

[REDACTED]
O'Fallon, Illinois 62269
8 April 1997

Dear Dick,

At this time thirty years ago, I arrived at Dau Tieng. In my replacement group, we were flown up there from Long Binh in a C-123. That was a noisy ride! But it was a short one. Even before landing there, when I first saw that place, it looked so desolate and forbidding. There weren't even many helicopters there then. Aviation wise, about the only thing there then was the Third Brigade Aviation Section and all they had was a few OH-23s; it wasn't too often then that a Huey came in. Dau Tieng had just then been secured; everywhere there that you went, you had to have a "weapon and pot." I'm sure you remember that.

Before I got there, and while I was still down at Long Binh, every time I heard an aviation unit called out for assignment, I would always hope that my name would be called then. But, unfortunately, that didn't happen. Instead, when my name was called, it had just been announced, ".....Third Brigade, Fourth Infantry Division." Then we were told we were going to Dau Tieng.

I can't say I was looking forward to being a "grunt." However, I figured then that if that was what I had to do, then that's what I was going to do. As we got to Dau Tieng, we were told that the brigade was "good" about getting you out of the field after six months. So, I made up my mind that I was going to do my six months in the field and then go to aviation as a gunner.

I HATED the infantry!! I hated it *with a passion!!!* But I was determined to see it through and move on to something I wanted. I'm glad I did that, but I wish I'd skipped that infantry bit even in the first place. It's nothing I'd ever do again.

I almost made it out of the infantry after only two months in country. That was that time when I had the interview with Major Rungee to come over to the 188th. He wanted all of us he interviewed that day and we would have been reassigned to the 188th, but brigade nixed the deal. Sufficient to say, and needless to elaborate, I was MAD!! I mean I was violently mad!! I was so mad, so bitter and so upset that eventually when I got to the Little Bears I used to say, "Infantry sucks." In fact I got to be quite well known for that common comment.

I had guys -in both the 2/12th and the Little Bears- tell me that they never saw anybody who wanted out of the infantry and who hated it as bad as I did. I can understand. I know now and I knew then that they were right. I just wasn't cut out for the infantry; never was and never would have been.

You had better be glad that you went to the 188th right away and as soon as you did! You had better be glad -and probably even more so- that you didn't go to the 2/12th when you got to Dau Tieng. You would have got there when LTC Greer was battalion commander. He was one of the craziest and most stupid bastards I ever saw. He was the worst battalion commander I ever had, and I mean *bar none!* When I got Captain King as company commander, and at the same time had LTC Greer for battalion commander, then -at the same time- I had the worst company commander and the worst battalion commander I ever had. I *never* saw any as sorry as those two. And furthermore, that was a dangerous place to have those like that!

In that firefight that we got into on 11 September 1967, Captain King got wounded and he never came back. My platoon leader (2LT Cabral) got wounded too, and badly wounded; he too never came back. In my squad we had two KIAs. As I learned later, that firefight was a cause of LTC Greer being relieved of his command. He did not want artillery called in at the

onset of that firefight, and that was why we took the casualties that we did. (We also had an MIA in that firefight too - an ARVN who was wounded and "scarfed up" by the enemy.)

Another reason for LTC Greer being relieved as battalion commander was because the job was getting to be too much of an emotional strain on him. Yet, he had *extended* his tour ever there to take command of that battalion. But I'll say again though, he was the worst battalion commander I ever had.

I got in touch with my former platoon leader last week. I found out that he now lives in Columbus, Georgia. He got out of the Army after 15 years. I first met him 30 years ago, almost to this day, as I came to his platoon. In the time when I was in infantry, he was the platoon leader I had longest; he also was the one who put me in for the interview with Major Rungee. The next platoon leader I had, got badly shot up in that firefight on September 11; the one I had after that was the last one I had in the infantry. The last two platoon leaders I had there, I had for only a short time.

Well, that's how things were 30 years ago. I just couldn't resist letting you know, for there is a common denominator of experience involved there for us. I'll get back in touch soon. Take care now.

Clear Right,

Frank
Mailed response 4/13/97