

26 July 69

2 tanks and a PC went a sweep down to the stream; we sit up on the hilltop by ourselves. Moved to our night location, A16 threw a track. Jordon and Brown came back from R&R.

27 July 69

Platoon return to Sharon to top off and then moved out to secure engineers location. Upon arrival we test fired our weapons had a little trouble with the 73, tube fires a little to the left and the 50 was dead on target.

28 July 69

up at 06:30 went out with A18, A13, and A11 to guard dozers. A13 broke a U joint and final drive. A18 and my Tank hooked up to tow it back in. A18 was in front and we were in the back (acting as the brake). Coming down a hill A18 had to stop, this was not a problem, went A18 started again we did not-- something had to give and it was part of the rear ramp of A13. We tore a nice big chuck of metal out of the ramp. We made it back to Sharon without tearing anything else up. While we were in Sharon we paid a little visit to C 1/77 and acquired a few little items (**two real nice ice chests**). That night Six called Ten and told him we had to return the ice chest or 1/77 would call CID in to solve the matter.

29 July 69

went out with A18, A15, and A12 to guard dozers. Engineers finished their job this morning we should go in tomorrow. Word is that we should move from LZ Nancy to Quang Tri around August 15. Around 02:45 Dave was having some kind of fit and they could not medivac him due to the wind. A11, A12 and my Tank took off for Sharon. We made it in about 30 minutes. Took him to 1/11, they did not have a doctor so A11 and A12 carried him into Quang Tri. (We were at LZ Mohawk)

30 July 69

LZ Sharon Keith came out this afternoon we went to the NCO Club.

driving 24, second platoon got a new Lt. (Bossom?) (Taylor) **I think it was Lt. Styles, actually, because Canda came to 1st Platoon and replaced him ~Pineapple

31 July 69

LZ Sharon Pulled maintenance today, helped A18 layout new track for both sides and let me tell you that is a ball-busting job. Went down to 75th to watch a movie, Lt. went with us. Ran into PP and Dan at the club, PP was blown away we took him back to A19.

Carroll Church, Top, arrives in the troop, tells Pineapple that to burn shit properly, the shit must be stirred, and happily demonstrates that. Pineapple demonstrates his gag reflex.

Neil Armstrong walks on the moon. 1st platoon is on dismounted patrol, in a place that also has lots of craters.

August 1969

Elements of 1/61 Mech infantry and 1/11 infantry are blasted to smithereens by artillery hidden in the hills that form the Bi Long Valley as they use the new road.

1st Platoon works at LZ Angel, LZ Pedro and LZ Mohawk, all in the AO that includes Nancy and LZ Sharon

From Coop's War Diary:

01 Aug 69

Left Sharon at 11:00; we are back out in the same area we were in a few days ago. We have a 60mm mortar that Shue had traded a 46 for and out of eight rounds only one worked. Don't know if was the tube or the rounds.

02 Aug 69

Changed location today, we did a few sweeps around 14:00 Ð 15:00 we ended up at the river to wash up. Went back to night location and J.B. set out a four-claymore ambush.

03 Aug 69

we are to head back into Sharon today. About 5 minutes from Sharon we get a call that 3rd platoon has been ambushed. We turn around and haul ass. 2nd platoon and the old man make it to 3rd platoon before we do, we are instructed to take up the right hand side of the cordon, on the way A13 breaks down and we hook up and tow him into place. 6 calls in air strike, then artillery, and then the Troop opened up. I fired 20 main gun rounds and 700 50 cal. (the 73 jammed). To this day, what happen next I can not explain. Out of all of this hell we were pouring down into this area one of the TROOPERS of 3rd platoon walks out . I do not his name and I have always wonder what happen to him. 3rd platoon had 5 troopers medivac'd that day. Before we fired, we were told everyone was out of the area only the enemy was down there. Spent the night on a hill overlooking the valley; J.B. took out a AP

I was with the 3rd Platoon that day, I was the PSG of 3rd at that time. we had one person med evac'd and one PC destroyed. We were headed back in when we got hit. The ambush was set for for 4 vehicles because 5 other vehicles come in from another direction, but all 9 come out the same way. The ambush was not long enough to get the whole platoon. The track that got hit was the platoon leader's, which we did not have a LT at that time. Don Bunch

I was out with 1st Platoon that day. We were closer than the 2nd and took a position on some low hills overlooking the little valley where 3rd got hit. All the vehicles except the one had pulled out of the jungle. Saw the guy come out of the jungle with uniform smoking (an unbelievable sight), nearly got bombed by one of those Phantoms, and later saw what was left of the hit APC melted to a puddle of aluminum. McFadden was the LT, but as I recall he was away from the platoon picking up new funny money for C-day. That night we (1st) stayed on the hills. A large "manned ambush" was set out behind us composed mainly of FNG's, really just to get them some experience being out away from the tracks at night. In the morning it was reported to me that everybody was asleep. You know who you are! (Not to worry, I don't. Everybody was an FNG once, and never again!) LTF

we were just about at the gate at Sharon when 3rd platoon got hit, and got hit hard, and how to my utter dismay we had to turn around the head back to where we were just an hour ago! Worse, when we arrived we were being shot at by 3rd platoon! I'm sure it wasn't the NVA because there were red tracers flying towards us! I remember just peering over the M60 shield at all the noise and moving greenery from the fight on the other side of those green jungle walls. Haw! Haw! If you see the jungle rocking, don't come a-knocking. I didn't see that 3rd platoon guy emerge from the jungle like you did. I guess I must have been looking the other way or my memory is erased. I do remember that the log run came in with cases of ice-cold apples so me & SS had us an apple feast while Phantom jets were dropping napalm between us & 3rd platoon. That's when Groulx explained to me that the hot sucking wind was caused by the fire consuming all of the oxygen to our front in big bites. Then, I heard the funniest thing on the radio. Some sergeant who was leading a patrol in that thick jungle screamed for artillery support. When they asked for coordinates, he said, "Dammit, just fire, I'll adjust" Sure enough, it took just 2 adjustments to get the fire on target. How lucky was that?

Pineapple

John, good to hear you are still around. Don't worry about things being foggy about Vietnam. Just a little while ago the ambush of 3rd Platoon in August of 1969 was mentioned and it's amazing what came back to me about that day. My recollection was that we were at LZ Sharon then when 2nd Platoon received word that 3rd Platoon had been ambushed. We rushed out of Sharon and put up a blocking force on one side of the ambush site (though I'm sure the NVA were long gone by then). I watched what was probably the first airstrike of my tour in Vietnam as jets bombed the area and then gunships strafed the area. Quite a sight for a 19 year old to see. Afterwards the platoon went down for a recon of the site. Saw the 3rd Platoon vehicle that had been hit. Either us or 1st Platoon booby-trapped the vehicle and we spent the night some distance from the ambush site. Next morning the booby-trap was still intact so obviously none of the "little people" returned. Anybody else out there from 2nd Platoon remember that day?

Turtle

04 Aug 69

A Troop credited with 3 KIA, we had three men come up to our location to be medivac'd. One had shrapnel in his foot, one had a M-16 round stuck in his back (didn't go all the way in) and one had a blasting cap go off in his hand (if he hadn't had a Bible in his left pocket it could have been much worse). We towed A13 back into Sharon. Later that night Reb and I help Mike back to his track.

05 Aug 69

LZ Sharon Still in Sharon, a couple of other units and a ARVN unit is out sweeping the area where 3rd platoon was hit.

The Night of the Ammo Dump

6 Aug 1969

The ammo dump went up in Late August, I believe. I was CO of A/1-77 at the time and we were in a night position several miles northwest of LZ Nancy when it happened. Initially I thought NVA had infiltrated the camp and we were preparing to move back towards LZ Nancy in case there was an attack. I was told by the battalion operations officer that when the mortar platoon was pulling charges off the rounds or was disposing of some charges that had been pulled off that they used an improper procedure, started a flash fire that spread to other charges and so on until most of the dump went up.

(Matt Spruill)

06 Aug 69

07:00 towing A18 down to the 75th (after 5 or 6 six stops nobody seems to know anything about it) for repairs. On the way back to LZ Nancy, A14 and A15 break down. About 24:00 a short round from 4 duce mortar set off an ammo dump. You could see flames and explosives from all over Nancy; it also touches off riot gas. They had to medivac 5 people, 1 dead and 2 missing.

(Charles Cooper)

In August of 1969 the ammo dump went up at LZ Nancy. I can remember the incident because a bunch of CS gas went up. I had just gone to bed after a night at the club when the thing went up. No one could find their gas masks so we had to cover our faces with whatever we could find. Does anyone remember the incident?

Taylor

August 6, 1969

From: John Olney "Okie"

What happen to A18 was we were crossing a river that had a steep bank on it. We had a new driver and he didn't hit it fast enough and the tank stalled on the way up. We got about 4 or 5 miles and all of a sudden a big puff of white smoke and the power pack froze up. The reason I remember is I was the skinniest and had to crawl in and unhook the sprocket. I also got a little R&R out of it, because I got to stay at the 75th and help them put the new power pack in.

Bob

I sure as hell remember that incident 'cause I thought I was going to gag and or suffocate to death. I was concerned especially for the guys in 2nd platoon because I think the last time any of us thought about using a gas mask was in basic or at Ft. Carson. Seem's like we had pulled into Nancy for refuelling and to change out an engine pack or maybe it was only to check the drive axles, 3rd echelon stuff, but I remember squatting down beside the 27 track and Turtle or somebody telling me to wet a tee shirt and breathe through that. Fortunately, the wind blew the AO clear after what seemed like forever, but in reality was probably only 3-4 minutes. That's the way I remember it, 'course a lot of gin has flowed over the transom since then.

Don Bossom

Bob Taylor same night those motormen put a short round in the ammo dump!!!!!! Ever been pukey drunk when the tear gas was so thick you couldn't see 10 feet? Lots of fun!)

Ya, I was at Nancy when our side put a 'short round' in the ammo dump. THAT was totally miserable!!! Very new in country and I had just recently been introduced to "Beauford the Skull".(You guys remember Beauford don't you?) Crawling through CS gas, so thick you couldn't see to get to the tracks and our gas masks, was no fun!!!! Puking all the way. We thought we were being over run. When I found out what happened I couldn't decide to kiss the mortar man (no VC) or shoot him.

Bob Rebbec

Bob,

Remember it clearly. Was in my bunk in the commo hootch and the Commo Sgt. came in and woke us up the CS wasn't bothering us while we were in the hootch but once we went out side it hit you like a ton of bricks. I think I would have rather spent the time in the hootch asleep instead of being out in that stuff.

Take care, Keith

Hey I remember that night and your right I don't think many of us in 2nd plat had a mask, I ran outside and headed towards the guard bunker that's the last place i remember seeing a mask, on the way i almost fell into a smouldering shit can and even that smelled better than that dam CS. Duke

I remember that night the ammo dump went up especially since I was one of the few guys (and there were only a few of us) that had a gas mask available and believe me, I used it. A lot of guys suffered that night although for a fairly brief time.

Kim aka Turtle

And I remember sleeping through the night the Ammo bunker blew up at Nancy then awakening to find myself alone in the reception barracks stinging from all the CS Gas and smelling of gunpowder. I remember wondering, where is everyone at, and looking over to see the bunk next to mine with a big shrapnel hole where Mike Davis's head should have been. He had jumped in the bunker earlier in the night and they couldn't wake me, evidently I wasn't in any shape to be woken. They had concern for their own lives. I'd a done the same! That should have been the end of little 'ole' me. Ask 'ole' Mike about it I'm sure he'll get a kick when he remembers. But I guess all the planets aligned and the Moon was in Aquarius and I was spared to live another day. Their ain't no sense to it. [Bill Dodds]

In August of 69 I was the platoon leader of the Scout Platoon 1/77 Armor. On that fateful night, we were ordered to proceed from LZ Nancy to reinforce B Company 1/77 which was in contact with an enemy force of unknown size. The mortar platoon was firing illumination rounds so we could link up with B Co. as quickly as possible. All the way out I was unsuccessfully trying to raise the B Company Commander on the radio so that we could link up and not blow each other away in the process. When we finally did link up the contact had been broken, so the Capt. called me over to his tank to find out why we had been unable to communicate. At the time we were issued radio frequency books which gave the frequencies for all the units in the Brigade. The frequencies were changed on a regular basis and when that happened, new books were issued. Well, naturally, the books had just been changed and I had forgotten to bring the new one, still had the old one. As the Capt was chewing the last little bit of my ass that was left, we heard a tremendous explosion. We turned and saw a series of explosions in the middle of LZ Nancy. We were sure Nancy was under attack and immediately radioed back that we were prepared to come back and do whatever was needed. We were told that there was no attack, and not to return to Nancy until the next day. The explosions had successfully interrupted my ass chewing and I

managed to avoid the Capt. for the rest of the night. The next day we both went our separate ways. Fast forward now to November 69. The Troop has a new CO and he wants to meet his platoon leaders. He looks at me..."Don't I know you?" You guessed it. The Troop's new CO is the former CO of B Company, 1/77,Capt. Matt Spruill. You can imagine how thrilled he was when he remembered where we had met before. Turned out to be the best CO I ever had. LT Styles

An Eye-witness account of the Ammo Dump Incident with photos!

LZ Nancy, 6 August, 1969. In reference to several mentions of the ammo dump blowing up and as I in the 4.2" mortar platoon at the time, some clarification of that night should be made available.

We were firing illumination rounds for our FO that was out on an ambush with the 1/77 Scouts and we had overheated the #1 gun so we cranked up #2 and started hauling ammo over to the Gun#2 bunker. After about 30 minutes of constant firing, that tube was GLOWING hot and a piece of the "cheese pack" charge wafted out of the tube landed just inside the bunker door. Normally, a poncho would be covering the opening but with ammo going in and out at such a pace, it was folded over the top of the bunker. Anyway, the guys setting the charges were just dropping the leftover cheese packs on the floor of the bunker and when that burning charge landed on that pile, dat's all folks. We didn't even try to stop the conflagaration...we did maoed outta there. I headed back toward the hootches and dove into a slit trench between them and the shower (which took a 4.2 round thru one of the 55 gallon drums). Ammo was blowing up inside the #2 bunker and was sending rounds flying thru the air everywhere. One of the rounds landed on the roof of the hootch next to me it, rolled off and nailed me in the back. It must have been only a few minutes later when another round landed in the trench that we used as our main dump because when those rounds went off, the CS went off too. Lucky for me, Lt. Jesse Silva came looking for us guys that were unaccounted for and he told me to get over to the Seabee's area. What a fireworks show it was that night. I have recently found out that a couple of Seabees that had driven a water buffalo over to the #2 bunker in an effort to put out the fire were killed when the HQ42 track exploded with a full load of ammo. My platoon wasn't allowed back in the area till later the next morning, just in time for the 8"ers to open up on the other side of the ridge. The "definitive" pucker factor. Just walking around the gun pit area kicked up the dust that was soaked in CS powder.

Memory by: Tom Loehr

(from Taylor's letter home:)

Aug 10 - 13 LZ Nancy, 4.2 inch mortars got hit, we used our three mortars to help them. The troop's mortarmen stayed behind at Nancy while the rest of the Cav went to C2. Second platoon got 8 kills while acting as a blocking force. Us mortarmen eventually joined back up with the Cav.

From Coop's War Diary:

07 Aug 69

LZ Nancy The ammo dump is still burning; 4 mortar tracks and 2 or 3 other tracks that were next to the ammo dump are toast. Talked to TOP about getting out of the field, should be the new training NCO next month.

08 Aug 69

LZ Nancy Mounted AP tonight, men on second guard thought they heard something and fired a 79 round & M-16. Turned on the searchlight didn't see anything.

09 Aug 69

LZ Nancy A11 ran out of fuel on the way back in; we towed them in. Towed A91 into the motor pool. Went to USO show (NO BOB HOPE)

10 Aug 69

04:30 going out past Jane this morning, will sit up as blocking force for grunts who will be sweeping the area. A13 threw a track on the way, took a couple of hours for A13 to be back on the road. A16 throws a track next; finally we make it to our AO. Set up, put out claymores and wire; J.B. put out three claymore ambushes.

Aug 10 –13 LZ Nancy, 4.2 inch mortars got hit, we used our three mortars to help them. The troop's mortarmen stayed behind at Nancy while the rest of the Cav went to C2. Second platoon got 8 kills while acting as a blocking force. Us mortarmen eventually joined back up with the Cav. (Taylor)

11 Aug 69

A10 and I made a log run to 6's location, on the way back one of J.B. ambushes was set off. The rest of the platoon cut loose into the area. Once we made it back to the platoon we turned around with A10 & A13 and returned to the ambush location and shoot the hell out the area before the guys dismounted to sweep the area. 1 KIA NVA and 2 RPG's. They threw the dead NVA on our Tank deck (his face was blown away, both legs were broke and his body was like one big bowl of JELLO the poncho he was wrapped was soaked with blood). Artillery was called in so close that one guy on my tank was hit. I fired 10 main gun rounds and 300 50 cal.

12 Aug 69

LZ Nancy Return to Nancy today, getting ready to head out to C-2 around Cam Lo (a lot of mines in that area)

13 Aug 69

06:00 loading up (wire, 79 ammo, water and a few other items) 10:00 left Nancy went to C-2 then on to A-4. The OLD MAN just finished giving us all a pep talk: C 1/77 had 4 killed, 9 wounded and hit 10 mines. Those kinds of pep talks I could do without. I would say we are a couple clicks south of the DMZ; a chopper just killed 2 NVA (been there done it brought the T-shirt took the pictures all before)

Aug 23 Troop at A4, I was on 25 as gunner, puff came in one night and put on a show for us. (Taylor)

24 Aug 69

We found 15 NVA bodies in various stages of decomposition. It was very, very hot and humid that day.

Aug 29 Alpha 4, gunner on 25, hit a mine and assigned to a tank, 3 APCs lost to mines. CO's pc hit one also a couple of days earlier (Taylor)

Aug 31 Troop at Hill 100, moved to Mother's Ridge where 25 hit the mine. Assigned to 27, got stuck, gooks dropped 2 mortar rounds close to troop.

Troop responded and got 2 kills and 3 prisoners. Dragged raced CO's APC from C2 back to A4. Still on 27. We won (Taylor)

30 Aug

Hey there Fearless Leader,

Do you remember the incident when you guys encountered gooks?, Captain Robinson kicked one of them and forced him to surrendered, while that was going on one of them ran up to one of the tracks, Big Daddy shot him point blank. I was not in country yet, but no one has mentioned yet.

Wally

Wally, I'm pretty sure I remember this we were up around the Z and the whole Troop was together " one of the few times we were all together" we were casually going about our business when we started taking on Mortar Rounds the second platoon. and third platoon went to the left and right and first platoon went down in the draw where the rounds were coming from I was on a small hill and I could see these two NVA laying in a ditch the first platoon was getting close to them when all of a sudden they jumped up like rabbits and one ran straight for a personnel carrier. Whoever who was on the 60 started nailing him but he just kept coming finally he went down and the other was KIA also the reason I remember this so well is that some big brass wanted to come out and see the Dead NVA so we put the two dead on my tank and brought them up the hill to where the chopper was going to land. We put the bodies on the ground and after the big brass left Sgt. D was the lead tank and I was following 26 went down into a deep gully and up the other side I went into the gully and hit a mine I was in the same tracks as 26 never understood that. The mine really messed 28 up blew a couple sets of road wheels off and ruptured the fuel tank on that side. we got the Tank back to Nancy but it took a long time for repairs during the time we were down for repairs is when the incident happened where Sgt. D drove the burning tank out the tank he drove out was 27 not 28 he was also wounded and sent to Japan for about 3 months in this maylay (sic) . I forgot the platoon sergeant's name that was over the 2nd platoon while Sgt D was gone but I know we were at Cua-Viet most of the time he was there and we had to go on a lot of ambush patrols on foot being tankers we didn't like that too much maybe this is the incident you are talking about.

Merle TC28

I have a notation on my short-timer's calendar that this contact occurred on 30 August 69. We were indeed casually going about our business, in thiscase Troop-in-line test-firing all our weapons into the DMZ, Six Robinson commanding. Scared the heck out of an NVA squad doing forward observing for arty across the Z. They mistakenly thought we had detected them. What appeared at first to be mortar fire were the explosions of a couple of command-detonated chicom mines attached to trees, attempting to sweep the crew off some of our tanks. Don't remember who was closest. The squad attempted to evade by going down a valley stretching into the Z. Six

decided hot pursuit was justified. 2nd and 3rd platoons went along the sides of the valley pouring in fire, 1st platoon was at the head of the valley, and an artillery spotter flew overhead. The spotter could occasionally see an unknown number of NVA moving toward safety through the trees. Since 1st plt was the only one in position to go into the valley, I requested permission for the 1st to pursue and pin them down. Hell, that's definitely one thing Cavalry is FOR. Six finally said do it (although to be honest, he later said there was a misunderstanding in all the radio cross-talk and he had not meant to) and away we went.

We did run them down and trap them, a couple in a patch of woods and 3 in a large shell crater adjacent to the woods. Turns out there were only 5 total, 2 killed, 3 captured including the squad leader, who Intelligence later said had a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering. The guy was no dummy, he did not panic, he waited until the right time to calmly surrender. But one of his guys started a rush across the crater toward the 10 track at the edge with a chicom grenade in hand. Big Daddy Trimble on his 60 nailed him, depressing the barrel so far down that he chipped the corner of the APC deck. At the same time I hit him with a .45, he was really close. Pretty fatal without that extra lead. How the other NVA got killed is a story which I suspect I remember differently from other Troopers' versions. The wounded guy in the woods took a bad hit through the leg from a .50 round. The other captured guy was unharmed physically, but literally paralyzed with fear. He stood frozen against a crater wall, petrified and unresponsive right under the front of 10 where we couldn't even see him until we came around the crater from the far side. He had just seen his buddy shot to hell in front of him, and truly believed as told that we would skin captured NVA alive (so reported Intelligence later). I heard he didn't come out of his trance-like state until the next day when he suddenly started screaming like crazy.

The other notable aspects of the 1st's foray into the valley I'd rather hear from somebody else so I don't sound too self-serving, and the details of the squad leader's surrender to Six Robinson I could mention later. But that sure was a good day for the Cav, as the forward observation team was put out of action and whatever smoke they were bringing on the AO was at least temporarily interrupted.

LTe F

From: jerry malan
Date: Wednesday, July 16, 2003 6:45:29 AM
To: George Gersaba
Cc: Bob Barrows
Subject: Cav History Aug 30 1969

George, Have been reading the history. You are doing a great job. Thought I would give you a bit more detail on the events listed as occurring on 30 Aug 69. The troop was together that day with 1st platoon in the lead and Barrows tank at the head of 1st platoon. We were approaching a ridge line at a 90 degree angle and encountered a soft muddy area some 500 meters away from the ridge. The tank began to sink and we reversed and backed out of it before we got stuck. We moved to our left approx 500 meters where the ground was solid and turned right to head towards the ridge line again. Shortly after we had made this turn several explosions went off on the top of the ridge line at about the same area where we had encountered the mud. Barky was in the area and spotted some NVA in a valley on the other side of the ridge line. The entire troop pulled up on the ridge inline and proceeded to open up on the valley. We emptied the turret of 90mm ammo during that time and had to move the gun tube to the rear to reload the turret ready racks from the 2 racks on either side of the driver. The 1st platoon then proceeded to sweep the valley and 2nd and 3rd platoons kept their positions on the ridge line. The tanks were some 30 meters in

front of the APCs during this sweep. Dodds had been assigned to our tank as no tanks were available as replacements and was loading that day. I don't think he had been with us long and am sure this was his first combat experience on an M48 tank. The valley had some heavy bamboo and underbrush as it was very difficult to see anything but brush thru the tank sights. Some one was on one of the radios saying we were about right on top of them and I still couldn't see anything thru the sights on the tank. Vision or not I decided to fire the area up and cut loose with a canister round and told Dodds to reload canister while I sprayed the area with .30 cal coax fire. I expected Dodds to say "up" when the cannon was reloaded and he was clear but didn't hear anything from him so I finally looked over and the turret was empty. I tapped Barrows on his leg and ask him where Dodds was and he said "on the back deck". I told Barrows to tell him to get back down inside which he did. A few minutes later Barrows said he wouldn't get back in the Tank. So I reloaded the 90mm and sprayed a little more coax and since I couldn't see anything I got out of the turret and grabbed an M16 and sat up on the loaders hatch. I hadn't been there very long when the NVA fellow appeared in front of us and Sgt Barrows sprayed him with the .50cal and he went down. The CO said that higher up needed prisoners and if the NVA was alive we should take him prisoner. We pulled the tank up beside this guy and could see he was hit in the leg but he also had his hands under his chest as if he might have had a grenade so we decided to let him leak a little more before we called Doc up to look at him. We were about 30 meters in front of Lt Fs APC so he was to our rear and right. There was a bomb crater in between his track and our tank. Sgt Barrows had his .45 pistol in a holster under his .50cal and I saw him reach for it. I didn't know what he had seen but knew the shit was close to hitting the fan if he was getting his pistol. I watched him pull the pistol and as he moved it to our rear I followed him with the muzzle of the M-16. There was an NVA crawling up out of the bomb crater right in front of the Lts APC maybe 20 feet away from and the APC. The Lt was dismounted with his .45 pistol in hand. (Beginning to sound like the wild west?) In between the crater and the APC. Barrows popped the guy in the upper chest with the .45 and almost at the same instant I sprayed him with the M16. He was not taken POW but the wounded one was. Barrows got a wristwatch marked made in Moscow off one of the guys which I later lost. We also got a brand new AK47 which still had the factory grease on it and appeared to have never been fired. They choppered the wounded fellow out and patched him up. I understand he spilled his guts and they flew him back out the next day when he showed our guys where they had stayed ect. Word was that he told them when his unit was resupplied and one of our units set up an ambush for them and had some sucess. I felt for poor Dodds. The turret of a tank is bad enough looking out the gunners view but the poor loader has no view at all and it really wasn't fair to put him in that position without the benifit of some training. I don't recall any other NVA KIA or taken prisoner but that may have happened elsewhere where I didn't see it.

Jerry Malan

Sgt Barrows shot the NVA guy twice in the leg with the .50 cal and 6 wanted him taken as a prisoner. While waiting for the medic another NVA came up out of a bomb crater between our tank an LT Fs' APC. Sgt B shot him with his .45 pistol and I sprayed him with M-16 fire. I'm pretty sure he never crested the edge of the bomb crater where the APC could see him...ask Sgt B. Jerry Malan

This is my memory of the incident of August 69 on the DMZ: Peter Rabbit was TC; I can't remember now who the driver was or who was the left m60 gunner; Doc Parker was on the track with us and I was the m60 gunner on the right. Over the radio came a message that we were heading into a horseshoe shaped ambush-this message came from a spotter plane. While this was going on, headquarters and 2nd platoon came up on the left flank, while 3rd platoon came up on the right. 1st platoon went up the middle and as we were closing in on the enemy, the barkey

spotted the nva crossing back over the dmz into north vietnam; as they were moving, we were notified that the enemy was carrying some kind of "boxes"; therefore, 6 wanted to know what was in those boxes. As we moved on up into a little valley we took on fire, so we proceeded to fire back. 50 cal. and 60 cal. were firing. I fired 100-200 rounds through it, then I gave it to Doc Parker and as he was firing, I looked to my right and there was a Sgt on a tank that was trying to fire his m50 machine gun which would not fire but one round at the time; it seemed that his timing was off; it appeared that he was getting exhausted from chambering one round at the time. Being frustrated he grabbed the m79, loaded it and it went off before he could get it completely raised; the round went off directly in front of the tank. Peter Rabbit got word that there was some wounded on the left and he saw nva go into a bomb crater. As this happened, I decided to dismount, as being an infantry soldier I felt like I could do more on the ground than where I was at. As I dismounted, PR told me to get back on the track and I told him to Kiss My A-- and that I was sick of this Sh---!! Doc Parker dismounted behind the track for cover and I asked him did he want me to go with him, but he said no; so I proceeded around the right firing my m16 over the crater and closed in on the position and as I approached one side of the crater, a guy from another platoon came up at the same time from another angle. There was a young looking nva soldier holding a grenade in one hand; as the other guy told him in vietnamese to surrender; my first thought as he released the grenade, was is the pin released!? Fortunately, it wasn't. As I held my weapon on him, the other guy tied him up with his belt; there was one dead nva soldier in a hole in the crater.

As others from the different platoons came up I remember Capt. Robinson came up holding his 45 and he looked around at me and said that I was in uniform; I suppose because I had my flack jacket and helmet on. Since he knew the top brass was on the way (and I was in uniform) he handed me his 45 and took my m16 and told me to take in the wounded prisoner; and to shoot him if he gave me any trouble. They loaded the prisoner on the Loach helicopter and as we were flying tree top level I was holding the 45 upright; the pilot looked around and told me to point it out the door! So I did. When I returned, the guy who tied up the prisoner, was pissed with me because he kept saying that I had stole his helicopter ride (well, he should have been in uniform!) I returned the 45 to the captain and he gave me back my m16 and we searched for the "boxes", but found nothing. We loaded up the dead nva, and carried them "somewhere"; then "they" decided to bring them back; we threw them off and some of the guys took their 4/12 cav patches and laid them on the chests of the dead and also left the Ace of Diamond playing card to let the enemy know we had been there. This is how I remember it.

Duffy

Jerry I received your E about Birth Control, but, there was nothing on it. Have you seen the way they are describing what happened the day we captured the NVA Trooper and nailed the other two! If they did all the shooting and capturing, I wonder how we ended up with the watch and I got my new AK 47? Some are saying it happened in Aug before I got in country and some say it happened later in the fall. I know I reenlisted in October and got a 30-day reenlistment leave that I had to make up before I left Nam!! I think that may be the time you got to go to the rear till I got back cause when the original A17 got broken and we got the replacement "Stoned One" (You picked the name!) It was only 12 days before we hit the next mine as pictured in our collection of pictures. I hit that dude in the thigh with the .50 Cal. I hope I didn't ruin his Love Life!! Well I'm out of here, Regards to You and Debbie I'm Gone

Barrows

My platoon was in the field with the rest of the troop near the DMZ. At one point 1 st platoon (my platoon) started up a scrubby brushy hillside, when we experienced two explosions. At the time we thought they were mortar rounds. We found out later they were, Chi/Com anti-personal mines.

At this point, I had been assigned to tank 1-6 I believe they were short 1 crew member.

When we heard the explosions go off very close by, we all climbed inside and buttoned up, and began advancing being guided by a F.O. flying above in a Cessna. Command had instructed 2 nd and 3 rd platoon to block and 1 st was to advance up the middle and engage the enemy. As we advanced we came to a knoll or high point and command ordered us to recon with fire. At this point I must mention that I was trained 11-B Infantry, and knew little of the operation of a tank. Jerry Malan a regular tanker on 1-6 had graduated tanker school, as well as TC. Sgt. Barrows, and had lots of experience firing etc. I asked Jerry where he wanted me, he in turn asked me if I wanted to fire and he would load, as Sgt. Barrows had an over ride to correct any wrong targeting I might have. I slid behind the breach and into the gunners seat, and began looking through the gunners sights. I could see the brush around the tank and the crater marked landscape ahead in the ! kill zone but I could not identify any enemy troops. So, I began firing H.E.-Rounds into the bomb craters in the distance, firing between 15 and 25 rounds total. At one point Jerry had to stop loading, to clear the empty casings from the turret.

Command ordered a cease fire and I believe we took time to refreshed the ready rack. Then the F.O. (code named Barkie) had just observed the enemy on the move ahead of our position, and near to the left flank of our platoon formation. Since Our tank was on the left flank

I took this time to speak with Malan and told him that, I was not comfortable with firing the 90MM and wanted to load as I felt he could probably do a better job engaging enemy targets being a tanker and all.

We switched and I helped throw out the last of the empty casings. Malan slid into the gunners seat and I loaded for him. Command ordered us to advance on the enemy, and we began creeping forward as per F.O.'s directions.

The vehicle I was in was 1-6 the left flank tank in our platoon sized online sweep formation. The PC next to us on our right was 1-1 ? not sure of number but the T.C. was Peter Rabbit, Jimmy Mann drove and I think Duffy was left gunner possibly Mike Davis Right gun.

Next P.C. over may have been LT Canda's command track.

I could hear F.O. talking us toward the bomb crater he thought the enemy had concealed it's self. We crept forward and at one point I heard F.O. shout excitedly over our CBC head sets, "Left flank tank stop, your about to run over them, Their in a bomb crater to your right front" (or words to that effect). I could hear Sgt. Barrows firing his 50-CAL and observed he seemed to be having trouble with it. At this point I decided to join him topside for 3 reasons, #1 I felt that firing the main gun was futile at this point being's as F.O. had said we were right on top of the enemy. Being an Infantryman 11-B, I was not sure of how close the 90MM could be fired, #2 From what I heard above I thought Sgt. Barrows could use some help above, as per our close range with the enemy. I felt that Malan could stay inside and fire the Co-Ax 7.62's, without my

help. #3 has to do with a warning we had received several days prior to this engagement. It was recently rumored that the NVA had ! a new weapon in their arsenal. A small shaped charge, fitted with a tiny parachute attached to its finned tail. This they would use in close combat with armor. It was to be thrown from a concealed position by ground troops over the top of a US Tank or PC, where it would be effective against the thinnest armor on the vehicle. The tiny parachute would deploy and it would come down nose first upon the top of it's intended target. When the nose struck, It would detonate the shape charge that would blow a small hole through the armor and then explode inside.

I did not intend to find out how effective it would be. I left the turret after yelling to Malan that I was going Up top.

Upon emerging from the loaders hatch, I ran immediately to the bussle rack and found my personnel weapon M-16. I locked and loaded, then swung around, and walked forward on the deck of the tank, where I observed Sgt. Barrows trying to fire his 50CAL, Single shot at a time, toward target on the right front side of the tank Opposite me. I flipped the safety off my 16. Just at that moment I saw a flick/movement directly in front of the tank and closed my 16's sights on and enemy NVA obviously trying to flee the area. His AK-47 was in the present arms position in front of him and he turned to look at me. I fired at him on semi auto until the magazine was empty. To be sure, I didn't see a round hit him, however I was convinced that I had hit him, due mainly to his actions when I fired at him. He didn't return fire rather He Immediately turned back and hit the ground and began part crawling and part pulling his self out of my field of vision, under the right track and fender of! the tank. I was terrified and when I squeezed off those rounds tears came to my eyes and clouded my vision. I then leaned against the turret, reloaded and reconed the area to the left of Sgt. Barrows. There was a lot of firing that continued for several minutes before cease fire was finally called. I could hear Peter Rabbits track firing and their was much yelling back and forth between Barrows and I think LT Canda and or Duffy or PR. It wasn't at real clear to anyone where anyone else was and where the enemy was. When the firing stopped and cease fire was called I shouted that I was going to dismount and did, walking, creeping in front of the tank and coming over to the right of it. Where I observed the enemy NVA I had shot trying to hide under a small dead tree branch. I watched him for aprox 1-2 minutes then grabbed some como wire from the side of 1-6 and tied it to one of his legs. I stepped back to the rear of 1-6 and began to pull his body from under the tree branch.! When I was sure he was not booby-trapped I went over and claimed his AK-47 as a trophy of war, along with his wrist watch and his medicine kit and his note pad. I put those items in my personal container on board 1-6 except for the note pad, which I gave to command for investigation. I Believe Captain Spruill was our commander at that time. [Actually it was Captain Robinson]It was known that one of several enemy engaged that day survived. I am unsure weather the one I shot, survived or not for sure but it was my understanding and my fervent hope, that he was wrapped up and sent to K-2 for interrogation upon wince he received good treatment.

He was, shot twice in the knee, the same knee I believe.

That night I slept fitfully if at all, and the next morning 'I believe', Captain Spruill [Captain Robinson] came over to our track and verbally commended me personally, for my duty in that skirmish.

After reading others accounts of this same incident I find that some saw it unfold differently. This is fine. I don't wish to argue with them, or to discredit them. That is for them to judge. But as for me, this is the way I remember it. I take no pleasure in believing that I shot the man I saw

running in front of me.

On many other occasions I fired at the enemy who were concealed or hidden, however on this particular occasion I observed the whole thing at close range in Technicolor with Dolby stereo complete with blood and special effects.

It is entirely possible that Sargent Barrows shot him after he turned and scrambled out of my vision, indeed he went over to Sarg's side.

It's also entirely possible that fire from Peter Rabbits track felled him.

I only know the effect it had on me, believing in my heart that I had shot this man. To shoot at muzzle flashes or fire at enemy troops hundreds of yards away, or just to recon with fire is one thing, but to look into the eyes of a person your trying to kill is quite another.

It hasn't been a pleasant experience for me for I grow tired of remembering and wondering if this poor unfortunate rice farmer lived or died and weather he had loved ones who mourned his loss. I still remember to this day the look of fear on his face, as we faced off to each other, and the feelings I felt as I squeezed off those rounds from my perch on the deck of 1-6 that day. Had I spoken his language, perhaps I could have spared his life. Perhaps he was ready to surrender? I cannot say.

I'd be glad to let others claim this incident. I don't seek any glory nor do I believe killing and maiming others will yeald it.

Later I took the AK back to the troop area at LZ Sharon and turned it over to the NCO Club for safe keeping. They hung it on the wall behind the bar. The other items I took and put in my footlocker in my hooch back at, Sharon?, I believe the watch made in USSR, went to Sarg. Barrows. There was an ink pen made in Hanoi and the medical kit, that I hoped to take home to my mother who was studying medicine at Portland State, as a war souvenir. I don't know what happened to them, I believe they were stolen.

I believe this action in which I played a part, has profoundly effected the way in which I think about war.

I have been haunted by this and other such memories, since my return. I no longer think it's a good Idea to send skinny pimple faced kids over to foreign lands to kill people. Yea, I wish someone would take these thoughts from me I'd surrender them gladly. Bill Dodds.

September 1969

3 Sept 1969

Ho Chi Minh, leader of the North Vietnamese, dies in Hanoi at the age of 79.

Sept 5 Alpha 4, typhoon hit, heavy rain, wind and mud (Taylor)

Sept 6 Back at Nancy, The first and third platoon went to LZ Jayne. Finally on 29, we got a new engine, transmission and transfer case. Pulling night ambushes, Got a new CO. We stole the Col 's Jeep, repainted it and kept it. (Taylor)

09Sep

Troop is back from A4, no one in 1st platoon was injured. 5 NVA KIA, Dodds brought back an AK-47 (it is in the club along with a RPG from Hai Lang) I will be taking over one of the tracks and J.B. will be taking my place in the rear. (Coop)

Sept 14-29 broke again, We were put in for CIB's. Monsoon started, daily rain. We had gook made jackets. " Fighters by day, Lovers by night, Drunkards by choice" on the back of them.

(Taylor)

19Sep

I am TC on A15 now (an old Tanker now a Grunt). We are now pulling night mounted AP; it has been raining hard for the last four days. Dan went on R&R yesterday. (Coop)

Troop is working along the DMZ/marketplace working from Alpha-4. As you approach A4 from the south, the first thing you see on the first hill is the EOD bunker. There is a huge sign telling you so.

The troop has a steak cookout at A4 way into the night. We use a piece of anti-RPG fencing for a grill. The North Vietnamese leave us alone. My theory is that they too were cooking steaks and in no mood to fight either.

We have two nights of staying at a large command bunker and witnessing rockets bracketing the bunker in the mornings. We are very happy to be going out to the field 1/77th troops take our place.

The next day, command bunker is rocketed at A4, supposedly killing many 1/77th troopers. (ggersaba)

Sept 27 2nd platoon sent to C2, attached to the 1/11 infantry. TC on 29, 2nd platoon received two new APCs (Taylor)

UNNAMED OPERATION 25 September – 22 October 1969

excerpts from COAAR

6. (C) TASK ORGANIZATION:

1-11 Inf

1-61 Inf (M)

1-77 Armor, A/4-12 Cav

3-5 Cav, C/2-34 Armor

10. (C) CONCEPT OF OPERATION: During the period covered by this report the brigade operational area was divided into five task force areas of operations.

c. TF 1-77 Armor operated in AO Gold. This battalion, based at LZ Nancy conducted search and clear, reconnaissance in force and rice denial operations throughout AO Gold.

11. (C) EXECUTION: list of significant events which occurred during the operation

(5) 30 Sep 1969 APC from 2/A/4-12 Cav detonated an AT mine at YD102668. Results were four US WIA (E) and moderate damage to the vehicle.

(7) 2 Oct 1969 Night defensive positions of B/1-77 Armor, A/4-12 Cav and 2&3/C/1-11 Inf were attacked by an estimated NVA company at YD72677. Results of the contact were one US KIA, 22 US WIA (E), 14 NVA KIA and one NVA PW. Nine RPG's, 11 AK47's, 60 Chicom grenades and 30 B40/B41 Rockets were captured.

(18) 18 Oct 1969 A/4-12 Cav found two NVA bodies at YD174679; two hours later the unit uncovered two more bodies at YD178682.

October 1969

2 Oct

"I remember the night my tank caught fire during one hell of a firefight a few klicks west of A-4. Sgt D jumped on my tank A-27 and told me we were on fire, my loader had already been hit and was laying on the turret floor, I had no turret power after being hit at least twice by an RPG, I had to traverse the turret manually to let Sgt D in the drivers hatch so he could get us off thaside (?) of the perimeter, I was wounded that night also."

(Duke)

We went out to retrieve some of the 1/77th and escort them and their disabled tracks back to A4 I think, we were on are way back late afternoon almost getting dark, rained all night, some of the 1/77th guys were playing poker in a VTR in the center of the perimeter, i could hear them laughing and carrying on while I was on guard sitting in the pouring rain..

Duke

George, I was looking through some letters that I sent to my parents and found two articles about Sgt D. It must have been published in the Stars and Stripes The fight occurred in Oct of 69 near Mother's Ridge. The headlines on the article give allot a credit to the 1/77 armor. Only three tracks from the second platoon were there. 20,22 and 27. Two of our tracks were left guarding a portable bridge on the way up there. The rest of the platoon was at C2 broke down. Lt Bosson was the Lt and I know Larry Corso was one of the wounded. The articles will be nice for the history. I also looked through the letters and can come up with a chronological order of some of the Cav's movement. I will send it later as a word doc and you can post it as needed. I did mention something about a fire. It was started by a marine coming into our perimeter and set off a trip flare and some claymores. You can read it when I send the file. Bob Taylor

Bob Taylor,

If you guys are talking about Oct. 2, 1969 I remember that pretty well. I turned 21 10/02/69! We were hit at 1AM 10/02/69. Second platoon...at least part of it... was on Mudders Ridge. A tank got stuck. There was 2nd 4/12, 1/77, and a light platoon of grunts from, I THINK, 1/11. Our tracks (2) were left at a junction at the base of the ridge. It was a very nasty night!!! An FNG, that had been in country a VERY short time, lost half his face when an RPG hit the gun shield on his .50 cal. Sergeant D got hurt pretty bad too. I don't know about the grunts or 1/77 guys, but most of the rest of our wounded was relatively minor if I remember right. Look at the pic's I posted. The ones with captured AK's and RPG's pilled up and a couple of guys with head bandages drinking beer were taken 10/03/69. By the way WHO is the guy in those pic's??? (Seems he had a pregnant wife AND girl friend and couldn't go home...or something like that. Real fun guy and yarn spinner...he gave me my first beer served in Beaufort (our skull) shortly after I got to LZ Nancy.... same night those motormen put a short round in the ammo dump!!!!!! Ever been pukey drunk when the tear gas was so thick you couldn't see 10 feet? Lots of fun!) I don't know for sure, but I've always had the impression that 10/02/69 was the heaviest contact any of the elements of the 4/12 engaged in. Not the biggest but the 'worst'. (I left for home Aug. of '70 so I don't know about after that.) It went on until nearly dawn with "puff" helping to keep the gooks at bay. It was so bad because our guys were trapped on the ridge and the NVA used the bomb craters as (hell the ridge was just a series of craters) foxholes! We were scared shitless.... just two tracks...sitting ducks. We never got hit but we didn't stay to watch the end of a very scary (and CLOSE) light show either. About three or four in the morning we headed back toward Quang Tri and ended up joining the relief element of the 1/77 that was headed out.

Bob Rebbec

In Oct '69 I was XO and so nowhere near the action, based at C-2. However, my understanding was that 2 tanks from the same platoon in 1/77 threw tracks in a shell crater, and at least 2 more got stuck trying to recover them. (The platoon leader was a former LT from 4/12 who had had 2nd Plt before me - Robinson claimed he had this LT transferred out before his troops shot him.) Inasmuch as it would not be possible to recover the vehicles before dark, the tank company CO, approved by Higher, made the decision to hold position overnight. 2nd Plt 4/12 was also to stay. After dark an infantry unit was brought in to help provide security. There was speculation at Bn HQ that the NVA did not know the extra reinforcements were there, and so thought the position would be relatively easy to overrun. That's how I heard it. LTee F

I didn't get hit in the track it was after we pulled back to the other side of the ndp and got our driver (Joey) out of there, he had been on guard when the first rpg hit us and got hurt pretty bad, I got hit after we carried him back up into the NDP and sat him down to see how bad he was, I lit two smokes and stuck one in his mouth then BOOM I went flying, it looked like someone took a whole junkyard and threw it at me at a thousand miles an hour, light shrapnel and no eardrums..... You really got me thinking about that right now more than I have in quite awhile I'm sitting here almost shaking all over again.. If it wasn't for Sgt D I might not be here right now, I lost all contact with Joey, my mind is still not real clear what all went down that night... Duke

Captain Robinson leaves.

Capt Kaufman arrives as the new C.O.

EXCERPTS FROM FULTON SQUARE COAAR

22 October 1969 – 18 January 1970

1. (U) NAME AND TYPE OF OPERATION:

b. Type. Search and Clear, reconnaissance in force, rocket suppression, rice denial and security.

3. (U) LOCATION: Trieu Phong, Hai Lang, Mai Linh, Cam Lo, Huong Hoa, Gio Linh Districts, Quang Tri Province , RVN.

4. (U) COMMAND HEADQUARTERS: Headquarters, 1 st Inf Bde, 5 th Inf Div (M)

6. (C) TASK ORGANIZATION:

a. The brigade normally operated with four task forces formed by the cross attachment of infantry, mechanized infantry, tank and armored cavalry units. The composition of these task forces was varied on a mission type basis.

A/4-12 Cav operational control to 1-77 Armor

7. (C) SUPPORTING FORCES:

f. Chemical. The following activities were conducted by the Brigade Chemical section and the 86 th Chemical Detachment during Operation Fulton Square .

(2) Herbicide operations: The perimeters of FSB C2 and FSB A4 were defoliated with Agent Orange.

11. (C) EXECUTION: The following is a chronological list of significant event, which occurred during Fulton Square :

(4) 29 Oct 69 – At 1440 hours A/4-12 Cav, reacting to an intelligence report, sweep the area in the vicinity of YD144706 and located 13 recently used bunkers. The bunkers were destroyed.

(18) 25 Nov 69 – While conducting reconnaissance on the north bank of the Cua Viet river, a tank from A/4-12 Cav detonated a mine at YD330711. The tank was a combat loss and one US was wounded.

(22) 15 Dec 69 – While supporting an infantry search and clear operation by fire west of FSB C2, A/4-12 Cav received 15 rounds of 60mm and 82mm mortar fire without casualties or damage. Later, an APC was hit by an RPG round resulting in one US KIA.

(32) 13 Jan 70 – While conducting a search and clear operation in the vicinity of YD124727, two tanks from A/4-12 Cav detonated mines. There were six US WIA and the tanks received minor damage.

Oct 4 Still at C2, brought mess hall up, sleeping in large bunkers, day patrols. (Taylor)

Oct 12 rain, mud, limited travel (Taylor)

Oct 22 6th night out, hot, fired 40 HE mortar rounds and most of our illumination. New Lt and platoon Sgt (Taylor)

Other events in October, 1969 (according to Pineapple)

The infamous neutral steer on the new asphalt road incident with the Navy CB construction foreman occurs.

About the end of the month, a raging typhoon signals the beginning of the monsoon season. 1st platoon endures the storm while out on the DMZ. It rains every day of the monsoons until it's over.

Millard the Mallard Mills comes in from the rain tells Pineapple that he'll stay with 1-2 only until the rain lets up. He'll leave in February 1970.

3/3 Marines began their pullout on the first.

November 1969

03 Nov

We spent most of last month up at C2; except for about a week at the first of the month at Fire Base Sandy. All we did was pull guard duty and AP. After leaving Sandy we went to C2, it started to rain and we didn't do much for about a week. After it cleared up we moved out on sweeps and sitting up at night waiting for someone to hit us. Supposedly we were attempting to draw attention to ourselves so we could have a little pay back for 2nd platoon being hit hard about a week ago. About 10 men were medivac'd out of the field (2 were shipped stateside). So it became the same routine every night: pull in, dig fox holes, RPG screen up, 60's dismounted, claymores out and then wait. This went on for a month; the last night was the only exception. About 22:00 2nd platoon had movement on their side of camp (I did not write this part down but I believe we had a mobile radar unit with us?) we lob some mortars in the area and then called artillery in. Next we sent out Recon Patrol, there were fifteen of us. On the way out I hump the radio we covered about 3 clicks. We were running up and down hills, getting caught in the undergrowth, and stumbling over everything. We called in artillery again and lob a bunch of hand grenades. During all of this I pick up a small piece of shrapnel; I believe it came from one of our frags. Went back to Nancy for the Medics to look at my leg, it hurt with them probing around in my leg than when it hit me. Upon returning C2, was told to prepare A15 for turn in. Took A15 back in to Nancy. Lost Westervelt, he was transferred out of the Troop. We are short of men now, running with about 4 men per track. Toni is supposed to take over the club soon. I put in for R&R in Feb. (Hong Kong).
(Coop)

Nov 6 At Cua Viet, received orders for CIB. Articles about Sgt D (Taylor)

The troop goes to the Cua Viet Naval Base, but spends most of its time across the river. Then the troop pulls perimeter security there and goes on nightly ambush patrols along the river.

16 Nov 1969

The My Lai massacre, which occurred in 1968, is revealed. Lt. William Calley is tried and convicted for his role in the massacre. This atrocity further discredits the war and gives momentum to the peace movement.

Nov 19 Cua Viet, the rest of the troop is coming up the 23rd (Taylor)

Thanksgiving is at Cua Viet: "We went into the Navy mess hall and got our chow, I remember paper plates, rain, and not much food was left for us. I clearly remember Big Daddy bitching and moaning about the little bit of food that was left. About a half hour later they picked a group of guys to go across the river, when the landing craft opened the front door to let us out I jumped out and landed in water up to my neck. We hiked up to a cemetery and set up an ambush site in the middle of a bunch of graves, one was open and Big Daddy and I decided that was our foxhole."
(W. Mendoza)

December 1969

01 Dec 1969

The Draft Lottery is instituted in an effort to reduce criticism of the draft as unfair.

Jim Good arrives in country. President Nixon announces "we will have peace in our time." For I Corps, this means that the 3rd Marines finally go back to the world and we get to takeover their very nice quarters at Quang Tri. No cav hands filled any of the hundreds of sandbags. HQ moves there.

The troop returns to the DMZ from its last assignment at Cua Viet in time to celebrate Christmas and New Years.

10Dec

We have moved from LZ Nancy to Quang Tri, we have a new CO. We are still short handed. We spent Thanksgiving at Cua Viet, out of the last five nights we pulled 3 AP and when you're down to only fifteen men everyone goes.

(Coop)

15Dec

I remember that young Lt. damned near lost his mind when 2-0 took an RPG on the driver hatch killing his driver, Monte Stamm. That young Lt. came on the radio freaking out and the Captain had to calm him down, 2-0 kept yelling, "6,6,6,6, I have one KIA, two WIA, I have one KIA..." Does anyone remember his name? I think Lt. Perrino came in after that.

(W. Mendoza)

We went to Hill 162 NW of C-2 to hit suspected enemy mortar positions. 4/12 Cav, 1/61 Cav & grunts, 1/11 grunts, and 1/77 tanks. Our track was on an adjoining hill. The front line tracks got hit with mortar and RPG fire. An RPG round made a direct hit on a 2nd platoon track driver. As I remember this, it was when one damned gook popped out of his spider hole, fired either an RPG or mortar, and then ducked back in his hole. We brought in half the 5th mech., blew away a few hundred yards of hillside and quit. A bit later he'd pop out another round so we'd light him up again - he probably went back to his living room 100 yards inside the hill to smoke some dope while we landed another million bucks of ammo on the entrance. He did this several times. Before the day was over, besides all the troops we started with, we also had 2 cobras, 2 Hueys, 2 Barkeys, 1 spotter chopper and 2 jets dropping bombs on that hole. Never knew if we got him - no body count (Robert Klinsky)

When you here of someone getting hit with a RPG how many of you think of Monte Stamm? I know after Nam every time I heard of an RPG attack I thought of him. I watched Black Hawk Down and that movie made my stomach turn. Just thinking about things I thought I forgot but were just hidden. John K. 2nd PLT 69/70 A27

This is my recollection of an operation conducted by A Troop on 15 December 1969. Request you add it to the Troop history feel free to edit any typos.

A Troop participated as part of a task force under command of 1-77 Armor. Other units in the task force were C Co/1-77 Armor, A Co/1-61 Mech Inf, and maybe another Company from 1/11 Infantry.

The mission was to search the base of the mountain area located west and northwest of C-2. A Troop was the advance guard for the task force.

We left C-2 in the early morning and moved west along a dirt road that ran west and northwest to the mountains. When this road reached the mountains it made a sharp right turn and ran north along the eastern base of the mountains. Before we reached the turn in the road we began moving cross-country and deploying. The scouts of each platoon were leading their tanks sections. The mortars (formed into a provisional platoon under 19) went into a supporting firing position. The radar tracks with an engineer mine sweeping team on board initially stayed with the mortars. We were moving towards a small ridge (hill) to provide a covering position so the rest of the task force could deploy behind us and then move forward.

We approached a ridge – Hill 162 - that ran generally from southwest to northeast. The tanks went into positions to cover the advance and the scouts of each platoon and the troop command track moved to the top of the ridge. On reaching the top of the ridge we were facing northwest and could see the road to our left after it had made its northward turn along the base of the mountains. The troop was deployed from left to right: 3d Platoon (with their left flank next to the road) Troop Hq, 2d Platoon, and 1st Platoon. While the tanks were moving forward to join us on the ridge we received RPG fire into the 2d Platoon and AK fire against the 3d Platoon. The 2d Platoon Leaders track was hit with an RPG round and the driver, Monte Stamm, was killed. The 2d Platoon leader provided me a back azimuth from where the RPG came from and I had the mortars fire on the position while the artillery Forward Observer (FO) called artillery fire down behind the NVA position in case they were reinforcing or withdrawing. While this was going on the tanks came up to our position and the 2d Platoon tanks fire several rounds of main gun into the NVA position.

C/1-77 Armor deployed to our left rear to protect that flank while A/1-61 Mech deployed behind us, dismounted from their tracks, and moved forward on foot. They moved around us and to the base of the mountains were they began searching the small valleys and draws.

After firing on the NVA RPG location, the 1st Platoon scouts were sent forward on the right to check out the area behind the small ridge in front of us. While doing this they had 4 or 5 round of closely spaced artillery fire land about 100 yards from them. This was followed a few minutes later by a second volley. The FO contacted the brigade fire coordination center that told us that no artillery was being fired in our area. At the time I wasn't sure if they were correct or perhaps ARVN artillery had been miss-directed. After what happened later in the day, I came to believe that the rounds were 130mm NVA

artillery being directed by an FO along the base of the mountains to the northwest. The explosions were smaller than a 155mm but larger than a 105mm or mortar.

While out in this area the 1st Platoon Scouts found a cache of NVA mortar rounds. Shortly thereafter they were pulled back to the main position.

A/1-61 Mech had moved on foot to the base of the mountains and began searching. This search found several caches of mortar round.

While this was going on a helicopter came in and took out Monte Stamm. The radar tracks came forward with the engineer mine sweep team. The engineers went to work sweeping the road along the base of the mountains from the 3d Platoon's left flank back to where it turned east. This required several hours and they found and dug up several mines.

Late in the afternoon A/1-61 Mech began withdrawing from the search area. Their route was through the low ground directly in front of us. As they were moving through this area they began to receive mortar fire. I happen to be looking to the northwest and saw the dust and smoke caused by the NVA mortars. They were about 1,000 meters from us and next to the base of the mountains. I had the mortars begin firing on this position while the FO began calling for artillery fire. I then contacted A Co/1-61 Mech and told them we would be firing over their heads and if any thing came close to let us know. I remember the reply was something like "Any thing you can do to help is appreciated." Using the 50 cal on the command track I was able to mark the mortar location for the 3d Platoon tanks. They fired main gun into the area of the mortars, they were joined by several other tanks. All tanks were firing HE. Some of it was hitting in the trees, causing air burst and some was hitting the higher ridge behind the NVA position. Do not know if we killed them, but they stopped firing. The troop ceased firing and the FO walked artillery fire back and forth over the area. By then a Forward Air Controller (Barky) was on the scene and we turned the target over to him as he directed a flight of jets and some gun ships.

The order was given by the task force commander (LTC Miller, CO of 1-77 Armor) to withdraw back to vicinity of C-2 for the night. A Troop was designated the rear guard.

After everyone else had departed we began to move back to C-2. The radar track and one platoon (3d I think) moved down the road the engineers had swept to the vicinity of where the mortars had been. The mortars had displaced farther back to provide fire support. Once 3d Platoon established a overwatch position, the rest of the troop pulled out, again using the road, moved passed the 3d Platoon and established a position farther back. When this was done the 3d Platoon moved back through this position. We continued to use this rearward movement by alternating bound until we were well away from Hill 162. We then formed march-column and moved to C-2 where we spent the night.

I guess I remember this so well, as I made some notes afterwards. It was a classic use of cavalry: an advance guard, a screen for the main body to deploy behind, overwatching fire support and a rear guard using movement by bounds to cover the main body. And the troop performed it so well.

Through out my Army career I have told this story many times to show some of the things you can do with a Cavalry Troop. (Matt Spruill)

Approx. 24Dec

A cook released the gas pressure on a stove to close to another lit stove - fired him up. Sent back to the world but should be OK. (R. Klinsky)

Question..Christmas '69 at C-2

Does anyone remember what brass we all had to get spit shined to meet? My memory tells me he was a 4 or 5 or maybe a 10-star general, commander of the Pacific Fleet or something. His son had been shot down over N. 'Nam so every Christmas he'd make a pilgrimage as close to the "D" as he could - in memory. He said he'd like the privilege of shaking each of our hands. That 5 or 10 min. w/ him boosted my morale more than anything else that ever happened to me over there. (R. Klinsky)

Skee's talking about the head squid in the AO, Admiral John McCain, the CINCPACFLT ~ Commander In Chief Pacific Fleet. His son John eventually became a powerful US senator from Arizona some years after his release from the Hanoi Hilton. ~ Pineapple

1970

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 Matthias A. Spruill, Nov 69-Feb 70

CPT John L. B. Smith, Feb-May 1970

CPT Robert R. Richards, May-Oct 70

CPT Woodrow W. Waldrop, Oct 70-Apr 71

January 1970

2 Jan

After a fun filled New Years on the bunker line at Charlie2 (C2), the Cav pulled out. C 2 took rounds promptly at 7:00 a.m. on a regular basis and the Cav waited for it to end. 26 & 28 were down for repairs and both crews were drinking coffee in the one-foot deep mud to determine how we were going to get these two monsters back on the road. One crummy rocket came in and landed fifty feet away. The angle of impact was such that most of the shrapnel went forward. Messed up a 2 1/2 ton and blew holes in the shit house. Lucky no one was using it.

Unfortunately, there was shrapnel that came back and nailed seven out of eight of us. Daryl Pence, 26G was sent back to the states. I knew Deierling was hit right away, because I saw his shirt rip across the back. Bass took a chunk in the leg and had infection problems for the remainder of his tour. The rest of us just received minor injuries.

A week later, working the DMZ with Sgt Alexander as TC on 26 (DiSanto was on R&R), we hit a land mine. That was the infamous night that we locked and left 26 and came in after dark via flares. Mendoza's track hit a mine. Spruill had negotiations with the medivac (Batman). We got in about 2:00 a.m. to C 2.

The next day we loaded a canister round and fired on 26 before towing it to A 4 where two of us stayed with it for four days of monsoon.

DiSanto came back from his R&R to no tank, no gunner, and no driver. At that time I was an extra guy, because I was new in country and became the gunner.

A week to remember, (John Sharpe)

John, I remember that day because my track was back at C2 for some reason. It was about the time Stamm was KIA. If I remember correctly the rocket landed beyond the guys but close. They caught the back blast. Mike D would know since he was wounded. I guess that is why C2 was rocket alley. Bob T.

I remember this day very well! PR, Maggot, and myself went out to pull 3 of the wounded troopers to safety!! C2 was ROCKET ALLEY!! Thank GOD we made it home. Kid

I also remember that when the rocket landed, I along with my crew, was in that bunker next to the 4/12 mess area, as we were in C2 every morning around breakfast time, safe from that lethal rain. The protocol was get your breakfast and walk directly into the bunker to eat it. Because you always timed it right, the "incoming" siren would always go off after you got your breakfast. That morning, someone came running into the bunker yelling for the 1st platoon doc. Doc Kagimoto ran outside along with PR, Kid, and Maggot. As the rockets were still falling, I thought it wise to be around to retrieve them should it become necessary. I kept on eating breakfast. I wondered why someone was outside during rocket attack time. During the same medivac , my friend Papasan, who had arrived with me in-country, was flown out never to be seen again. I thought he was one of the wounded from the rocket, but he wasn't. Someone had either pushed him or punched him and he fell from his track. He had just transferred off my track to the mortar track after 6 months on the crew. I think the bad craziness exhibited by SS and I finally got to him, and the relatively saner mortar crew appealed to him. Unfortunately for him, someone didn't like him. I never knew what really happened to Papasan until 2001, when I located SS, who told me the story. Papasan made it back to the world in one piece and I talked to him also in 2001, but he didn't want to reveal who sent him to the hospital. Pineapple

Around Jan 9th

N.E. of C-2 within easy sight of the Red Chinese Flag, 1 tank hit a mine about 3 PM. Another tank started to pull around it to tow him and hit a booby trap. Claymore in a tree at a height to wipe everyone off a track, but since the tank was higher the main blast hit the center. The TC (Drake) caught pellets in the side of his face, groin, leg and side - medivac'd. It was getting dark so we locked up the tank (26?) to leave it and started leaving. We got about 100 yards when a 1st platoon track hit a mine that about 8 of us tracks had already been over (finally got the rust broken loose??). All 5 onboard were medivac'd. We finally made it back to C-2 about 9PM with arty supplying illumination all the way in.

(R. Klinsky)

Hey guys,

By the time you receive this, except for Pineapple, it will be January 12, this is the Day that according to Duffy, I flew...The day that 1-0 hit a mine late in the evening at the "marketplace". We ran over a mine. I always wondered what it was going to feel like? would our driver survive? would I survive? would it hurt? would our APC explode considering the amount of Ammo we carried? All those questions went through my mind the instant after the explosion. I remember talking to Hestand, the muffled noise of an explosion, the sensation of going up into the air, lots of dirt around me, the .50 Cal going up ahead of me.....landing on the inside of the APC and the .50 landing on my chest....looking at the gas tank and wondering if it would explode because the mine hit just ahead of it. My back did not hurt right away until I jumped off the track and started looking for Walker, our driver, then I realized I really hurt. That day is etched in my memory also because that is the day that our Capt. promised the medivac to shoot him down if he did not come get us out, he became my hero that day.

The next day I remember Big Daddy helping me get dressed, I could not get out of bed in Quang Tri, we were there 3 days and were sent back to join the Troop.

I wrote a speech in College about this experience because on the Chopper ride to the hospital Walker's face was bandaged up and he kept saying, " I can't see, I can't see" with lots of concern, Big Daddy put his arm around him and told him, "don't worry Walker, you gonna be ok" I looked down and could see the lights of the city or the base. Please don't mind me rambling on, just wanted to share it with you all, I probably have shared it before with you , but I always like to share it with someone on this day....We shall never forget!!

I always remember those that shared the experience with me....Love you all.

Wally

Wally,

You're right you did share that before, but it is okay. I think about that event often. That was a tough time for the Cav. Monte Stamm and Al Hall were killed in the few weeks prior and a rocket wounded about seven guys on C-2 on January 2nd.

I was driving 26 that day. Mike Deireling was laid up with shrapnel wounds, Sgt Alexander was the TC, because Di Santo hadn't returned from his R & R yet. Daryl Pence was send home with shrapnel wounds, so I don't remember who the loader or gunner was.

That chain of events started with me hitting a land mine. We tried driving it on one track, towing it, and finally booby trapping it and leaving it for the night.

The one thing that stands out in my mind was how well the arty guys handled those flares. A-4 fired for us until we were too close to A-4, then C-2 took over. When we were too close for C-2 to fire, A-4 had turned there guns around and fired.

Some pretty cool shit for a bunch of kids.

John

Wally and John, I remember that night too. I was driving 29 and trying to be careful and not lose a track. The best thing that night was when Capt Spruill called in that medivac and threatened to shoot it down. I'm glad that we only suffered a few wounded. That was not a good place to be that late and not set up in an NDP.

Bob Taylor

Wally, I remember that night well:) I was driving 13. After you boys were Choppered out we SHOT THE HELL out of everything on our way home:) I always wondered myself about how it would feel to hit a mine. Thanks be to God I never did!! Sure came close a few times. I know in my Heart The LORD protected all of us. I will Never Forget Duffy seating on top of the track reading his Bible, and Praying for all of us!! As I look back today I just want Duffy to know how thankful I am for his Faithfulness in The LORD:)

Kid

Hey Wally, welcome to that exclusive club of "minefinders".

The APC I was on (21) rolled over two of them while I was in-country. One was on September 30, 1969 while we were working out of Charlie-2 and the other was on February 8, 1970 while working out of Cua Viet (isn't it amazing how those dates stick in one's head?) The first one, two of my best buddies Jim Lundvall and Ed Ward were medevaced out and wound up going home because of their wounds. The rest of us on the personnel carrier were messed up a little bit though not as bad as Ed and Jim. I remember being covered in black powder and walking around in a daze.

The mine on Feb. 8 wasn't quite as bad as the first but hitting a mine is definitely an experience not to be forgotten.

Turtle

I also remember that night. At that time I was the 4.2" mortar platoon leader in 1/77. I had split the platoon, leaving 2 tubes at C2 with the platoon Sgt and I took 2 tubes to A4. We had been there since mid Nov. We got the fire mission to provide continuos illumination for the Cav. If my memory still functions, we fired all the ilum we had except for our final defensive supply. Yes, the tubes got so hot that one gunner did piss on it (not a nice odor)! Nice to know someone appreciated our efforts.
Earl Schorpp (40)

Wally:

The day you flew was also my first experience at being "airborne". It's funny some of the things you think about while flying through the air. I remember being aware that the mine went off under the left rear of the track and wondering if the shape charge we kept there was going to explode. A day or two after we were medavaced I left to meet my wife in Hawaii for R&R. One of the toughest things I ever had to do was get back on the plane to go back, when my last memory of that place was hitting the mine. Speaking of memory, when I got back Capt. Spruill commended me for the report I made over the radio immediately after the incident. Didn't remember it then, don't remember it now. Anyway, the crew of 10 is still around and I look forward to seeing everyone in Sept.

LT Styles

The night was real bad; the capper was that A12 was the last track to pull into A4 that night/morning. That day the troop's cooks had made a trip up there to feed the troop a hot non-C ration meal. By the time our crew got to the meal site, there was nothing but a few thin slices of mystery meat and dibs and drabs of boiled carrots left. After swearing at the cooks, the crew left and relaxed by taking a tub bath in an artillery water buffalo (they denied us use of their shower.) Pineapple.

09Jan

Al Hall is killed while waiting for a USO show at C-2, accidentally shot in the back by a REMF.

We went to a USO show at C-2. Waiting for the show to start when a shot sounded and everyone scattered - except 2 medics who immediately started both kinds of artificial respiration on the guy hit. The 16 round never exited, just tore up his lungs and he was gone in a very short time. Some new guy from arty had grabbed a 16 off the rack. No mag in it but he never checked for the round someone had left in the chamber - safety off. He leaned it against the split log bench; trigger snagged and went off point blank into Al's back. A lot more details are permanently etched in my mind about this. About 15 minutes before this happened; I had been sitting exactly where he was when he was shot. Some buddies came in so I moved 2 benches back and into the middle and a few minutes later he came and sat there. ...But for the grace of God...

The rest of A Troop moves from LZ Nancy, to new and improved quarters at Quang Tri Combat Base. For most of the troop, it's no big deal since we spend most of our time in the field, but now on stand downs, the conditions are less primitive.

Jan 10 1970 At C2, going north of A4, cold, can see your breath (Taylor)

Jan 24 back to Quang Tri (Taylor)

EXCERPTS FROM GREENE RIVER COAAR

19 January 1970 – 22 July 1970

1. (U) NAME AND TYPE OF OPERATION:

b. Type. Search and Clear, reconnaissance in force, rocket suppression and ambush.

3. (U) LOCATION: Trieu Phong, Hai Lang, Mai Linh, Cam Lo, Huong Hoa, Gio Linh Districts, Quang Tri Province , RVN.

4. (U) COMMAND HEADQUARTERS: Headquarters, 1 st Inf Bde, 5 th Inf Div (M)

6. (C) TASK ORGANIZATION:

a. The brigade normally operated with four task forces formed by the cross attachment of infantry, mechanized infantry, tank and armored cavalry units. The composition of these task forces was varied on a mission type basis.

A/4-12 Cav operational control to 1-77 Armor

11. (C) EXECUTION: Following is a chronological list of significant events which occurred during Operation Greene River :

(46) 2 May 70 – At 0905H vic YD278468 1/A/4-12 Cav with members of the A/7 Engr received SAF from the south of their location from an estimated NVA squad. 1/A/4-12 Cav returned fire with organic weapons and searched the area. Results: Three US WIA (M).

(55) 4 July 70 – At 0659H personnel of A/4-12 Cav while retrieving a mechanical ambush vic YD343448 discovered three claymore mines missing and a fourth booby trapped. The booby trapped detonated resulting in one US WIA(E).

21Jan

Hey all, By the time you get this it will be 34 years to the day since rockets rained on us at Charlie Two. Does anyone remember that???? I recall that it was a beautifully clear day, brisk and cool, Had rained recently and there was lots of mud on the ground because Big Daddy and I ended up in the mud when the shit hit the fan. I remember running into the command bunker and we were freaking out!! Capt. Spruill was sitting on his cot, I can still see him putting on his boots muttering to himself,,,,," you damned civilians,"" I yelled" Capt. we are getting rockets" he said, don't worry about it, put on your flack jacket. He proceeded to go outside and call artillery on their ass. That night there was a b-52 strike on the possition,,,(as I remember it). Just wanted to share the memories with you all. Sorry I remember so much of it. Love to all wally

Papasan, Gerald Holden, is medivac'd after a fistfight (?) at C2 in which is he thrown off a track. He never returned.

(SS)

Larry somebody (not Veatch or Corso) was involved in that fight with Papasan.
(Duffy)\

22Jan

First night back from C2, we stayed there for a month and half. Two Troopers were killed, Stamm 2nd platoon KIA and Al Hall accidentally shot in the back by a REMF while at a USO show. A17 and A10 hit mines; A10 had two or three people hurt. A10 driver was the most serious but he is back with us now. We went west of C2 a lot, Doc Parker found 28 mortar rounds. Received incoming about a half-dozen times; I guess it was not too bad except for the rain. We went so far north this time you could see the NVA flag flying across the DMZ with your naked eye.

(Coop)

Need a little help from anyone, I found a letter my dad wrote to a congressman about a grudge against the VA, in it, it states how he was wounded the first time, it says (Mike Minchey), "I was wounded on the last day of January of 1970, when a soldier in front of me walked into a booby-trap at Jones Creek, I was blinded in right eye and wounded in lower leg and spent the next several weeks on the Naval Ship USS Repose, Instead of going home on a medivac I stayed on board till my eyesight improved and I volunteered to return to combat." Does this incident sound familiar sound familiar to anyone dad also stated that he was on the ship several weeks before he could return to duty.

Thanks (Derek Minchey)

February 1970

Monsoon ends.

From G. Gersaba's War Diary:

01Feb

Cua Viet:

We got here 2 days ago. 1-2 caught fire 3 miles before we reached here. The batteries have mysteriously reversed polarity, they tell me.

The days have sped by, unlike our track. Otherwise, on the way over here, we went through Quang Tri City for the first time in my tour. Tripped out on the sidewalks, shops, traffic cops, etc., I was surprised to see that a real city exists here. Since I came in country the only city I've seen was Saigon.

02Feb

Crossed the Cua Viet today, going north. Nice day to ride in the sun. It has been a long time since we've last seen the sun.

Sgt. Styles comes up to me and tells me that I'm going on LP and Stoecker will take it out. OK, what the fuck, I say, and he says nothing, turns and leaves. Fuck. After a while, Lt. Styles comes around and says that I'm in charge of the LP again. Sgt. Styles comes back and says, "I've changed my mind you're in charge." What the fuck?? Stoecker comes by and says that he doesn't care that he's not in charge and volunteers to hump the radio. Should I break the news? I'm a fucking Speck 4! So we stealthily set up about 250 meters from the village. It was very realistic. Mendoza, Stoecker and Hooper are with me. I survive the night.

03Feb

Another sunny day. Is it true that the monsoons are over? February is the fabled time. Since September, it has been nothing but rain, and here I am with a fresh pack of Marlboros, and a tepid Pepsi to greet the day. Last night was a semi-bummer, but today the sun shines and my heart sings. But essentially, this day is the same as yesterday (as all days are.) Spent an uncomfortable night wrestling with flu symptoms. I think I have a head cold, at the least. Defcons kept me awake all night as they screeched overhead to land about 2000 meters west of our NDP. Intelligence predicts that the 2nd platoon, which is NDP'd on the other side of Jones' Creek, is going to get hit tonight.

We swept some flat sand today with PC's on line. Most ridiculous exercise yet. Object of a sweep being to look under rocks and shake bushes, something we can't do in an area devoid of bushes and trees. I guess we were looking for mines. I lost my nerve and made Alvis and SS drive, better them than me.

They're telling me I have to attend the TC meetings since I've been taking out LP's since Groove left us in December. Great. When the hell will they give 1-2 a sergeant? I've been asking since December, with no answer.

04Feb

Today we will go to Jones' Creek to dick around and eat lunch. We are scheduled to go back to the great sand wastes in the afternoon. I am definitely sick. My nose is running and my eyes are sore. Alvis gave me some penicillin and some thing he said was "generic" Contac. I should beat this cold by tomorrow. Sgt. Styles thinks I'm high. Wow.

Feb 4 Cua Viet, here 4 days now (Taylor)

05Feb

I feel better. My nose is still running, but my body doesn't feel as if was used as a bowling pin, like last night. Yesterday, I could hardly move.

At the end of my guard, about 0215hrs, Cooper's LP spotted fifteen gooks! He called for 19's mortar tube and artillery. Christ! 15 gooks? This morning we go on a body count hunt. It rained last night. I got wet despite my being inside all night. Today it is overcast. Maybe I spoke too soon about the end of the monsoon.

We checked out the area where Cooper saw those gooks. Found nothing. No blood trails, nothing. So we dried our wet sleeping bags and poncho liners ~the rain did catch us by surprise. I am still sick, but feeling 100% better than I did yesterday. Tonight, Big Daddy takes an LP out.

My sprocket broke loose, all of the bolts snapped off because of short blocking to increase the tension. I have to be towed back. Bummer. 1-2 dies again, unable to finish another mission. Have to remember to replace the block, and puzzle the motor pool sergeant once again.

06Feb

Ah! Today! Nothing happened in the night. No gooks to shoot at. At 8 AM, I broke track and while I was working, an explosion sounded about a click away, near the village. I find out later it was an advisor to the PF & RF (ruff & puffs) who stepped on a tank mine. It was in about the same spot the old 1-7 hit one last November. Brings back visions of the grunt Captain who went the same way at the Marketplace in August.

I am towed in with some difficulty – but make it in safe, only to run into skirmish #25 with motor daddy on sprocket theory. I let him have his way without too much argument. I used works like “probably” the bolts were loose...It is nice to be back in Cua Viet proper.

Oh yes, I made friends with the kids from Lang Ha, the village across the Cua Viet Navy base. “Mason” was one of the kid’s names. I smoked one of their horrible gook cigarettes and shot marbles with them. Mostly it was a nice day in the sunshine.

TET starts today, also is “Red” Phillips’ birthday. SS and Alvis stay in the field. I saw the tail-end (ha-ha) of “Some Like it Hot.” The movie was excruciatingly boring, even for what little I saw.

07Feb

I assembled a sprocket today with almost no help. All I needed was professional opinion. That is the extent of the work I did. It took me most of the morning, a job normally done in about 10-15 minutes by someone competent. From lunch to about 4pm, I read a science-fiction novel, “Operation Time Search” a story about the war between Atlantis and Mu. I never heard of Mu. Did you hear that? Are there cows around here? This afternoon, a LCM carrying a deuce and a half and army people hit a mine just as they docked in Dong Ha. 2 killed, 1 mutilated and one missing. One of the killed, a guy in HQ 1/77th, on the mortar track, was on the way to face charges for possession of marijuana. The mine blew the 2 ½ ton off the boat. No navy men hurt bad.

08Feb

Pulled KP today in the Navy Mess, not as difficult as KP in the world. I did very very little, almost nothing, but what can you say about KP?

They found the “missing” in that Dong Ha explosion. He was under the 2 ½ ton. Crushed. His name was “Joker” same company as those others that were killed. He was to face charges too. He locked and loaded on the master-at-arms in the club. Swift justice dealt out by the Cua Viet river!

While on the subject of mines, 2-1, 2nd platoon Sergeant Hunter hit one today near those French ruins where I shot marbles with the kids. The driver had a sore jaw and broken teeth. Sgt Hunter, a huge guy, limed into the mess-hall. The mine blew him out of the cupola with is .50 caliber MG.

Otherwise, today was another dull day in the NAM! Would duck hormones help?

09Feb

A day characterized by dull recollections of the night before. Worked hard all day. Nearly got the track together. Received some “care” packages from the silent majority. Best ones since Christmas!

Motor Daddy, after seeing me pull apart a track adjuster, popped his eyes and accused me of having the mechanical ability of a monkey. How right he is! Luckily, Giz put it back together again despite motor daddy’s doubts about all the kings horses and all the kings men.

10Feb

Got the PC together today. Batteries down low. Looks like slave-starting from now on. In disgust, I volunteered for afternoon detail on the bunker line. Tried to see Tony Rome and True Grit this morning, but at the last moment, the films were cancelled.

Parkinson tells me that a girl who read his palm two years ago predicted “a horrible death” for him before his 24th birthday. In about 2 days, we shall see. Actually that’s a bummer of a thing to think about in the field. I don’t think I’ll drive anymore.

11Feb

This looks like a bleak day. Already my PC refuses to start. Burnt-out slave receptacle. No negative ground, all melted away. Dammit! I hate this stupid vehicle!!! I feel like going over to 1-3. Today we go across the river for another 6 day mission.

Feb 11 Cua Viet 6 nights out, three in, new LT.(Taylor)

This time, we pull ambushes. 4-0 elements are already across spending miserable nights in the Cua Viet cold. I anticipate another fight with Motor Daddy today over “who melted the leads on my new *cupped* slave cable!?” What will I tell him? That the evil spirits that inhabit my track took a hold of it? Gah-damn! The hassles mount steadily over the mechanical state of 1-2.

Across the river today with the old man. We swept our AO which is about ½ way up the river to Dong Ha. Rice paddies up the ass. Conducted my first “cordon and search” since AIT. Cordoned a bombed-out Buddhist temple and searched it.

Word is that the mission is mostly ambushes at night ~ a bummer. Right now, ambushes are the worst things we do in the field.

Word on 1-2 is transfer case. They’ll pull the pack on that hunk of shit! Gizmo scares me with his crappy tracking. Told him we may as well be on the lead vehicle! Riding with Milard and Giz on the 1-3.

12Feb

Hot chow today while the weather is bitter cold. My cold lingers on, hoping for another wet night. We re-swept our AO this morning. I shivered most of the way. Damn the monsoon is still fucking with us!

Today is Parkinson’s birthday. He survived the horrible fate predicted for him. The only negative thing that happened to him was an insect bite near his groin (he said.) What an anti-climax! Whew. I drove for a while today putting my mind at ease about the tracking business.

13Feb

First platoon sends out an ambush patrol at night while operating across the river at Cua Viet. Sgt Styles, Wally, Barnes, Alvis, and Zahler. We ended up being ambushed ourselves. Too detailed to write in, I will describe the scene when I see you all. I have been dying to tell this story for 32 years, since everyone else was sleeping; Alvis and I are the only one that really knows what happened that night. By the time the others woke up the shit was all around us. (W. Mendoza)

Then there was the time when we couldn't decide if we wanted an ambush or a listening post...sent 4 guys as I recall out way to far for a listening post. But too Small for an ambush. In the middle of the night the NVA and our guys got into it. The NVA threw grenades so as not to give away their position, our guys opened up with an M60 and M16s. I can't remember who went out that night, but I talked to the guy who had the M60. He ran a belt of ammo thru it took about 2 steps and threw it down as it was slowing his progress. They left the M60 and a prick25 radio in the field.

(Malan)

Was this the same night that Coop, PR, Maggot, Kid, Veatch, and a few others were out, and we took friendly fire coming in to help out Sgt. Styles' squad? Sounds like the same night. Anyway it was a wild one!! Remember riding up river on the Navy boats, and getting sniped at? It was a wild & crazy time, but got to know a lot of GREAT GUYS!!

(Mike Davis)

From Ggersaba's war dairy:

Last night, a little after 12, the ambush led by Sgt. Styles (Mendoza, Barnes, Alvis and Zeke) was surprised by some gooks. Very exciting for them. The story is as close as I can piece out, is: Mendoza and Alvis were up on guard. Suddenly without a sound, a gook walks up on the trail they were watching. He was carrying an AK-47 and stooping low. 3 feet from Wally, he stops, spots the ambush and runs. The gook dove into the bush, and with another (who knows who else?) starts pitching grenades at the ambush. In the confusion, our ambush manages to shoot about $\frac{1}{2}$ magazine of 16 and blow one claymore before they start running madly back toward our NDP. Styles deserved some credit for getting all the men back. They left the radio, the M-60, 2 rifles, grenades, sleeping gear and ammo. Yesiree Bob. Must have been some run. Meanwhile, I had a major case of the ass because I had to get up. We pulled 100% alert the rest of the night. I'm going out of my gourd with the lack of sleep. Still, I'm glad I wasn't out there.

At dawn, we checked out the area. And I do mean dawn, yawn! We found the weapons, radio and everything else intact. We also found 4 Chicom grenades, all duds. Three grenades had the pins pulled and one was completely intact. I guess the guy that threw the last grenade after 3 duds thought maybe he'd bean someone with it. I found something in a cellophane bag that looked like dried food. There were blood trails, but as usual, no bodies. 4/12 Cav strikes again.

The day is overcast and cold again. The C.O. wants a practice ambush with 12 claymores on 12 clickers. What bullshit. We change AO's today ~ going to our old one just east of Jones' Creek, word is that no L.P.'s tonight!

Sgt Barrows needs to tell the tale of the 4 ill fated guys who were too far out for a listening post and too weak in strength for an ambush. He knows names etc. The NVA must have kicked one of these guys and got his attention. The NVA threw grenades to prevent giving away their position (damn guys were good) our guys on the other hand opened up with their M60 machinegun and M16s giving the NVA a target for their grenades. I talked to the M60 gunner the next day (can't

remember who it was) and he said he ran the 100 round belt thru the M60, took a few running steps with it and decided it was way too heavy to be running with and threw it down. They left the machine gun and their radio out there that night. I don't recall anyone getting wounded. They were way out there as well and had to come back in on a very dark night. I don't remember the details of the mine we hit up on the DMZ. I do recall spending days putting the damn thing back together. It seems to me we hit 3 mines in A17. I know we got a new M48 while we were there and it seems to me we hit one in a Sheridan and got a new one but I've slept since then. Sgt Barrows was telling on the phone the other day about getting the shit knocked out of me with a .50 cal ammo can when we hit the mine north of Cua Viet.. Hell I didn't remember that.

GOING TO SIGN OFF FOLKS

MALAN

Hey guys,

By the time you receive this , it will be 12 Feb. I wanted you all to have this before the end of the day.

It was 31 years ago tonight that a small ambush patrol was ambushed by NVA at Cua Viet.

Sgt. Style, Zahler, Barnes, Alvis and myself were hit while on night ambush about 500 meters from the Troop position .

I recall it was raining lightly, Alvis was on guard, it was about 11:30 PM . We had all turned in for the night, taking 2hours shifts (I think) each, it was Alvis's turn and I had just finished my shift at 11:00pm so I was a bit awake.

The way they hit us it is a miracle that anyone of us survived, much less come out of it without a scratch. The whole incident is too long to recount from beginning to end, suffice to say I thank God I am alive today to retell it.

That is the night I earned my CIB. I can still recall Big Daddy's voice in the dark yelling from the troop location, "Mendoza, come on in! Mendoza come on in!"

I have been spooked about the dark ever since and to this day I cannot sleep in total darkness.

I am glad to be around today to be able to share memories with You all who I consider all to be brothers, even thou in some cases the memory is a bit faint. I look forward to seeing all of you in November, when they will be saying in Vegas, "HERE COMES THE CAV!!!!"

Take care guys, Wally Mendoza

Hey Coop:

it's good to hear from you. i was in the 2nd plt., Aug. 18, 69 to Feb. 13, 70. i was a gunner on track 24. Monte Stamm was on 24 with me, also Jerry Hansard was on 24. Stamm got hit on Dec. 15, 1969, and died. I saw a message on the message board from his neice Ashley, asking for anyone who remembered Stamm to contact her. I posted my e mail address, she answered, and i have lost her e mail address. I sent her a message, on the message board to write me again, but no response, so far. I want to thank you for offering to help a old 12th cav. trooper I think of you guy's often. I got hit on Feb. 13, 1970. I spent 6 months in the hospital, at Ft. Gordon, Ga. I'm doing well. Maybe i'll see you guy's again someday.

Thanks again,

Ron Stinnett i had no nickname.

14Feb

What can I say? The morning is as overcast as my clothes. My first exertion today was to fling squares of black tar paper. This is the stuff they put in the crates of M-79 ammo. Kind of like tossing Frisbees.

Yesterday, on the way over to this AO, while on the LCM, I had the same thoughts as I always do; that is, when I ride LCM's on the river: We're going to hit a mine. That's why whenever I board a boat I loosen my shoelaces. Superstitious? You damn right. Today is supposed to be Valentine's Day back in the world.

Went out on a dismount along Jones' Creek around noon ostensibly to look for mines floating in the river, but really just to kill time.

Spent the rest of the day either sleeping or skipping stones in the river. No LP tonight. A general pays us a visit and tells us about death and communism. Also, the general expects us to tie down our one row of concertina with tangle foot and engineer stakes tonight! What lifer dreams!

Stoecker, short as hell, (15 days) is driving me crazy with his Gracie Allen logic and incomplete hearing. Ah well, someday...

Oh yes, around lunchtime, I taught some kids how to write their names and drew some silly pictures for comic relief.

15Feb

Instant cocoa this morning. Had a sleepless night because of the killer mosquitoes attacking me. I fought a losing battle. First sentence I said this morning was "Get the Fuck out of Here!" to the gook kids that appear every morning at our NDP, hovering like vultures and begging ~ unlike vultures ~ for food. I can almost see why the men who massacred that village felt no pain as they cut down those skinny children. I find myself wishing I could spray their bodies with my rifle on full automatic. Meanwhile Gizmo is trying to brew the world's perfect coffee-can-full of cocoa. Tell me life isn't maintaining a weird cosmic balance.

16Feb

Yesterday, a cataclysmic event! Before I went on the noon dismount, the radio mentioned me, saying that higher wanted me for an interview. Further probing revealed that I am being considered for a job in Finance! Me? Lucked out and become a REMF? Suddenly Vietnam is not as hostile. My problems all erased. No longer will 1-2 dictate my actions. Out of the field and into the kitchen the slave moves!

Clearly this sudden turn in fortunes will have a profound effect on my war dairy. After almost 8 months in the field, I can hardly think, lucked out for the second time in my life, the first was when I was sent to the Cav instead of to the leg unit I was born and bred for. No more sleeping in holes, going on LP's or AP's! No more worrying about land mines, no more ambushes to look for. All tension and all danger is now reduced to intangibles. I pulled guard last night, I think it is the last time I put out claymores, concertina, trip flares, and dug a foxhole! Ah yes, 1-2 is "up" today.

17Feb

A trip today on the way back from Cua Viet to Quang Tri. I rode a $\frac{3}{4}$ ton truck with Karl from the 2nd platoon driving. I sat in the back with my meager possessions, all of which fit in a M60 ammo can. I had a broken mirror, a double edge razor, a book, "Waiting for Godot," and a folding pipe from Hong Kong. We stopped in Dong Ha and purchased some fine Dong Ha 100's to smoke on the way back ~ they look like commercially rolled cigarettes. I don't know how Karl could drive. I didn't care. My brains were numb as I:

1. I saw the deputy commander of Red Devil in his air-conditioned office. I started to salute but he waved me off.
2. Saw a major somebody, he's the commander of Finance, but has an airborne ranger patch on his uniform. Very friendly guy.
3. Saw a Mr. Reynolds, a not so friendly warrant officer.
4. Even tho' I was high I functioned, because I really really wanted out of the field.
5. Got the job, at least until March 25, I'm out of the field!

But the field is where my buddies are, how about SS, Milard, Giz, Park, Al and everyone else? Ah well. Met Deon, Vouk, PR, Jim D, and Corso to party up the night. [This was the end of my "war diary" of 17 days in February, 1970 ~Pineapple]

19Feb

Been having our trip flares tied off by Charlie. Bout 9:30 trip flares went off on 3 sides at the same time. (I was buttoned up in my mortar track (hey, c'mon, it was raining - gotta keep the ammo dry ya'know) when our perimeter exploded w/ return fire. Banged my head then got it opened up and still remember how incredibly impressive all that firepower was going off all at once. Damn you guys were good!!!) I popped illum and HE until we all decided no return fire was going to come. Chuck was just doing a serious perimeter probe and he learned quickly our shit was much to fast and much to powerful to mess with. Think they went home to change diapers....

(R. Klinsky)

Feb 19 Cua Viet, going back to Quang Tri on the 22nd. Tankers to get new Sheridans . Lost two APCs to mines. Took speed boat ride on Cua Viet River (Taylor)

22Feb

I just returned from R&R to Hong Kong. I have been putting off for a long time facing something that I had to think about first. About 3 or 4 weeks ago I took out a four LP. We had one M60, three M16s and claymores. We were out about a half click or so in a grave yard. Around 01:00 while I was on guard, I saw movement (6 or 7 VC) about two hundred meters to my front. I woke up Coronato and we saw 6 or 7 more go by. I told everyone not to make a sound, I was afraid the VC might hear my knees knocking. The way I have come to look at this is being the safest way I could deal with the issue. One group was to my flank and out of sight while the in front out numbered us, through we would have surprise on our side. We had one other ambush that tried to shot it out with VC in a graveyard and they came out on the short end of the stick. I have thought about this for a long time and like in most of my cases your instincts take over for better or worse. I STILL THINK ABOUT THIS OVER THE YEARS, BUT ALWAYS I COME TO QUESTION, "HOW MANY MEN WHEN OUT AND HOW MANY CAME BACK UNHURT. The Kid, Maggot and myself were talking about traveling to Sidney. (Coop)

March 1970

1Mar

We made the switch [to Sheridan tanks] on or about March 1, 1970. John 26

The following was contributed by 3rd platooner Robert Klinsky, from his war dairy:

2Mar

1st platoon spotted 10 gooks across the river today. Made a sweep but never saw them again - natch.

5Mar

Andy Shuller had a blasting cap go off in his face (oops). Drew blood and blurred his vision but will be OK. Medivac'd by boat.

6Mar

A gook sampan boat hit a river mine. 4 killed plus 1 with broken back & neck. We pulled a sweep and stayed out an extra night.

7Mar

Screw up in 4 deuce defcons from Cua Viet. Landed an HE 50 mikes from our perimeter. Like we need this shit! 8th, back to Cua Viet.

10Mar

2nd platoons across river. CO told them to go straight to a woodline despite their protests they'd pass thru a minefield where they'd hit a mine last month. Made them go anyway and they hit another mine - 3 medivac'd - broken arm the worst. They also took two incoming rounds that night. &*#%&* CO!!

14Mar

LT and 4 tracks crossed Jones Creek at low tide. One track had a breakdown on the wrong side of the creek and they tried towing it back - across the creek - now at high tide. (Not!) Got stuck in the middle of the creek with the track full of water and the top 2" showing out of the water. We left it overnight.

Lopez passed out sitting on his track. Stomach cramps and seizures. Medivac'd. Medivac was going to start treatment for "heatstroke" - Doc Lagnese told them he was just crashing from speed.

15Mar

Went back at low tide and towed LT's track out of Jones Creek and drained it.

March 15 put in for R&R, swimming in ocean daily (Taylor)

16th, back in to Cua Viet.

March 19 cold, rainy, got small dog on track (Taylor)

24Mar

2 AM defcons were a nightmare for our mortar track (49er). 2nd rnd was a dud 300 mikes out, 3rd & 4th hot and on target, 5th hot but 150m short, 6th 25m from the tube - INSIDE OUR PERIMETER!!! Thank God it either didn't have time to arm or it was another dud!! Next AM I read the lot number then blew it in place and fired the rest w/ that lot number into the ocean. Didn't need THAT experience either!

April 1970

April 3 took first chopper ride. Operating on the beach, cold rainy (Taylor)

April 8, 1970

"26 took an RPG through the road wheels and hit a guy in a fox hole. DiSanto was TC, I was gunner, Jerry Beverage was loader, Chet Misa was the driver, and Tom The Gook was a passenger. Tom was medivaced with a bullet in the leg."

(J. Sharpe)

John Sharpe wrote that an RPG hit A26. The night was April 8, 1970. We had just set up our NDP north of Cua Viet. The area was flat and sandy. We put up our RPG screens and a bunch of claymores in front of each track. Guys also went out and put up trip flares 50 to 100 meters outside the perimeter. It was a moonless very dark night, and as night fell, our Lt, who I believe was Lt. Perrino, began calling in defcons on one side of the perimeter. He brought them in very close. I was in the middle of the perimeter manning the mortar track. It was hot and very muggy so about 5 of us were talking behind my track, ducking the shrapnel from the artillery. After the Lt was done on one side of the perimeter, he had the artillery dropped in on the opposite side. Shrapnel flew over our heads as we took cover behind track 29. Right after a round hit extremely close, one of the trip flares went off. One of the guys peeked around the PC and shouted, "Look at all those gooks!" I didn't need to look as the five of us scrambled to our positions. I spun the mortar tube around and began firing charge 0 rounds. The whole perimeter opened up at that time. Smithy and Koontz joined me in dropping rounds. The tanks were firing, machine guns blasting and all of a sudden there was this bone-chilling scream. Gibbs, who was in a foxhole next to 26, took the shrapnel from the RPG. His arm was nearly blown off. Tom, the scout, was hit and also one of the other M60 gunners was hit. Sgt. D crawled over to my track and opened the door. I thought that we were goners because I believed that it was the NVA. He wanted me to fire some illumination rounds and I remember that I replied that illumination rounds don't kill. He said OK and crawled away. After awhile a Medivac landed and we loaded the three wounded men. When the pilot took off, he caught our Concertina wire with his skid. Somehow Sgt. Hunter got the pilots attention and we got the wire unhooked. In the morning, we went out on foot patrol and found 7 dead NVA under our wire. They had bamboo sticks holding the wire up. One had an RPG launcher and some of them had satchel charges. We found another NVA further out. We were very lucky that night. That trip flare saved our asses. I believe that a guy named Ferguson set it out. Also, our Lt saved us by calling in those defcons so close.

(Bob Taylor)

I was the gunner on 26 that night and was on guard behind the fifty. We had a headquarters radar track to the right and Gibbs was in a foxhole to the left. That doesn't say much for the radar. Most of the gooks were in front and to the right of me. I opened up with the fifty, but the rounds coming in were from the wire and not from the large amount of gooks farther out. They just took off. I think the sappers in the wire were going to open it up for the others farther out.

Before I could hardly fire, Sgt D pushed me down in the gunner's seat and I cleared my sector with three canister rounds with Jerry Beverage loading. Sgt D emptied the fifty and went to check the perimeter while Tom the Gook and Chet Meesa loaded. Tom got shot in the leg. Gibbs scream was the most bone chilling sound I've ever heard in my life. That RPG burnt through the road wheels on the right side of 26 and out the left. To add to the confusion in the tank, our coax jammed a round in the chamber. Beverage unwrapped a new barrel, then bare handed the jammed barrel to the floor. It ignited the wrapping from the new barrel. I went back to the fifty while Jerry stomped the fire out. In retrospect that part was a little comical.

I don't think we took a round in after a few minutes, but didn't quit firing for a long time. I was soaking wet with sweat, but freezing cold. Go figure. The TC on the headquarters track had a week to go and in the midst of all this he yelled out "I'm too short for this shit!"

(J. Sharpe)

John Sharpe and Bob Taylor write in the Hist. of the Cav that they were north of Cua Viet on April 8 1970 when A26 was hit with an RPG. Was this when the NVA had several hundred pounds of plastic explosive and a balloon type water mine with them. They had come within 25yds of the perimeter and dug fox holes? The guy who hit the trip flare was out several hundred yards with the mine gear and all that gook C4)

(J. Malan)

Jerry, that is the night. Lt Perrino was calling in the defcons when the guy tripped the flare.

(B. Taylor)

The gooks hadn't dug holes and I don't remember water mines, but they had a shit load of plastic explosives. One guy had a snorkel.

(J. Sharpe)

That night NVA Naval sappers hit us. They were coming down to mine the river. The next morning we recovered 240 pounds of ChiCom TNT, pencil delay fuses and baskets with inflatable rubber tubes to float the mines. April 8 1970.

(D. Perrino)

On the evening of 4-8-70 we in the Cav selected a position to set up our perimeter. This position was a few clicks north of Cua Viet. It was a flatpiece of terrain with white sand as far as one could see.

Our perimeter was set up in a 360-degree circle, just like the cowboys did with their covered wagons in the old western movies. Tanks were positioned a 12,5, and 7 o'clock. Next to each tank was a 113 PC and in the middle was our mortar track. For some unknown reason I had the troops dig foxholes in between each track which later

proved to save our asses.

As the sun set in the west troopers visited with each other at their emplacements. Most likely talking about the day they would leave the Nam and return to the world.

Someone called in arty defcons that were landing so close one could hear the shrapnel whizzing over our heads as we ran for cover by our vehicles. I recall Sgt. Hunter making coffee for the troops and removing his boots to air out his feet.

Just as the last defcon was registered outside our perimeter I saw a trip wire go off approximately 100 to 200 meters to our west, and at that time I heard someone yell "god damn look at the fucking gooks."

Every one ran for their foxholes and gun emplacements and at that moment every emplacement opened up with machine gun, rifle, and main gun fire spraying the areas to their immediate front.

As this all took place I heard a blood chilling scream as trooper Gibbs was hit by shrapnel from an RPG that hit the road wheel of A26 to his immediate right.

Now if you can believe this a captain in the rear with the fucking gear, most likely sipping some cold beer kept coming on the radio asking for a confirmed enemy body count. I got on the radio and told this son of a bitch to keep the net clear of traffic we need a medivac for our wounded,(which was Gibbs and little gook Tom).

Sgt. Hunter being the good trooper he was grabbed an M-16 and jumped over the concertina directly to our west where we had seen the trip flare go off to get a body count.

After a few seconds I jumped over the wire to assist Hunter. As he was coming back into the perimeter, he got his sock on his caught in the concertina wire.

As I covered Hunter I saw three fucking gooks off to my immediate right facing our perimeter with what later proved to be AK-47's. At that split second I fired several bursts from my M-16 at the gooks, and could see the shirts on their backs rip as each round found it mark. (Mr. Rebbec this brings back memories of our little encounter).

Someone called in Puff who lit up our outer perimeter with cover fire I remember thinking no one can survive that gunfire. There were so many red tracers falling from the sky it looked like you could walk from the ground to the plane.

After puff finished the medivac came in to my left and hovered just off the ground as the wounded were loaded. As the chopper started to lift off the left skid got caught on the concertina wire preventing it from lifting off. Two or three of us pulled the wire off the skid, and as the chopper lifted off it turned on its searchlight lighting us up like a candle in the darkness.

After a while things for us started to settle down as a light fog started to settle in. I walked from position to position checking on the troops. As the sun rose in the east we could see seven dead NVA lying just outside our perimeter, they were so close it was frightening.

Some time later the Colonel flew out to our location and the Lt. asked me to select a trooper off each track to receive an award. I went to each track as requested and ask the troops to select the trooper they wanted decorated.

We then buried the 8 dead NVA and departed to Cua Viet.

Closing comments : a captain that I won't mention his name told me prior to 4-8-70, "Sergeant, the war is over in Vietnam"

Where did he gather his Intel?

Troopers these are my memories of the Cav.

David Boshell

From Klinsky's war dairy:

8Apr

2nd platoon got in another firefight about 10PM. Body count, 8 NVA. Our worst, 1 messed up arm and a scouts broken leg. Same night, 1st platoon killed one of 2 gooks walking near their perimeter and also the perimeter here at Cua Viet had 2 exchanges with AK47s. We provided illum till 3AM.

12Apr

41 hit 40lb mine. Rodgers got broken left foot, broken right ankle, a hole in his back, and a gash in his left leg requiring 120 stitches. Werner, sitting behind Rodgers had some internal injuries but was OK in a few weeks. TC & gunners OK.

Brothers,

I will be arriving Wednesday evening for the reunion. My cell is . I received a letter - snail mail - today from an old trooper, Gerald Standridge. He's looking for a sworn statement regarding a PC that hit a land mine. He lists several names of people on the track: Richard G Rogers, J. C. Hunt from KY, Gerald Ware from Atlanta, Carter Fuller from FL, If any of you can help him or know of any of these troopers please contact Gerals A. Standridge, GA . See you in Vegas LT Zero

That incident happened in April of 1970, about the time and near the location of your famous night firefight on the north side of the Cua Viet river. I was in 3 rd platoon, but had the great, good pleasure of being on an in-country R&R to Vung Tau when the track hit the mine. Total combat loss, and I know that Rogers was medevac-ed to CONUS, and later had a foot amputated from injuries received in the blast. Carter Fuller is a sometimes member of the Commo Net. According to the last roster that I have, Rogers & Ware are TNF status, there is an address for J.C. Hunt, though I don't know how active he has been in the organization. Doc Lagnese probably treated the victims of that blast. I vaguely remember Standridge's name, but don't really recall anything about him. Perhaps he was medevac-ed too, and didn't spend much time in the platoon. Long time ago, and that is one of the incidents that I recall hearing about, but did not witness. Jim Good

Brothers: I do recall that incident. The track that blew was in column right behind mine (40). I had just radioed our proposed NDP to troop and started to move to a slight rise on otherwise flat terrain. Cpt Smith and the Battalion S3 Air had also just called and said they were airborne in our area and were coming in to our position. Then the mine blew. When I turned to see what in the hell happened, their track was in the air, and landed on its side, and was on fire by the time I got to it. The guys on top were blown off (thank God for the soft sand of Cua Viet). Rodgers was still in the drivers seat. We pulled him out and away from the now burning PC. Rounds were starting to cook off. Andy administered morphine to Rodgers. When Cpt Smith and the S3 Air landed in a LOH, I kind of remember Medevacing the wounded on their LOH. I have Standridge's address and will write a letter to him confirming the incident. See you at FSB Vegas. ETA Thursday mid afternoon. Have a safe trip. Earl (40)

April 11 returned to Quang Tri for R&R (Taylor)

20 Apr

Left Cua Viet for Quang Tri

23 Apr Pedro - (boo coo mine area)

Track 32 Call Sign 42 went over a brush-covered embankment - ass over teakettle - skidded down on their top. Can't believeno injuries

from Good:

I don't remember who was on the track, but apparently the gravity was especially strong in the area where it flipped. If I recall correctly, the sheridan that I was on had some sort of mechanical problem, (didn't they always??), and our crew was in Quang Tri when this incident happened. I remember them bringing the track back to the motor pool, but don't recall how seriously damaged that it was. It seems like no one was killed or seriously injured when it flipped, but somehow it seems that I recall that the driver was trapped in the driver's hatch for a while. Given all the ammo and other stuff that we carried in APCs it must have been a real mess inside when it went over. The story I remember was that John Coble was the TC of the track and he ended up trapped. Sniper Tom, you may be onto something there. I remember Coble had one of his arm's in a cast for a while. I can't remember how he broke it, but it might have been from when this track flipped over.

Jim Good

As I remember that incident, the 40 track was behind Coble as we traversed down and across a slope covered with high grass. When the PC started to roll it was like watching it in slow motion. It rocked back and forth once or twice and then rolled completely over. The roll occurred because the right track went down into a hidden bomb crater. Coble's leg was pinned to the ground by the 50 cal gun shield. I tried to get him unpinched but the damn track was still rocking slightly, keeping his leg pinned. I was concerned that the track may catch fire so I remember saying to him " You're coming out of there right now" . I grabbed him under the arms and pulled until he finally popped out from under the gun shield. We medivac'd him and he returned to the field in a couple of days. Nothing more serious than some bruises!

Earl (40)

25 Apr Pedro

21 hit mine. 1 busted eardrum. CBL (combat loss) track.

26 Apr Pedro

62 hit small mine - no injuries.

April 27 Got back the 24th pulling bunker guard at Quang Tri (Taylor)

28 Apr Pedro

Sheridan and a pickup track (whatever THAT was) hit mines on the way back from a log run. 18 caught fire and driver, Sammons, slightly injured back.

**I think I remember this incident. Wasn't this the one where the Sheridan & the M-548 (pickup track), and another vehicle, either a second Sheridan or an ACAV, were on the way back to Quang Tri from FB Shitty Smitty? The TC of the Sheridan thought of something he wanted to tell the CO, and had just initiated a call on the radio. Since the whole troop was in a perimeter, everyone was on the same frequency, and most of us heard the exchange. "6, this is XXX (I've forgotten his call sign) XXX, this is 6, go ahead." "6, this is XXX

AAAAHHHHHHHHRRRRRGGGGGHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" [high pitched scream] The TC of the other vehicle with them then excitedly keyed his mic and said "6, XXX just hit a big mine and blew up, they are on fire!" Turns out the Sheridan had hit a dud 155mm WP round, and burst it open. Scared the bejeezus out of the TC who had his radio keyed, and he screamed like a woman being raped. The other track could just see the flash and the cloud of smoke that engulfed the Sheridan. Scared the crap out of everyone for a minute, but as I recall, it really didn't do much if any damage, and no one was hurt.

(Jim Good)

30 Apr 1970

Nixon announced that US troops have attacked Communist sanctuaries in Cambodia, following the overthrow of Prince Sihanouk by US-aided Lon Nol.

May 1970

May Assigned to 20 as gunner, no more mortar track. General and Colonel stated that the 4/12 was the best outfit in the 5th Div. (Taylor)

4 May 1970

The National Guard kills 4 students at Kent State.

From Klinsky's War Dairy:

6 May Pedro:

18 hit another small mine - it's 3rd. No one hurt.

7 May Pedro:

66 hit a small mine.

14May Pedro:

Watched a LRP team from a couple klicks away getting fired on by some gooks last night. Cobra came and hosed the area around them. We went in to extract them this AM. Pete (my driver) spotted 8-14 uniformed NVA. We were set up in a horseshoe formation so the direct fire who could see them couldn't fire w/o hitting our own so 6 had us fire them up from 700m out. A tanker watching thru a scope saw our 1st willy pete marker land in the middle of 3 who'd split off from the rest. We dropped 75 and fired for effect working the creek bed over pretty good. A later sweep found a spider hole in the creek bank where they'd holed up. Never saw them (or bodies) again but recovered 3 of their rucks, medals and certificates, bloody pants and an NVA radio - on our push!!

15 May:

27 hit small mine.

May 18 back out in field (Taylor)

19May:

I'm (Skee) now officially TC of 49er.

May 25 Blocking force, platoon only (Taylor)

27May Happy Birthday to me.

AM; Sgt Smith and Lee had a short fight. 05 later, Coble picked a fight w/ Lee.

2:30 PM, a jet caught fire and crashed within 500m of Quang Tri rear gate. Monster smoke ring. The pilots must have bailed w/ 02 'cause we'd given up watching for them in the sky when someone finally saw the speck of their chutes.

4:30 PM Sgt Mac came out drunk cussin' and threatnin' to kill Georgia, Minchey and a few others for trying to get Coble and Smitty busted. 3rd herd's getting' flaky!!! WE NEED A STANDDOWN!!!

May 31 track broke down, in Quang Tri (Taylor)

Summer 1970

It was the summer of 1970, I don't recall the month. We were southwest of Quang Tri, in the "Backyard" area between the combat base and the river. I think LT Schorp was on leave, and don't remember who was calling in the DEFCONs. We may have had a FO with us, but it was probably the platoon sergeant. The area was fairly flat and open, not a lot of brush or trees to stop shrapnel. I don't recall the round being all that close when it went off. Seems like it was just a fluke that one, a lone, big hunk of shrapnel flew a lot farther than usual. The arty guys may have goofed up somehow - extra charge bag, wrong azimuth or deflection, or the guy calling it in may have been more aggressive than he intended, but it really didn't seem especially close. At any rate, we were spending a typical night in the field. All the claymores, tripflares, RPG screens, etc. had been put out. Most of the guys were just loafing, or visiting with friends around other tracks, and not really paying a lot of attention to the DEFCONs. Today, if there were 155mm artillery rounds going off just over a half mile from your campsite, you would be going nuts. In Viet Nam it was just another evening. As I recall Morris Smith telling the story, he was thinking about his upcoming R&R in Hawaii where he was going to meet his wife for a week away from the war. He said that he was trying to determine how many days he had left until leaving on R&R and he raised his left arm to count on his fingers when "Whap!" the hunk of shrapnel hit his left side, and he let out a moan that everyone heard. If he would have had his arm down by his side, he might have lost it. Later, someone found the piece of shrapnell on the floor of his turret. Seems like it was about 6 or 8 inches long, and 2 inches in diameter. It split his side

open from just under his armpit to just above his hip, but fortunately didn't cut very deep. Just split the skin, and the shrapnel didn't penetrate him. I can't remember if he had on a flack jacket or not, but I tend to think he didn't. We quickly shut down the artillery, and called a dustoff. Doc Lagnese may recall some of the details, as I assume he put Smith on the medivac. Smith didn't even stay in the hospital at Quang Tri very long. I remember a few days after the incident we were in the rear, and he was resting at "B Med," Company B, 5th Medical Bn, which was the 5th Mech's organic medical unit, and which served more or less as an outpatient clinic and minor convalescent center. I think Smith only stayed there a very few days before returning to the unit. He probably stayed in the rear on light duty until going on R&R, but eventually he returned to the field with the 3rd Platoon. Just by the grace of God his wounds were relatively minor.

Jim Good

June 1970

6 Jun 1970

Robert F. Kennedy assassinated.

From Klinsky's war dairy:

9Jun

12Pm Quang Tri got hit by 19 rockets. Hit the 1/77 hootches killing 2 and wounding 22 engineers - direct hit on their hootches. Hit empty service club and empty movie area. Almost hit battalion TOC. 2 hit not far from our hootches - but we were back in the bush.

12Jun

I (Skee) got walked on my bare back by a 6" centipede. Drew blood. Doc lanced it w/ a razor blade. Tight & painful for a day or 2 but no damage.

19Jun

Sgt. Mac hit a mine with 46 (YES, he was driving - for kicks) Blew a nice hole but no damage or injuries. (believe this is the day Sgt. Otts joined us.)

23Jun

Sgt. Otts and Werner medivac'd for M-79 shrapnel wounds. (If I remember correctly the round one of them fired hit a limb right over their heads) Werner right back but Otts needed 4 stitches in his neck.

25Jun

27 hit mine on Red Ball. 79 mini-primer, mortar round primer and 105 for a kicker - 105 didn't detonate. No damage, no injuries.

26Jun

I'm now an official Acting Jack (field 5) 24 hit mine - kicker didn't detonate (same FNG must've set them both up).

I/77 scout track hit by command detonated 155 mine in our AO. Chuck blew it directly under the driver. Blew him, the lats, seat, dashboard - right up and out the hatch. Legs gone. KIA

27 June 1970

Tank A-38 hit mine: the incident took place near the Quang Tri River, about 2 miles south of Quang Tri City. The driver (SP4 Lea) and I (Jim Good) were both slightly injured, and medivaced to Quang Tri. Other guys from the 3rd Platoon saw a young kid, about 14 years of age run from the area. It appears that he set off the command detonated mine as we drove past. Lea, Jerry Darnell, John Davis and I all got the Purple Heart for injuries resulting from that mine..

(Jim Good)

From Klinsky's war dairy:

28Jun

47 hit mine. 3- 155 rounds. CBL tank but bruised knee and sore butts the worst injuries.

29Jun

20 hit mine. Driver took 4 stitches in chin. CBL track. Had belly plate which helped a bunch.

July 1970

From R. Klinsky's war dairy:

1Jul (Skee made 2 digit midget)

3rd herd moved to Hai Lang w/ 1st platoon joining us later. 3 companies of NVA supposed to be in the area. (what the heck were we...bait???)

3Jul

Tingo shot his big toe almost off w/ a 60. Using the Cav and 2 platoons of 1/77 as a blocking force, the ARVN's waxed 145 NVA.

4Jul

Sgt Debos went out to pick up a gangbang of 4 claymores. Gooks stole 3 and booby trapped the 4th. It went off when he was about 20 ft from it. Messed up his side, legs and chest pretty bad.

9Jul

Moved toward Khe San way west in the Mountains not far from Laos with 3/5 Cav, 1/61, 1/77, 4/12, 175's, 155's, aid station, dozers, & commo (most of Quang Tri, I think), to set up a new firebase. Mine roller 48 tank hit major mine, knocked it off the road and CBL'd it. 4/12 command track hit mine, CBL. Broken wrist and bruises worst injuries.

10Jul

24 hit mine while bookin'. Went down embankment and flipped over. 1, and possibly 3 broken legs (I assume not all on the same guy). New firebase is shaping up.

15Jul

Convoy from Vandergrift to Cam Lo got ambushed. RPG's and auto fire. 1 medivac'd - not bad. On our way back from Cam Lo, 1/61 put out a dismount sweep to check the ambush area. Got fragged by a gook. 1 KIA, 1 WIA. Gook got dead too.

18Jul

Dude from 1/61 built his fire over an old M16 mag which exploded and put shrapnel in his face. Medivac'd.

21Jul

1/61 ambushed 1/77's scouts! No one hurt. Dumb shits!!!

25Jul Pedro

My claymore ambush blew at 6AM. Blew 1 gook into a tree. Later found 2 rucks. 9PM, 1/77 security platoon killed a gook w/ claymore ambush

August 1970

From Klinsky's war dairy:

12Aug 7:30 AM

20 rockets were fired 1800m in front of us aimed at Sharon. Our tanks and mortars fired up the launch site, as did 105's from Ann. Tried to sweep the area but was tri-can - nothing.

14Aug

Brigade security platoon ambushed in our AO. 2KIA, 2 WIA

17Aug PM

27 sank completely in Quang Tri River. CBL.

19Aug

I'm going in for E-5 board. 47 in front of us hit mine. CBL. Roland minor back injuries and shock, Lea paralyzed 2 fingers - also his 3rd mine! Sent stateside.

20Aug

passed 5 board

28 hit mine. CBL. Minor injuries.

21Aug

18 hit mine. CBL.

27Aug

11 hit mine. CBL. Minor injuries.

29Aug

22 hit mine. CBL. Minor injuries.

September 1970

09Sep

Gook fired 2 bursts of AK47 into the perimeter from about 400m out. No injuries, never found him.

29Sep

Sgt. Otts caught shrapnel from 81mm 200m out. Da Nang for recoup.

30Sep

"66 hit mine. 8" round. 6 medivac'd. Beining (driving), broken arm, possibly broken leg, messed up pretty bad - stateside bound. F.O messed up neck &/or back, old man cut head (out cold). FNG - hurt knee, engineer & LT, internal injuries." That was 5 days a'fore I ETS'd!!! That was the last entry (besides "I'm outa here!") in my diary.

Skee

October 1970 23 Oct

Michael Le Boeuf accidentally killed by a .50 caliber machinegun at home base in Quang Tri

November 1970

23 Nov 1970

A raid into North Vietnam to free American POWs comes up empty-handed.

Thanksgiving 1970:

I left Quang Tri on Thanksgiving Day 1970 to come home. We were to go to Can Ranh Bay. Like most guys, we got orders to go home, but not given a way to get there. Jerry Beverage and I bummed a ride on a C 130 to Da Nang, hoping to find another flight to Cam Ranh from there, but no flights were leaving in the foreseeable future. The Air Force ran the club at Da Nang and wouldn't let us in, because it was their Thanksgiving celebration. (I always thought they were a bunch of pansy as &*%\$*&%\$). Somehow, we found our way to a French restaurant just outside the base. We celebrated with another guy over some wine. We truly had something to be thankful for, we were on our way home. When we returned to the airport, it was deserted and dark, but we found a cargo flight going to Cam Ranh Bay. There were no seats, just cargo, us, and four or five Vietnamese that looked like farmers and probably had no business in the plane. We flew through the worst storm I've ever flown through. The plane even leaked. I think we landed about 2:00 a.m.

John Sharpe

December 1970

31 Dec 1970

Troop strength is 280,000.