

Write to me, tell me who you have been thinking about for 28 or 29 years and we'll do our best to locate that person for you. Whatever information you can provide will help, such as where you think their hometown was, or their social security number from orders, etc. We'll try for you.

Stories from the past

Due to the "Magic" of E-mail (electronic mail over the internet, on computers) many of us have been able to stay in close touch since the Apr '96 and Nov '96 Reunions. The following are excerpts from some of those e-mail messages.

Movement into Fire Support Base Burt aka Suoi Cut

(From a message Fri, 24 Jan 1997 to Awb Norris - CO of 2/22 from Bill Allison - CO of Charlie 2/22 on 12/26/67)

The move to Burt started the day after Christmas; early on the morning of the 26th we were moving to cordon and search a village south east of Dau Tieng. You should remember it well because as we moved toward the village, I remember Fullback 6 walking up out of nowhere and joining the lead element of Charlie Company as we approached the village at first light and in a heavy fog. [Some day Stiles will tell you what problems he was having at that time getting a dustoff to land to evacuate a man who had been wounded on ambush patrol. Stiles built a large bonfire to create an opening in the fog for the dust off.]

Sometime early that day you received orders to move the battalion back to Dau Tieng for a change in mission. There was considerable delay on the road back to base camp which is a

tragic story in itself. We did not close into the camp until well into the night and you issued our orders even later. The next morning we moved out to the vicinity of what we referred to as an old French fort about 10 kms north of Nui Ba Den. At the fort we joined up with a large column of wheeled vehicles, probably a supply convoy heading to Katum..

On the 28th, we moved north on TL4 to Katum where there was a forward base with the helicopters you referred to; the wheeled vehicles and the tank company that lead the way from the French fort to Katum stayed in Katum as we turned initially south east on road 246 toward Burt. The column now consisted of our battalion, a 155SP BRTY, two dusters, two bulldozers, and I don't know if we had anything from BDE. I'm not sure if the battalion spent the next night at Bo Tuc or not; that would have been only 6kms from Katum. For some reason I feel like we spent the night where a unit had been hit a night or two before. As we headed toward Burt, Charlie Company was in the lead. I vaguely remember someone wishing us well and saying that no friendly unit had been down the road for 18 months.

The first part of day was tense but things went off with only minor delays. The NVA had been using the road, therefore most of their mines were marked with either three stones or woven circles of vine. We found more than thirty mines that we marked with toilet paper, so the sweep team could push on. We missed at least two mines: a 155SP found a large one and Lt Kelley's lead track hit the other one. [That was the second track that I was standing near when it blew.]

The area was heavily infested with NVA; at times the odor from their presence was so strong that we felt like we could reach out and touch them. PSG Alexander, who could smell VC and NVA as well as I could, rushed up to me and asked, "Do you smell them?" My reply was, "Why do think we have

been reconning by fire so heavily for the last 30 minutes?" Those 50s were worth their weight in gold at times like that.

When we arrived at the bridge site, the bulldozers cleared an approach and bridge sections were flown in. Once we crossed the bridge the road conditions changed for the worse; it appeared that the NVA had been transferring their supplies to bicycles at the bridge site. The road that then went due east was covered with tall grass with a bike trail going down the center; several large tree had been dropped across the road. Again the bulldozers were put to good use moving the trees.

When we arrived at the intersection where we were to turn south on road 244 that ran to and through Burt, I uncovered a mine that had been missed. As the Engineers and the lead track passed the mine that I was uncovering the track hit another mine. By this time it was starting to get dark. With the blown track under toe Charlie Company moved south and closed into the area that would become FSB Burt after dark. The rest of the column spent the night spread out for miles on the road in the middle of NVA controlled area. During the night there were probes of the column and scattered sniper fire. When Fullback 6 was asked how many LPS he had out his response was in the hundreds; because every man in the column was a listening post that long night.

From John J Eberwine :A message to Bill Allison on Fri, 24 Jan 1997

Your remembrances of the movement into Burt are quite amazing and jog my memory. You mentioned that you were near the lead track of Lt Gordon Kelley when it found one of the mines the sweepers missed. I was behind it when it blew. I landed on the ground and looked up into a face that I knew, Ennis Crow. We had gone to AIT together at Ft Polk and landed in the Nam together, when we were split up, he sent to A

3/22, me to C 2/22.

What I believe I remember is they (3/22) were just sitting alongside the road, weary and dirt encrusted, while we went by. They had moved into the area before us.

Ennis picked me up, brushed me off, made sure I had no gapping holes in me..... we laughed, we talked and that was the last I ever saw of Ennis. He died the night of Burt. He was a good buddy.

I have since found out that our good friend, Chuck Boyle of C 3/22, was a platoon leader for A 3/22 the night of Burt and Ennis was in his platoon. Do you know that somehow I felt better, 29 years later, to know that Chuck was his platoon leader, because I know how Chuck cared then and still does for each of his men.

From Jerry Rudisill a message to many on Wed, 29 Jan 1997

At that time, I was a track-driver in the 3rd platoon. I drove Lt. John Lashbrook's command track and had been in country since September. I had been driving track for about 2½ month's. Lt. Lashbrook had given me a driver's job when Gavaros was rotating home in October. Somewhere around the first of December, I had a track blown out from under me, so at Burt, I was driving a brand new track. I remember that you could tell the track was new because the fire extinguishers had not been used for cooling our pop.

When we arrived at Burt, we loggered up like normal, set out the concertina wire, trip flares, and claymores. One thing was unusual at Burt though; because we were getting mortared from the first day as we set up, we left our ramps up, leaving only the door in the back of the ramp open. SSgt Hale and I were by our track when we received incoming mortar rounds and we both jumped inside my track but we failed to shut the door on the ramp. SSgt Hale's

butt cheeks took some mortar fragments because of that mistake. That was the last I ever heard or saw of SSgt Hale. He was a short-timer then and I think he was glad to be dusted off. I believe this was the night before the main battle or December 31st of 1967.

My memory of Burt is that the main attack came the night of January 1st, 1968 and into January 2nd. I am very clear about this date so in my mind it is settled.

Bill, I think my track was set up on the south side of the logger, the 4th from the road. When the attack came, I watched the tracks to my left, as first one exploded and burned and then another exploded and burned. They called over the radio that they were sending a duster to fill the gap between the tracks and the legs. The duster did not even get into place before it exploded and started burning. During this time, I had been feeding ammo to my 50 gunner. I remember we had burnt up 2 - 50 cal barrels firing madly in front of us. I can remember thinking that no one could live thru the lead that we were putting out. God bless those 50 cal's.

About this time, as I looked to my left and saw 2 tracks and one duster burning, there was one more track on my left (I found out this year it was John Eberwine's 2-2 track) before I would become a prime target if they were going to continue to blow up the tracks. I began to wonder how the guys in the bunkers were doing for ammo. I set up some 50 ammo for the gunner and then asked Lt Lashbrook for permission to run ammo to the bunkers.

When he said yes, I was one happy camper because I did not like the idea of being trapped in that track when it exploded and burned. (It never did, but the odds at that time looked better running ammo to the bunkers)

I will always remember the adrenaline rush that kept me moving until I was

wounded running over to the 2nd platoon track. PSG Alexander was running behind me when I was hit. Anyhow, after a bit, I was taken to the command area for medevac. I was one of those taken to Tay Ninh and then on to Cu Chi. My wounds were not disabling and I recovered completely and returned to the company in 3 weeks. What a night!!!!

It changed my life forever. My life since then has been a bonus from God. When I get caught up in life's challenges, that night comes back, and I can realize just how lucky I am to have come home at all. It has helped me thru some very interesting times.

Anyhow, thanks for listening and sharing your memories with all of us. Take the time to write it for us if you have not. Bill, you were right, as we go along fleshing out the memory of Burt, we will put together quite a story about one hell of a battle.

Regards from Renee and I. - Jerry Rudisill

P.S. - Hello Lt. John Lashbrook! I look forward to re-making our acquaintance. I have a lot of memories of you.

From Pat Merth a message to many on Thur, 30 Jan 1997

Drew Christie, Jon Parsons and I were at Burt.

I was driving 3-3 track at the time (nick name Swamp Fox). After we crossed the river for a given time I was the lead track breaking jungle. Charley 6 called repeatedly and asked our progress, and we didn't answer right away, I could tell he was getting upset about calling 3 or 4 times trying to reach us.

My flank men couldn't walk flank, due to the thickness of the brush, so they walked behind the track. I had just hit a large nest of red ants; lost my 50 gunner so he could drop his pants. By

now I broke into a VC camp. I finally
was able to get back on the radio and
report our progress, and Thank God
Charley Wasn't I home!