, I walked through the doors on crutches bearing my last cast. My handicap was purely physical, unlike the mental trauma my dad experienced.

Halfway through his senior year of high school, my dad joined the army and headed to Vietnam. He was in the infantry division as a recon scout. He carried an M-60, the biggest rifle issued, putting him right on the front lines. At one point during the war, he was out in the field for over seventy days, in combat, with none of the conveniences we so easily take for granted. I saw a picture of him that had been taken when he returned from those seventy days. He was nineteen; he looked like he was thirty. He watched his friends die, and he killed people. They stacked the dead bodies in piles and burned them. He was the youngest in his platoon. They called him, "The Kid," a nickname that signified belonging. This was in stark contrast to some of the names he was called after the war and to some of the phrases I heard as a kid.

The words still sting.

"You sure have skinny calves."

"Look how flat your feet are."

"Why does your ankle bulge out on the side like that?"

I hated the fact that my feet were the way they were. Whenever my handicap was exposed, every bit of insecurity I possessed surged forth, especially at an age when any blemish brought embarrassment. I wanted nothing more than to just fit in. I always felt different from the other kids. Not that I chose to feel that way, I just did. I hung around the "cool" kids at school; I played sports, but a part of me didn't feel like I belonged.



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My dad returned from the war with the same feeling. He walked out of a combat zone into a country that referred to him as a “baby-killer.” He was not applauded nor honored. He was spit on. He was taunted. He was looked down upon by a generation that was supposed to be his. Where was his place in the world? He returned to a society he no longer belonged to. The free-spirited, peace-loving movement of the day did little to make a soldier feel welcome. He would not allow this to dictate who he would become, and like me, he would defy what life was trying to deal him.

The doctor told my parents that I might not be able to play sports because of my feet. By my junior year in high school, I had participated in basketball, baseball, soccer, track, wrestling, football, skiing, snow-boarding, kayaking, rock-climbing, and mountain climbing. I became fiercely competitive and would leap at the chance to prove myself in any challenge. My dad approached a very different obstacle in much the same way.

An article in a local newspaper featured him. The story was about soldiers who were unable to find work after the war. My dad gave the most formative years of his life to serve his country. In combat, he made some of the most incredible decisions a person could ever be faced with, and mere months after returning, he was sweeping floors at a lumberyard. He was confused and resentful, but he would not allow it to control his life; he would not be held down. Within months, he would become the manager of the lumberyard. Sadly, both of our triumphs were also accompanied by sorrow.

I started drinking my sophomore year in high school, and by the end of it was doing drugs. I loved the escape I found in these vices. I was able to forget my handicap and my insecurities. I hated the return to reality.

Likewise, my dad turned to drugs and alcohol to hide his scars. The pain and emotional turmoil he suffered due to the things he saw and experienced in Vietnam took their toll on him. He was left with a weight he couldn't bear and dreams he couldn't separate from reality. Any release from this was welcomed. Through God's mercy, we both eventually found the true healing we longed for.

Just before my twenty-second birthday, God took hold of my life. A few months later, he used me to reach my dad. From the insecurities we faced to the



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unhealthy patterns we had developed in our lives, God helped us begin the process of mending. The burdens we bore were surrendered to Him. Through Jesus Christ, we were made whole. The old man died, and a new was born. We went from hopelessness in our personal battles to having faith in God's love and grace. He took the broken pieces of our lives and put us back together. And He continues to do so. Hey you

Have A Blessed Day!!!

Mike

I know some or all got the same welcome I did. When we arrived in the states the MP'S met us at the plane and there were some people standing by the building we were taken to, of course we thought they were there to welcome us home. When we got close to them the names , baby killers, and a few others showed me how welcome we really were. After that we were stood against the wall inside and searched by the MP's. I will never forget how I felt that day. When they were done some one said there was a steak dinner waiting for us, I told them to stick their steak dinner up their ass, give me some clothes I was going home. I thought home would be better, but I was wrong again. My first vist to the VFW was a mess, when a World War 2 guy told me I didn't belong there. He said the club was for veterans of war, not baby killers & dope heads, I knocked him down and left. I worked and people didn't know I was in Viet Nam, it was something you didn't talk about. When the subject came up I found something to do to leave the area. My wife knew nothing about my time in Viet Nam until I joined the Army Reserves where once again I was with people who understood. I now am with people I know which is much better. Our time there will never be forgotten. Just a few things off my chest. John K. 2nd PLT 69/70

Hey John, all I know is my family was happy to see me come home alive and in one piece and that was good enough for me. My feelings were "screw everybody else". I know I and all the Troopers did our best over there and that was comfort enough for me. Who cares what anybody else thought? Turtle

Hi old buddy, You are right and that is how it all ended. Our familys were there for us. I am proud to be a Viet Nam Vet. and a 412 Trooper. Talk soon. John K.

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I've often thought of how fortunate I was because of one civilian in 1970. I was racing from the ticket counter in Portland, OR. to catch my last connection home to Eugene and a guy close to my age with his daughter in his arms stopped me, asked me if I'd just returned from 'nam and when I said yes, he said "I'd just like to say thank you and welcome home" and with that he shook my hand. I think of that every time I hear how others of you were treated on your return and the incident has grown even more meaningful over the years. I hope I'll be able to thank him for that gesture in heaven someday 'cause I have no way of knowing who he was here on earth. I lived several hours from the airport but I wonder if any of our guys have gone to the airport just to say "thank you" and "welcome home" to returning vets. When I think of this incident or just the fact that I've had a few moods lifted and days pleasantly altered just because someone gave me a great smile, I realize the impact seemingly small gestures can make in ones day or life and I try doing my part. Know what? It IS more blessed to give than to receive !! Skee

Amazing to hear somebody said "thank you" right when you got back!

It was about 15 years before anybody ever said that to me - and the first guy I can recall actually saying that was my old brother Tom. When I came home he was an 18-year-old scraggly-looking sneering war-protesting drug-inhaling hippie, and the only reason he didn't right-out call me a baby-killer was because my folks would have yelled at him. 15 years later he called me up on Veteran's Day to say he'd figured out why I was proud to have volunteered to serve in Nam and he appreciated that service.

Tom died 12 years ago, but I remember that phone call every Veteran's Day.
LTeeF

Depends on what part of the country you were from, and probably what year you served in Viet Nam. I think attitudes got worse the later things went. When I processed through Cam Rahn Bay, and then SeaTac & Ft. Lewis in late 1970, all went relatively smoothly and efficiently. I do remember that on the "freedom bird" about half way over the Pacific, a flight attendant told a GI who had persisted in acting like an ass-hole that if he didn't straighten up, he would be met by MPs when we landed. The guy had it coming, though. He seemed to think



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that his year in Viet Nam had earned him the right to grope, and verbally abuse the first round eyed woman he saw, and she was just setting him straight. Once I got to my hometown, I was met with universal acceptance. The bartender at the local tavern gave me my first beer on the house for having served, and many people looked me up to say hello and to welcome me home. I can honestly say that I never got any of the "baby killer" crap that some people experienced. Over the years I've later heard many misconceptions of the Viet Nam War by people who didn't serve there, but I really feel that the majority of the people who I've associated with were OK about the whole thing. Of course, after taking 3 years off active duty to complete college, I went back into the Army, and initially the majority of the senior officers and NCOs were also Viet Nam veterans, and the junior people weren't critical of what we had done there. I feel sorry for the guys who got such undeserved crap for their service when they came home, but I also know that a lot of people never really got any of that treatment. The only somewhat negative thing that I recall from the time shortly after my return from Viet Nam was a really condescending letter inviting me to join the American Legion. The jerk who wrote the letter made it sound as if I had an obligation to join their almighty organization and pay dues to them out of gratitude for their supremely outstanding and marvelous work in obtaining benefits for veterans of all wars which Congress would never have thought of approving if it had not been for the supremely marvelous American Legion. I really think the guy who wrote the letter was just stupid, and didn't mean to convey the attitude that I took from reading it, but to this day I've never joined the American Legion.

Jim Good

John,

I can relate 100 %, besides kiss the ground when we landed in Ft. Lewis I purchased civilian clothes to fly home instead of facing the protesters' abuse. I felt lucky to be alive and with all body parts, but I'm glad I served. Except for the emotional scars that only time will heal, I'm a better man for and proud to be a member of the 4/12 Cav. I can't tell you how glad I am to be found and what a great honor it has been to meet fellow cav members at the reunions. To members who haven't attended please make it a priority, you won't regret it. To the Brotherhood of the Cav, Trap



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My father and I had similar experiences when we finally came home from our respective wars. The only story he told me about his days in WWII was about 2 sentences long. He told me that when he arrived at Schofield Barracks in early 1947 from combat duty in the Philippines, they gave him 15¢ for bus fare and told him to go home. I asked him how come it took so long to get home since the war ended in August 1945, he said that he didn't have enough points. He joined the war in January of that year during the invasion of Luzon. He had been drafted right after he graduated high school in June 1944

I came home, not on a Freedom Bird, but on one of them round-the-world flights that the air force does once a day on I think it was called a C-141 Starlifter. The plane stopped in the Philippines and Guam before touching down in Honolulu. I was still dressed in my jungle fatigues. When I hopped off the plane, I was alone. No one else got off with me. I went straight for a taxi and told him, home, James. He said, "What, jes came back from Vietnam?" "Yeah, do I get a free ride?" "No." He answered, "But welcome home." He returned my tip at my house, and said, "No need."

I didn't expect a parade, steak dinner or any thanks from anyone. And I sure didn't get any. Haw! Haw! I did have a Zippo engraved with "A 75th Support Finance, Babykillers" on one side and "A 4/12th Cavalry 1st Platoon, Pineapple" on the other (the Vietnamese engraver at the QT PX misspelled it even after I wrote it out). I showed it to everyone I met. They must have thought I was crazy.
GeorGersaba

Hi Wally, When I got home I had to find a job since I went into the Army out of school. On the appt. they asked did you serve in Nam? So you and everyone else knew what that meant. One job I went for asked if I was in Viet Nam, and if so I had to take a mental test. I told them yes, 2 times they replied you definitely need to be tested. Welcome home Viet Nam Vet. John K.

Hey John,

I guess we all had different home comings.

The only adverse reaction I ever received was when I went back to my old job. I was working with a bunch of guys my age, but they were going to college, I was



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the
only war vet in the place. They were big jokesters and lots of fun, but the
conversation came up soon enough about Viet Nam. The questions started
coming:

Did you kill babies?

Did you rape the girls?

Did you guys kill the pow's?

How did you have to serve, you're a foreigner?.....with that I finally had to
answer!!! I told them just this:

"We all are very fortunate to be Americans, there is one difference though..... You
guys are just lucky to have been born here.....I EARNED IT". The conversation
was never brought up again in a negative way and they eventually came to
admire the fact I was the only combat veteran working in the whole place.

Take care

Wally

I had two eye opening experiences. First when I was on RR in Hawai Linda and I
went into a restaurant and ate dinner. When I asked for the check the waiter said
that a gentleman at the bar had paid for my check because he wanted to thank
me for serving my Country. He had already left so I never got a chance to thank
him.

Then when I returned home I was travelling to Wash DC in my uniform and I
stopped at an airport bar to get a beer. This nice older guy walks up to me and
says I can see by your uniform and the CIB you are wearing that you must be
home from Vietnam. I said yes and he told the bartender to give me anything I
wanted. He then told me that when he returned from WWII an old man from
WWI bought him a drink and told him he was now obligated to buy a drink for
another soldier returning home from another war. This man then told me that I
was now obligated to buy a drink for a returning soldier of the next war. To this
day if I am in a bar and I see a soldier in uniform, I thank him for serving and I
buy him a drink.



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Rag

Rag: when I returned to the world, after the first week at home I military hopped from airbase to airbase to DC.

I went to the Pentagon and had them change my orders from Ft. Carson to Ft Lewis, (closer to home).

When I returned I stopped in Kansas City, Mo to meet the girl who was later to become my wife. We were out to some lake in the vacinity of KC, MO. and went swimming. I wore cut off jeans after we swam we drank some beer and returned to Carolyn's Uncles house in KC.Kansas. I had lost my wallet, with everything, ID, Orders, and all my leave pay, I don't remember now maby \$4-500.bucks.

The next day my father called me from Portland he knew the phone number where we were and he was frantic!

It seems this guy had found my wallet floating in the lake and had called my home number in the wallet and talked to my dad.

Of course dad thought I was dead meat until he talked to me that day. Well dad told me the guys phone #. I called him up, he said come on over and claim your wallet.

We drove over, turns out the guy was an off duty police officer. He said I was a Viet Vet and he wouldn't take a dime I offered him. I looked in my wallet and all was returned in good order. I now regret not keeping his name and address, I would like to send him a card now and again. There were many other incidents that weren't so cool, but this one still warms my memories. Wild Bill Dodds