

4 12
A



M113 ACAV



M125
MORTAR CARRIER



M48 A3
PATTON TANK



M551
SHERIDAN

A TROOP 4/12 CAV

Vietnam 27 Jul 1968 – 30 Nov 1971

**A TROOP 4TH SQUADRON, 12TH U.S. CAVALRY
1ST BRIGADE, 5TH INFANTRY DIVISION (Mechanized)
VIETNAM JULY 1968 - NOVEMBER 1971**



FORMATION, TRAINING & DEPLOYMENT TO VIET NAM

**Successful military organizations are solidly founded upon the pride of their soldiers with a strong sense of belonging to their unit and enthusiastic about it's being their own...
...so began the BROTHERHOOD**

WHO WE WERE:

We came from the north, the south, the east, the west, from the big cities, the small country towns, large families, only-child families--as high school drop-outs and as college graduates. We were fathers, sons, husbands or brothers--unemployed, laborers, students, clerks, tradesmen, professionals and soldiers--law-abiding citizens and those given the choice of the service or jail--Career Soldiers (Lifers), Draftees (US), or Volunteers (RA's).

We were a slice of the Baby Boomer generation. We went because we were ordered to go, or we wanted to become US citizens, or sought adventure or simply because we believed in fighting for democracy. Some might have needed to escape situations at home or had nothing better to do at the time. A lot of us celebrated our coming of age in Nam, and encountered a lot of "FOR THE FIRST TIME" life experiences there.

By the end of our tour with A Troop 4/12 Cav we came to have one thing in common...

THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE CAV.



**3 Troop
4th Squadron, 12th Cavalry Regiment
1st Infantry Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division (Mech)
APO San Francisco 96477**



"Those days 30+ years ago are really important experiences for us all, and if you are like me, those essential parts of us have been isolated for a long time. But they are not irrelevant. They may be ancient history to our kids, but they aren't to us. Who can we really express them to? Who could even help us remember that they are real? Who other than we could have an instinctive understanding of what these experiences mean to us individually?" "And there were a LOT of funny/haha and funny/wierd things which happened that nobody around us now could possibly appreciate." L Tee F

**THE QUEST TO RECORD THE HISTORY OF A TROOP 4/12 CAV
Vietnam
27 Jul 1968 – 30 Nov 1971**

The Phrase "**DO YOU REMEMBER**" has prompted numerous trips down memory lane.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: "His" story, as told by the troopers themselves, in their own words.

The main body of our Troop History will consist of Troopers relating memories of stories and accounts of events IN THEIR OWN WORDS. All troopers experienced the same war in the same area of operations but from different perspectives. Days of boredom, miserable weather, loneliness, interspersed with moments of sheer excitement and terror, which has led to memories full of many emotions - fear, sorrow, anger and humor. Will all Troopers remember every event the same way? No, it is their memory and with these memories we build a picture of our past.

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History of A 4/12th Cav in Vietnam 27 Jul 1968 – 30 Nov 1971

"His" story, as told by the troopers themselves, in their own words. Augmented by after action reports and other official documents.

CPT Errol D. Alexander, July-Oct 1968

CPT Kenneth G. Carlson, Oct 68-Mar 69

The TO&E of a Cavalry Troop in the 1960's called for three platoons. Each platoon had a platoon leader's vehicle, a scout section of two scout squads with each squad having two vehicles (4 vehicles in the section) a tank section of three tanks, an infantry squad and a mortar squad.

Many Cavalry units reorganized the platoons to have 9 M-113s when they deployed to RVN - 11th Cav is the best example. However A/4-12 kept its original organization when it deployed to RVN with one small exception.

There was never enough infantry replacement so the infantry squad was folded into the scout section and most of the time the mortar squads were pulled from the platoons and formed a mortar platoon.

A platoon's organization would have been (using 1st platoon as an example)

- 10 - Platoon Leader
- 11 - Scout Section Leader
- 12 - Scout
- 13 - Scout Squad Leader
- 14 - Scout
- 15 - Infantry Squad - not used as a scout
- 16 - Platoon Sergeant and Tank Section Leader
- 17 - Tank
- 18 - Tank

19 Mortar Squad, but removed and grouped with the other mortars to form a mortar platoon under Troop Commander's control.

There were three platoons. In addition there were two radar tracks, (Call signs 61 & 62) the troop commander's track, a light recovery vehicle and the commo track (Call sign 30) that is why the 3d Platoon Leader's call sign was 40.

Matt Spruill

Matt Spruill This is the second installment to my e-mail on Troop organization.

As I mentioned before each platoon had a mortar squad, they were 81"MM mortars mounted in a track. Common practice was for all three mortars to be grouped into a platoon. When I was there the "19" Squad leader ran the mortar platoon. The mortars went to the field whenever the entire troop deployed. In night defensive positions they were located in the center of the troop position and were aimed at a pre-determined target. They also had registered data for other likely targets.

The troops had two Ground Surveillance Radars(GSR). They were AN/PPS-5, and used call sign 61 and 62. Each radar had a track and a crew of 2 or 3. The radars looked like a large can turned on its side with the radar end being curved and the operators end being flat. This was mounted on a tripod and could be hooked up to a small generator for power.

The radar was designed to pick up movement and worked best against vehicles, but it could pick up groups of people. There was no scope like you see on most radar, but the radar return came through an noise which the operator heard in a set of head phones. It required training and practice to use the set with any reliability.

The radar also went to the field when the troop deployed and at night was located in the center of the troop's position.

When I was there I had the mortars and the radar set up on the same base azimuth. That way when ever the radar picked up a target they only had to give the mortars the azimuth and range for the mortars to fire, it took some practice but several times suspected targets were engaged.

As each mortar track and radar track had a 50 cal mounted on top they also provided a nice firepower reserve for direct fire in a defensive position if needed.

When on the move the radar tracks accompanied and set up with the mortars to provide them security.

Is anyone out there a mortar man or a GSR operator?

Matt Spruill

Matt, I was the gunner on 29. MOS was 11C20. I was trained as a mortar man at Fort Ord. During the time that I was over there, I only remember a few times that we set up as a company and used aiming stakes and the M16 plotting board. It seems that most of the time we were at platoon strength and usually

just "hip shot" the mortars. I don't remember the radar tracks very well. The tank's range finders were used to give us an accurate distance to target and we would use the vertical cross hair for alignment and adjust range accordingly. Much of the time that I was there, Jun 69 to Jun70, track 29 wasn't running so I spent time as M60 gunner on different tracks. I can remember one time that we had the three mortars tracks set up on coordinates and we had some Marines working with us. They had electronic listening devices set up on a trail in three different spots. Movement was detected on the first, the second and when we got the ok, we fired 5 rounds from each tube and blew up the third sensor. In the morning we found a bloody shirt.

Bob Taylor

Glad to see that troop tactics changed some time after I was there. Don't remember ever seeing a radar track and to the best of my knowledge never used the mortar track other than as another vehicle with a 50 on it. I never remember them set up as a battery but then we were usually operating as independent platoon and not that often as a troop. The one time we could have dropped a few rounds in to keep them hopping it was decided that the men didn't have the experience to register accurately enough, especially when friendlies were also operating in the same valley and positions iffy.

William McShane

Feb 1968

TET offensive initiates additional troop buildup in Vietnam

March 1968

1st Brigade 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized), Ft. Carson, CO begins receiving troops buildup and training for deployment to Vietnam.

April 1968 Civil Disturbance Training and deployment to Washington D.C. riot control; in the time frame of the end of March and the first of April. Pineapple: Barbara and I were out doing the Thanksgiving shopping tonight and while waiting for her to clear the checkout I went over to the book rack and picked up a book about Nam (surprise surprise). I always check them out to see what reference there is to the Cav (normally none at all). This one did make reference to the fact about the 5th Inf being send to Nam despite not being ready for combat operations (that is one reason we sat on the beach for so long). It seems that the Division had been wrapped up in riot control and were behind in their training and in the outfitting of equipment to be used in Nam. So it was held back until sometime in September before the whole unit was declared fit for duty.

Coop

According to "The Rise and Fall of an American Army" by Shelby Stanton (1985, Novato CA, Presidio books), the 5th I.D. (Mech) brought 1,072 armored vehicles with them. Once there, they received 140 APCs, 8 mortar carriers from Fort Hood and a total of 67 M48 tanks from Ft. Knox and the Letterkenny Army Depot in Chambersburg, PA. During the shakedown period, the division's readiness was complicated by the September monsoons which temporarily isolated the division on the wrong side of the Cam Lo main bridge. But the day was saved by aerial resupply. Some elements of the division came into enemy contact in August, but the rest of the division actually entered the fight in October 1968. According to Stanton, the NVA on the DMZ now had to deal with armored formations and "mechanized momentum."

Coop

June 1968

Deployment of advance party for Quang Tri and Wunder Beach. Tent City built in the sands of Wunder Beach.

Deployment of advance party from Ft. Carson to Danang.

Jim Mills arrives with advanced party that in Danang, and then flown to the Marine base at Quang Tri. While awaiting the arrival of the main body elements we receive our in-country briefing from the 3rd Marine Div., fill sandbags, pull guard and learn how to burn shit.

July 1968(ORLL Beginning First Period 1/5 th Inf Div (M) Quang Tri Province, South Vietnam 1 Nov 68) Phase III – Movement to Vietnam: On 1 July 1968, an advance party consisting of 300 personnel and 85.5 short tons of cargo departed Peterson Field, Colorado Springs, Colorado. This lift required seven C141 aircraft (3 for passengers and 4 for cargo). Upon arrival at Da Nang Air Base, the advance party moved to Quang Tri Combat Base to establish a temporary base camp and prepare to receive the main body of the Brigade. The main body started moving on 22 July 1968 and completed movement on 31 July 1968. The movement of the main body required a total of 64 C141 aircraft consisting of 48 passenger sorties and 16 cargo sorties. A Total of 4,578 personnel and 1,109.3 short tons of cargo were moved by air.

Personnel landed initially at Da Nang and were transloaded into C130 aircraft for movement to Quang Tri. Priorities for movement were 1-11 th Inf Bn, Brigade Hq, 1-61 st Inf (M), 1-77 th Armor, and the 75 th Support Bn in that order. After arrival the brigade began to deprocess the equipment shipped by surface transportation. The majority of this equipment was off-loaded at Da Nang and transshipped to Wunder Beach on the coast ESE of Quang Tri City. From 1 August to 15 August 1968 the battalions unpacked, conducted orientation and acclimatization training, and prepared for combat.

The units were initially positioned as follows: 1 – 11 Inf LZ Sharon 1 – 61 Inf (M) Wunder Beach 1 – 77 Armor Wunder Beach 5 – 4 Arty LZ Sharon A/7 th Engr Wunder Beach A/4-12 th Cav Wunder Beach 75 th Spt Bn (-) Quang Tri CB D 75 th Bn Dong Ha 517 th MI Quang Tri CB 407 th RRD Quang Tri CB 86 th Chem Det Quang Tri CB Bde HQ Quang Tri CB (5) .50 Caliber MG Mounts:

(a) Observation: The M@ caliber .50 cupola mounted MG on the M1 cupola in the M48 series tanks is unsatisfactory forthe type of combat experienced in Vietnam. A pedestal mounted MG with armor protection enhances the tank commander's ability to return fire immediately. The .50 caliber MG used in reconnaissance by fire is easier to control if mounted by this method.

From Lt. William G. McShane 3rd Platoon 1968-69

As I read comments of others about their memories of their early days in country I decided to try reconstructing some of what happened to me from memory and comments I made in letters to my wife to be. She has saved all of the letters I wrote, so there should be some interesting facts a few of which I have already come across. If anyone wants to edit this or can fill in some of the blanks I would love to start a dialog.

The troop left Carson and flew to Traverse AFB in CA, then to Wake, Manila and finally Da Nang I got off the plane on Wake, walked out to an old WWII bunker and checked out the Pacific. Never saw the pacific. I commented in letters that each stop got hotter and hotter. When we disembarked in Da Nang the heat was so oppressive I just stood there and sweated. Sweated some more. Then watched the tracer fire shooting off in the distance.

I can't remember how we got from Da Nang to Quang Tri. Boggles my mind, but I remember our first days were at Quang Tri combat base in a tent city next to the marines. Here we were in our nice clean fatigues in a base camp. No equipment. Don't remember when we got weapons, but do remember we had some rule about loaded rifles. My first trip out of the compound was when John Howell (lt) and I grabbed Lou Coates' XO jeep and went for a ride down 1 to Quang Tri City. Here we go out of the compound in nice new fatigues, steel pots, belts, flackjackets up to our eyeballs, weapons at the ready, driving down the road sightseeing. Uneventful except for the smell of burning charcoal, palm fronds, and nouc mam(sp). Marines lazily walking up and down the side of the road, dirty, no pots, no flackjackets, some no weapons. We looked like a couple of fresh flowers totally out of place. FNG's

Hot hot hot. No ice. Went to the Marines on a mission to get a refrigerator. Marine Major from home town looked at young 2lt (our mothers knew each other) and blew me off. He was even a supply officer. I guess I should have known better. Should have sent Sgt. Platt in the first place.

Prior to July 8 - NCO's and Officers buy a refrigerator. Supplied by none other than Sgt. Platt. Cold beer!

Just talked with Lou Coates, the Troop XO on departure. To correct the record, he states that the Troop left in mass before he left. While we were on leave prior to departure, he and 10 or so others, Harrison included, worked, tying up loose ends. When we, the whole Troop embarked, he went on leave and then directly to Nam and directly to Wonder Beach, missing the Quang Tri tent city stage. Does anyone remember how we got from Da Nang to Quang Tri. I am drawing a blank.

W. McShane

I was in the advance party and it is my recollection that we flew from Da Nang to Dong Ha or Quang Tri. I remember that the Air Force tried to frighten us when we were about to land at Da Nang by telling us that the base there was under heavy fire. The A Troopers were smart enough to realize that they would not land those huge planes if they really were under fire.

Remley Campbell (Static)

Blue Max:

Let me add to the confusion with my faded memory of almost 34 yrs ago.

I remember an advance party being sent from the Brigade and A Troop sent personal with it. In regards to the Troop going on leave, there was a period of time when almost all of A Troop was on leave. There was a small party left behind to wrap up odds and ends. I was part of that small party, I had to attend a meeting (as the ranking NCO of the Troop) in regards to status of Troop preparation and you want to talk about being the low man on the totem pole. There even were a couple of days when you could not find an officer in site. During this time we basically hung out at the motor pool or some other spot out of site - out of mind. One of the reasons I remember this time period, we had one buck Sgt. who was thrown from a jeep injuring his elbow so bad that he could not go to Nam with the Troop. Another reason why I remember this period of time is because we became so laid back that some people felt like we forgot that we were still in the Army and one morning at formation we had a surprise inspection. At this inspection several Article 15's were handed out, including one to me for not shaving. At age 19 I could go for months and not shave and pass inspection but high up wanted to put people on notice that we were still in the Army. The company clerk at that time told everyone not to worry he would handle it and make it go ahead.

It was not until Pineapple was back in the rear, did I find out that I had an Article 15 on my record. When the Troop came back from leave, the party that had been holding the fort down while they were gone, took their leave.
Coop

Bill (Blue Max)

Guess I'll add a little more fire to the confusion. Coop corrected me on one part and that was leaves. From what I remember the Troop was split for their leaves. The advanced party where the first to leave and by the time we returned the rest of the troop was on leave. I don't recall how many troopers a C-141 holds but the A Troop was one one. If I recall correctly there were three birds that took the advanced party over. Carson to Travis AFB to Wake Island to the Phillipines and then to Da Nang. From Da Nang we flew in C-130's to Quang Tri and landed in a 30 mph cross wind needles to say the pucker factor was high. All I remember about Quang Tri was the Marines gave us some in country training, filling sand bags and pulling guard on our motor pool. I do remember that a higher up came up with the idea that we should make a landing pad shaped like a diamond out of sand bags. During construction of the pad some Marines came by and told us that the pad would be under water after the first rain (it was). One thing that I can't place is did the Troop come together at Wunder Beach or at Quang Tri?

Jim M. A 4/12 (advanced party) 68-69

D Co. 1/11 ACR 69

4th of July show put on by the Marines, the whole perimeter opens up and flares light up the sky.

By the way, I have a really stupid question. I really seem to remember being in Viet Nam on the 4th of July. I have this memory of being in a marine area with the other platoon leaders and Bobcat. The Marines let loose with everything sometime during the evening, a mad minute I think, to celebrate the 4th. Scared the shit out of me because I thought the perimeter was under attack. I think it was Quang Tri, but it could have been Wunder Beach. Now, am I dreaming or do you remember that too or do I have the date wrong?

James Kershner

L.T.

You are not dreaming it was at Quang Tri on the 4th of July like you thought. It gave me one hell of a pucker factor. Shit I was in country for just 2 days and I thought they were already going to waste my ass. All I remember was it was one hell of a show.

Jim Mills

Good, I'm glad to know I haven't totally lost it after all these years. I can't believe I turned 60 last week. I still think I'm about 25 and bullet proof. Two other things I remember about that 4th of July.

I bought a K Bar knife from a marine for a case of beer. I'm sure he thought that he pulled a good one on an army LT, but the beer is long gone and I still have the K Bar and it is as sharp as ever. The other thing I remember is that when the jar heads set off their "fireworks" I grabbed my .45 and and tried to chamber a round and it jammed. I found out later that it was defective and I turned it in for another one, but after that I always had a 45 and an M-16 and I won't even mention the .32 snub nose I carried in my pocket.

James Kershner.

Swinny arrives with main body.

Equipment - Tanks & APC's arrive

Coop says the Troop was issue M48A1 or A2 tanks (which were gasoline engine powered) while at Carson they train on M60. Think this should be noted in the record. Saw a show on the history channel awhile back about WWII Sherman tanks which were also gas powered. Both the US and Germans nicknamed them "Ronsons" because like the cigarette lighter, they lit first time and every time when they were hit. I do recall seeing a bunch of burnt out Marine tanks around everywhere. A few were even flamethrower models.

Malan.

There was a report of enemy activity near Tombstone. A Troop sweeps area around 0300hrs. No contact was made but tanks run over a few hootches.

After A Troop first hit Wunder Beach; we had so many 3rd degree sunburns the CO threaten to give out Article 15 for destroying Army property.

Coop

Coop:

Tanks for memory I just about put the Wunder Beach Sunburns to rest. I didn't think we had that many layers of skin to peel off. Even the Brothers got sunburned.

Jim Mills

From Lt. William G. McShane 3rd Platoon 1968-69

Remember the first month as pretty slow therefore wrote a lot of letters.

10 July report that the Marines up north are into it although our area is fairly secure. Marines kill 233 and take 4POW's. 3 Killed.

14 July Arrival at Wonder Beach which turned out to be the first real base of our own albeit short lived. Sandbagging and more sandbagging! Yesterday rained harder than I have ever seen it. Everything drenched.

17 July Playing a lot of poker!

18 July Ship in. Six days to offload.

21 July Sea snake came swimming at me while body surfing. Got the hell out of the water.

24 July No Mail No Mail No Mail. Went out on the ship to check on the off loading. In the lights hanging overboard sea snakes and squid galore. Every once and a while a big something crashes through and takes a mouthful.

25 July FIRST LETTERS FROM HOME. Dated July 2. Wrote Peg about Fat Harry, Pewee and Skinny Luke. You guys remember who they were? Big waves at the beach. Body Surfing. Seems we are all swimming in the nude and one of the guys got his ass burned so bad he couldn't stand the feel of a cover or whatever on it

July 27 drawing rations for 250 men and only feeding 190. Eating like a demon

July 31 We received 23 of our vehicles last night. Today will put on armor and start mechanical checks.

August 1968

Quang Tri base camp occupied

4/12 Cav assigned to guard road between Quang Tri and Dong Ha

The following is from Keith Short of C 1/11th Infantry:

On 6 Aug 1968, A/4-12 Cav replaced C/1-11 Infantry in a place called "Red." Red appears to be the area around FSB Pedro area to the north of the Thach Han River. It begins at 13:41 hours when A/4-12 Cav start calling in their locations at check points #1, #7, #23, #25, #50 and #70. I'm assuming these were places were east of FSB Pedro. At 15:59 hours the location of A/4-12 is at YD258526, some 4300 meters north of Pedro. At 12:59 hours, 7 Aug 68, an A/4-12 Cav location is at YD232477 just off Rte. 557 on a little knob about 1900 meters SWW of Pedro. At 13:45 hours there is an A/4-12 Platoon at YD231472. At 14:04 hours 1/A/4-12 at YD2314566 found a spider hole they threw CS in and then destroyed it with a track (no enemy found). At 14:28 1/A/4-12 was at YD227466. At 14:28 1/A/4-12 was at YD222474 and at 16:10 hours they're at YD231481. At 17:59 hours A/4-12 Cav reports LP's at YD285501, YD291503 and YD293500.

At 22:01 hours the CO of A/4-12 was given orders to report to QTMB NLT at 11:00 hours for a meeting. On 8 Aug 1968 at 16:58 hours A/4-12 Cav sends in their ambush locations at YD278482, LP at YD286501, a patrol from YD287502 to YD272489 to YD274482 (an area 4500 meters NE of FSB Pedro). At 21:00 hours to 21:50 hours A/4-12 reported they were shooting illumination after hear noises from 2x persons running at them at YD284501 (this position is west of the ammo dumps at Red Devil). On 10 August 1968 at 11:40 hours the 1/11 Daily Journal entry reads: Change of Task Organization (Loss of A/4-12) will be effective 101600 11 Aug 68.
[End of Short's insert]

Mine (I would assume - and we all know what assume spells - 1st platoon) first time took place up on the DMZ; we had been doing a sweep all morning. We took a lunch break, all the tracks were spread out in a line. I was sitting out on the right front fender of A16, McNeil and Willie P were up top and Troy was in the drivers hatch. What followed seemed to happen in slow motion (but it took place in seconds) out front and to the right of the tank the ground started erupting (it was incoming mortar rounds) McNeil yells incoming about the same time, being wet behind the ears I was amazed by it all. In the next moment it's assholes and elbows, with c-rats flying through the air. Being the gunner I had to get in fast so the rest could get in; while this is going on Troy has the Tank going backwards. The grass was so tall unless you were in the TC hatch you could not see shit. The next thing you know we have back off into an old B52 bomb crater, trust me you can lose a tank in one of them, and threw a track as we hit bottom. The rest of the platoon had pulled back, we are sitting at the bottom of the crater at an angle so it is out with side arms (grease gun / 45 pistol ha-ha) lucky nothing else came of the incoming. An M88 was sent up to pull us out of the crater; they hook onto one hook and pull us out while doing this the other track comes off. So here we sit one large visible non-mobile bunker. The rest of the platoon is covering us from a distance. I do not remember how long it took to get the tracks back on but I would think we would have been inspired. Were we lucky, someone watching over us, or what?
(Charles Cooper)

From Lt. William G. McShane 3rd Platoon 1968-69

August 6 Spent a week in the hospital in Da Nang Legs, hands, feet, lips whole body swells up so much I must walk on heels of my feet to get around. Learn what it's like to get malaria from the men in my ward and swear if I get out of this place and back to my men I will force feed malaria pills to them for the rest of the year. The sweats and cold chills they had under ice water rubber blankets made a believer out of me. I didn't have it and didn't know what I had until four months ago (2002). Story to be told at the reunion under

the right circumstances. Remember after returning to the platoon, one of my men getting a wound, bite or irritation, on the rear of his calf. A few days later it ate its way through to the front of his calf without touching either side. Just came out the front. Sent him to the doc and it was the last I saw of him.

While I am in the hospital Sgt. Jim Platt gets the platoon up to strength and combat ready.

August 15 Out of the hospital, no ticket home. Guy in another platoon shot a friend in the arm with a 45. We are doing road duty. Keeping open the road between Quang Tri and Dong Ha. Wrote home and I quote " I know that I have got the best platoon over here and I think my men are beginning to think the same way also. It is not a feeling of over confidence either; it is just a feeling of pride among everyone." Credit one Platoon Sergeant, Jim Platt.

August 18 Took six incoming rounds, from where or where I don't know? Close to DMZ. August 21 Fire fight up North. Air strike. "I think the mail is getting fouled up again. It isn't coming in regularly. A few of my men haven't gotten mail from their wives for 8 days when they were getting it everyday."

August 24 Got ahold of the clerks typewriter to write home. We were 1500 meters from the DMZ. Second platoon took three incoming when leaving.

August 24 - Sept 8 References to being in base camp at Dong Ha. Vaguely remember calling Dong Ha base camp for a while. Think our area was on south of the tarmac. Took 50 incoming rounds and spent a few hours in a trench. Came out of the trench and saw Sgt Spybuck pop his head up. He was white. Hard to do for a 201 pound Cherokee. I remember him as being just one big man with coal black hair. He was Indian but I really can't say what tribe. One night on road duty I fell asleep and my men could not wake me. I was out cold in some kind of stupor. They got worried, call HQ and out came Spybuck, to save the day and me. I seem to remember being held up in the air by Spybuck and him shaking me while holding me with his hands on each of my upper arms as I dangled in front of him. Wake up time! He was Top at that time. Reported we were in a typhoon for three days. Tank sank in a rice paddy up to its turret ring. Assume we got it out.

September 1968

A-18 hits mine near C2. Swinny, Mills, Tulki and Gaylor shaken but there were no major injuries.

I'm still not sure of the time of this event but it must have been at the end of Aug. or early Sept. 1st platoon had been pulling road guard on Highway 1 keeping the road between Dong Ha and Quang Tri secure at night. How we got to where we ended up is still locked away. Any way we ended up on a Recon near, I believe, C-2. We did our Recon of the AO and started back down the road following the tracks we left on the way up figuring we did not hit anything on the way up we should be ok on our way down the hill. I still don't remember the explosion all I remember is coming back down on the turret, looking down where the mine exploded. At this time we had M48A1, which was gas powered. Why they did not give us A-2's or 3's I do not know. Back to the story the mine went off about amidships it seemed like that it went off right under me. The next thing I remember is asking Swinny if he is ok and he was. All of a sudden, SSgt. Cunningham comes running from his ACAV. Finds what he believes to be a spider hole and empties about 3 M-16 Magazines into a hole about a foot deep. Still it had to have been a command-detonated mine considering where the mine blew and that was A-18's welcome to Nam.

Tanks for listening

(Jim M "68")

Septemeber 5, 1968

Typhoon BESS strikes I Corp with 50-knot winds and heavy rain. Operations are suspended for two days and defensive positions are washed out.

I remembered a typhoon hitting early in our tour but could not recall the date of and etc. One of the reasons this memory has stayed with me all of the these years is every time it rains hard I can see myself back in Nam pulling guard on A16 (at night near a bridge) in this typhoon. You could hold your hand in front of your face and not even see it. Let me tell you it became just as wet inside the tank as it was outside; wet and cold all night is something that I can remember. It even will cause me to look out the patio door and stare out into a hard rain and smile.

Cooper

12 Sep 1968

Brigade sweep along DMZ. A28 hits mine. 2nd platoon APC hit by Chicom anti-personnel mine. Spc Jones and Van Winkle wounded.

Harold Joseph Van Winkle, Jr., aka Rip. Married. Patterson, New Jersey. Was wounded on Sept 12, 1968. Sent to Ft Zama Japan. The shrapnel was real close to his heart. His son, Saun, was a couple of months old and he heard him baby talk on the phone, but never got to see him.

(G. Bowers)

Also, are you sure that Michelson was KIA in Vietnam? He was hit on my track (A10) up on the DMZ and I had him medivac'd out. I think the date was Friday Sept 13th, 1968. If he was KIA no one ever told me.

I can't remember his first name but he was supposed to be getting an early out to go home to start college. Anyone have any other details?
(Ltee Kershner)

Charlie Brown:

I had to think on this for awhile but if I remember correctly Michelson came back to the troop before he left for the world. If this is the person I'm thinking of I believe it was his 2nd. tour.

Jim M.

I agree that it was his 2nd tour. I'm glad to know he wasn't KIA. I don't remember too much except he was a good guy and he was sitting on the back of my APC when we started taking incoming. I think he got hit in the stomach, but didn't seem fatal at the time. I remember the first round, probably a rocket since we were sitting almost on top of the Ben Hai River, hit right in front of a tank to my right. I thought the tank had fired and it went low, then I realized that it was enemy fire. We opened up and I watched a gunner on one of the tracks burn out his 50 cal barrel by firing without stopping. When that happened you could see the rounds not going straight, but kind of cork screwed. (By the way, that is one of my nightmares about Vietnam in having a weapon that won't shoot straight or running out of ammo. In truth, I always had so much ammo on my track and on me that there was never a chance I would run out. After an experience, which I will relate some other time, I always made sure I had a .32 5 shot snub nose in my pocket.) I think I remember somebody trying to change the barrel and getting burned because they didn't have asbestos gloves on. The next thing I remember is all of the tracks and tanks backing off the hill. We had some other WIA's I think an E5 was shot in the arm. Then a Medivac chopper came on my freq and said that he was coming in for a dust off. I told him the LZ was hot and he said don't worry just pop smoke and be ready to get the wounded on his chopper. I never knew who the pilot was but from that day I will buy any Medivac pilot or crewman a drink anytime, any place. Those guys had to have the biggest brass balls in the war. Thanks for listening.

(J. Kershner)

From Lt. William G. McShane 3rd Platoon 1968-69

Sept 15 Into the DMZ. Launched from A-3. 1st and 2nd Platoons stage in the night before. 3rd Platoon, ours, holds back and keeps the road open and rendezvous in the morning. Road off 1, to A3, not cleared of mines, so get off into the low grass. Hit a mine. Zamora was driving. All okay, just a little sore. Track a mess. I wrote that the rest of the Troop pushed into the DMZ that two other tracks hit mines and there was contact. We got a few. Can't say more than that because I was sitting there on the top of that exposed hill with one of my tanks and another track waiting for repair.

September 24 Rained for three days. Cam Lo Bridge completely washed out last night. Mission was guarding the Cam Lo District Headquarters from VC or NVA attack. Drenched. If I remember right, at one point we may have been in Cam Lo cordoned around some Marine 155 SP's. Great fun trying to sleep with those babies going off all night.

Sept 27 Cordoned off a vill and waited for the PF to come in and search. Told eight VC caught.

Sept 30-Oct 1 While riding on Sgt Platt's tank we hit a mine.

September 29, 1968

Battleship New Jersey (BB-62) arrives on station off I Corp.

October 1968

1St platoon sent to Camp Eagle by way of LCU to Hue.

October 8 Talk of being attached to the 101 down in Hue. Alexander no longer CO. Ended up a CO of company in 1/77. We lost a great CO.

October 20 Now attached to 101st north of Ha Vong Pass (sp). Raining for six days.

Lt. William McShane

November 1968

6 Nov 1968: Nixon elected president. American troop strength is at 540,000.

Returned to Quang Tri.

From Lt. William G. McShane 3rd Platoon 1968-69

Nov 6 Prior to this date we break off with the 101st and drive north past Wonder Beach again. Remember Sgt. Platt taking the lead tank over a bridge shaped almost like a perfect arch, semicircle, going about 5mph and praying the damn thing didn't drop out from under him. Peg sent a plastic pumpkin for Halloween. Hung it between the whips on the track.. Got more smiles and thumbs up from guys as we drove around country with that orange glow between the whips. Nice to cheer up people.

Bill McShane

On Nov 8 I was pissed about something and I wrote "Point #2. Our president must be and idiot. I am far from a war monger, yet I don't like to be shot at by

artillery from the other side of the DMZ. If the bombing halts bring peace that is fine, however the first one did the opposite. They dropped 130mm artillery rounds into Dong HA for two days straight after the first one (the 36 hour job of a few days ago) and managed to destroy one hell of a lot of government property, not to mention killing the Sergeant Major. All those halts do is let Ho chi and the boys hump down more ammo on their backs" etc.

In another instance I railed on about the news we were seeing of rioting students.

December 1968

06Dec68

SSG Guy Creep killed doing thunder run. Took RPG in swim vane and 50 cal shield. SPC Jones wounded, mechanic wounded (lost part of his skull cap), and two others wounded.

I was in 2nd platoon then. i was in charge of track 23 & 24. I got over to Sgt. Creep's track that night before "doc" could get there and saw he was dead. we were all so mad at the dustoff pilots because they wouldn't come in and get guy because they were scared somebody would fire a star cluster into their chopper. hell, they were green i guess.

Sgt. Kilmore

December 18 Returned from R&R and doing guard duty for engineers building a road into the Bai Long Valley. Lost a man in another platoon while I was away. Wrote the "Americans forces left the valley a year or more ago and the NVA and Cong have had it ever since. No sweat though, the Cav is tough."

Bill McShane

While I am B.S.ing. Do you remember Christmas '68. Don't know where the first platoon was but second was reinforcing an engineer unit building a road west to the Bi Long Valley. Monsoon rains came. Third was cordoned up just west of a little stream tributary south of a river and acting as a base for the second and engineers to return to. River started rising. They got a portable bridge in and we just got the last vehicle over before the stream became a torrent and we would have been stuck on that side for months. Headed back to I think Nancy or Red Devil and while riding on Platt's tank hit a mine. I didn't notice any mention of that road to the Bi Long, if that is how it's spelled and wonder if any of the guys that came after us ever used the road.

Christmas spent in the field cordoned up east of the road into the Bai Long Valley. Raining for days and the river between us and base, which I believe was Nancy at that time, was swelling. Received a live Christmas Tree, the bottom four feet for Christmas. Also a plastic reindeer, and Santa. Put the tree in the ground with some decorations and had a little service around it. Second platoon was with us. Don't remember where first was. Christmas dinner flown in. Turkey. After dinner ordered to return to base and get out of area. Worried about not being able to cross swelling river. Got the last vehicle over and were just able to pull up the bridge before the creek became a torrent. Think on the way back I was on Platt's tank and fell off, or hit a mine and was blown off. Probably the latter but didn't write home about that. Another Christmas dinner at base and then back to Wonder Beach. Got a "Tuggy Tooter" for Christmas from Peg. Also, the top half of the tree arrived. Raining and in the mountains. Now cold. Can see my breath.

(William McShane)

Bill, I'm not sure where we (1st platoon) was at for Christmas of 68. We had just picked up our new tank at Nancy and if my memory is correct we went to a base camp that the 1/77th was at. I believe our crew ate Christmas dinner at Nancy before heading out. After Christmas I just remember being at Red Devil waiting shipment to the 11th Cav.

(Jim Mills)

My most memorable Christmas in Vietnam was Christmas Eve, 1968. A Troop, or at least most of it, was working on the road over the mountains and into the BaLong Valley. We had an engineer unit and an artillery battery attached to us, making us almost a battalion sized outfit. 1st Brigade had decided that our little operation was large enough to call our headquarters "LZ Carlson." Coming out of LZ Sharon to the Southwest, we followed the Thach Han River until we came to a small stream called Khe Trai. There, the engineers built a pontoon bridge and we set up HQs across the stream towards the hills where we intended to build the road. (YD265440, for those who want to check the map.) We had been there for at least two weeks when Christmas Eve arrived. Earlier in the day, a monsoon had hit us and we lost a 2 1/2 ton truck which slid over the side of the road we were building. I had to declare it a combat loss because there was no way to pull it back up the steep cliff. We blew it in place. Our biggest problem was that the monsoon had turned the small stream into a raging torrent, and the pontoon bridge was washed away downstream. We were on the wrong side of the stream, stuck in "Injun Country" until a new bridge could be put in. On Christmas Eve, COL Frank Borman and the crew of Apollo 8 were making mankind's first trip around the Moon. As the officers and I sat in A1A, my track, soaking wet and trying figure out what we were going to do, we listened on one of the LT's transistor radio as Apollo 8 saw it's first "Earthrise."

From 70 miles above the surface of the Moon, Astronauts Borman, Lovell and Anders took turns reading the first ten verses from the Book of Genesis, the story of Creation. They ended at Verse 10: "And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called He Seas: and God saw that it was good." And as the spacecraft began to disappear again into the silence behind the Moon, COL Borman paused and said, "God bless all of you on the good Earth." I looked around the cramped space of the track. All of the officers had tears in their eyes, me included. Just then, PSG Jim Platt opened the back of the ACAV and looked in at the scene. I don't know what went through his mind as he saw all of his officers crying, but I recall he reached in his pack and pulled out a small bottle of scotch. "Here --- you guys need this more than I do." Then he closed the ACAV door and left. Next day, Christmas 1968, was the only time in my 26 year military career when my unit did not receive Christmas dinner in the field. The rain and wind was just too severe to fly out our meal. But when we returned to LZ Sharon some 6-7 days later, our cooks had Christmas dinner waiting for us. The road into the Ba Long Valley was never finished on my watch, but it wasn't for lack of effort on the part of A Troop. We went places and did things, others wouldn't even consider. You guys were superb. May you all have a Merry Christmas and Joyous New Year.

Ken Carlson A Troop Commander 1968-69

1969

History of A 4/12th Cav in Vietnam 27 Jul 1968 – 30 Nov 1971

"His" story, as told by the troopers themselves, in their own words. Augmented by after action reports and other official documents.

CPT Kenneth G. Carlson, Oct 68-Mar 69

CPT Larry R. Robinson, Mar-Sep 1969

CPT William C. Kaufman, Sep-Nov 1969

CPT Matthias A. Spruill, Nov 69-Feb 70

January 1969

Most of the advanced party, including Swinny and Mills, were sent to the 11th ACR.

The story I remember being told when they were transferring us was because the 11th was getting Sheridans. We were scared to death they were going to put us on the Sheridans when we went but it turns out all us tankers were put on the M48A3's and the new guys coming in from the states on the Sheridans. At least for once that was logical since some of those guys had been trained on the Sheridans.

I think it may have had more to do with breaking up the rotation than the Sheridan story though. Since most of us that went over would be leaving within a couple of months of each other it also made some sense to do that. Charlie would have loved having a shot at an almost all green unit. (Swinny)

From Lt. William McShane:
Jan 4 Back in from the field.

Jan 12 Been back in the field for days.

Jan 27 report that I had left the beach some time ago for LZ Nancy and as of the 25th was at C-2. Quiet, waiting for Feb 17. The monsoon season is ending.

I think this action took place late '68 or early '69. The Troop was pulling a sweep into DMZ, this is the first time we went up far north into the Z. The grunts and we were searching bunkers. This guy was from A15 track, he throws a frag into a bunker and goes in and drags out a wounded NVA. He had to disarm and drag him out because he was not coming out on his own. They medivac'd the NVA. I remember it was still early in country for us because the B52's were still flying missions. If I am not mistaken A15 trooper received the Silver Star for this; later on he went on R&R to Hawaii and when he returned to the Troop he was put in charge of the Club at Nancy.
(Charles Cooper)

Coop,

Is this the mission we sat up a NDP and a NVA rocket team started rocketing e that we were

there. The north side of our perimeter opened fire and then the New Jersey fired 2 rounds. The next morning we started the sweep. Then the incident you mentioned took place. We continued the move and ended up at the Ben Hai River. I remember firing several main gun rounds into North Viet Nam. We then hooked west and ended up in a NVA base camp. SSgt. Makela found a bunker and went in with a pistol and brought out a very frightened dink. We trashed the camp. Found a bunch of documents and a small medical bunker. I heard we were ordered out. While all this was going on, A Co 1/77 was in contact with another bunch of bad guys. These could have been the owners of base camp.

(Glenn Bowers)

The guy that tossed the grenade received the Bronze Star. We were maneuvering along the beach and somehow he saw the bunker. I think they had a formal presentation for the award. He came back and was shaking his head. Why were you shaking your head we ask. He said he received 2 Bronze Stars and he couldn't figure out what the big deal was and why did he receive 2. I think the morning after was when we, A18, sunk into a sand bog. It took 2 tanks to pull us out. What fun. (Coop)

I was speaking with Ken Dye tonight and he confirmed the following information for Dec 68 or early 69.

Person who went into the bunker and pulled out the NVA was Dan Lohman and Ken put him in for a Bronze Star w/V, I do believe this would be the first A Trooper to receive a medal for Valor while in Nam. Dan Lohman was part of Ken's squad A-15.

We also discussed my notes on "First Time", Ken added we were working with the 1/11 Inf. During the incoming Ken had to go out and recover the grunts and then pull back; all of this took place while A-16 was stuck down in the bottom of the bomb crater.

He was also talking about A Troop's trip to Hue part of the Troop was assigned to the 101st Airborne (up on top of a hill outside of town). He has a lot of good information for '68-'69. He gave me the address of Dan Lohman, I am going to see if I can get a hold of him.
Coop

Subject: Sitrep: DMZ early 69

I was reading on the troops site about the action on the DMZ (it was in early 69, not late 68). I had been wondering all these years why the Brass was so hot for us to get out of there. Well, I found out. This maps says we weren't just in the DMZ, but were in North Vietnam. Anyway if I remember right we were up to the Ben Hai river on the coast.

John/okie/hogpen

February 1969

From Lt. William McShane:

Feb 5 Received two sets of long john's from home and slept in them along with a sleeping bag last night

Feb 7 The top half of the tree arrived. Mail service could not send a six foot long tree so they asked permission to cut it. Naturally they took two feet off the top, and not the bottom. Arty going off big time. Carbine rifle vibrated right off the wall.

Feb 12 Tomorrow I am going back to the DMZ for about a week and a half. Been quiet up there.

Feb 14 Mission to A-2 cancelled. Off to Wonder Beach.

16Feb

Van Winkle killed on an ambush. AK round hit a M 79 round as he was loading it. This was around a cemetery. Sgt Ski was severely wounded. A guy from Sisters (?) Oregon was slightly wounded. Jerry, the Kit Carson, sprung the ambush early. I think Larry Stone was also on the ambush. (G. Bowers)

Feb 23 Been back in the field. Got four vehicles stuck in a ravine for four hours and had to "float" them down a river to where the banks were not so steep." Out on ground patrols of foothills. Freyler shot the boa constrictor.

Feb 27 "Been in the field for several days. Haven't had a shower or bath or river to clean in for six days so I'm gross, filthy to be exact. My replacement is here. Use the word "short" for the first time in a letter. Should be off the line within the next week. Don't know what the new guy is like.

Bill McShane

28Feb

I'll never forget how bad Ken Dye felt on the night of Feb. 28th, 1969 when we were riding with Herb Parsons on track A-13, on our way to setup a night ambush near hill 101, and we hit a land mine. I got hit in the head and leg and was bleeding like a stuck pig. Ken, the cool calm guy that he was, took the situation in hand and made sure I got medivaced to Quang Tri. He would have carried me on his back if he had to. Ken and Herb felt so bad that I hardly hurt for myself because they were so hurt that it happened. I remember I was gone from the Troop for about 8 to 10 days and when I got back the guys was all in camp and man what a welcome I got when I came in the A Troop area. (Jim Rinaldi)

March 1969

from Bill McShane:

First let me say that I was on the patrol with Freyler, when he got the constrictor/ python or what ever. I was given a mission to go out west of Nancy I think, to the foothills, cordon up the platoon and take a squad of infantry out and patrol on foot to see what we could find. After humping in a few steps, there were nine or so of us and a Chu Hoi, Freyler, on point, opened up. I crawled to his position to find him saying I got it, etc, and then see him get up and run into the bush and grab the snake by the tail. The damn thing had gone under him and the head came out of a hole behind him and bit him in the foot if I remember right. Was it 17 feet long, or shot 17 times or both. Made the Stars and Stripes.

On to March. In thinking about how to write this I realized there are one hell of a lot of words I have no idea of how to spell so allow me the liberty. Any way, your description and the AAR you sent put some things in perspective that I really wasn't really sure of, but I will assume them accurate and go with what I remember after 30 years.

We, the troop were ordered into a blocking action along the ridgeline northwest of Cam Lo. I believe the whole troop was involved and we spread out on the ridgeline. TAC air was called in and I remember F4's nailing a few locations. Sitting up there is was like watching a circus, but it seemed to take forever to get the air there. By the time the air arrived the little guys had an hour to run. I knew the I/61 was involved but didn't know the 3/5 was, really only that other friendlies were engaged to the north and were in the AO. I was asked/ordered/told, whatever you prefer, result is the same, to take a bunch of infantry down into the valley to link up with their unit. I think they were to link up. I don't know of another reason. Carlson was the CO at the time and Hap Trainer the XO. Anyway, Platt my Platoon Sergeant, was strung out some where and it was easier for your tank to lead so you were attached to the column and were the lead. I only had one other tank in the platoon at the time because 38 I think, was that the third tank #, had sunk in the Cua Viet. Do you remember when we were ferried by the navy down toward the Hai Vong pass and attached to the 101. Any way my third tank was loading when the boat backed up and the TC was off the vehicle and it slowly rolled right into the Cua Viet, a million bucks down the river.

OK. We formed a column, loaded with infantry and down we went. Couldn't recon by fire as friendlies were in the AO, couldn't fire mortars because of friendlies and lets face it at that time, my mortar guys didn't have the experience the VC did. Matter of fact I don't ever remember using that big baby the entire time I was there. Do remember talking about using it though. Anyway you know what happened. It ended up not being the walk into nothing that we had taken so many times before, but a ride into an ambush. When you were hit the whole column pulled a right flank and opened up. I had to clear the infantry out of my track, think I had their Lt on the track, and they hit the ground behind my vehicle. In the process my como wire became undone and I had to go below, make contact with 6 and then gain control of things, and it took me a bit to get the como back up and working. In the frenzy I didn't know if it was the radio again or what, and then I found the wire unplugged. When I popped up Freyler was firing off to the right and Zamora on the 50 forward I told Freyler to shoot low, and he got pissed and yelled "I got one in my sights" or words to that effect. I cased the terrain to the rear and fired some bursts, when Freyler got hit in the wrist and went down. The firefight continued until things died down. I remember looking at Sgt Skinner(second tour ex 11ACR, damn good Sgt.) the TC to my right and him motioning me to move the line forward. I nixed that and motioned so. This is when I get fuzzy. Don't know what I did about other wounded, assumed I checked but knew support was headed down. Had to get Freyler out. I am embarrassed to say I don't know how bad you personally were, but knew one guy, your TC, was lost. Think I told others to stay put until support came and took off up the hill alone to get Freyler out. May have been in some shit on the way out as rear of the track was riddled with bullet marks. Got Freyler medevaced, after passing the relief on the way down. Then returned. Always wondered how the rear of my track got shot up with small arms fire. We were on a little knoll. Where they on both sides of us, or did it happen on the trip out to evacuate Freyler? I'll never know.

The rest is just some observations after 30 or so years. Didn't know you were hit with 2 RPG's. Assume your TC was riding in position. Ryan on the hatch. You on the outside left. How can you say if the RPG hit Lower all would have been okay? They must have knocked you out and hoped to take me out because there was one of those big pizza type claymores they had just in front of my track location. Think I recall a chunk was blown off but lucky they didn't get to fire it or it misfired. Wonder if Zamora got it with the 50.

I have been embarrassed about this whole event for years. Wish all could have been different. Lost some sleep many times, but managed to get on with life. Have always wanted to talk with the guy others said fought the tank single-handedly. The word was you did a hell of a job. What about Hagland? Any word?

They gave me a Bronze Star with V. I'm embarrassed about that. I did what I had to do. Nothing more and I hope nothing less. I have no idea why I consented to ferry a bunch of infantry down into the area, hornets nest, and didn't proceed slowly, with infantry out front as would be classic formation. We were giving these guys a ride! Of course we did a whole lot of things unconventionally over there.

As for you, I would be more than willing to write and find out why you didn't receive anything. You deserve something. Believed in what we were doing and still do. Volunteered to go the Nam with the 4/12. Was in C Troop in Carson and transferred to A when the word got out they were going. Much rather go with guys I trained and trained with.

Remember Sgt. Cook. Think I liked him. Don't remember De Somer. Sgt. Platt told me one new Lt. that came in after me to one of the platoons shot himself in the foot. Charlie Brown was Kirchner, first Platoon, Mad Dog, Howell, second platoon, and Blue Max, me the third. Don't know how or why on the call sign, think Howell uttered it and it stuck. .

Bill McShane

From Glenn Bowers:

I was in Ft. Knox teaching tanker stuff to trainee's. The student Bn commander was walking by checking on his troops. He saw my patch and ask what unit I was with and I told him. He was wearing the 9th Infantry patch and said that he was with, I interrupted and told him he was from the 3/5 Cav. I haven't a clue why I said that, but it turned out he was. I asked him if he remembered some crazy son of a bitch that made contact with the 27th NVA Regiment and we had to come and bail his ass out. He told me that he knew him quite well-he was the one. I could not believe it. His name was Lau. He has retired and was working at the golf course on Knox This is the AAR:

The Battle of Cam Hung

At 1540 hrs on 28 Feb 3/B/3-5 Cav was engaged by an estimated NVA company at YD098630.

The remainder of B & C Troop 3-5 Cav reinforced by a platoon of M/3-3 marines moved to reinforce the platoon. The cavalry employing air & artillery closed with the enemy and swept the battle area finding 60 enemy KIA. At 1815 hrs contact was broken. Results of the days action were one (1) US KIA, nine (9) WIA and 60 NVA KIA. The enemy appeared to fresh, well trained, and well equipped with new uniforms and weapons. An assessment was that a forward element for a larger force(possibly a Battalion or Regiment). Based on the above estimate A/4-12 Cav was ordered to moved to an assembly area at YD102596 to block. The troop moved at 0010 hrs on 1 Mar and arrived 0330 hrs and was put opcon to 3-5. At dawn A/4-12 crossed the Cam Lo river and moved north to regain contact. Contact was regained at 1050 hrs at YD078639.

Shortly after contact B/1-61 moved from AO Black to C2 (YD136646) to act as reserve. At 1250 hrs C/1-11 was air assaulted in the battle area. Results of the days activities, two (2) US KIA, twenty-five (25) WIA and 17 NVA KIA. In addition five (5) PCs and four (4) tanks were damaged and placed out of action. Then a whole bunch of stuff. Enemy: During the battle of Cam Hung

the enemy lost 118 NVA KIA and 13 individual and 8 crew served weapons captured. A bunch off ammo. Friendly: Personnel loses were three (3) US KIA, thirty-five (35) WIA. Seven (7) personnel carriers, and six (6) tanks. Documents captured during the battle indicate that two (2) Battalions of the 27th NVA Regiment were operating in the Cam Hung area during the battle.

Well we made it. Glenn Bowers

01 Mar

This very cathartic for me. If you have any questions, I will answer any and all the best that I can.

I will tell you that the inside of the tank was a mess. The RPG exploded a can of Rite menthol shaving cream. It took many years before I could stand the smell. I would almost throw up.

Glenn

Here goes:

A28 led Lt. McShane's platoon into the valley. The crew was; TC - SSG Hagland, Gnr - Sp5 Ryan, Driver - Sp4 Gossman, and Ldr - Sp4 Bowers. There were several infantry riding on the outside of the tank. As we were going down into the valley we hit a dip and one of the grunts fell off the tank. It is strange, we could hear the sounds of fighting, but we were laughing at the grunt who fell off. We stopped and he got back on.

We entered the bottom of the valley into an open area. I remember looking right and then left. I saw a black cloud out of the corner of my eye, but I don't remember hearing an explosion. The RPG hit the right side of the turret just above the infantry rail. If it would have went lower it would have hit the track blocks that hanging from the rail. I kept hitting Bill on the head yelling we had been hit, but he was probably gone. The blast wounded several of the grunts, tore up Haglands legs (heard he lost one), and hit Bill on the right side. The next RPG hit the infantry squad leader in the chest. He was riding on the right front fender, this one also wounded Gossman, the driver. The concussion or the jerking of the tank threw me off the left side. The tank continued down the valley. I did some fighting and killed one NVA (another story for another time).

When the tank returned, I climbed on and looked into the turret.

I went over to a PC, but they could not understand me.

When I returned to the tank I found Bill lying under the breech and Hagland was gone. I found out at the 2d reunion that Miike Revill had removed Hagland from the tank. I could see muzzle flashes in the brush. I saw a couple of RPGs come in and hit the ground and I think some grenades went off too.

I fought in the tank the best I could and then we moved out of the area to the top of the hill. It was the longest journey of my life

[Okie] If you were on Cook's tank, you must have some insight to the fight in Cam Lo valley. I remember Cook's tank flanking me to the right, breaking through some brush. That tank was putting out some outstanding suppressive fire as it moved forward. I lost contact with it as we moved out. Glenn A28

1969-From the DMZ to Cam Hung=3 days

This is an exchange between John/okie/hogpen and Glenn Bowers

I am trying to see how bad my memory is and to talk about something I have kept inside me for more than 30 years. I might be getting different actions mixed up, but this is how I remember it. This might not be the place for some of this, but I have held it in long enough and I think some of you might understand.

In my mind it all started in the evening. We were one or two clicks west of Ocean View. That's what I remember the name of the base just north of C4, it had two 40mm Dusters on it. Anyway after we had set up the captain told us that there was a build up north of us that might run as high as 5,000 and that we were bait. Boy that sure made me feel good. During the night there was a lot of action around us. I remember to the south west it looked like an ambush had been popped. There were red and green tracers flying everywhere then the Dusters over at Ocean View opened up. Then, at about the same time, an artillery cluster round went off to my right. I had never seen one before. While I was looking right I saw this flash out in the gulf. A little later heard this BOOM and then the round going over head and then seen a large flash and a little later BOOM. The captain came on and said "Oh, I forgot to tell you the USS New Jersey is backing us up. He sure could have told us that a lot sooner.

At the same time the mouth of the Cua Viet got rockets. (*We were in a NDP and in the middle of the night a 122mm rocket platoon(?) set up north of us. I don't think they even knew we were there. The New Jersey fired 2 rounds one was an HE and the other was a Corfram(?) It was full of little bomblets and boy did it look like the 4th of July when it went off. A28 got stuck in some kind of sink hole the next morning. We were finally drug out and everyone had a chance to laugh at us. We headed toward the DMZ from there. G. Bowers.*) When the sun came up we were told to go to C4 and pick up a platoon of Marines and see if we could catch the rocket teams going north. We got the Marines and started north up the beach. I can remember that we passed some members of the 1/77 on the way up there. Later we were told that they had been hit by mortars. On the way north Rat said that he saw something. We stopped and he and some of the infantry squad went into the bush and came back out with a NVA with a chest wound. (*The NVA was a Lt. and it was someone from our unit that drug him out of a bunker. I think he received a Bronze Star for this G. Bowers*). We kept moving north and heard that the Marines had caught some bad guys trying to cross the Ben Hai River. By the time we got there they had already wasted the bad guys. (This is how I know my mind doesn't remember everything right). Over the years my mind told me that I had fired some rounds into North Vietnam. After reading Glenn Bowers memories I knew that it had been him that had fired those rounds. If I remember right you fired two rounds. A HE round at a radio tower and a Beehive round. I remember the beehive round because it was the first one I had ever seen fired and had to ask Sarge Cook what it was. (*I saw 9 or 10 gooks running down the bank of the river on the North side. I called Shadow and asked him if I could engage, he told me that I could. I fired a canister round at them and only one got away. I fired 3 or 4 rounds at the tower. I ranged out to 4000m and added Kentucky windage and still missed. G. Bowers*)

We moved out again and heard that a bunker complex was found. When we got there I saw a group standing over by one of the bunkers. As I watch one of the guys leaned down to look in and said that something moved. So he went in to get him. (*This was SSG Dick Makela, he received the Silver Star for this G. Bowers*) When he came out he said that the guy had pulled one of his dead buddies over top of him.

Higher up had been yelling at us all morning to get out of there and then about that time they told us to blow up the bunkers and get out of there. (*About this time one of the Kit Carson scouts found a cache of medical supplies that was covered with PSP and bamboo. We destroyed it. The marines were in overall control of the AO and Gen. Davis was screaming that we had no business in there because the Paris peace talks going on. G. Bowers*) Right, we backed up and I fired one HE round right though the door of one of the bunkers. Hell, you couldn't even tell I had even hit it.

We started moving back south and on the way (if my memory is right) we got word that 1/61 and the 3/5 had gotten into some shit and were going to Cam Lo. We went down to the Cua Viet and loaded up on landing craft (I think that is what they were called). We got loaded just before dark and started moving up river. W got up to where we were to unload and got moving at just about sun up. Just a click or two before we got to Cam Hung valley we ran into a mine field. A tank in front of me hit a mine and a track behind me hit one. We stopped and waited for the mine sweeps to get there and while we were waiting a M88 showed up. Instead of waiting for the mine sweep he decided to go around us. Dumb move. He was right beside our tank when he hit a mine.

Another M88 showed up about the time the sweep team did and we start moving again.

I can't remember where everyone was parked at, but A17 was parked where we could look down into the valley. I could see one of our sister units moving around over on the other side and it looked like they got hit as they moved the hell out of there and the jets came in shortly after that. I sure did like watching those jets do their job.

Shortly after that we got word that us and I think it was A15 was supposed to load up with some infantry dudes and move out with orders not to fire as there might be friendlies down there. We got loaded up and were just starting to move out when we got word that the orders had changed (This is why when I think of RPG's I think of Ryan). A28 was going down instead.

A28 came up and the infantry dudes got on they we moved back up to were we had been. I can still remember standing up out of the loaders hatch watching them move down the valley when all of a sudden all hell broke loose. I ask Cook if there was supposed to be fire and he said "no, MOVE OUT."

We got down there and got into action and it was hot and heavy. Glenn and Bill, I can tell you that was more than just an ambush. Sarge Cook told me after that with all the bad guys we saw that you had ran right into their HQ. I don't remember how long it went on, but there were buku bad guys.

One thing I don't understand is how they could come up with a body count. Beehive and canister rounds at that range don't leave nothing to count.

We put a dead infantry guy on our back deck and went back up the hill.

This is a part I might, should leave out but it has haunted me all these years. Ryan's death really ate at me. We got up to the top of the hill again and were told to take rounds from A28 since we were running so low. As we were unloading the main gun rounds I keep seeing blood and bits and pieces of body and a slow madness started building up in me. I remember all of a sudden turning around and walking off. I heard Cook yell at me, but I kept walking until I got up to were the captain and the officers were and walk up to the captain and in a very calm voice, ok in the voice of a mad man I asked "who changed the orders", he said "it came from higher up", I said "it won't fucking happen again" turned around walked back to my tank got a can of water, washed the blood off the back deck and laid down and went to sleep.

Question is, was I crazy?

I turned 19 five days later. Hell of a birthday present wouldn't you say.

okie

The Battle of Cam Hung from the troop commander's viewpoint

I know that I am late on crossing the LD on the Battle of Cam Hung. I apologize, but as you know, "life is what happens when you have other plans."

After I left all of you guys in Vietnam, I went on to the Officer Advanced Course and then to Princeton University for my Master's degree. Returning to West Point as a member of the faculty, I used to tell all my Cadets one of the lessons I learned most strongly, both in my short military career and in my academic studies: "Where you stand, depends on where you sit." In short, your perspective on events is profoundly affected by the location from which you view those events. This is why five witnesses to a single crime can, under oath, recall totally different sets of events that they each saw with their own eyes.

So, as to Cam Hung, my perspective is only one view of what happened. I do have a couple of advantages, however. One, I was the Troop Commander, so I had a unique sense of what was going on both above and below me. Second, in a fight with the VA and the Department of the Army over compensation, I had to do some research in the National Archives here in Washington. Thus, I have the operational records of reports on Cam Hung which many of you looked over carefully at the Reunion

So here is the story of the **Battle of Cam Hung** from my perspective:

First, Blue Max was absolutely right that he was missing a tank, which "sank" in the Cua Viet River a few weeks earlier. Actually, it didn't sink - the Navy screwed the pooch by not keeping the screws of the LVT turning while 38 was driving aboard. 38 simply pushed the LVT out into the river and proceeded to disappear under the water. When we finally got Navy divers down in the river to hook up a tow cable, the tank had vanished. Later, we found that the power of the Cua Viet after a monsoon had pushed the 48 tons out to sea! 38 was found about 200 yards offshore in the Gulf of Tonkin. Nonetheless, 3rd Platoon only had two tanks. That plays a major role in the Cam Hung action.

28 Feb 1969 : A Troop was back from our Cua Viet adventure (another story for another piece) and had been assigned night screen and ambush duty - sound familiar? But this time, we were set up just west of Camp Red Devil and the Quang Tri Combat Base. Getting there had cost us a track which hit a mine about 1900 hrs. enroute to dropping off an ambush patrol. We had a casualty from a mine which we estimated as 30-40 lbs. of explosive which broke track and blew off two road wheels and an idler arm assembly. (Duty Officer's Log, Item #55, 1st Bde, 28 Feb 69)(DOL 28)

Earlier, at 1632 hrs., 3-5 Cav Squadron (just attached to 1st Bde) reported contact west of C-2. Later, at 2225 hours, reports say that both B, 3-5 Cav and Mike Co, 3/3 Marines have been in heavy contact with unknown sized enemy force at YD 098630. 1 US KIA, 7 WIA.

2300 hrs., 28 Feb: I received a call on the radio telling me to report to the Brigade TOC at Camp Red Devil ASAP. We were about 4 miles away, at least. Since it was awfully dark and we had already hit a mine in the area, I asked if the Bde could send a chopper to pick me up. No was the answer, this is to be silent and covert. No tracked vehicle - I was to come in my jeep. When someone woke up my driver, all he could say, and I echoed, was "are you shi--ing me?" I called Blue Max and told him he was in charge while I was gone, which may be forever. We drove with lights off to the Red Devil gate, where the Brigade was nice enough to have alerted the perimeter that we were coming, blackout.

COL Jim Gibson, the Brigade Commander, met me soon after I entered the TOC. Our mission, he told me, was to move A Troop north, cross country, to the vicinity of Cam Lo, where we would be attached to 3-5 Cavalry for combat operations against an unknown sized enemy force. Why had he selected us, since we were already in place for the night? His answer was, "There is no other unit in this Brigade that can do what I am asking yours to do, under these conditions."

When would he like us to do this? "Now - immediately - and under blackout conditions. Under no circumstances were we to take roads because the enemy would know we were coming."

A cross country, night road march, into known combat, blacked out, and in an area where we knew enemy mines were planted. Let me assure you that, as your commander, my a--hole slammed shut, several times. I called Blue Max on my way out the gate and told him to bring in all the ambushes - NOW - and place the Troop in march order for my return. His 3d Platoon would lead. "Oh, and by the way, I cannot tell you what we are about to do but I will be coming back in a dark jeep - so unless you want command of what was about to become a "goat rope," please tell the troops not to shoot me."

Upon my return, at 0010 hours, LT McShane had done as I ordered. We started what was likely one of the most unusual and

harrowing armored movements of the entire Vietnam War. (DOL, 1 Mar 69 , Item 32) There was no time to tell everyone what was happening. Blue Max had the lead track, or perhaps the second. I know that my track, A1A, was third, in the middle of his platoon. We guided by azimuths which we shot about every 1000-2000 meters (by getting off the ACAVs), since the road didn't go to where we were headed. It was truly cross country. Although I hoped that the troops were trying to catch some sleep, I knew that, given the circumstances, all of you must have thought that I had lost my mind. Mostly, I was sleepy, concerned and determined.

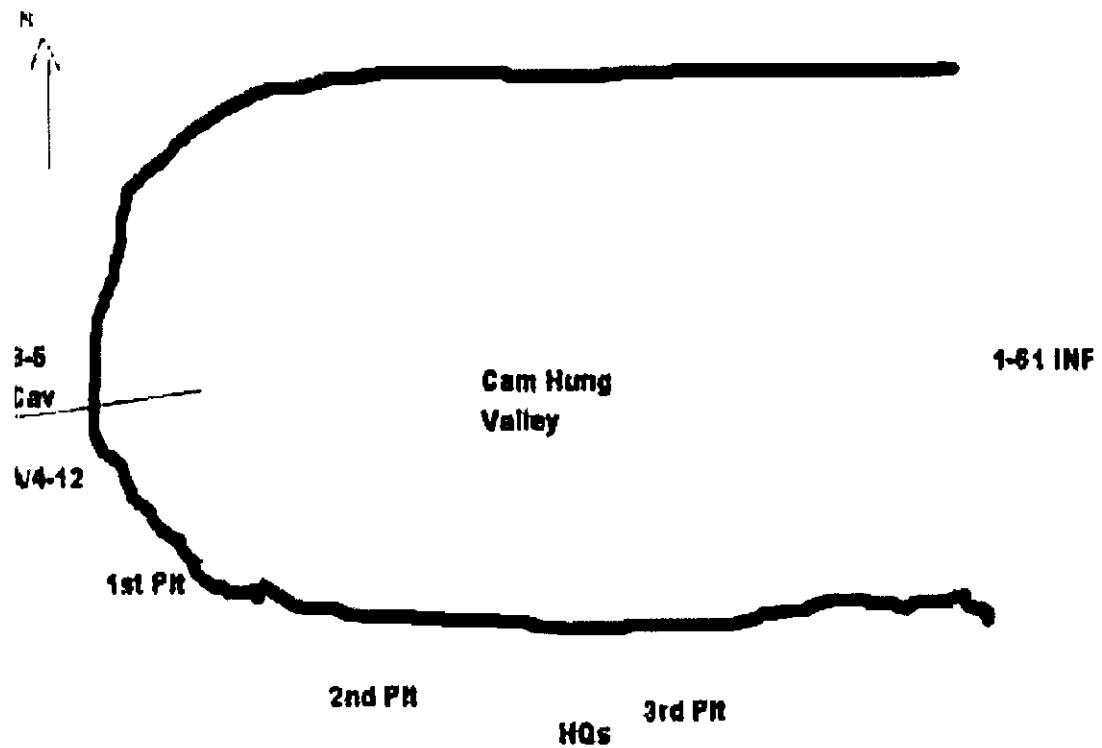
Having crossed the Cam Lo River in darkness, we arrived in our designated assembly area, Quat Xa, YD102596, at 0330 hrs. During the night, suspected enemy positions in the valley around Cam Hung were fired upon by 6 batteries of Marine artillery , two batteries of Army artillery and the battleship, USS New Jersey. Not knowing what we were about to face - or how soon

- I directed all platoons to put max numbers of troopers to sleep, while LTs and I planned what would happen next. Since we
- had heard nothing from 3-5 Cav, to whom we were now attached and whose radio freqs we didn't have, our plans
- were not very detailed. I don't think anyone got much sleep since we could hear the sounds of the artillery, and
- especially the New Jersey , all night long.

What I did know about 3-5 Cav was that their S-3 (Operations Officer) was MAJ Nick Krawciw, a Regimental Commander at West Point, a second tour Vietnam vet (and later a 3 star general.) Oh, and the Squadron Commander was LTC Bill Anderson (later a 2 star general), once Army Football's "Lonesome End," who in a prior Vietnam tour, had won the Medal of Honor for calling napalm in on his own position to prevent being overrun. I figured these guys knew what they were about.

Just after dawn on 1 March, A Troop left its assembly area at Quat Xa and was ordered by 3-5 Cav to head through the hills to the North, and occupy blocking positions on Hill 124, YD075623, to seal off any enemy avenue of escape to the West or South from the vicinity of Cam Hung. at 0820 hrs. one of our ACAVs hit a mine estimated to be 40lbs of explosive which blew off the right track, 2 roadwheels, the final drive and put a hole in the hull. (DOL 1 Mar, Item 39.) We had one WIA. Okie has reported in his recollection that not only did an ACAV hit a mine, but a tank and an M-88 as well. I can find no report of the tank and the M-88, but I do recall that we held up while waiting for a mine sweep team.

When we arrived on Hill 124, we were aligned facing generally North with 1st Platoon, then under 1LT John DeSomer (Shadow) on the left, 2d Platoon under 1LT John Howell (Mad Dog) in the center, and 3rd Platoon under Blue Max on the right. 1st Platoon made a button hook around the hill to the north where we linked up with 3-5 Cav, so the whole troop was in a straight line on the hilltops. I was located with 3rd Platoon on the right.

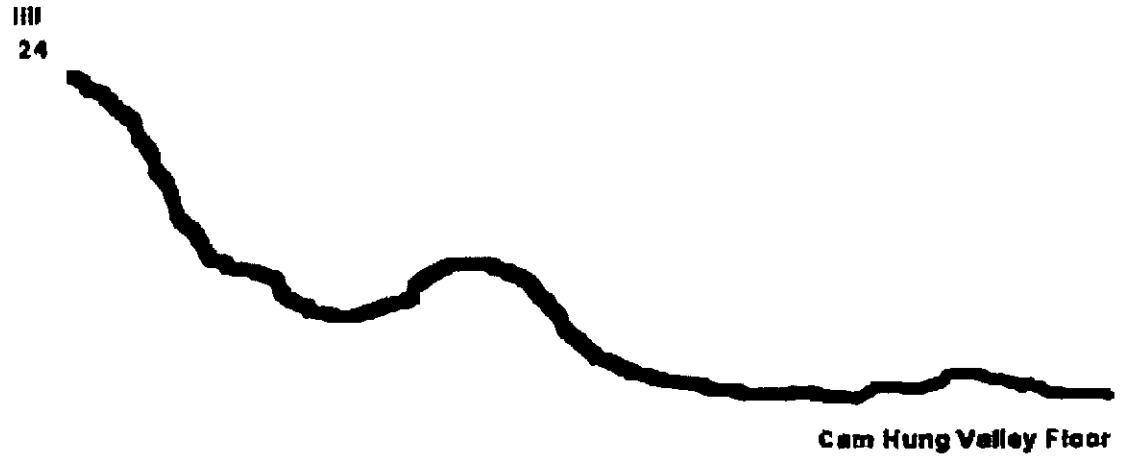


We sat on Hill 124 for several hours, watching as 3-5 Cav across the valley engaged targets below that we couldn't see. Then the air show began at 1517 hrs. (DOL Summary, 2 Mar, Item 8). Mad Dog's photos show what we all remember - a lot of airpower, with both "snake and nape" being dropped on positions in the valley below us. Our orders were to continue to seal the area to the West and South, thinking that the enemy would try to escape the area. 1-61 Infantry (Mech) was sent in to seal off the Eastern escape route. They brought some Marine tanks with them.

It was starting to turn dusk (early March) at 1700 hrs. when we got the call to head down into the valley, taking with us a platoon of Infantry dismounts from C Company, 1-11 Infantry. Their job was going to be to search the valley for any survivors after the air strikes and the artillery and Naval gunfire barrages of the night before. We were directed by 3-5 Cav to get down the hill quickly, before darkness set in. The fastest way down into the valley was a trail right in front of A1A and 3rd Platoon. Even though we had seen some impressive firepower rained down on the valley, I was still uncomfortable with the mission. Because one of 3-5 Cav's troops was going down opposite us, we were precluded from "recon by fire" as we went down. I decided that we needed to lead with tanks.

I directed Blue Max to take one of the 2d Platoon tanks plus his remaining one and lead the way. PSG Platt's tank was not located anywhere near the route down the hill, so it didn't go down with the first two tanks. My track, A1A, followed about 3-4 vehicles behind Blue Max, but still inside his platoon.

The route down (below) shows that there was a steep descent, followed by a flatter area, then another rise.



Blue Max directed Tank 28, the one he had borrowed from 2d Platoon, to lead. It was closest to the trail. SSG Harold Haglund, quite new to the troop, was the TC. SP5 Bill Ryan was the gunner, SP4 Bill Gossman was the driver and SP4 Glenn Bowers was the loader.

As 28 went over the first hump going down the hill is when one of the Infantrymen got bounced off. When the tanks got to the Valley Floor, they went up a slight rise. That's where the shooting began.

I told Bill McShane at the Reunion that I did not consider this to be an ambush. Rather, we were directed to take some Infantry down the hill to do BDA, bomb damage assessment. We would remain outside the tree line and support by fire, but only if needed. We had no mission to link up with the 3-5 Cav Troop coming down the other side of the valley, but we were to be aware that there were friendlies to our front. The combat logs say that we "conducted a "mounted assault against enemy bunker complexes at YD 082627." (DOL 2 Mar Item 8) That's news to me. If I had been given the order to "conduct a mounted assault" I would have called the Squadron Commander personally and told him that I can't assault without using

my unit weaponry. We would have reconned by fire. Only after the fact could it be called "a mounted assault." Once the shooting began, my troop command net became jammed with traffic on the needs for medics. Some track commanders keyed the net, thinking they were on their own intercoms. I could see what had happened ahead of A1A, but I couldn't talk to Blue Max or anyone else. I dismounted and ran forward to the slight rise where 28 had been hit. Tracks were shooting in all directions, and we had not yet concentrated our fire on the enemy bunker emplacement. My platoon leaders and I had agreed as part of our SOP that I would load all tracer rounds into my M-16. If we ever lost commo and they could see me, they were to direct their fire where my stream of tracers were flying. I fired in the direction from where the RPG's were coming and the main guns and 50's began to concentrate on the area I was designating. The whole shooting match lasted perhaps 90 seconds to 2 minutes, but by that time we had tracks from all three platoons in the fight.

Bill Ryan was killed instantly by the first RPG. SSG Haglund was hit in the leg. The second RPG wounded the driver, Bill Gossman and killed outright SSG John Gibbons, the Infantry squad leader from C 1-11 Inf who was riding on the right front fender and was hit in the chest. Only Glenn Bowers escaped, by being thrown off the tank by the explosive force. He remounted soon after to continue to try fighting the tank.

SP4 Greg Freyler, a mechanic who couldn't stay out of the action, was hit on Blue Max's track. SGT Frank Long from 1st Platoon was hit; SP4 Jesse Zamora and SP4 Vernon Adams, both of 3rd Platoon were hit. And I was hit in the right arm by an AK 47 round which had ricocheted off my M-16 and embedded in my forearm. Luckily mine was just a flesh wound. When the shooting stopped, some of the wounded, such as Freyler, had already been taken part way up the hill where the Infantryman had been bounced off 28. Down at the site of the shooting, I directed several soldiers to police up the remaining body parts of SSG Gibbons and put them in a poncho. They either refused or ignored me. So, I started picking up parts of SSG Gibbons, an African American, and putting them in the poncho. When one of the Platoon Sergeants saw me doing this, he got the other troopers involved immediately.

I walked back up the hill to the spot where we had medevac Hueys inbound. It was the area where Freyler had been taken by Blue Max. He and his crew headed back down the hill to help with the other wounded. I stopped to help Freyler whose left arm was a mess and he was in great pain. All the medics with the morphine were down below, but Freyler pleaded with me to help him with the pain. So, I hit him as hard as I could - and I knocked him out. I also broke two knuckles in the process

and discovered, after all the adrenalin rush of the firefight, that I was bleeding a lot from my right arm. The medics came and bandaged me. Almost a month later, I got a note from Freyler in the Evac Hospital in Japan . He thanked me and told me that , in addition to his arm injury (which was very serious), he also had his broken jaw wired shut...

On the evening of 1 March, we remained atop Hill 124 and sorted out ammo shortages, preparing for expected orders next day to return down into the valley. I don't recall Okie or anyone else angrily telling me that "orders had been switched wrongly." It may have happened – I just don't remember that. Probably a good thing for Okie...In addition that evening, my Kit Carson Scout used my bullhorn to call down into the valley with instructions on how to "Chieu Hoi" to the powerful American Cavalry. Much to my surprise, we had two NVA come in the next morning, weapons slung over their backs, muzzles down.

On 2 March, as expected, we were directed to go back down the hill, this time with just our own Infantry and Scouts, to search the battle area. 1 st Bde PAO flew in with two yahoos from CBS News. They were wearing Hawaiian shirts! One had a huge Bolex camera on his shoulder. They wanted to accompany one of our dismounted patrols.

As the only Ranger-qualified trooper, I felt that I should take one of the several patrols we stood up. The newsmen came with me and about 15 others. As we followed Chicom commo wire down one streambed, my Kit Carson warned of a possible ambush as we went around a turn in the stream. I ordered a MG crew to climb the bank and set up to cover us if that should happen. The camera guy shouted, "Hey, come back down here and do that again – I didn't get that on film!" I told the reporter that the next time I heard his cameraman shout while we were trying to sneak through the jungle, that I would kill him. He hurried back to cameraman and things got real quiet.

We found lots of weapons, ammo, rice and other stuff and lots of blood trails leading out of a bunker complex we discovered. The CBS Crew was filming the reporters "closing remarks" to the story. He said that we were "deep inside the DMZ" and the men were "dirty, hungry and didn't know why they were here" When I looked around, all I saw was a bunch of happy soldiers who had been victorious and were now blowing up the enemy's fortifications and equipment. So I confronted him. I'll never forget what he told me. He said that the editorial policy of CBS had changed once Walter Cronkite came out against the war. Now, if he wanted his story to be aired, it had better not make US operations look good...

The battle calculus for Cam Hung was 118 NVA killed and 13 individual and 8 crew served weapons captured. We also captured 194 mortar rounds and eighteen 122 mm rockets. There were 3 US KIA and 35 wounded. Seven APC's and

six tanks were damaged. Two battalions of the NVA 27 th Regiment were involved in the battle against 3-5 Cav, 1-61 Inf, one company of 1-11 Inf and A Troop, 4-12 Cav.

In mid-afternoon of 2 March, we were directed to leave one platoon in position on Hill 124 to work with Engineers on bunker destruction the next day. The Troop (-) was to head for C-2 where we would receive new orders. There was some concern about this move because of all the mines we had hit in recent days and around this NVA headquarters. So, again, I directed that we lead with tanks.

I rode in the second tank, with PSG Platt. The first tank missed it, but PSG Platt's tank hit a mine, later determined to be rigged from unexploded USAF ordnance. I was blown out of the loader's hatch, told later that I went about 15 feet in the air, landing on my back. Blood coming out of all orifices, I was out cold with a concussion. PSG Platt was also wounded.

When I woke up, I was in Bravo Med, 3 rd Marine Division in Dong Ha. I was on an x ray table. The doctor said something to me, but I could hear nothing in my left ear and only loud ringing in my right. He wrote a note: "Your back is not broken, but you'll pay for this in future years."

The Marines transported me back to LZ Nancy, where I was to be on quarters for two weeks while my back muscles healed and my hearing slowly returned. However, when the Troop came back to LZ Nancy on 4 March, I went to the front gate and saluted as each vehicle rolled in.

Bill McShane departed the Troop for the 11 th Cav on 14 March, so we never got a chance to discuss together what each of us perceived of the events from 28 Feb to 2 Mar 1969 .

MAJ Nick Krawciw, the 3-5 Cav S3, had observed all that happened from his OH-6 LOH over the battlefield on 1 March. He put Blue Max in for the Bronze Star for Valor, and I was proud to write the witness statement in support.

When I left command at the beginning of April, I went to Brigade Staff as the Deputy S-1. One of my jobs was to investigate and answer Congressional correspondence for the Brigade Commander's signature. Sometime in June, we received a letter from the Congressman representing the family of SSG Gibbons of C/1-11. Why, if as the Army reported, SSG Gibbons was killed by small arms fire, was the casket sealed for his funeral? I related the story of his death as an eyewitness, not as an investigator. When COL Gibson read the proposed response for his signature, it was the only time I ever saw him cry.

By: Captain Kenneth Carlson, C.O. A Troop 4/12 Cavalry

05 Mar

Been north west of Dong Ha for days. Been in a firefight, walked into an ambush and also hit mine number 3 a few days later. Lost men that were attached to me from an Infantry unit, and Ryan from second platoon. He was in the lead tank heading the column down into the ravine, when hit by an RPG. On the 7th wrote that we had run into the 27 NVA regiment. Whatever. Remember the events clearly, just don't need to be public here.

March 12. Write home from Bien Hoa. Left some of the greatest guys I have ever known, and from a situation that would affect me for the rest of my life. ** Remembered there is a photo of A 36 after it hit a mine as/or in reference to Ryan. It may be giving the wrong impression that it was the tank Ryan was on. He was not on 36 but 28, which was attached to me for just this mission. Bill McShane

DIAMOND DUST Vol 2, No 25 March 12, 1969 (A newsletter of the 5 th Inf Div in Vietnam)

Article provided by Dan "Mack" McAuliff, 3 rd Plt 68-69

4/12 Interrupts Enemy Baths

by SP4 Robert P. Smith

An enemy bath party was interrupted recently by a reconnaissance patrol from A Troop, 4 th Squadron, 12 th Cavalry south of Quang Tri.

As the 10-man 1 st Brigade, 5 th Infantry Division (Mech) patrol cautiously made its way along a streambed, SP4 Mike D. Rich, Indianapolis, the point man, came to a sudden stop and motioned for the rest of the patrol to take cover.

"We heard voices to our left; we were going to back off and come in from their blind side," stated 1LT John DeSomer, Syracuse, Ind. "We were going to assault them because we thought we could take them by surprise but then we heard voices all around us."

"About 25 yards in front three enemy were taking a bath in the stream. They had their weapons lying on the riverbank," SP4 Rich commented. "One of them turned around and we were staring directly at each other and then they all started for their weapons. One burst from my M-16 and all three of them tumbled into the water."

"Then all hell broke loose," SGT George Padrick, Salem, Ore., added. "We were in a pretty heavy fire fight and we had to withdraw because we were outnumbered."

The patrol returned to the site the next day: "They must have cleared out of the area as fast as we did because they left behind weapons and other equipment," said 1LT DeSomer.

That sounds exactly like the mission we went on my first full day with the Troop. They put me on an PC and off we went. I didn't pay any attention to what direction we went in just out to these hills and dismounted all but one per vehicle and off we went up in the hills. It seemed like we went up for hours. We were told to get down because we ran up on these guys taking baths and such and then all Hell broke lose. Point came back up the trail running full out and we started to return fire, the trigger pin vibrated out of my M-16 (the one I was assigned that morning) and then the trigger fell out, just when I knew I was going to die we hauled ass, it didn't take us as long to get out of those hills as it did to get up them. The track I was on hit a mine going back across the river and blew us off the back and when we hit the ground we looked back across the river at the rest of the column and they were screaming at us to get back across the river and we didn't argue and that was late March/early April 69 if I can remember right.

That was a Hell of a way to start my first day with the Troop but in hindsight it was probably the best way to start one's tour.

I had a little talk with the guys in the arms room when we got back to Nancy.

Duke

I do remember that incident somewhat. As I remember, it happened pretty much like the article says. But, I think we tried to go back in the next day from the back side, but couldn't find it. So the next day we went in the original way and hoped for the best. Hope it helped.

Skip Padrick

April 1969

I remember those night ambushes we had to go on. I was on the Infantry track; I think it was A-15 in the 1st Platoon under TC SSgt Ken Dye. Man he taught me all I ever learned in Nam. He was one smart dude and always had his shit together. He saved me more than once. I remember one ambush we setup and just after it got dark we hear all these Gooks talking. All of a sudden the Gooks start walking down the trail towards us so Ken (aka DOC 4 EYES) signals us to get ready to nail these guys with all we got. Well we wait a little longer for some reason and all of a sudden we realize that this line of Gooks just doesn't end. They all had two mortar rounds tied on their backs and they are moving ammo up north. We never did spring the ambush and we all quit counting when the number of Gooks got over 100. (Jim Rinaldi)

8 April through 15 April

excerpts from Ellis Ravine Operational Report – Lesson Learned for Period Ending 30 April 69.

From 8 April through 15 April the brigade conducted Operation Ellis Ravine, which was a search and clear, road building operation conducted in cooperation with the 1 st and 2 nd ARVN Regts, 1 st ARVN Division. During Ellis Ravine a road was opened between LZ Sharon(YD335445) and Ca Lu (Y015455) giving the 3 rd Marine Division a route from Quang Tri to Vandergrift Combat Base that could, with a little improvement, be used as a supply route for Vandergrift Combat Base should Route 9 be closed. On 8 April the 1 st Inf Bde, 5 th Inf Div (M) begin a combined search and clear, and road building operation in the Ba Long Valley west of Quang Tri City . The operation was conducted in coordination and cooperation with the 1 st and 2 nd ARVN Regts and lasted until 15 April 1969 .

- Elements of the Brigade that participated in the operation were the 1 st Bn, 11 th Inf and the 3 rd Squadron, 5 th Cav. The 1 st Bn, 11 th Inf was reinforced by the addition of one Cav Troop (A/4-12 Cav) and an engineer platoon (Reinf) from the organic Brigade Engineer Company (A/7 Engr), while the 3 rd Sqdn, 5 th Cav Consisted of A and B Troops 3-5 Cav, D/1-11 Inf and a reinforced engineer platoon from A/7 Engr.

(4) Ellis Ravine had not resulted in the destruction of any enemy forces or caches, but an alternate supply route was opened between Quang Tri Combat Base and Vandergrift Combat Base.

23 April – 15 June 1969

excerpts from Massachusetts Bay COAAR

6. TASK ORGANIZATION:

TF 1-11 Inf: 1-11 Inf (-C Co) and B/1-77 Armor

TF 1-61 Inf (M): 1-61 Inf (M) and C/1-40 Arty

TF 1-77 Armor: 1-77 Armor (- B Co), A/4-12 Cav and C/1-11 Inf

11. EXECUTION (Significant Events):

28 April – 3 May 69 : At 0430 hours on 28 April 69 , A/4-12 Cav and C/1-61 Inf (M) of TF 1-77 Armor conducted a cordon of the Bo Brang, Le Xuyen, and An Trach areas until 0800 hours 3 May 69 .

13 May 69: A/4-12 Cav, on a mission of searching southwest along the Quang Tri – Thua Thien border, found three bunkers at YD419361.

14 May 69: At YD420322 a patrol from A/4-12 Cav found a fresh trail, an NVA pistol belt, miscellaneous gear and tracks of 10-20 individuals. At 1337 hours contact was made with an unknown size enemy element which resulted in two VC killed by small arms fire and the capture of one K-44 rifle. B/1-61 Inf (M) was moved from Wunder Beach , placed OPCON to TF 1-77 and committed to assist A/4-12 Cav in developing the situation.

16 May 69: (a) 1/A/1-11 Inf, while on ambush, had one of their booby traps detonated at 0530 hours. A search of the area revealed a bag of rice, pair of pants, and a blood trail.

(b) B/1-61 Inf (M) while continuing to search along the Quang Tri – Thua Thien border, killed an NVA who was carrying an 81mm mortar base plate. In order to conduct a thorough search of the area, C/1-11 Inf was committed to support A/4-12 Cav and B/1-61 Inf (M).

May 1969

16 May

Leonard Coles KIA
John Jackson KIA

Specialist Sam P. frags the orderly room. Two sergeants who just walk in were caught in the blast. Sgt Jackson was killed and Sgt. Michaelson wounded. 1SG Short wounded bad, the Duck (nickname) wounded, and Sam P. suffered light wounds and a broken leg. Lt. Trainer, the XO, later reads article of murder charges to Sam P. The outcome is unknown.

I remember the dude that fragged the Orderly Room, His name was Phronerbarger and he came to A Troop on the same day in Dec 1969 as Paul Schiano and I did. He didn't like being out in the bush so he kept trying to get hurt. Finally one day he jumps off a tank and breaks his ankle. They send him to the rear to heal up. We are out on a mission and when we come back into LZ Nancy the 1st Sgt sees Phronerbarger out at the gook hootches in front of the main gate to Base camp. Top tells Phronerbarger that the party is over for him and we were going to pull out the next morning on another mission and Top tells Phronerbarger that he WILL be going back out with us. Well the dude didn't like Top's idea and the next morning he goes down with a loaded M16 and a grenade with the pin pulled and decides to convince Top that he wasn't going back out. Top tells him what he didn't want to hear and Phronerbarger sets the grenade on Top's desk and jumps out the front door. We all heard the explosion and figured we were getting rocketed as we often did, that's another story, so we all jumped in the bunkers next to the hootches. After a little while we found out what happened and the last I saw of that dude they were locking him in one of those big reefers we had behind the Mess tent until the MP's could come to get him. Paul Schiano became the Company clerk that day because he knew how to type. Funny thing about that is that when I got back to the states I was sent to Ft. Benning and the clerk at the reception station was he clerk for A Troop before the guys that got killed. He knew most of the A Troop guys so he got me a nice instructor's job for my last 5 months in the Army.

(Jim Rinaldi)

There are at least two other brothers that died in Vietnam, Lenny Coles from outside Rochester, NY, and John Jackson from Kansas. Lenny was a friend of mine from Commo school. He was infused into A trp as a tank driver and we needed a radio mechanic/operator. He transferred to commo and then became a clerk in the orderly room. Both men were murdered by a weasel named Phronenbarger (not sure how that is spelled) when he went into the orderly room and dropped a hand grenade. I had just walked out of the orderly room and passed him on the way up the hill to the commo hooch. I never did find out what happened to him.

A couple of years ago, I finally found Lenny's family in NY State. I went up there for a wonderful memorial service for him. His family really did not know what had happened.

I would love to know if anyone knows what happened to the slimeball that murdered the two men and injured several others, including the 1st Sgt.

But in reference to Lenny and John Jackson.: When the incident happened, Lenny was hurt pretty badly, as were Michael Harrison, Top and a guy from Charlotte that ran to the Orderly Room from across the street at the barber shop. Jackson did not seem to be hurt as badly, so I guess that he lived longer.

Remley Campbell

I was on a few patrols with this clown and I am the proud recipient of one of his finer days. I was wounded in the crotch from on of his grenade exploits. Then he fragged the orderly-room. I was in the motor pool working on the tank with Garry Norberg. Gary left for a while and I decided to

look for him. I was headed up to the company area when I heard an explosion. I thought we were getting hit. When I got to the orderly room their were bodies everywhere. The Duck, nickname, was laying out side the door, Jackson and Michaelson were laying on the right side of the orderly room. Then the 1SG came crawling out, yelling kill the f-----r. A chopper flew into the compound and we loaded everyone up. The MP's showed up in a jeep and threw P. into it and drove away. I know P. ended up with some wounds and a broken right (?) leg. I saw him a one of the field hospitals. There is a lot more to tell, but I will save that for the reunion. Glenn Bowers

I was in the 11th ACR when the orderly room incident happened but heard about it when I called Sgt Platt from down south. After returning I was stationed at Ft. Meade. Harrison showed up and I got him a job as company clerk with the troop I was then with. Harrison was the company clerk that was in the fragging in Nam and apparently was the clerk who jumped on the guy with the grenade and the M-16 he was about to shoot. Harrison was pretty messed up in the legs for a while but I am happy to report that he probably has done alright given the circumstances. Are you sure the name Michaelson isn't really Harrison?

(W. McShane)

From: Michael Harrison **Sent:** 9/7/2005 9:27:09 AM

It has been brought to my attention there are individuals that want to know what actually happened the morning of May 16, 1969-I have written a short version:

The morning of May 16, 1969 I was in the First Sergeant Robert Short's office. I observed Samuel Phroneberger walking towards the office and that his M-16 rifle was loaded which was unauthorized while in base camp. The 1st Sergeant told me to go tell Phroneberger to clear his weapon. I went outside and informed him to clear his weapon. Phroneberger stated that it was his goddamn weapon and if he wanted it loaded he could. With the rifle pointed at my head I followed him back into the office where Phroneberger fired a round which almost hit me in my foot. Phroneberger then raised his rifle at the 1st Sergeant at which time I grabbed the weapon from him and hit him in the stomach with the butt of the weapon. I then dropped the weapon and grabbed him; Phroneberger struggling pulled a grenade out from under his shirt, pulled the pin and dropped it between my legs.

When the grenade exploded I was sent thru the front wall of building landing approximately 20-30 feet away from the building. 7 individuals were hit of which 2 individuals eventually died from sustained wounds.

While being attended to I felt myself slipping away and as my eyes closed I saw white lights-sensing I was dying in my mind I said no!

The next thing I remembered after being med-evac was in an operating room and that I came to and saw one of the other individuals hurt during the incident being operated on (he eventually dies). This individual had wounds across his chest and all across his face. This individual then vomits on me and I passed out again and woke three days later.

From: Michael Harrison

P was taken to court martial at Fort Meade in late Oct 69 and was found guilty of assault only- was given 1 yr confinement and bad conduct discharge-sentence was appealed and on weekends P was allowed weekend passes and in Nov-early Dec went awol-I was discharged end of Dec 69 and never heard whether he was caught or not.

Again Thank You and hope you are well.

June 1969

5 June 1969

It was shortly after this that I was called back to base camp at LZ Nancy to take over as company clerk after one of our own fragged the orderly room killing the company clerk and sending the 1SG and others to the hospital.

Schiano

8 Jun 1969

Nixon announced the withdrawal of 25,000 American troops. The first step in a plan called "Vietnamization," the aim of which was to turn the war over to the South Vietnamese.

"When I arrived in Country I went directly to LZ Nancy in June of 1969. The Ammo dump did go up in either Sept or Oct 1969. We then moved into the 3rd Marine Shore Party area in Quang Tri in Late 1969. I remember clearly since I couldn't believe any one would fill up that many sand bags in a life time." (Keith Eaton)

26Jun

John E Macklin (SP4) and myself escorted one Sam Phronerbarger down to Long Binh Jail for confinement. He is the one who threw a frag into the orderly room. (The names and dates come from a copy of travel Authorization. (I hope I have the names in the correct order) [Charles Cooper]

July 1969

"Was reading some old letters that a friend of mine sent me from Nam. He was my loader. His name was Garry Norberg from Gillette Wyoming. The letter is dated 5 Aug and he mentions 3rd platoon getting hit, the 30 track. There were four people wounded. A guy named Casha was really hit bad. Do you remember any of this?" (Glenn Bowers)

1st Platoon is ambushed a few klicks away from the site of the 3rd platoon ambush, no injuries, 1 NVA KIA, numerous blood trails.

1st Platoon spends 2 weeks guarding engineers in the Bi Long Valley, re-cutting a crude road to Khe Sanh with Rome Plows.

Lt. Shadow, 1st platoon, leaves.

Lt. Styles arrives in first platoon, reassigned to 2nd platoon on the 25th.

From Coop's war dairy 1st platoon, and 2nd Platoon's Bob Taylor's letters home:

02 July 69

Hi Lang Reinforce fire support base

04 July 69

Hi Lang Troy G. 26 today should leave country by 14th
assigned to 4/12 Cav (Taylor)

My flag is out with the Cav pennant flying proudly below it. Can you remember where you were 35 years ago. I think do. It wasn't bad.....just awesome. I was on ambush in the scrub west of Quang Tri. We were hunkered down along a supposed 'rice trail'. The bush was not very thick and low enough that if you stood up the taller guys could almost see over it. Like with most all ambushes nothing was going on. Then, with no warning, to our north about a few clicks a duster opened up with tracers and air bursts. Suddenly, a couple of clicks east of them, pop ups of all kinds lit the sky. By now we were wondering what the fuck was going on and, I might add, getting a bit nervous. Behind us, to the south and south west, red tracers and pop ups split the darkness.....what, we're surrounded!!!???? It was all still going; duster, pop ups, and tracers, only a few moments had passed, when from the east....Quang Tri lit up too. That's about when one of the guys said, "it's the fourth of July!". The show went on for what seemed to be several minutes, and in the total black that was the Viet Nam bush, it was spectacular!!!! Bob [Rebbec]

Way to go Bob, I remember it also as Sgt "D" knocked his finger out of it's socket and told me to go out and setup as he would be our later but didn't make it back out. It was my first ambush and boy was I praying.. I do remember blowing the hell out of a pagoda. Joe [Byrne]

06 July 69

LZ Nancy 2nd and 3rd Platoon back in - 1st Platoon due back the 7th

07 July 69

LZ Nancy Went to LZ Sharon to turn in old Tank

08 July 69

LZ Sharon Back to LZ Nancy with new Tank

09 July 69

LZ Nancy Doc took sitches out a grunt from 1/61 C Company; he had been wounded by sharpnel from a RPG at Khan Shun
assigned to track 29(Taylor)

10 July 69

LZ Nancy Took new Tankers out to familiarize and test firing of weapons 17:30 return to LZ just in time to receive orders to move out in 25 minutes for a screening mission. It was 21:00 before moved out and we could not see a damn thing, tracks were getting wire in their tracks and tangled up with anything hanging over the side of the track. 24:30 made it to our location just in time for it to start raining

11 July 69

Troy and W.P. left for the world.
company went out on ambushes from LZ Nancy, assigned to 23 M60 gunner (Taylor).

12 July 69

Still on screening mission, went out to pick up some grunts and A13 threw a track. We stayed behind to help; rest moved on. About twenty minutes later they received a change of mission and return to LZ Nancy before moving on to Pueblo, leaving my track and A13 behind. About 12:00 hrs made it back to LZ Nancy hooked up A12, A15, A31 and A39 and took off to catch up rest of Troop. It started raining again and the hills were beginning to get slippery. A13 threw another track A12 and my track stay with him; had to call A18 to help tow A 13 up the hill so other tracks go around us. It was dark by the time we had A13 running; we had to locate our platoon during this process we manage to slide down and turn sideways on the way to the bottom of this very steep hill (the brakes would not slow us down enough Jordan tried his best to kept it straight) after the rest of the tracks regroup at the bottom of the hill we continue on our way. As if sliding sideways in the dark to the bottom of a hill wasn't enough, a little later we slide off the side of a hill and threw a track. Brown came over and it took about an hour to throw the track back on, otherwise we would have had to sit there all night.

WILLIAM'S GLADE 12 July – 26 July 1969

Excerpts from COAAR

- (C) **TASK ORGANIZATION:**

Task Force 1-61: 1-61 Inf (M) (-1 Co), A/4-12 Cav, A/1-11 Inf, 2 teams P/75 th Inf, and 1 team 407 th RRD

1-4 Marines

10. (C) **CONCEPT OF OPERATION:** From 12 July to 24 July 1969 elements of the 1 st Brigade, 5 th Infantry Division (M) with 1 st Battalion, 4 th Marine Regiment, 3 rd Marine Division under its OPCON conducted a joint operation in the area east of Highway 558 and west of QTCB. From 24 July to 26 July elements of the 1 st Brigade in coordination with 3 rd Marine Division and ARVN forces conducted a search and clear operation and established a cordon to provide security for the departure ceremony of the 9 th Marine Regimental Landing Team, 3 rd Marine Division on 25 July 1969 .

13 July 69

Another exciting day of hurry and wait; we are to sit here the next couple of days. Tanks went to knockdown the undergrowth around our location; during this we drove off into a ravine and A16 burned out a final drive. About 21:30 I was over at A15 when one of the trip flares went off; talk about hauling ass back to your track. No action, it may have been the wind or an animal.

15 July 69

Joint sweep with Marnies (grunts), one of them had a sun stroke. We went out to get him but a stream was blocking our way; a chopter came to pick him up. An M88 was on its way out, to work on A16, and its brakes went out as it was going down a hill. Took three tanks to pull it back up the hill. Barham came back from a 3 day R&R; he brought a little something back with him he did not want.

IROQUOIS GROVE Combat Operations After Action Report 15 June – 25 September 1969

excerpts

Task Organization to COAAR, Brigade control:

HHC, 1 st Inf Bde, 5 th Inf Div (M)

A/4-12 Cav

5-4 Arty

P/75 th Ranger

A/7 th Engr

75 th Supt Bn

298 th Signal Co

407 RRD

517 MID

86 th Chem Det

43d Inf Plat (Scout Dog)

48 th PI Det

11. (C) EXECUTION:

- The following is a chronological list of significant events which occurred during operation Iroquois Grove:

(2) 16 June 1969 3/A/4-12 Cav, while providing security for the Cua Viet Naval Base, sighted five frogmen emerging from the water at YD358658. The enemy were engaged with negative results. A naval mine sweeper later located and destroyed two mines in the mouth of the Cua Viet River .

(10) 30 June 1969 A tank from A/4-12 Cav detonated a mine at YD432398 while moving into an ambush location. There were no casualties.

(29) 3 August 1969 A/4-12 Cav made contact with an estimated ten NVA. One APC was hit by an RPG and was subsequently declared a combat loss. Five US were WIA (E) and three NVA were KIA.

(31) 11 August 1969 In two contacts by A/4-12 Cav at YD351418 two NVA were killed and one RPG with two rounds was captured.

(37) 24 August 1969 In the vicinity of YD066683, A/4-12 Cav found 15 NVA bodies approximately three days old.

(40) 30 August 1969 A/4-12 Cav received two 60mm mortar rounds. An aerial observer came on station and guided the ground elements to a point from which the area of operations had observed fire. Results of the contact were two NVA KIA, two PWs, five AK\$&s and a 60mm mortar baseplate captured

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT AND TECHNIQUES:

a. Radar (PPS-5 and PPS25), night vision devices (XM-43), aquabuoy devices and sensors were used in defensive roles throughout the brigade AO. These devices have been proven of great value in giving early warning of enemy movement and have been instrumental in inflicting casualties on the enemy by artillery fire.

15 July 69

been out for 4 days as a blocking force whole troop, north of Nancy. (Taylor)

16 July 69

LZ Angel Shadow comes up to tank and wants one man for AP; I went because 2 of my crew are on R& R and the third is new. This will be my first AP, out of eight men seven were first timers on AP. I stay awake almost all night.

17 July 69

LZ Angel Came in from AP 07:00, Shadow sends me and A13 out to help a couple of M88 (one has a throw track and the mags are out on the other one). A13 and I end up spending the night on a hill guarding these two M88.

18 July 69

Track back on one M88, another M88 came out and we help to pull the M88 into LZ

Sharon. Brakes are bad on our tank, so it makes it a little interesting going down the hills. A13 broke down in Sharon, we return to the platoon with the night log run.

19 July 69

New Lt. arrives, we take the log run back to Sharon. A18 took out the nightly AP and threw a track; we went out and help him back in (back in camp 21:30).

20 July 69

Help A36 with it's housing, it was giving them trouble last night. Took the log run and Mr. Cool located us a cooler. On the way back it started to rain, back at camp I was informed we would lead a mounted AP tonight. Went to the wrong location the first time; relocated and now the brakes will not hold, had to put a roadwheel in between the wheels to hold us in place.

been out for 9 days, LZ Angel, Cam Lo, gave rides to Marines, one of them tripped one of our flares and started a fire. Three claymores blew, burned our bunkers, and almost our tracks. Marines caused it I was on 23 as a gunner and 25 as M79 man (Taylor)

21 July 69

Return to camp 06:30, talk to new Lt. (he is ROTC) seems OK. Hung out at A15 track most of the day; shooting the breeze.

22 July 69

LZ Sharon Rained all last night, started the day off with a sweep around Pedro and return to Sharon that afternoon (out in the field 12 days this time). Some people in 2nd platoon started shooting of flares and started a fire around a radar tower and if that wasn't enough they started shooting them at 5/4 arty. one landed in a ammo dump. Boy did we have some pissed CO's come over. Rained last night.

23 July 69

had a couple of Sgt. Majors come looking around this morning. Went down to C 1/77 to eat supper, Anderson and I went over to the 1/61 NCO Club. If J.B., Hursch, and Pete hadn't been there I don't think we would have made it back that night. But of course we all hung together or should I say hung on to each other.

LZ Sharon, 12th day out, shot flares at arty unit a Sharon, big drunk! (Taylor)

24 July 69

LZ Angel Leave Sharon at 07:00, we have another new platoon leader today, we are to go about 4 clicks north of Angel and sit up a mounted AP and Blair will sit up two hill tops away as a dismounted AP. Blair had to blow his ambush (he heard movement and one of his guys saw some movement) about 22:00. He called for reinforcements; we took our Tank and haul ass, it was so dark that we could not see shit and drove our Tank off into a ravine, it was one hell of a ride. Made it to the ambush site and searched the area; did not find anything. We were out for about an hour and half but it only seem like 15 or 20 twenty minutes.

25 July 69

around 12:00 headed into the French Fort for chow; someone had started a grass fire and it was causing old mines to blow. A19 and A13 broke down. House-man ask me if he was in this journal, he is since he has been my driver for the last 13 days