

December 22, 1999

DAU TIENG

Rudy,

Thanks for your packet in October. I especially appreciate the photos you took on your battlefield visit last year. It has taken me a while to get back to you with the "rest of the story" because we have moved a few times since 1973 and the Tri Tam file somehow got integrated with one of my other files. Anyway, it's been resurrected and you will find enclosed my final report as District Senior Advisor of Tri Tam. I wrote it a week after I sent my letter to you. In fact that letter served as a basis for the AAR. I started writing it on Thanksgiving Day (23 Nov) and signed it three days later.

Prelude to the Report. In the Spring of 1972, NVA forces attacked ~~an~~ overran Loc Ninh. In addition to gaining some real estate, they got some weapons, including some 105mm and 155mm US howitzers abandoned by the ARVN. They used these in support of their follow-on attack on An Loc, where they were stopped by LTG Hollingsworth's masterful application of the principles of war. The NVA was so damaged by their failed attempt to take An Loc, that it took them nearly two years to rebuild. They did not sit still, however. After An Loc, they looked around for other places they could do damage, and because Tri Tam was just on the other side of the rubber plantations from An Loc, we became a good place for them to keep their warfighting skills honed. Thus the October-November action in Tri Tam.

Report. The last enclosure is an overlay of the enemy weapons positions around the city. Unfortunately it was done to 1:50,000 scale, since that was the operational standard. I have included a copy of my personal operational map to help. But it is a 1:100,000. If someone has a 1:50,000 map, the overlay is a simple transfer. If not, it would take some re-scaling to get it transposed to the 1:100,000, but it can be done.

Postlude to the Report. My NCO and I left Tri Tam on December 18th. As I shook hands with the District ~~Commander~~ ^{Chief}, tears came to his eyes—after all we were his last hope. I had called the chopper into an alternate LZ away from town, so ~~he~~ ^{the chief} brought along a security platoon. It was to be a hot pick-up. The chopper was sitting out in the field with its blades still going. As I turned around and started walking to the chopper, I just knew we were going to get shot in the back. In my nearly three years service in Vietnam, this was the first gut feeling I ever had that I was not going to make it. Didn't happen, obviously. Got back to Province HQ, had ten days left on my DROS. Province Senior advisor had gone to Hawaii to spend Christmas with his wife. The Deputy PSA told me to go home and spend Christmas with my wife. I did.

Sean Matthew
THE ^{I go by "Sam"} D