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Mike,

Great letter for the "newsletter"... A lot of folks know that the guys behind the scene (the ones who do most of the work and miss all the great parties) are often not remembered as clearly as the rabble rousers, but everyone knows that the guys who do that work are a most important part of the mission...

Richard Green

-----Original Message-----

From: Mike Vickroy [REDACTED]
To: Dick Detra <[REDACTED]> Richard Green [REDACTED]>
Date: Friday, January 07, 2000 12:24 AM
Subject: Top

Dick; I missed your call on December 30th. We were out of town. First Sergeant DePalm also called. I wasn't at home then either but I called Top back on 01/06/2000. I really enjoyed our conversation and we had a lot of memories to share together. But, he didn't remember me and I suspect that few will. When I arrived on the last day of August a lot had been going on just before. We lost some people and most of our choppers on the flight line and we were rebuilding our resources. Carlos Suarez was the company clerk at the time. Although I was an honor graduate, helicopter maintenance, out of Ft. Rucker, Alabama the need for clerical skills was at its height by the time I arrived at Dau Tieng. When the first sergeant asked if any of us new recruits new how to type I nearly broke my arm getting it up in the air fast enough (obviously looking for a nice cushy job in the middle of hell). First Sergeant DePalm set me to work assembling our empty military regulations library; in order to do it right you had to read every manual, every change, every rescind, every append and every insertion. When I completed the task Top and I were the only ones within a

hundred miles that knew military regulations. And if you know the AR
you
are nearly god. Especially in front of officers who generally don't
have
the vaguest idea that the military actually runs on regulations. In
the end
I knew how to do every thing. When Suarez left I became Company Clerk.
When Top left in January I became (probably a figment of my
imagination) the
master of the orderly room. Lt. Flack (not on the roster and maybe we
don't
want him there; ask me why, someday) came, and went, as administration
officer. WO Spearman became a temporary administration officer; but WO
Rhodes (Dusty) ended up being the real AO. He probably won't remember
but I
was the enlisted guy that DEROSE'd at the same time as he; we left camp
(LZ
Sally) together, but somewhere under a parachute on a rainy night, he
and
another officer got a ride on a Mohawk and I had to stay behind. I
finally
got to departure camp a day later (not their fault - just that it was
the
only ride available). But, that was actually the end of the story. I
have
to apologize for one thing. The TOE for the 188th, as I recall, was
about
150. We actually had built up to about 300. It wasn't easy keeping up
with
all the paper work (motor pool, morning reports, officer/enlisted
efficiency
reports, requests for awards and decorations, Article 15's, and a host
of
other requirements that I somehow became responsible for fulfilling). I
worked night and day; I never made roll call (I requested that I be
exempt
because I worked til one or two o'clock in the A.M. from 7:00 A.M. and
my
request was granted). I knew specific people that frequented the
Orderly
Room but every one else was a name that I had to monitor for the
morning
report. I was good at what I did but I was buried in my work. I
remember
peoples names and some faces. But lots of people came in and left;
some on
temporary duty some permanent (There was a Captain Castro who gave me a
helicopter flying lesson when I prepared his request for awards and
decorations - but he's not on the roster; I needed help typing reports
and a
kid named Peterson was assigned to the OR to help out for awhile, he's
not
on the roster either). I was there with you guys, but I wasn't
responsible
for the choppers or for combat missions that you all were involved
with. I
did interview some of you (I was sometimes responsible for debriefing
after
some missions). I was there when Major Morrow and Sgt Green died; I was
there when LTC McWhorter turned command of the 188th over to Major
Johnson;
I was there when Captain Doht was wounded and came back to rejoin the
outfit; I was there when Major Graham and another officer was wounded

(medical detachment?) on the 9th of November; I was there when word came that we lost a pilot and crew chief at Vung Tau after a mis-landing on an over-water pad (can't remember their names and I am ashamed); I was there when Leroy McKeever and Sergeant Helvy died - and the dog; I was there when we were nearly overrun at LZ Sally after sappers got in and blew the perimeter wire. So, okay, I was there. I sure am enjoying reading the newsletter and learning what all was going on while I was back at base camp. And I am really excited about the Black Widow "family" keeping in touch. We were all there. And we all were doing something to be proud of. Isn't perspective a grand thing!!! Catch you later. Mike Vickroy. Hermitage, Tn.

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