

Koto Miyamaedaira 403
7-1-5, Tsuchiahshi
Takatsu-ku, Kawasaki-shi
Kanagawa-ken 213 Japan

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Mr. Philip Caputo
c/o Holt, Rinehart & Winston

New York, New York 10017

Dear Mr. Caputo:

I just finished reading your A Rumor of War and I don't mind going out of my way to say you did a great job. I was surprised by the similarities in our experiences. Like you, I grew up in the Chicago area (Elgin, Illinois), was a platoon commander in 1/3 ("B" Co.), and wrote a book about it (The Grunts, Presidio Press, San Rafael, Cal., 1976). But the scope of my work was smaller than yours, one operation. You described so well the things I left out of my account, especially the Quantico training. And as a history major in my college days, I appreciated the inclusion of specific dates, place names and figures.

I graduated from TBS in May 1968 and was in 1/3 from February to August 1969. Your description of the battalion's change of character during its first few months in Vietnam was interesting. That character, of course continued to change; you probably wouldn't have recognized the unit in 1969. The area of operation had changed by then, too: along the DMZ. I also spent some time in the rear, on the staff of the III MAF brig no less. The brig was run by 3d MP battalion, which arrived in Vietnam after you, I was told. The brig location was probably different than the facility you and your company commander were taken to. We were southwest of Hill 327, at about the middle of your map on page 70. In addition to errant Marines, we were holding North Vietnamese POWs.

You might be interested to know that you and I are not the first and second author-veterans of 1/3 but the second and third. An account of some of the battalion's operations in World War II was written by one of its members, and I found a copy in an old book store in Chicago after my discharge. I don't remember the title but the book is with my things in the States. If you're interested, I'll send you the title when I return later this year.

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I've been in Japan five years now and just completed a book about present-day Japan. My wife (a daughter of Japan) and I plan to return to the States this year, when I hope to meet you and many other veterans. Japan offers a nice degree of detachment for one who wants to write but I don't find as many veterans as I'd like to.

Good luck to you.

Sincerely yours,

Charles R. Anderson

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