

1971

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 Woodrow W. Waldrop, Oct 70-Apr 71

CPT Edward E. Helton, Apr-Oct 71

January 1971

The following information was provided by Short, Keith . (2000) C COMPANY, 1 st BATTALION, 11 th INFANTRY. Colorado : Roshtiek: from his research manual.

Two operations of the 5th Mech out of the AA's; with information in regards to A Troop 4/12 Cav activities.

1/C/1-11, 1/5 Infantry Division (Mech)--Quang Tri Province
3/A/2-506th Infantry (Ambl), 3/101st Airborne Division (Ambl)--Thua Thien Province

Lam Son 719 Significant Events entries in the Combat After Action Report of the 1/5 Mech.

According to the AA, A/4-12 Cav had 25 WIA'S and no KIA'S during this operation.

28 JAN 71

1/A/4-12, 282217H, YD107694 (4km SW S-4).

The unit reported that a trip flare was detonated approximately 75 meters north of the NDP. They also received 3-4x rounds of AK-47 fire from the north. Organic weapons fire was placed on the area, and pink light and radar were employed, but with negative sightings. The area was swept at first light with negative results.

29 JAN 71

2/A/4-12, 291200H, YD157687 (4km ESE A-4).

An M551 Sheridan detonated a PM60 mine buried near a tank trail. There was 1x US WIA; the vehicle sustained moderate damage. The unit then received approximately 10x rounds of AK-47 fire from 100 meters west of their location. The area was engaged with organic weapons fire and was swept with negative results. There were negative further friendly casualties. The resulting crater was 5'x3'x7'.

2/A/4-12, 291430H, YD163700 (5km east A-4)

An M551 Sheridan detonated a PM60 mine buried in a tank trail. There was 1x US WIA; the vehicle sustained moderate damage. The crater was 7'x7'x5.

12 FEB 71

A/4-12, 121145, YD158698 (3km E A-4).

A M551 hit a PM60 pressure activated mine which was buried in an open field

resulting in a crater which was 4' by 4'. There were negative friendly casualties, the vehicle was a combat loss.

3 APR 71

1-77, 032310H, XD820418 (2km N Khe Sanh).

Team received AK-47 fire and grenades from an estimated 6x NVA. Small arms fire and grenades were returned. A/4-12 reinforced team. Results: 1x US KIA, 1x US WIA, 2x NVA KIA. Sniper team at 040800H, made a sweep of area where there was contact resulting in the following items captured: 2x RPG rounds, 1x RPG cleaning kit, 1x estimated one pound type of explosive, 1x homemade bangalore torpedo, 1x hunting knife with scabbard, 1x first-aid packet, 1x NVA pistol belt with fish cakes. There were heavy blood trails and drag marks throughout the area.

EXCERPTS FROM MONTANA MUSTANG 1-5 COAAR

08 April 71 – 11 July 71

Montana Mustang Significant Events entries in the Combat After Action Report of the 1/5 Mech.

According to the AA, A/4-12 Cav had 19 WIA's and 2 KIA's during this operation. They were attached to Task Force 1-77 Armor with the 1-77 Armor (-).

20 APR 1971

201025H, YD238460. 2/A/4-12. Track detonated an unknown type boobytrap--negative casualties or damage. Area was checked with negative results. No recent area activity.

201230H, YD331445. 3/A/4-12. M551 detonated a 20 pound plastic pressure activated mine--negative casualties. No recent area activity. 2 vehicles had passed over mine previously.

1 MAY 1971

011340H, YD290458. 2/A/4-12. M113 hit Arty shell having claymore type clacker detonator--negative casualties. One roadwheel was blown off.

5 May 1971

051000H, YD249484. 2/A/4-12. M551 hit aluminum type rocket mine blowing off 2 roadwheels--1 US WIA.

051145H, YD258486. 2/A/4-12 discovered mine made up of 1 RPG and 1 82mm round. Mine was blown in place.

18 MAY 1971

182040H, YD112719. 2/A/4-12 spotted 3 personnel 50 meters from their position while on an 8-man ambush and engaged with M16 and M79 fire, the enemy were engaged with M16 and M79 fire to the South. 4.2" blocking fire was used to the West.

19 MAY 1971

192115H, YD131684. CP/A/4-12 took 3 unknown rounds of incoming--1 US WIA.

No counterbattery fire.

23 MAY 1971

230900H, YD100642. A/4-12 took 4x 82mm rounds--negative casualties or damage. Counterbattery and 81mm fire employed. Scts/1-61 swept area with negative results.

30 MAY

301440H, YD263485. A/4-12. M113 set off a TM-41 mine with 4.2" round on top of it blowing off 2 roadwheels and damaging hull around sprocket. 4 US WIA.

31 MAY

031000H, YD355453. A/4-12. Individual set off anti-personnel mine--1 US WIA. No recent area activity. Area swept with negative results.

4 JUN

040835H, YD304409. With mine detector, 1/A/4-12 detected boobytrapped 155mm round which was blown in place.

041255H, YD361477. 2/A/4-12. Individual set off pressure activated mine (anti-personnel)--3 US WIA. No recent activity.

7 JUN 1971

070908H, YD232435. 3/A/4-12. M551 set off suspected 155mm/4.2" round blowing off 1 roadwheel arm and 2 pads--negative casualties. Area swept with negative results. No recent area activity.

8 JUN 1971

081400H, YD222456, 2/A/4-12. M113 set off anti-personnel mine wounding individual on next track--no vehicle damage.

081742H, YD262487. A/4-12. M551 hit unknown type mine which tipped vehicle on its side with one man trapped inside--2 US WIA.

2 JUL 1971

021850H, YD137632. A/4-12 took AK-47 and 2 RPGs from unknown size enemy force and returned organic weapons fire. Negative casualties or damage. Area swept with negative results.

7 July 1971

071200H, YD095683. A/4-12 found 1 mortar site which they destroyed.

Trooper Memories of 1971

February 1971

March 1971

Found a letter "Tex" Keith L. Anderson, 3rd platoon, wrote me in March of 71 after I was home and he had about 70 or so days left. Might be a bit for the journal. I believe I say he'd been located, if not, let me know cause I've got a line on him thru Terry.

Keith wrote;

"I don't guess you've heard about them running us off the Rock Pile. Just before we went to Khe Sahn, they had us sitting on a hill just north of the Rock Pile. We stayed there 19 days. When we went up there we had 5 P.C.'s, 2 Sheridans, old 39er, and 50 to 60 men. When we left, we had 3 P.C.'s, 39er, and 23 men. They hit us with over 300 rounds of 82mm, 122 rockets and RPG's all within 3 days time. Nobody got killed, but Boo Coo dustoffs."
Skee

Two majors shot at in the I/77 - that is true to my knowledge. I had dealings with both. One was seriously wounded, one was killed, and the man killed was a fine fellow, says I. A good man, his heart was with the troops in the field. The other was strictly a rear echelon guy, which was his lot in life, I didn't like his attitude, but he thought he was doing his job. They apparently went to investigate "loud noise" in an enlisted bunker after dark in base camp, the guys were doped up according to the Stars & Stripes Article at the time, the officers got shot by the people in there. One major crawled back to an HQ bunker. The guys responsible were rear echelon MF, people wholly isolated from field activity, near as I could tell from the article, which was published after I was back in the States. I remember it well, was really disturbed that a good guy had been killed by REMFs.

There weren't a lot of people above CPT rank I had much respect for over there. Truth be told, rank was irrelevant as to whom I respected. Willing to bet that is true for many of you. But the guys I knew who got killed or fucked up never "deserved" it near as I could tell. Shit just happened, as later popular philosophy had it. Or as we said, "Don't mean nuthin."

The other stuff - well, Lehtinen sounds like he was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Doesn't matter who you are to get hit like that. Could have been me. Could have been any of us. Let's get him on the net.

L Tee F

Hey Guys, Things really heated up after we went into Laos and Khe San. I was lucky to spend one night in Khe San, The main gun blew a seal so I had to return to base for repairs. But I wasn't so lucky at the Rockpile. We were occupying a hill that was a perfect location for an artillery observer and as you can guess the NVA wanted it. We got bombarded with mortars (over two hundred we figure with a 24 hour span), RPGs knocked out one tank, showed me how Superman flies and shared it's shrapnel with myself, Lt. Bergstrom, and I think about 4 others in our platoon. It was the most frightening time in my life and my back has never been the same. I remember the night before we thought we were goners. I was so scared my M-60 turned cherry red before I could release my fingers from the trigger; I must've fired 2,000 rounds. We had them linked inside a mini gun container 5K +.

And of course that was around the same time Nixon escalated the B52 strikes and we were the recipients of the misfires. They make a nasty land mind. We lost some good men from them. I'd like to go on but I've got to ditty-mow. Headed to N.C. to visit my kids.

Have a nice weekend.

trap

April 1971

Our combat base was Quang Tri for the duration. The Troop worked out of many AO's, Charlie Alpha 4, Vandegrift, and we were at Khe Shan when everybody pulled out, now that was an experience! (Walter "SKI" Slawinski HQ 70-71)

May 1971

Hey Troopers,

I think it was sometime in May of 71 when the 1/5th was replaced by the 101st Air Cav and of course we were reassigned to them. I remember the changes they made weren't good. They wanted accountability for every bullet fired and as a result morale suffered. We felt very unsafe and became rebellious at that point. To add insult to injury the US cut our budget so allocations for promotions trickled in .I was in country 8 months before getting my Sp4. I couldn't leave there fast enough. It hurt seeing a great unit falling apart. Our First Sgt. didn't help morale much neither, he pissed off alot of men back then. He had a preference for Article 15s.

When I returned to the world and seeing all the protesting towards us, I flew back to the east coast in civilian clothing. I didn't care being called baby-killers or warmongers; I just wanted to go home. I glad to be found and the painful experience is behind me. I hope that most of our brothers have healed. It made me a stronger person and no matter how bad things can get, if you can survive Nam you can survive anything.

See ya

Trap

June 1971

June 8

I was third track behind Farmer's tank went it hit a mine. Earl Warren and myself tried to crawl up to the tank and pull Farmer body away from the burning tank. We got about ten feet away and the ammo started going up and the flames got too hot. Farmer lay next to the tank and his body was badly burned. I remember seeing the grate off the back of the tank flying over my track when it hit the mine. There was an E-6 black guy that was TC and he was blown about 20' from the tank when it hit the mine. He had a huge piece of shrapnel protruding from his left foot. The driver got out OK but don't remember who he was either. I just remember how bad me and Warren felt that we got so close and yet failed.

Buddy Puryear 1st Plt. '70-71

Tommy Farmer's death -- it happened in the "Backyard" (area around Quang Tri Fire Base).
Buddy Puryear

July 1971

August 1971

For a while we worked out of Camp Eagle w/101. While we were out in the bush with the 101, a 30 day mission, the maintenance track was with the 2 nd Plt and we had half of the tracks down, so we were stuck on this hill for at least a week, even the LTR was down, during the day the rest of the Plt would go out looking for Charlie while we sat on this hill pulling guard on all the dead tracks, one day a Huey was flying by when we heard a machine gun and watched the Huey take evasive action, we called it in and the next thing we know there were Cobras firing up a hill about a click from us then the Hueys came in and dropped off some grunts and they took off and a few hours later they came back and picked them up. It sure put us on guard being that close to us. After they left the cobras had fun with us, they flew by then came back and dived on us, everybody was eating dirt. They came back a second time and flew just above our heads and we could see the pilot real good and he gave us the peace sign, laughing all the time! We didn't think it was funny at all! (Walter "SKI" Slawinski HQ 70-71)

September 1971

October 1971

The trip to turn in the equipment was very interesting to say the least. After we loaded all the tracks on a LST we headed towards DaNang, 100 miles south, and everybody (us landlubbers) got seasick, I didn't cause I went down below deck and found a rack and went to sleep, as we arrive there was a typhoon going on, the people put us up in condemned barracks that we didn't stay in to long cause we thought they would come down on us. (Walter "SKI" Slawinski HQ 70-71)

November 1971

December 1971

Leaving for Viet Nam

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

By the time you get this mail it will be tomorrow 15Aug 02. Marks the day 33 long hot summers ago that I left home for the War.

Can never forget that day. It was a beautiful warm day, went to the airport for a 5pm flight to Ft. Lewis, remember that the last song I heard on my car radio on the way to the airport was "Kemosabey" by a group called The Electric Indian. It was my girlfriend's birthday.

Vivid in my memory is my mother crying and waving goodbye, reminding me to write to her, as if I needed reminding, also reminding me to say my prayers.

Irony of Ironies, that friday that I left was the opening day of the Biggest anti war concert in the History of Mankind, WOODSTOCK. While the last of the Flower Generation was going to the farm for that historic love in, I was going off to fight a war, not very popular at that. I thought of going AWOL in order to make the concert and chickened out at the end.

The Music from Woodstock is still popular today even 33 years later, "I wanna take you Higher" still gets to me and gets my blood pumping, Santana's "Soul Sacrifice" is still a masterpiece and of Course Cosby Still Nash and Young's "Judy blue eyes" is still an anthem around these parts. Who can forget Country Joe and the Fish singing "....Come on mothers, now's the time to send your son off to Viet Nam, be the first one on your block to bring your son home in a box..."

I did not think I would make it back home in one piece, so many of the guys in the block were messed up over there, Benjie was shot a couple of times at Khe San, Roger lost an arm to mortar round, Mike did not make it back at all.

All these years, having been 11B10, I have been very thankful of having been assigned to the 4/12 Cav. The opportunity to serve with some of the finest guys I have ever met I will always treasure.

The Day I left is a day I always remember in a special way, I came home a year later to continue with the plan..So many young guys our age did not, they also had that farewell and friends and parents waiting for them back home. We should never let the World forget that there once was a war in a little country far away that lasted longer than the Trojan War. WE should talk about it to the younger generation because they are already begining to forget.

Lets continue this wonderful friendship we have rekindled again over the net, lets all be at the Reunion and hug, and laugh, and drink, and tell lies, and war stories....."WE OWE IT TO OURSELVES"

Love you all,
See ya in a couple of months,
Wally

from Jersey

WALLY

Your story of the day you left was very touching. I also can remember the day I left. It was June 1st 1969 at 4:30 AM. My Father was still on the couch recovering from a hangover and as I was leaving his last words to me were you'll be back. Well I guess he was right here I am. I do believe that the day I got in country I didn't think I would be returning, they told me I was going to be with the 5TH Inf and when I looked at the map they had set up I seen that it was all the way as far as you could go north and that's when I realized I was in VIETNAM. I really feel in my heart I couldn't have been with a better bunch of guys if I had hand picked them myself. I'd like to thank each and every one of you for your support and friendship while we were together. I hope that the brotherhood we had over there always remains with all of us forever.

AS WE SAY MAY THE CAV LIVE FOREVER

JERSEY

from Jim Good

Going to Viet Nam? Seemed like a great adventure to me. I enlisted, and really would have been disappointed if I had gotten orders to go anywhere but Viet Nam. I wasn't especially patriotic, or gung ho, it just seemed to me like the thing that young guys ought to do. More or less a part of growing up. Our grandparent's generation fought in WW I, our parents in WW II, some of my schoolteachers and other middle-aged men in the community had been in the Korean War, and now it was my generation's turn. I suppose that in a way I thought I might be helping the South Vietnamese people maintain their freedom and way of life. In hindsight that doesn't seem to have been a realistic goal. You have to let some people fight their own wars, and decide their own fate.

At any rate, I learned of my orders to Viet Nam one afternoon in AIT. I think we were at a commo class. I seem to remember that we were on a break on the south side of that WW II vintage wooden barracks building that they used for commo classes at Fort Knox. One of the platoon sergeants called off a list of names and told us to gather around. He informed us that we had just come down on orders for Viet Nam. He was rather solemn and straight faced. I think that he was more upset to tell us that we were going, than we were to learn that we were being assigned to a combat zone. Hey, it was the fall of 1969, where did we think we were going? Disneyland? While we knew that some guys from most AIT classes got orders for Germany, Korea, or CONUS bases, the vast majority went to Viet Nam, so most of us would have been surprised to go anywhere else. We probably had two or three weeks left in AIT after learning of our assignment, and several of us also learned that we were to attend Sheridan tank school after AIT. Sheridan school was another 3 or 4 weeks I think, and more or less a "gentleman's course" after BCT & AIT. We still had the standard Army discipline to adhere to, but much less of the B. S. that they put us through in boot camp. Following the Sheridan school, we also had a week of "RVN Training" or specific preparation for duty in the Republic of Viet Nam. By the time we got to RVN training it was November at Fort Knox, and I recall that one day while practicing response to ambushes it started snowing. Not much accumulation, but enough to make the ground white. The absurdity of the moment caught us all. We were jumping off 2 _ ton trucks into the snow to practice avoiding a V. C. ambush. Of course, a few months later while sitting radio watch on a tank in the flat, white sand north of Cua Viet with the cold, damp air blowing in off the Gulf of Tonkin, it seemed like we really were in snow in Viet Nam.

One of my clearest memories of departing for Viet Nam was getting on the airplane in Kansas City to fly to California where I processed in through the Oakland Army Depot. I'd been on leave at home, and my mother and stepfather took me to the airport. That was back when airports were not highly secured fortresses, and friends and relatives could accompany you basically to the door of the airplane. At that time, Kansas City did not have the passageways that extend out from the terminal building to the door of the airplane. Rather you had to walk out on the ramp, and then go up a set of portable stairs to the airplane. My parents walked to the foot of the stairs and we said our good-bye's, and then I got on the plane. As it happened, my seat was on the left side of the airplane, and I had a window seat. As I looked out the window, my parents were still standing there waiting for a final glimpse of me, and my mother was crying. I was genuinely surprised to see her cry. My reaction was, "what's she crying for, I'm coming home." In hindsight I now know that it was only due to luck that I returned in one piece, rather than in a body bag, but at age 20 I suppose that I felt bulletproof.

I arrived in California the day before I had to report in to Oakland. I really can't remember if I had any specific plans for going a day early. Maybe I wanted to do some sight seeing. It could have been that we had to report in by a certain time of the day, and there may not have been any flights on the due date that would have gotten me there in time. When I got to San Francisco, I learned that there was to be a big concert at Altamonte Speedway that weekend. I think this was the Rolling Stones concert where they had Hell's Angels acting as security guards, and one of the attendees was killed by a security guard. I thought briefly about going to the concert and just reporting for duty a couple of days late, but decided that probably would cause a lot more trouble that it would have been worth.

The next day I reported in to the Oakland Army Base. I remember spending hours waiting in lines to have my personnel and finance records audited, to get my jungle fatigues issued, and to do whatever other nonsense the Army figured that was needed prior to shipping out. I spent one night there in a fairly nice, but large and crowded barracks area. The next day was more hurry up and wait until enough of us to fill a chartered DC-8 were collected together and moved to a temporary holding area. There were cots in the holding area, but not much else for comfort or entertainment. While sitting there, several busses brought in a group of guys who had just arrived from Viet Nam after completing their tour. They were going through the reverse process of getting Class A uniforms, and doing whatever else was necessary before being sent home on leave, or being discharged. The group of veterans looked thin, dirty, and haggard. They tried to cheer us up by saying things like "you'll be sorry" or "run now while you can." At any rate, sometime after midnight we boarded busses for Travis AFB where we boarded our MAC charter aircraft. A real no frills flight, but at least it was a civilian airliner, rather than a C-130 or something like that. We made a scheduled fuel stop in Hawaii, where we all got to leave the airplane for an hour or so while they refueled the plane, cleaned it, and changed airline crews. That was my one and only visit to Hawaii. Then we took off for the Philippines, however strong headwinds forced us to make an extra fuel stop in Guam. Again we got a chance to get off the plane, stretch our legs, and partake of the gourmet luxury of the PX snack bar at the air base passenger terminal. Then we went on to the Philippines, where I saw my first glimpse of Asian jungle. While on the final approach to Anderson AFB in the Philippines, I saw farmers plowing fields with water buffaloes pulling a wooden plow. I figured that I'd be seeing a lot more sights like that in the following months, and of course I did.

The flight from the Philippines to Bien Hoa AFB, Viet Nam was probably the shortest leg of the trip, and it was about midnight when we landed. I have no idea how long the trip took, between the fuel stops, crossing the international date line, and everything else it had probably been about 24 hours since we left California, give or take a day or two. We seemed to circle at a relatively low altitude for a while before landing, and finally the pilot came on the intercom and announced that it had taken longer than usual to get the artillery shut down across our approach path, but that we would be landing soon. When we got on the ground, an Air Force sergeant, with a pistol on his hip, boarded the flight, and said welcome to Viet Nam. He then told us to move quickly from the airplane to a covered area about 100 meters away. He then told us where to go to find bunkers if we started getting incoming fire while gathering there. Nice thought. "Welcome to Viet Nam, TAKE COVER!" Fortunately, we didn't get any incoming that night, however a couple of days later after completing the in-processing at Long Bin, the air base did get a couple of rockets while I was waiting for the flight to Quang Tri.

One of my memories of the short time that we spent in the Repo Depot in Viet Nam was when I went to the latrine the first morning to shower and shave. There were a couple of Viet Nameese cleaning ladies there who were sweeping and mopping the place while naked GI's were taking a shower. It didn't seem to bother either the showering soldiers, or the women who went about their task like it was the most normal thing in the world to be mopping a shower building while it was in use by members of the opposite sex. Oh well, there was a war going on, so I suppose things just operated differently. Toto, we were not in Kansas anymore.

Jim Good

from Bob Taylor

I received my orders for Vietnam while I was at Ft. Benning. I was sent to NCOC School after my AIT training at Ft. Ord in the early spring of 1969. The school was one of those things that you volunteered for but later regretted it. I asked to be transferred out of the school, however, the captain said "there are two ways out of this school, to graduate or to get kicked out." So after about 6 weeks, I purposely flunked enough tests and didn't shine my boots bright enough and was "kicked out." The army gave me thirty days to report to Ft Lewis so I went up to Ft Meade, Maryland to visit my brother. He was a Sheridan mechanic in F troop, in the cav unit stationed there. After a few nights going to the bars and seeing some stock car racing, I went home to Arizona.

The day I left Phoenix, my mom, dad and some other friends watched me board the plane and head off to Ft Lewis. I don't remember too much about the processing. The only thing that I do remember that it was cold and raining. We were driven to McChord AFB to board a C141 Starlifter for transport to Vietnam. The plane was held up on the runway for sometime because we were told that a jet had crashed. We took off and flew to Elmendorf AFB in Alaska. I remember seeing Mt. McKinley in all its glory. We then proceeded to Yakota AFB in Japan. The flight was really smooth on board that C141. The steward was some air force sergeant who passed out TV dinners on the flight. The plane had no windows, only a few port holes.

We finally arrived at Cam Rahn Bay and spent a few days doing odd chores while waiting for our orders. I remember standing there in formation watching the other

soldiers get their orders and move to a large billboard map of the country. They would locate their division and at that time probably realize that things may get tough. I finally was called and did the same thing. I walked to the map and started looking for the 5th division. I found it at the last place I looked because it was all the way at the top of the map. So off I went to DaNang, Quang Tri and finally to LZ Nancy and the 4/12th. In my letters to home I wrote that it was July 4th, 1969.

from Keith Eaton

Hey Guys,

My memory is quite shakey re: my trip over the pond. I got my orders in early May 1969 while I was stationed at West Point N.Y. I got 30 days leave and went home only to find my girlfriend going out with some new bozo. Don't remember much about the leave or the trip to LA. I think I boarded a Braniff Airplane in LA for the trip over. Our first stop was in Hawaii the let us off the plane but would not allow us to move out of the boarding area. My first trip to the islands and all I saw was concrete, glass and steel. From there we flew to Manila we were all ready to get off the plane after that leg of the flight but once off the plane we wanted back on it was so hot and muggy that you didn't need to move to sweat. We then flew into Cam Ran Bay. We were kind of lucky on the trip over I sat in the last row of seats by the rear galley and helped the stew's with meals and snacks. That was nice because in the slow times we played cards and talked. One of the stew's was from Texas and really nice she took my name and would you beleive she sent me one of the most bodacious care packages I ever received. Canned fruit, cookies, books. She must have cleaned out her apartment there was soo much stuff. My one regret is that when I sent a thank you to here it was returned as undeliverable. I hope she knows that she really eased the trip over and one young guys mind.

At Cam Ran repo station I lucked out and the Spec 4 making the assignments was from Ohio. He told me at that time there were 3 openings for RTO's 2 in Leg units and one in the Cav.

We all filled up a C-130 and after about 6 combat takeoffs and landings I finally made it to Quang Tri in the middle of a raging storm. I can't remember who picked me up at the airport but I remember the wet ride down to LZ Nancy.
Well Got to go, Take Care 30 Out

FSB – LZ – BASECAMP

The PX barbershop at Quang Tri Combat Base is shown behind two cav troopers, Chuck Lea and Carter Fuller. Though just another of the standard plywood buildings that were found all over bases in Viet Nam, the shop sported a traditional striped barber's pole out front. In addition to a good haircut, the scalp, neck, and shoulder massage was relaxing. The popping of finger joints by the barbers usually came as a surprise to new troops at the end of their first haircut. All in all, a pleasant experience.

(Jim Good)

Pineapple (George),

Not dead yet. The last time you saw me at the hospital compound I had less than a week left in country. Most people got out of the field 20-30 days before they left...not me! For 7 or 8 days before my DVE date Alpha 1-7 went down and I just knew I would get to go back to base camp. Instead they put me on an APC. I was hot and had the 'pucker factor' to the max. I was riding on the back of the APC when it went down into a depression and suddenly up a rise. I fell off the back, and while lying there looking face up at the sky, decided this was my ticket out of the field. Went to the hospital and stayed until I had 2 days left in country. I figured no way would they send me out with 2 days left so I recovered and went back to HQ. They assigned me to shit burning detail! What a slap in the face. I could not let such an injustice go unpunished, so I pulled the 3 barrels out about 4 inches from the outhouse and filled them with mo gas. The shit burned nicely but 4 inches was not enough distance to prevent the outhouse from burning as well. There is a picture on the 4/12th web site of the outhouse burning...I forgot my camera or I could have had a MUCH better picture. There was a guy in the unit who bought a 38 revolver. He was an APC driver who wore thick glasses. He only had a limited number of 38 rounds, which he made dum-dums of. Were you my co-conspirator in stealing his .38 ammo? What a trip. Bill (William?) Dodds from Portland, OR was on Alpha 1-7 for a while. Talked to him 15 yrs ago. Got his number from directory assistance. Ronald Congleton from Paterson, NJ was the driver for a while. Was never able to contact him. Someone stole my photo albums from my footlocker at Quang Tri right before I left so I have less than 15 pictures of my time there and only 3 of me. Sgt. Robert Barrows the platoon Sgt and TC of A1-7 has hundreds of excellent pictures. If we could find him I would like to get some copies. I have some good shots of the new Sheridans I will try to get on the site. I couldn't ID any of the guys whose pictures are on the web. It's been a long time and very few were 1st platoon people. Do you have pics of 1st platoon during our era?

Jerry Malan

The Finance major woke me up early one morning, around 3 a.m. He told me to get dressed, bring my flak jacket, my weapon, my helmet and my rifle. I was to meet him at the helipad ASAP. He left to wake another soldier. While I stumbled and dragged all my stuff to the helipad, my brain still befuddled with the lack of sleep, Jerry Malan stepped out of the shadows, "Hey Pineapple, he said, "Where are you going? He was the last person I expected to step out of the shadows to ask me. "I don't know, I honestly said, "I have to go to the airport. "You're going to get new MPC, Malan said. He disappeared back into the shadows as I walked on. Was I still sleeping? How did Malan know? Was it true? I met the major at the helipad and we took off immediately, heading on a southerly bearing. As soon as we were in the air, the major revealed our destination was DaNang, our mission, he said was to pull security and help him with picking up the new MPC. We were going to have a currency change in the next few days. It was top secret.

(Pineapple)

The people at momma-sans whore/drug house knew about the MPC exchange 3 weeks before it happened. No doubt before your major did, and since I was a frequent flyer I knew too. Do you remember Sgt. Barrows calling in a chopper for me to make a P.X. run while you were with 1st Platoon? I didn't go to the PX, I went to momma sans for the supplies the troopers really needed. I remember Cua Viet Navy Base and leaving there with the turret full of Navy C-rations. We would have been main gun-less had we been attacked because no one could fit in there. .
Malan (Merk-merk)

Hey John, I remember Weaver, he used to stand at the hooch door so all you could see of him was his top half and roll that grenade of his down the isle and we all would run like hell, then we got smart and painted his toy fluorescent orange or pink or something like that so we would know it was that dummy grenade of his, well he rolled that bright orange toy of his down the floor one night just a laughing his ass off, we took one look at that thing and then looked at each other and then ran like hell.....
Duke, 2nd plat 69

I agree too...Cua Viet was good duty...SUPER food....OK bunker guard, and a boat ride to ambush. Except that river seemed awful wide when the boat left. Very lonely out there on the other side of the river. Seemed like it rained almost every night I went out. The drag races on the beach were cool though!!! Nancy was a "homey" LZ. When we went to Quang Tri I felt like we had moved to the big city.)-: ???

You're right Turtle, my least favorite place was, I THINK, A2. Or whichever one we were at closest to the DMZ. (C2 was a bit south, right?) It was the rainy season and I never did get warm. Nothing but red mud and sand bags. I always liked the field better than any base camp anyway. I'll never forget WATCHING those 175mm rounds when they fired the ARTY. Unbelievable to me, to be able to SEE the rounds go out..and out ... and out...WAY out! What was their range?
Bob Rebbec

Speaking of Cua Viet, I remember in November of 69 that the troop had to go back to Quang Tri for some type of inspection. The three mortar tracks were left behind at Cua Viet. We had to pull fire missions every third night. The nights off were spent at the club listening to Three Dog Night and the like. The only problem, it didn't last long enough.
Bob Taylor

Does anyone remember the guy who came to the Troop sometime during the middle of 1970 from the rangers, P/75th? Seems like he had been in some really bad stuff, got stranded above the pink line of the DMZ for a few days when the rest of his team all got killed. He refused to go out with P/75th again after that, so they sent him to A 4/12. The first sergeant made a deal with him, and in return for being the permanent shit burner at Quang Tri, he didn't have to go to the field with us, either. Once he showed up for formation stark naked. I don't know if he was trying to make like Cpl Klinger in MASH and get a mental discharge, or if he just truly didn't give a damn anymore. One night he apparently got tired of burning shit, or perhaps he was just angry at the world. He filled the cut off 55- gallon drums in the bottom of the latrine with fuel, and tossed in a frag. Really made a mess of things. At first it seemed a bit weird, but after that lots of people probably chuckled a bit and wish they had been the one to do it.
(Jim Good)

Hello from Memory Land,

From the e-mails floating by today I do remember the larceny in the hearts of all 4/12 troopers. I remember a certain summer at A-4 when FO and a group of Troopers went down to C-2 to look into the possibility of improving rations for the troop. The PC was loaded to the gills when the Mess Sergeant of the Artillery Battery caught one of the guys. I can't remember who it was but the Mess Sergeant had us by the short hairs. As we unloaded the PC from the back hatch two cases of goodies were stacked back in through the drivers hatch. (Those Arty guys never were too swift.)

That evening in front of the main bunker at A-4 we had one of the best cookouts ever. Steaks were cooked over an open fire. C-Ration Crackers were made in to the best canapés. Accompanied with sardines, cheese and pickled eggs. Every thing was washed down with the coldest beer that could be found.

Can anyone ever forget the taste of hot Fresca? That has to rank right up there with anything you wouldn't drink today.

30 Yankee Signing Off Read you 5 by 5

Whoo-ee! I was there! I remember the cookout! The best steak ever! Never had better in the army! I was a little nervous as the cookout went on and on as it got darker and darker. I kept expecting the NVA to send over .122mm guests, but nothing happened! Thanks for bringing it up! We used somebody's RPG screen for a grille. We kept eating and drinking and talking far into the night w/Capt. Robinson. (That scene in Apocalypse now: with Kilgore and his airmobile bunch making steaks rang true) I also remember earlier in the day, watching a mock tennis match between a couple of guys swinging imaginary rackets and hitting an imaginary ball. A crowd was watching and applauding the good shots. We were a very weird bunch. And hot Fresca was just the thing to hit the spot when you ran out of warm Schlitz.

Pineapple

One of the ways we acquired grass was to drive out of LZ Nancy at a breakneck clip, up to the people that hung around the main gate selling cheap mirrors and plastic bowls. As we passed, we threw a case of C-Rations out. We went about 200 meters down the road, turned around, at the same speed, we flew back. The gooks would then throw huge bags of grass at us as we passed. Easily, these bags were worth about \$100 in 'Nam, maybe \$300 back in the world. It was the best, most high quality shit available! We called it the grass run.

(????)

???? you write about getting grass at the gate of LZ Nancy for C-Rations. One case of rations got you \$100.00 bag of dope. (We all realize that we never inhaled and only did that stuff to let the brothers know we were cool) Let me refresh your mind. A case of C-Rats was worth \$5.00. A case of cigarettes was worth \$5.00. A shot of momma san was \$5.00. a pack of ready rolls was \$1.00. A \$5.00 bag was about all you could fit in 2 Ziploc sandwich bags. A kilo (2.2lbs.) was \$20.00 that would fill a waterproof bag. Cigarettes were free out of SP packs, cost \$1.10 a carton at the PX.(did get some for \$1.00 on that LST and got greenbacks in change for a \$20.00 MPC which were worth 3MPC per greenback). I recollect it very reasonable. Name withheld by request. merk, merk.

Remember Capt Robinson? When we would pull into a base saying we could get most anything we needed here...Lots of nights out in the bush enjoying dehydrated steak and shrimp etc., that came from someone else's mess hall. Barrows says we stole a bunch of food and some of those insulated cans from some unit and under threat of CID involvement had to bring the cans back but was allowed to keep the food. I figured they deserved it since they wouldn't feed us or let us use their showers. Malan

Remember how the jeeps use to get borrowed? Got so bad they started chaining the clutch pedal to the steering wheel. Seems to me the CO had a hot one he kept for along time. Malan

Then during the Typhoon we rode out at Cua Viet (Nov? 69) I was on bunker duty. The wind was blowing the rain into the bunker sideways and was cold as hell. One of the guys on the bunker with me got into his sleeping bag behind the bunker to block off the wind and went to sleep. In the middle of the night the Lt (Canda?) came around on an APC to check on us and ran over the guy in his sleeping bag. Lucky guy got rolled under the belly but wasn't hit by the tracks. Malan

I'M SURE we were at Cua Viet for Thanksgiving because I remember a Holiday dinner in the field and I was in DaNang for Christmas. Don't know the month but we still had the M48s. 1st platoon alone was north of Cua Viet it had been quiet and I was bored since it was not a free fire zone there. I told Jersey (Congleton) who was driving that I wanted to drive that day. I threatened to empty the coax ammo box the next time I had a chance and he let me drive (he had sensitive ears). We left our NDP that morning and hadn't gotten 200yds in the very tracks we had come in on the evening before and we hit a mine. BOOM! I didn't remember it (most likely concussion) but Sgt Barrows said I had a .50 cal ammo can hit me and knocked me a little silly. Took forever to get A17 back to the river. We tried every which way to get 17 on to the navy 8 boat they had there. They could carry one tank and one APC only. We ended up getting an LST from somewhere and finally got her back to the navy base. The picture on the website of A17 in the water was taken when we were trying to get her loaded on those small boats. The road to Quang Tri was washed out and the NVA had control of the area so they couldn't get a flat bed trailer in to take 17 back to Quang Tri for almost a month. I stayed with her at Cua Viet during this time. Had my own hooch, had my own perimeter around it to keep the Navy who weren't invited at bay, ate 3 hot meals a day out of the navy mess hall, rode the river with the navy (out of sheer boredom), and enjoyed a hot shower when I wanted to. Best damn month I ever spent in the army. Malan

THEN there was the time at alpah4 during the monsoon I was sleeping under a poncho on the back deck of the tank. Sgt Barrows shakes me awake and ask me if hadn't heard that? I ask "Heard what?" He says that mortar round that went off. I told him I hadn't heard it. He points to mud and crap all over my poncho. I get up and see where the mortar round hit a few feet behind the tank. That's tired. Malan

Another funny story... Barrows always pulled last guard shift from 5-7 AM. We were working out of either C2 or A4 and the NVA had been shelling the place daily. A rocket had hit near enough to an outhouse that Barrows used to ventilate it. We started to tease him that he better quit using it as the NVA had it zeroed in. One morning he woke me up to take his place on guard at daybreak so he could go to the outhouse. He had enough time to get his ass planted when the rockets and mortars started hitting very close to us. Sgt. Barrows came running out of the outhouse with his pants down around his ankles. He was trying to pull them up and run at the same time. He had to run maybe 50 feet to a bunker. He never got the pants up above his knees during this run. They might consider adding this event to the PT test stuff you do in basic training. You know 100 yd. man carry, etc. Malan

Jerry Just to help you with memories of Viet Nam I used to pull the 0300 _0700 Hr shift all the time because I had to make sure the Platoon was up and ready to go early every. To make up for pulling the last shift I always pulled a 4 hr shift. That morning at the outhouse we were going to escort the Engineer mine sweep team on the daily sweep back to Charlie 2 from Alpha 4. I was attacked by a case of "Gotta Goes when that mortar and rocket attack started. The rest of the story was pretty accurate
(Sgt Barrows)

Then there was my R&R story. I waited until I had about 8 months in country to apply for R&R because I wanted to go to Sidney and someone had told me the longer you waited the better your chances of getting your pick. When my orders came thru I got Thailand so I was not a happy camper. I flew to DaNang and lined up at the R&R center behind 15 other guys in front of this Navy guys desk. After awhile it was my turn so I walked up to this guys desk and set my paperwork on top of it. This shit head jumps my ass and says if he wants my paperwork he will ask for it. (The bastard had looked at everyone's' paperwork that had been in front of me). This guy was an E-6 who must have weighed 300 lbs. and was all of 5'6" tall. It was all I could do to keep from breaking his neck on the spot so I picked up my papers and left. I went to Red Beach and found me a momma san for that week. When I got back to the troop they said because I had not gone on R&R the troop had lost an R&R slot. So if any of you guys didn't get R&R after that it was all my fault. Malan

OK more B.S. bout Nam, like the time Sgt Barrows came into the bunker at either Charlie 2 or Alpha 4 with his .45 caliber pistol in hand, pointed it at the floor and pulled the trigger. Boom it went off and scared the shit out of several of us including Barrows. I think he said "so much for the firearms safety lecture." Malan

Can't remember where we were but I'm thinking Charlie 2. Sgt DiSanto on A26 and Sgt Barrows on A17 get an offer form one of the Mech. Infantry company's (1/11?) for breakfast. They had an APC hit a mine the day before and while trying to retrieve it had another APC hit a mine. We got real eggs for breakfast and all we had to do was go out in the middle of a minefield and retrieve those APC's. In hindsight I think that job was underbid. Sure would have been if we had hit a mine but we were lucky that day. Malan

Cua Viet Navy base was the only place in northern I corp where one platoon actually got a night off every 3rd day. The Navy issued C-rats to the guys who ran the river but most of them managed to make it back to the base for the 3 hot meals the mess hall served and as a result they had a big fenced in area full of C-rats. I can remember leaving Cua Viet with the turret so full of C-rats that we would not have been able to fire the main gun if we had to. Lucky we never had too. Malan

You guys who were tankers will no doubt remember when we first got the Sheridans. They set up a firing range for us to train on. We were all a little worried because they told us the front end on the Sheridan jumped about 3 feet off the ground when you fired the main gun. Sgt Barrows, brave soul that he was, got in to fire the first round to show us there was nothing to worry about. He fired the damn thing and came out with blood running down all over his face. He had flipped the site cover half way up so that the sharp edge of the cover was over his forehead but the foam forehead rest kept him from feeling it. This put the sharp edge maybe a quarter of an inch away from his forehead. The recoil of the gun forced the cover towards his head and cut him all the way across his head just over his eyebrows. Nobody wanted to shoot after that. Malan

When I first come to Vietnam I hardly got time to see L.Z. Nancy before I was trucked up to Alpha 4 for my baptism. Hell of a place to break in. Couldn't believe you could see that NVA motor pool across the DMZ with that damn red flag flying above it. I always wanted to take a shot at it especially since I figured they were the ones that shot the rockets and mortars at us all the time. Anyway during the nights there I kept hearing this whoosh, whoosh, whoosh, noise going overhead and thought it must be a bird or big fruit bat or something. After a week or so I ask someone what the hell that noise was. He said have you seen those five foot long 100 pound pieces of shrapnel laying around on the ground around here? Jesus Christ! There weren't any bombs dropping close to us, that stuff was coming from WAY OVER THERE and flying over my head! . Malan

I don't know why but for some reason around the time of the move from Nancy to Quang Tri I was back at Nancy for some reason. There was a bunker there that wasn't on the original blue prints and in typical military fashion somebody decided it had to be destroyed. There was a brother in the camp maybe had a base camp job who was assigned to destroy this bunker. The plan was to burn out the wood supports and let the sand bag roof fill it in. This job was given to the brother who pulled the MO-GAS truck up to it and proceeded to run a bunch of gasoline down into this bunker. Good plan so far. Where he went wrong was standing directly in front of the entrance and throwing a trip flare down there to light it up. Burned his face, hair, hands, ect. I saw him sometime after that and other than having a bunch of pink spots all over where he was burned he was O thay. Anyone remember his name? Malan

The C.O. of Personnel and Finance at A75 Support was some kind of frustrated Green Beret Airborne Ranger dude. He has the airborne wings and the ranger patch. The major would send for me at least once a week and make me ride with him in a helicopter up to the DMZ, then to A4 or C2, where we'd land for a few minutes, then take off and look around the bushes and paddies a bit more. I'm a little puzzled since there are 2 other combat guys in finance, one from the 1/11th and the other from 1/61st, but he doesn't make those guys fly around with him. I'm very afraid, but I must hide it well. I wonder how many of these rides do I have to take before I can put in for an air medal? I love flying in choppers; the ride is fantastic. The major likes riding those little Loaches. I do too. I think he's crazy. We've never seen anyone on our little trips around the bush thank God. All I carry is 2 bandoleers of ammo. I guess in gratitude for me riding shotgun for him, the major made a call to the Cav to ask why the hell I hadn't been promoted to E-5 yet. He said he had Top schedule me for the next board. I was shocked, I didn't want to be promoted, I wanted to stay in Finance for the rest of the war. If I were promoted, I would have to go back to the field. I asked Top to ignore what that major said I didn't want it. (Pineapple.)

Do you remember the time they let the whole Troop stand down at the same time in Quang Tri? We all went to the Brigade NCO Club together and between everyone there must have been about \$500 -\$600 dollars of funny money anted up in the middle of the table and one of our young NCOs walked up to the bar with his boonie hat on and they were demanding that he buy everyone at the bar a drink !! (about 60 people) and we hollered "After the Fight" and all Hell broke loose, I remember someone shoved all the change in the pile to the waitress and told her to keep it. They brought in two trucks of MPs to break it up and that was the last time they ever let us stand down at the same time and I think they put the Brigade Club off limits to the Cav . HA!! (Robert Barrows)

Hey Bill, You where saying something about the barber we had at LZ Nancy. I remember after he gave us a shave and a haircut, he would crack our necks. It felt good ,but I always thought that he might be a VC. Could he have twisted our necks a little farther? I heard he was killed on a VC trail with the rest of the gooks. Big Al

NDP – OPS – PARTOLS

North and West of A-4

Sgt. Barrows/others where were we when we found those NVA guys who smelled sooo BAD? I recall we smelled them long before we saw them. I think the artillery had killed them some days before and they sat out there rotting and waiting for us to find them. We were told to take off their gear. I put my gas mask on and still couldn't stand the smell. Guess I got a profile not to take the gear due to extreme nausea. Malan

Yea they definitely had a severe case of BO. Evidently stood too close to the impacting rounds as they came in. We could smell the bodies from at least a qtr of a mile away. That was my first day's introduction to Viet Nam. Jog my mind, but later was when the Troop Cdr past us "leading" and backed over the mine about 25 feet in front of us! I believe we were near "Mutha's Ridge" when that happened!! Barrows

I can't remember the COs APC hitting a mine that day we Found all the NVA bodies rotting but I was sick enough of the smell I can't remember anything else. If that was your first day in country the only thing you may have missed was the rockets and mortars that were usual for breakfast. Malan

We were on a hellacious dismounted patrol the day before. For some reason, we picked the hottest part of the day to go walking in some of the toughest brush anyone could have thought of. JB was leading the patrol, I still remember that Duffy kept saying, "what they gonna do, send me to 'Nam?" We had to rotate the point, at first every 10 minutes because the point had to chop away at this incredibly thick brush with a dull machete, then we went to every 5 minutes, then every minute as we spent our energy at an alarming rate. Near the end, the obstacles in front of us were mainly thick elephant brush and we flung our bodies at it to beat it down. We were making a cloverleaf pattern search, trying to join up with two other leaves from 2 other squads. Mutter's Ridge (found out the correct spelling just recently, named for an infantry captain from the Marines) loomed menacingly in the background. When JB finally called it quits, we were about 500 yards from this oasis of trees that was to be our end point. It was useless to continue, the three squads were totally wasted from the effort of getting through that jungle. I remember sweating in places I never knew you could sweat, like my elbows and fingernails. JB faked seeing movement in the trees and called in an air strike. They lay in the napalm exactly into the Oasis. I was too tired to watch, all I could do was lie on my back, wheeze, and stare at the sky.

The next day, we went back to the Oasis, where we found 15 or so NVA in the crispy critter mode. Some bodies looked like they were trying to ward the flames away as if it were just raining, some were in running poses. It was an awful sight and the smell was so bad, it had it's own APO address. Then there was an order to search the bodies. Fuhgedaboutit, I moon walked back to the I-2 and left the ghouls in the platoon free to do their happy task.

Apparently the NVA were waiting in ambush for us, and most certainly would have wiped us out, had we had the energy to walk there. Pineapple

You sure this was the same gooks? These guys smelled like about 3-4 days old and don't remember and burn damage. Pretty sure this was artillery defcon stuff. Malan

oh yeah, it was napalm, you remember craters and blown apart bodies, or were they all intact? I rest my case. Pineapple

Actually, it was hot as hell and the bodies were bloated, but as far as the smell, it was the normal fucked up dead body smell that we've all smelled before. They weren't 3-4 days old with maggots or anything. Pineapple

The temp was way over 80 and they had begun to ripen. The guys had to collect all weapons and ammo and strip the uniforms off of the bodies. We threw all of the bodies in a bomb crater and covered them up. All of the shit we collected was sent back to S-3 for them to analyze. I will never forget the smell.

Keith Eaton

I remember a time out round Con Thien or around there somewhere on a NDP one night we had our one of our claymores stolen and in its place was left a piece of paper with a poem on it about some river up north somewhere, it goes without saying after that we became a lot more proficient in our own booby traps making and for awhile there we would get one of those little sneaks in the middle of the night. Do you remember what tank that got all cleaned up and painted so nice? It was for some visiting senator or something I can't remember' hell I can't hardly remember my own name sometimes. Later.

Duke

Does anyone remember when the troop was operating around an abandoned LZ called Angel (I think that was the name) somewhere up near Charlie 2 in late 1969 or early 1970? One day the company dropped off around 8 of us from each platoon to form 3 separate night ambushes. The rest of the troop then went back to wherever and was going to pick us up the next day. I was with the second platoon and carrying a M79. Our Sgt. was one that we called Paul Revere because he always wore a patriot style hat. I can't remember his real name. Anyway we formed the ambushes and had rendezvous locations in case we engaged and had to leave quickly. I remember that the second platoon was just off a well-used trail. Our claymores were placed real close to us. Luckily no one came by that night and we all hooked back up the next day and waited for the troop to pick us up in the afternoon. It was one scary night to be that far from our friends with the ACAVs and tanks.

Bob Taylor

Ya Bob, seems REAL familiar...but I went on what seems like a lot of ambushes...some were really scary, hell they ALL were scary. Just real lucky they were mostly all just 'camp outs'!!!!!!!!!!!! I remember we did blow the claymores one night when we heard voices moving into the kill zone and laid there the rest of the night scared shitless until we could get back into the womb in the AM.

Bob Rebbec

John, I remember the night well. I can't remember if I was on the mortar track or another scout track. The mortar track didn't run most of the time. I remember that it was a badass place to be after dark. I think that we all hit a mine or two. I was on the Passion Wagon, I think 23, when me Scotty and Dierling hit a mine near Rocket Ridge. We had our scrawny mustaches burned up, but no injuries. That was in July of 1969, one month after I got in country. Because we were short on APC's, I rode on a tank for a while. I believe it was 26. APC's don't fair well when the mine hits. It sounds like we are going to have a bigger reunion this year! I joined the Society of the Fifth Division and read the article from the chopper pilot but didn't connect it with Wally. I also received the M48 and an ACAV model. It was interesting hearing the story of Capt. Spruill and the War Lord.

Bob Taylor

John, I remember Ferguson well, that night we got hit in Cua Viet; he was crawling around and asking everybody if they needed water or ammo. He was different but he sure helped that night.
Bob Taylor

I remember when we went on that big task force operation out by Khe Sahn, then back through the Ba Long Valley in the summer of 1970. They had a 175mm unit inside our perimeter while we were at the old Marine firebase Van der Grift. One afternoon they were using the 175s to do H&I fire. They were shooting into the wooded draws along a ridgeline to our west, probably less than a mile away. One of the rounds must have hit right at the base of a big tree. BIG TREE. Hard to say how tall it was, but it looked like a tree that was 3 to 5 feet in diameter and 30 to 50 feet tall. That big old 175mm HE round launched the tree straight up. Looked like a rocket taking off from Cape Canaveral. The tree went straight up in the air about a hundred feet, then sorta hung there for a moment, and started flipping end over end on the way back down. Some of those toys the U.S. taxpayers gave us to play with back then were pretty cool. No idea what the exact range of the 175mm was, probably something just over 20 miles.
Jim Good

One morning, Capt. Kaufman lines up the troop, line abreast on the road between C2 & A4, facing west. It is a glorious sight, but it is raining and we're looking at low elephant grass covering a sea of mud. He gives the signal to "charge. The old 1-2 is slow to move. Everyone else who does decide to "charge gets stuck. The troop spends the rest of the day pulling tanks and tracks out.
(Pineapple)

While operating near LZ Nancy, Kaufman decides to lead dismounted "night patrols into the jungle. It happens that he picks a succession of moonless nights. No one can see. People have to have physical contact with the person in front of them, and even then, the person in front of them often disappears down unseen bomb craters. It is very slow going. One of these patrols gets horrifically lost and opens fire on an ARVN outpost when Kaufman hears Vietnamese voices and orders us to shoot. When the return fire sounds like M-16's, we flee. The next morning, we discover that we have caused KIA and WIA on an ARVN outpost. The night patrols are stopped, and nobody is the wiser.

The 1st platoon scouts are offered LRRP rations and camouflage fatigues if they volunteer to make long range dismounted patrols out into the bush from Nancy. Our patrol goes out and makes camp as soon as we're out of sight, a few hundred yards downrange. We give fake sit reps of our travels around the AO, while we chow down on that great LRRP dried rations. .
(Pineapple)

BR: "I dropped off the track like the experienced IDIOT I was (I'd been in-country almost 13 months), took an M79 into a wash-out and ran smack into a GOOK. The '79 chose then to miss fire! (lucky for me really. We were only about 6 or 7 FEET apart!) The Sarg had followed me in (which I didn't know) and covered me as I ran for my life!!!!"
(Bob Rebbec)

Was that the day after the new troop commander took over after CPT Smith? Would have been the summer of 1970 sometime. If it is the incident I'm thinking of, the 2nd Plt was on the northwest side of a stream, and sent some people in to check it out. The 3rd Plt was on the southeast side. After you guys ran into the gook(s), I saw 3 of them in the open through the sights of my Sheridan. Unfortunately, one of our 3rd Plt tracks was right in line between me and the gooks, just downhill a bit, and the second platoon was straight on beyond the stream. I wanted to fire up the 3 NVA, but the new troop commander and my TC said not to. That was one of only two times in Viet Nam that I clearly saw gooks in the gun sight. Didn't get to fire either time. Oh well, long time since that happened. I wonder if the gooks ever realized how close to getting waxed they came that day.
(Jim Good)

A couple of unlucky NVA troopers, an RPG team, were crawling up to our NDP one afternoon in July 1969 when we were working to the west of LZ Nancy doing "blocking" assignments. Track 1-3 neglected to retrieve their claymore ambush from the night before. Their philosophy was: if we aren't going nowhere (& we weren't because we were waiting for a mechanic to install a needed part for my track) why bring in their stuff? Ka-boom the NVA ran into the ambush. The rest of us thought that it was incoming and dove for the dirt. I-3 started firing wildly into the bush because they knew what it was. To make a long story short, that night, when it was my turn for guard at around 3 a.m., I sleepily took a look around the perimeter and saw Jerry buck-naked walking around with an M16! I thought I was hallucinating. What made it even weirder was that the mosquitoes were tearing me up and Jerry seemed unaffected. Let's see, 2 dead NVA, and a naked Chieu Hoi =? Is it any wonder that I haven't thought of these matters for 30 years? ???

Drake was one of my first tank commanders in Viet Nam. A mine north of Alpha Four one day in December 69 or January 70 messed him up. We had a vehicle down in third platoon, so they sent us to one of the other platoons to pick up a tow bar. We had strapped the tow bar onto the back deck of our tank, and were backing up to turn around, when *^BOOM^* an ear splitting explosion went off right beside the tank. I don't know if they ever figured out whether it was command detonated, or if we ran over a trip wire. Being very new in country, I relied on the training that I had gotten by watching the TV show "Combat" when I was a kid, and did the only thing I could think of. I yelled "Medic!" Drake was covered in blood. He was in the TC hatch, I was the gunner and sitting on the loader's hatch, and our loader was sitting on the bustle rack. No one else got a scratch. Holes in our marmite cans, water cans, and everything in the bustle rack. Drake had something like 23 pieces of shrapnel in him, and he was a hurting puppy, though he stayed awake throughout the ordeal. The medic from the platoon we were getting the tow bar from patched up the holes in him as best he could and then called a Medivac. Kent went to a hospital in country, and spent about 3 weeks there, but remained in Viet Nam and completed his tour. He is now living back in Three Rivers, Michigan -- his hometown. Bub Pollet is also still living there and Kent said he sees Bub from time to time. They completed their tours in Viet Nam in very early 1970.
(Jim Good)

Got an E- Mail at last. Even learned how to check it. Need to send Sgt Barrows the history of the cav. We were talking the other day and we've both got stuff to add (pages). Some you may not want to publish, but a lot is humor, like Jordan driving A17 with the umbrella to keep from tanning. JB was the gunner on 17 when I got there in June 11th 69. TC was Cooper E5. The first firefight we got into I had to pull the 90mm cases out of the main gun as they only ejected half way. After it was over I ask JB when he had last cleaned the chamber (screw the bore) and he said, "Never cleaned it". I took over that job from then on. Malan

One time on the Z we found a tunnel and using a tank jumper cable lowered Lt. Canda down the hole with his .45 caliber pistol. Was really steep. While he went to explore the hole, Dodds and me pulled up the cable and let him sweat for a while, yuck, yuck. Malan

The entire troop was working one day on the Z, we were heading for a ridge line and ran into muddy dirt and had to detour about 400 yards to the left. As we were turning back to the ridge 5 or 6 large blasts went off on the ridge where we had 1st approached the ridge. The NVA had set up claymores and would have peppered us if we hadn't had to move to the left. Barky was in the air and radioed he could see the NVA running on the other side of the ridge. The entire troop pulled on line and opened up on the valley. We shot all of the main gun ammo in the turret, called in air strikes with F4s, arty etc., When the smoke cleared a bit the CO told 1st platoon to sweep the valley and 2&3rd stayed on the ridge. The 3 tanks were out in front of the APC's by 30yds. or so. Barky or the CO was talking on the radio saying we were about to run over the NVA we were so close to them. I couldn't see anything but jungle thru the sight on A17 but fired several canister rounds anyway. Sgt Barrows said the barrel was pointing down when I fired and Bamboo and crap flew all over the place...he thought we had been hit for a minute. After a couple of rounds I shouted to the loader I wanted another canister round and got no response. I looked over and the loader was gone. I ask Barrows where he was and he said "the back deck". I told him to tell him to get back inside. He wouldn't get back in. I think this was Dodds when he was fresh off an APC. Anyway I loaded and fired several rounds myself. About this time an NVA stepped out from behind a bush and Sgt. Barrows shot him 2 times with the .50 in the upper leg. The CO called down and said if he was alive S2 needed prisoners. We pulled up beside him and he had his hands underneath him as if he might have a grenade. We let him bleed for a while due to this danger. In the meantime the 1st platoon had stopped the sweep. Lt Canda's APC was to our right rear about 20 yards away and there was a bomb crater between us. The Lt. dismounted and was walking around with his .45 pistol. I had left the turret and was sitting beside Sgt Barrows with an M16. Sgt Barrows always kept his .45 under his .50 cal (use to tease him that the only thing it was good for was to shoot himself to prevent capture) and I suddenly see him pull his pistol and begin to swing it back towards the Lt. Knowing something was up I followed his swing with the M16. As Barrows came down just about in line with the Lt. I see an NVA crawling out of this bomb crater maybe 10 feet or so from the Lt. Barrows popped him with the .45 and I emptied the clip on the M16 in one burst...Poor Lt started shouting "it's me, it's me!" as if we were shooting at him Yuck, yuck. Malan

Then there was the time Aug? The brains from higher up came up with the mounted ambush. Three M48s sneaking up on the NVA and ambushing them...go figure. Anyway we were south of Nancy as I recall and the spot they wanted us to go was low land by a creek with several hills around. We set up on a hill and notified HQ. of our position change. It was an hour or more before dark when we were finally all set up. We were relaxing around the turret when this strange noise that sounded like a locomotive running out of steam and passing right next to us occurred. As I was trying to imagine what it was, the area where we were supposed to be exploded. It was a very large explosion indeed. We were taking big incoming artillery. Sgt Barrows got on the radio to base camp to tell them we were taking fire (this was too big to be Charlie's), the base camp said no one was firing that they knew about but that they would check it out. A few minutes later this whoosh, whoosh, steam engine sound started again. This round hit in line with us but on the other side. Both had been 3 or 400 yds away. Barrows got back on the horn...same story they didn't know who was shooting. I joked to Barrows that they had us bracketed in. The whoosh, whoosh starts again and this time you can hear it's a lot closer...in fact I thought it was going to land in my back pocket. We were huddled inside the tank, flack jackets

and steel pots on. This round landed in front of the tank maybe 50 yds away. When it went off it pulled the steel pot off my head 5-6 inches as it sucked the air out of the tank. Last week when I was talking to Barrows he said he remembers trying to crawl into his steel pot. It stopped after that 3rd round. It was 8-inch gunfire. I recall it was the South Vietnamese being trained that fired on us. Barrows remembers it was our own guys. Either way it was a hell of an experience. Malan

I can't remember where we were but we were out in the field somewhere and sat up the NDP late. We had fire support from a 4.2" mortar outfit that night. Sgt Barrows called the mortar group on the radio to request an airburst marker round so we could get them on target. A few minutes later we heard a THUD out in front of our tank. Barrows called the team to tell them that the round was a dud and ask them to repeat the airburst. That round worked perfectly. The next morning I went out to pick up the trip flares and there was a 4.2" high explosive round sticking in the ground about 20 yards in front of A17. We had all been sitting around on the top of the tank when it hit and surely would have been peppered if the thing had gone off. Those guys must have been hitting the booze or smoke pretty heavy that night. Malan

Pineapple after we got the Sheridans and Sgt Barrows started getting the short timers increase Sphincter tone syndrome we started letting some of the other tanks take point. I think it was SSgt Skolnzovch in his Sheridan that hit 2 mines in about 2 weeks. The 1st one blew him and his entire .50cal turret off his tank with him inside it. Seems the next one was sort of a dud. A W.P. round went off under his tank. Seems that someone had stepped on a mine during this same period while dismounted. If memory serves me this SSgt had only been in country for a short time. He would hang his butt off the side of the tank to take a dump so he didn't have to dismount. Malan

We were set up in NDP out towards the beach somewhere in the middle of nowhere and as I recall only 1st platoon was there. I was sitting up on top of the turret behind the .50 cal doing my guard shift looking at the fireworks here and there when I notice a twin 40mm open up. It was a long way off and looked like it wouldn't come close to us. I was watching the tracers burn out different colors at different ranges and began to realize it was going to impact closer to us than I first thought. The guns were still firing when the first rounds hit maybe 60-70 meters out to the north of us and proceeded to sweep his fire through the platoon and stopped firing a little south of the NDP. After a few minutes (reloading no doubt) they started firing again and sweep back thru the platoon. Don't remember anyone getting wounded, do remember itching to squeeze off a few 90mm rounds to return the favor. Do you remember where we were Sgt B?

Malan.

Jerry Are you talking about the time we were on the North side of the Cua Viet River setting up our NDP and the Riverine Boat came down the River and was firing the twins. Cpt Merk Merk called for the Mortar track to pop illum and I was screaming No NO!! but they popped one and the Navy thought they had found a good target, Us!! Everyone was up under the tracks while they were shooting the Hell out of us. Finally got them stopped. That incident definitely stands out in my mind!!

Sgt B

My 19 track was with me all the time. Don't ever remember calling for mortar fire except for one night we were called out to secure an AVLB that was stuck in the field (what it was doing I never had a clue!), but we were called out & set up a defensive perimeter. When it started to get dark they really didn't want to spend the night (I'm thinking we were at C-4 at the time, but not positive) so I had Sgt Lawrence fire illum so they could keep working. He fired every round they

had and they finally got the damn thing unstuck. On the way back I got a call that there were friendlies in our area who had been sent out to back us up if necessary.

I had to tell my platoon not to fire and we passed about a platoon-sized group of grunts that was going out to set up an ambush in case Charlie showed up to see what the fuss was about. Never did hear if they had any luck. I just don't remember having any targets to use the mortars on. I think I used to hook it up with the 15 track and use them as scouts. The platoon sergeant and I used to let men move tracks or tanks if there was a need. I think I had an 11 Bravo that became a tank driver. Does anyone remember if that was Troy?
(Kershner)

Thanks six, I'd written what I knew about it, but as Jim said, we were just pawns doing what we were told, never had a clue what the overall purpose was, who else was involved or half the time, even where we were. Great to have the big picture. One incident I didn't write in my journal (but I know happened) and haven't heard anyone else reference, was the big perimeter fire that happened on that big 5th Div. sweep where we had more of the 5th in the bush than back at Quang Tri. Jim, (or Six) you seem to know all the details - still envious of your memory - but weren't we real close to Laos on that one? Anyway, someone's trip flare went off and lit up the elephant grass and the wind caught it and we had to scramble to get as many claymores in as possible before the fire got there. One track (tank?) was surrounded by fire and they used a dozer to push dirt against it. We were beating back flames w/ our shirts and anything else we could get our hands on. Wild & crazy night.
Skee

The big grass fire was in the Ba Long Valley, as we were returning from Van der Grift & the Rock Pile to Quang Tri via the scenic route. The operation was "Task Force 1-77 Armor" and it took place during the summer of 1970. As you said, half the frickin brigade must have been on it. During the part of that operation where the fire occurred, the artillery had already gone home via QL-9, and the Cav, and I suppose most of 1-77 Armor and 1-61 Infantry along with maybe some other support elements, were headed back through the Ba Long Valley, then over some hills, and finally across the Quang Tri river near the big bend south of the French Fort. We were out in that area for several days. If I recall correctly, we had been starting fires during the day with WP to clear out any cover that the bad guys might have used to set up ambushes behind. I don't know if the wind changed direction at night after we set up the NDP, or if a new fire was started by a flare or WP round while registering Def Cons. It seems that at least one daisy chain of claymores went off in the fire, though I don't think anyone was seriously wounded by it. Big excitement, that night, however. After the night of the fire, I think we were still in that area for a couple more days. There were some AVLBs that we used to cross a couple of very deep streambeds in the hills when we continued back toward Quang Tri. If I recall correctly, we spent at least one more night in the hills on the way back before returning to the Quang Tri area. I know the 3rd Platoon stayed on a hilltop over-watching an AVLB one night, and we had movement in the streambed, and fired up the area with one or more mad minutes of machinegun fire. The next day, the AVLB crews had a hard time raising their bridge because of all the damage we had done to it with small arms fire the night before. That was the first time that most of us had been anywhere near the Rock Pile, Van der Grift, or the Ba Long Valley. At the trooper level, we really didn't know very much about where we were, or what we might expect to encounter out there. We did know that we were close to Laos, and pretty well out in Indian Country. Pucker factor was rather high throughout that operation. LT Schorpp and I talked about this operation when we were at the reunion last year in Las Vegas. Earl Schorpp thinks that it was done as a dress rehearsal for the Operation Lam San 519 or whatever that cluster fuck was right after the first of the year in 1971 when the ARVNs went into Laos and got their clocks cleaned. There is a picture that I took of that grass fire in my slides on the picture site, on page 3 of the photo albums.

Jim Good

Dang you and that fantastic memory of yours!! You still remember more than I ever knew in the first place!! - even if it is a "refreshed by Lt." memory. Thanks a bunch for the info, I'll print it and add it to my collection. As I remember, we went there at almost the same time they were crossing into Cambodia down south with much success and the general feeling was that we might be going to try the same thing w/ Laos - but then after sitting around on our thumbs for a few days w/o the top brass knowing the next move - which further led to the belief things were coming down daily straight from God, the Pentagon or somewhere up high, we just packed up and as you said, took the scenic route home. VERY anti-climatic!!
Skee

1st Platoon was guarding Hwy. 1; we were facing the Rock 2nd or 3rd Plt. was to our left rear on another hill as you face the Rock. They were overran with NVA and had to call for our platoon to fire on their position with small arms and mortars. They had dug in and had constructed bunkers while located on that hill for two weeks. Charlie was trying to dig into their bunkers that night. We could see gooks running in the perimeter as trip flares were burning. Our orders were to fire at anyone we saw in the light--for all our guys were either in bunkers or dead. Our position got plastered by incoming rockets every afternoon about 3:00 o'clock. One guy (Greg Sessions) from my track (12) and another guy along with a FO were airlifted to the top of the Rock to spot the location from where the rockets were being launched. Arty from FSB Vandergriff would plaster them. Khe Sanh was an adventure and a nightmare! [Buddy Puryear]

Wally

Welcome to the Club. I was on 13 in Feb of 1969 when it hit a mine and I still have two scars on my forehead and one across the bridge of my nose that reminds me of that night almost everyday. I couldn't even wear a baseball cap for years as it would bother me. That is one club I really never wanted to join, but thank God I only got scared and didn't lose anything but alot of blood. That was the first time I ever rode on a track that Lucky Lou Larson wasn't driving and damn if I didn't get hurt. I only trusted riding with Larson and Ken Dye after that night. I'll also never forget the reception I got about 5 days later when I returned to LZ Nancy from the hospital and all the Troop saw me walking down the road to the front gate. They didn't know if I had lived or if I got sent home and would never be seen again. That day really proved to me that I was in a SPECIAL unit with the greatest guys you could ever serve with. I truly felt that every guy in that unit was my real Brother, It's a feeling I have never forgotten and thank God all the time for letting me have it and still be here to appreciate it,

Peace, Rag

. You also were saying about land mines. One day i was behind one of our tanks on a convoy and he turned a sharp turn and pryed a land mine out of the ground in front of me. What a close call! Another time up at the D.M.Z. i threw a track on my A.P.C.. The Captain left me and a tank there by ourselves untill i got the track back on. When we where leaveing the tank backed onto an anti- personel mine. I thought that was the end of the line for us. I don,t remember the tank number, but i remember that the sgt. was shot and served another year in Nam.. Big Al

Big Al The tank commander I think was Sgt D [Jersey]

Mechanics

Brings back a great memory. The mechanics had a bunker at C-2. Ernie Holton (now deceased) relayed this story. The bunker had a parachute on the ceiling to keep dirt from falling on the bunks. A rat called "Freddie" would entertain the guys by running around on the parachute. One night, they left some cheese from a B-2 unit on the ledge above Sgt Peterson's cot. The rat slipped in the middle of the night and landed on Pete. He about went nuts. I recall the mechanics were good guys and good at their jobs. They were constantly picking on Pete. I remember Vukatch?, Al Lott, Beatty, Holton, a few others.

John

John, Al Lott was from Yuma, Az. I know that his given name was Herbert. I checked around and can't locate him. He was an excellent mechanic and like many others, a tribute to our troop.
[Bob Taylor]

Several of the mechanics of the '69-'70 era have preceded us to Fiddler's Green. Ernie Holton, Johnny Mills, Big John Mackin, Ken Eizik, and John Bracken are gone. Charlie DeMeo will join us in Vegas, and Butch Beatty has finally been located. I don't know if he can make it or not.
Jim C.

Anyone remember a mechanic named King - a brother? [Skee]

Hey John,

I got to see it first hand....those mechanics were as dedicated as anyone I ever saw...They worked their tails off in that dammed heat and in the rain and mud. They took each job as a personal goal and did a super job everytime. There was a particular guy e-5 from Riverside ,Ca. Anderson. I have never been able to find him. Helluva mechanic, one hell of a guy.

Wally

Hey Jimmy,

What about King, do you remember him,? Short, buffed, very nice man. He was a helluva mechanic.

He is pictured in the yearbook standing next to Beatty, in the pictured labeled The Grease Monkeys." I have not heard whether he has been found or not.

Take care,

Wally

Yeah, this is the guy I was wondering about....Skee

Great to see you remember the mechanics! Bill Styles has been located, but Jim King has not. Dave Anderson came in mid-70, along with an airborne spec 5 whose name was Bill, I think. Sothey McLawhorn is in No Carolina. Zimmerman and Perkins worked in the motor shack. I apologize to those I've forgotten, but my memory fails me...

EQUIPMENT

Now on the Charlie Browns rolling tank/PC story. While in Nam I had the good fortune to have one of my tanks burry itself up to the sprockets in that spongy stuff we all remember. I was a mess and I couldn't get another tank in close enough to recover it without risking that tank also. Hooked up a PC to it and It wouldn't pull it out. Hooked up two PC's. No go. I'm about to collect all the cables we have and link them when along comes the colonel. Melia was his name I think. He tells me to hook a tank to the front of the PC. So we have tank cabled to PC cabled to tank in the muck. Can't remember If we had another tank in line leading but the long and short is when the pulling started the rear of the PC in the middle ripped rightoff.
(W. McShane)

GSR, Ground Surveillance Radar. In theory they picked up movement with Doppler shift radar waves, it was supposed to detect things like vehicles or people moving toward you. In fact, the GSR took up space, and didn't do much. I think the night that 2nd platoon had their big contact across from Cua Viet with a couple dozen NVA naval sappers they had GSR pointed right toward the center of the group of dinks, and didn't see squat until one of the bad guys set off a trip flare. GSR was a technology, which had not completely arrived during the Viet Nam war.
Jim Good

Capt Spruill stated that there was no scope in the radar set up, that the radar returns were audible rather than visual. When the radar guys first came out with first platoon in the latter part of 1969, of course I was curious enough to want to learn everything I could about it, and one of the things that I did when I went up to the tripod was to look through a radar scope. It had what looked to me like a circular display, just like the stuff you see in the movies and a sweeping thingie going back and forth. I couldn't make heads or tails out of the picture. They did use headphones too, but there was definitely a green and black display. My first comment was, how can you tell if it's people and not bushes that's moving? They said they could tell because of their experience. When 2nd platoon got hit in April '70, the first thing I heard was that the attack came right at the radar gizmo, and if it wasn't for a trip flare, things would have been much different. It only points up what I've always experienced with technology, that anything on the bleeding edge is never ready for prime time. It takes years for the technology to mature.
(Pineapple)

Then there was the day we were riding along the trail and the damn left fender blew off A17 (M48). That was the day I learned not to put trip flares and grenades in the same box. That lid to that box must have gone 200yds up in the air. Malan

One day during the dry season we found a 1000lb-unexploded bomb. I think you have a picture on your video of the blast (that's not on the web site anymore...is that your picture?). I put a couple sticks of C4 on it and a long, long, fuse. We then hurried to a hilltop at what seemed a safe distance. That damn thing looked like an atomic bomb when it went off. Mushroom cloud, ring around the base, etcetera. To this day the most impressive blast I have ever seen. Malan

THEN there was the time the CO took the troop out to test fire weapons (west of A4 or C2). We came on line; A17 was the farthest track to the right, and fired away. I shot 2 rounds of 90mm and moved to the loaders hatch where I had my extra .50 cal mounted.

The ammo was dusty so I decided to shoot it up. There was a clump of bushes out a few hundred yards that I took aim at and opened fire. Next thing you know there is a red star cluster flare coming out of that clump of trees. Seems there were some friendly folks hiding in my target. SS says He say some holes in their gear. Lucky no one was hurt. The Colonel was waiting for us when we got back to the base. He said my .50 was unauthorized and had to come off. I pulled the pin and moved it to the bustle rack. He said that wasn't good enough, he wanted the mount removed (that had been arc welded on). I told him we didn't have a torch in the field. He said you have a hacksaw don't you? It's hard to reason with people like that. Malan

AND THEN while working out west we had to make log runs out to Hwy1 to get supplies. We had been fording this river at a certain location for a month without problems. The water was just deep enough that the driver had to button up to keep the water from washing up the front of the tank. We had Sheridans at this time and A17 drivers hatch had a problem in that getting the cam lock to close the drivers hatch required a 5lb hammer. Sgt Barrows stayed out in the field for this trip so I was playing T.C. We stopped and threw a few grenades in the water while Jersey hammered his hatch closed. When he was ready we proceeded to ford the river. Little did we know that a B52 strike had come thru there and left us a 20ft hole in the middle of our ford. We sank big time. Poor Jersey nearly drowned before he could find that hammer and get himself out. The transmission and engine as well as the turret electrical system fried. The guys at battalion or brigade put another engine and transmission in within a few days but the turret parts were not in country so we were not combat ready. While waiting for the other parts an APC from the troop got pulled back to base camp broken down but close enough to the mileage where they were going to get a new track. The problem was that this poor guy had to clean this APC before he could get his new one. I told him we should hook up the tow bar and I would pull him to the river where for a few C-rations the locals would clean it for him. He thought this was a grand idea. As I pulled him into the water I felt my ass getting wet. I looked down and my tank is filling up with water. Then the engine dies and I'm stuck. The guys who put the engine in didn't put the access plates back on under the tank. It was all their fault-honest. Malan

Barrows and I were talking the other day and he reminded me of the time the CO Capt. Smith decided we were using too much C4 explosive (most to heat our C-rations but I do remember boiling 2 quail I had killed running in front of the tank which took about a case of the stuff and they were still tough) and started having that green plastic explosive sent out that didn't burn worth a damn. Barrows laughed and said he never noticed we doubled our claymore orders to get the C4 out of them. Malan

Then there was the time the new scout in the platoon wanted to go out and learn to set up claymore ambushes with me. We found a good spot with a trail on it; I showed him how to hook the claymores together with Det cord, and how to pull the trip wire across the kill zone to the claymores. I was in the process of showing him how to hook the safety pin on the end of the trip wire into the grenade's blasting cap, hooking only one hole so it was sensitive. He was standing up looking down at me squatting beside the 4 claymores and as I turned loose of the safety pin it pulled out of the flip lever on the grenade's blasting cap. This gave us about 4 seconds before 5 pounds of C4 went off. He ran as soon as he saw it happen. I didn't know if I should run or shit. I knew the back blast on one claymore was about 18 meters and figured 4 would be much further so I decided to disarm it by pulling out the grenade's blasting cap. I was surprised how hot the cap was when I grabbed it (fuse inside burning) and realized that the explosive in the cap might very well become more sensitive than usual since it was hot. I very

carefully pulled it out of the claymore and threw it. It blew up about a foot from my hand. I got my first gray hair that day. The new guy never asked to go out with me again. I changed to an electrical system after this so I could set it up as hairy as I wanted to and knew that until I hooked the battery up 100 feet away I was safe. Also made it less hairy to pick them up in the morning when you might not remember exactly where you left them. Malan

Barrows you need to tell Pineapple the story about us towing the broken Tank and having the NVA following us with the mortar rounds and how we load rated that bridge that day. You had better details on it than I have. I do remember pulling out of Charlie 2 one morning during the usual mortar and rocket attack and was amazed when the mortar fire started following us up the road. Made the hair on the back of my neck tingle a bit. Malan

Nobody has mentioned that the tanks led the troop because the tanks could stand the mine hits better. Also Charlie started putting some sort of counting detonator on his mines so that the tank would not set the mine off but the APC that followed would. We then had to start putting 2 tanks in the front of the line. .

Trains

Does anyone remember seeing some of the remnants of the narrow gauge railroad neat the hospital & Replacement Detachment at Camp Roberts / Quang Tri Combat Base? Were there any train tracks left when we got there? [J. Good]

Jim, I recall tracks south of QT west of QL . Seem to remember taking a body maintenance stop at the bridge. Must have been A Troops reversion of an Incountry R & R. [Earl Schropp]

p.s. I believe that CAmP Roberts was also known as Camp Red Devil.

Jim, I remember and no, there were no tracks left when I was there. There was, however, a train still running every day from Dong Ha to Da Nang. I remember it well because one time 3rd Platoon did some guard duty for a battery of SP155's. The guns were doing fire support for somebody all night and when I woke up in my little sleepy hole in the ground I couldn't hear! Got sent back to Quang Tri for an exam and they sent me to Da Nang on a truck. The highway paralleled the train track for about 1/3 of the way down and I watched an old steam engine puffing along slightly slower than we were going! On the way back I asked the truck driver about the train and he told me it made a round trip every day they could get the engine running. Real sense of pride for the locals. To myself I just figured the only reason the thing didn't get blown sky high was Those People were using it for transport. Greg PS - turns out that during the night the concussion or back blast from the guns had managed to lodge a little, teeny, tiny pebble way down in my ear against the ear-drum. They had a heck of a time getting it out, but after that I no longer had rocks in my head....so to speak. [Greg Beining]

PERSONAL HYGIENE

SP packs (Sundry Packs) were sent out once or twice a month to the field they also had cigarettes and candy in them. Sgt. Bills the FO Sgt and I use to make out since we were the only ones in HQ that smoked Camels. Other than that my memory fades as to their origin the just seemed to appear on the supply tracks or choppers.

Keith

SP: Sundry Packs. Government issued care packages. Given out periodically by some unknown formula, to provide soap, tooth brushes, writing paper, envelopes, gum, candy, and cigarettes to the troops in the field. Essentially the stuff that we would have purchased at the PX if we had a chance to go to a PX, but since we spent extended periods of time in the field, these boxes of goodies would be delivered from time to time. JimGood SP sundry packs were sent to units in the field they were for 100 men - 10 cartons of cigarettes per pack also soap, gum chuckles, hershey tropical chocolate bars, razors, shave cream and some other things. They came once a week. Lt Zero The Hershey's tropical bars were so bad, when you threw them to the Vietnamese they threw them back. Jerry Malan

Boy SP were a big Deal. One box for ten men.

ten cartons of cigarettes

one box of cigars

three pouches of chewing tobacco

shaving cream

Castille laundry soap (Bar form)

Boot laces

double edge razor w/blades

tropical chocolate bars

Chiclets chewing gum

Life Savers

bar soap

Once I remember getting Juju Bees and lost two fillings from my teeth.

Merle and the guys on 28 always got the chewing tobacco.

My sister send me a care package from home. Deierling said, "Your sister is really on top of things we get in Nam." As I put a box of Chiclets Chewing Gum and Life Savers into an almost full Duster 40mm ammo box with the other Live Savers and Chewing gum. It was always good trading material with the gooks or stuff to throw to the kids, when we were passing through Quang Tri.

John

P.S. Try to remember the 12 selections in a box of C's or the 6? LRRP selections. I remember the LRRP rations were things like chicken catchetore? You poured a canteen cup of water into the plastic bag and kneaded it for about five minutes. Took one look at it. Lost your appetite and threw it away.

"Hogpen"! I think that about says it for me.
okie/hogpen

You're probably right. It smelled like seventy. One day working outside Cua Viet, we were looking really bad. One tank with a blown engine, another with mine damage and some higher higher came down in a chopper and started giving shit to Perrino and Sgt D. D had the type of beard that if he didn't shave for a few days made him look like he was growing a Goatee. I kind of thought he looked like Mitch Miller. Anyway, word got back to Capt. Smith and we were ordered to shave. We each got a steel pot full of water and a pound of C-4 to heat it with. I still think it was the most expensive shave I ever had. About a month later the same brass was passing out bronze stars to our platoon.
John Sharpe

Ya see, if you guys wouldn't have shaved, you never would have gotten your war hero medals. You oughta be grateful to those brass hats for providing the proper motivation to shave so that you would be ready to do your duty of killing commies when the time came. My goodness gracious, you couldn't be expected to hose the little buggers down with your machine guns if you needed a shave, now would you? :-)
Jim Good



ANIMALS

March 1969

from Bill McShane:

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



Don't remember the month but during the dry season we were breaking down jungle in M48 A17 and as broke down some bamboo a green snake fell down into the drivers hatch with Jordan. He came out like his pants were on fire and refused to get back inside. Sgt Barrows threatened to leave him there if he didn't get back in. Seems to me somebody else (like me) had to drive for a few days. We also had a huge spider inside one time (like the old Tarzan movie) that gave everybody the creeps. I remember getting my gas mask and 2 cans of DDT and locking myself inside and emptying the cans. Can't remember if I did that for the snake or for the spider. Malan

Just shootin' the shit with some friends one evening at a birthday party last week when the subject of animals in Vietnam came up. They've heard stories of elephants, tigers and gorillas walking by GIs. in the jungle. I told them that I never saw any of those animals, but I heard of something called a "rock ape" that beat some guy up in the perimeter at Alpha-4, but to my mind it must have been one of them urban legends around the Z. I told them I did run into a monkey once while cutting through some bushes in the middle of the base at Quang Tri. I was walking

from my hootch at Finance to the cav. The monkey was tiny, about the size of an infant. It climbed up my left leg, stopped at my shoulder, and peered into my face. "Uh, Hi," I said. It looked at me with these beady little intense eyes. Then the monkey jumped off and disappeared back into the bush. Apparently, I wasn't the guy it was looking for. Then I suddenly had a thought ~ I quickly felt my back pocket for my wallet. Whew! It was still there. Pineapple

I did kill a deer with my M79 somewhere in the western part of our AO. Snakes were pretty common animals. How many M48 drivers had vipers drop into their laps when they were busting jungle for us? I remember someone in our platoon spraying a bamboo viper with his CO2 extinguisher at C2 and apparently putting it to sleep. We all have stories about pythons. I've never seen one although I was on a dismounted patrol where someone across me saw one & ran away screaming after he *threw* his rifle at it. He said the snake's head was as big as his head. Uh, the rest of the patrol instinctively ran with him, not knowing what was wrong.

One dark night, while on ambush, a snake crawled between me and the guy next to me. For some reason, the a.p. was lined up real close. I think it was because we were on some kind of small hill overlooking a foot-trail. He jumped up and screamed. I told him to shut up, the snake was gone. I was about to fall asleep so I was very calm. He spent the night at another part of our perimeter.

The fish I saw in the river scared me. The Cua Viet was filled with weird looking big fish. Who didn't throw grenades in the water to see the fish float up to the surface?

& I've never seen rats the size of the rats I've seen at Alpha 4. They were as big as puppies. I shudder to think of it.

The old guys that were in our platoon told some stories about elephants and tigers, but they sounded too wild for me to believe them. [[Pineapple]

about the animal planet; when I was there our platoon scouts killed a 17 foot 9 inch python, we also heard of rock apes, though I never saw one myself but Tiny told me he saw some in the Bau Long valley. We also heard a report about a guy getting killed by a tiger in the same area, I don't remember if he was 1/61 infantry or 1/11 or even if it is true, some of the other troopers may know. [Whitey]

3rd platoon did kill a large (12-15 ft) snake at Cua Viet. We were setup overlooking a village along the Cua Viet river. We took a dismounted patrol thru a banana grove to checkout the village. I don't remember who was on point, but I was 2nd or 3rd in line when the point man stopped and dropped to one knee as he slowly raised his 16, aiming up into the trees. He fired a burst and I heard a crashing and breaking of limbs. I (in addition to being scared shitless), thought that we had walked up on a sniper who was either asleep or not aware of our approach. Then this damn big snake fell out of the tree. Our Kit Carson scout, Seemore, was with us, so when we got to the vil, he told the indigenous personnel what we did. They had lunch, dinner and probably breakfast on us! Mickey D's Nam style. [Earl Schorpp (40)]

We took out a small (even smaller after the claymore went off) pig on the trail with a claymore ambush once. [Skee]

Whitey

If I remember correctly there was an article in the Stars and Stripes about a trooper being attacked by a Tiger. Killed a snake in the shower at Red Devil chopped off its head don't know what kind of snake it was but it was one of them snakes that crawl.

Had an FNG tell me he saw a green Elephant when I was down south. We got a good laugh out of that. He was looking through a Starlite and everything is green, Only remember seeing a boar when I was with the 12th. [Jim M]

wish i'd have been there to help kill that snake. couple of people posted the picture of that snake and I think someone posted the one that the stars & stripes used. I'm not sure about snakes as we don't have any here in the islands, and my experience with them in Vietnam was limited to just looking at them. Can you kill them in the body or do you have to bash it's head or cut it off. Would cutting a snake's tail off have any effect? How about if you cut it in half? [Pineapple]

Jim Mills, You killed a snake in the shower ? Did you normally take a shower in ' Nam armed with an edged weapon? I guess that would be one way of picking up the soap without using your hands. That's awesome! I would have never thought of that, and probably would have been snake bit had it happened to me. [Pineapple]

gnaw had to go back to the tank and get a machete. I was going to shoot it but I was afraid I might hurt myself. Never thought about picking up soap that way might be a safer then bending over [Jim Mills]

About a few weeks in country when we were on patrol somewhere in the rice paddies we veered out of the convoy. I was a gunner on our track-- Alpha-62, Mission Impossible ,I didn't know what was going on. Our T.C. started firing at something. We killed a 12ft. python. When i became T.C. i saw a two stepper up real close. We passed a hanging bamboo branch with a two stepper attached to it. It was about two inches from my face. Another time at Qua Viet we were throwing sea snakes around that were stunned by a mine that went off from some sampans. That's the only snakes I saw. Outside of Charley-2 a boar the size of a baby elephant was killed. [Big Al]

KIT CARSON SCOUTS

Been reading the thread about Kit Carson scouts. When I came in country, we had a guy named "Jerry." He seemed to be really tight with our Lt. & Platoon Sgt. so I accepted him. Screeching stop! Jerry worked with us, Tom worked with 2nd platoon. Tom & Jerry? Ha! How come I never noticed that in 'Nam? ???

It was a super sad & poignant day when Jerry left us, apparently for another assignment. He came around and shook everyone's hand then said a big "Hello" and left. Apparently he got the words "hello" and "goodbye" mixed up. We answered "hello" back and waved goodbye. "Where the hell is he going?" the Ltee asked. "I don't know." was the answer. ???

We had several more chieu hois, but the scariest was a scarred, unsmiling, hard-faced guy who showed up one day. He looked like he had been fighting a war since he was an infant. Was this guy a real chieu hoi, we thought? He just emanated a huge dislike for us Americans. We gave him a wide berth. That very night, he disappeared, back to the NVA, we assumed. ???

One of the real neat things that is posted in the picture site are the Chieu Hoi safe conduct passes that used to be all over the ground on the Z. The one propaganda thing that I wish I kept were those NVA Christmas cards that mysteriously appeared on the ground everywhere in December 1969. They showed a drawing of Santa Claus pointing behind him and the caption was "Go Home." On the reverse side was a drawing of a woman sitting at a desk with a picture of a G.I. the caption was "Wish he were home." Anyone lucky enough to have one of those souvenirs? Pineapple (Cooper has a copy of this on the website)

FROM 31 MARCH 1971 TROOP ROSTER

KIT CARSON SCOUTS

1st Plt

Tham
Minh

2nd Plt

Nghem Tam Bang
Tham

3rd Plt

Vo-Hue (HUE)
Tham Nhen (Seymore)
Phan Set

HOLIDAYS SPENT IN VIETNAM

Thanksgiving

1969

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)

The picture was taken on the evening of Thanksgiving Day, November 1969 on the Cua Viet River. We're going out on an ambush patrol after eating a turkey dinner. We're stuffed. Coop is leading us out. I strongly remember everyone except for that guy kneeling in front of me. It drives me crazy that I can't remember his name. It's like he came out of nowhere. Mike Davis has a similar picture and he labeled the guy the "new medic." His eyes are in shadow. Pineapple



Front Row: the new medic, The Kid, Coop; Back Row: Pineapple, Peter Rabbit, Sniper Veatch, Milard the Mallard Mills

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.

Christmas

Captain Kennth G. Carlson, C.O. of A Troop, declared the Brownie Troop honorary members of our unit..

My most memorable Christmas in Vietnam was Christmas Eve, 1968. A Troop, or at least most of it, was working on the road over the mountains and into the BaLong Valley. We had an engineer unit and an artillery battery attached to us, making us almost a battalion sized outfit. 1st Brigade had decided that our little operation was large enough to call our headquarters "LZ Carlson." Coming out of LZ Sharon to the Southwest, we followed the Thach Han River until we came to a small stream called Khe Trai. There, the engineers built a pontoon bridge and we set up HQs across the stream towards the hills where we intended to build the road. (YD265440, for those who want to check the map.) We had been there for at least two weeks when Christmas Eve arrived. Earlier in the day, a monsoon had hit us and we lost a 2 1/2 ton truck which slid over the side of the road we were building. I had to declare it a combat loss because there was no way to pull it back up the steep cliff. We blew it in place. Our biggest problem was that the monsoon had turned the small stream into a raging torrent, and the pontoon bridge was washed away downstream. We were on the wrong side of the stream, stuck in "Injun Country" until a new bridge could be put in. On Christmas Eve, COL Frank Borman and the crew of Apollo 8 were making mankind's first trip around the Moon. As the officers and I sat in A1A, my track, soaking wet and trying figure out what we were going to do, we listened on one of the LT's transistor radio as Apollo 8 saw it's first "Earthrise." From 70 miles above the surface of the Moon, Astronauts Borman, Lovell and Anders took turns reading the first ten verses from the Book of Genesis, the story of Creation. They ended at Verse 10: "And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called He Seas: and God saw that it was good." And as the spacecraft began to disappear again into the silence behind the Moon, COL Borman paused and said, "God bless all of you on the good Earth." I looked around the cramped space of the track. All of the officers had tears in their eyes, me included. Just then, PSG Jim Platt opened the back of the ACAV and looked in at the scene. I don't know what went through his mind as he saw all of his officers crying, but I recall he reached in his pack and pulled out a

small bottle of scotch. "Here --- you guys need this more than I do." Then he closed the ACAV door and left. Next day, Christmas 1968, was the only time in my 26 year military career when my unit did not receive Christmas dinner in the field. The rain and wind was just too severe to fly out our meal. But when we returned to LZ Sharon some 6-7 days later, our cooks had Christmas dinner waiting for us. The road into the Ba Long Valley was never finished on my watch, but it wasn't for lack of effort on the part of A Troop. We went places and did things, others wouldn't even consider. You guys were superb. May you all have a Merry Christmas and Joyous New Year. Ken Carlson A Troop Commander 1968-69

1969

Wednesday, December 25, 2002 9:36 AM To: ALL TROOPERS

My family and myself want to wish you the best Christmas ever as we pull together after all these years to meet again,Ê looking back together, at the memories we made together. It's a time to rejoice and share with the family, and I feel the Cav isÊ my family,Ê and at this time of year I always remember The Little Tree that made Christmas in Viet Nam seem so real but so far away



from loved ones that it was painful, but thanks to my grandmother, (now 96 yrs. old) The Little Tree made Christmas for me and my platoon, it was a surprise that came in the mail, but it made a lot of us happy to be able to have some simblance of Christmas as we decorated it and done our photo shoots with it.Ê I chose this pic with a fallen comrade we all respected very much, and as I reflect back on this Little Tree and the cav, I wish I had taken it around to the whole troop so everyone could haveÊ shared The Little Tree, and made their Christmas more special for all. MERRY CHRISTMAS AND GOD BLESS MIKE AND FAMILY

I got one of those trees also!! Thanks for the memories!! God Bless!

kid

Hey Mike(s)... I was in 18th Surg after my hand was crushed at Charlie 2. A homeboys sister sent me a small pine branch which hung from the IV stand my cast was attached to. I remember Jesse Esparza, the cook who was burned when that stove or immersion heater blew up, coming in. God was he hurting. I was given two beers and a kiss from a nurse on Christmas Eve. Had to drink them both before I kissed her back. Flew down to Phu Bai on Christmas day for the Bob Hope show, and was seated about six rows from the stage. Bittersweet memories... Jim C.

Mike, great picture of Sgt. Di and your little Christmas tree. And God bless your 96 year old grandma. She must be quite a woman! I remember the holidays (Christmas and New Years) spent on the DMZ. Does anybody remember the flare show on Christmas Eve and New Years Eve. I believe we were pulling perimeter guard in Charlie-2 and around midnight of both those evenings, Alpha 4 must have sent up dozens of flares to brighten the northern sky. Now maybe

they were being probed at the time but I like to think they did it for the holidays. It was one of the coolest sights I ever saw. But thanks again for sharing that picture of our late great Platoon Sgt.

Turtle

"Does anybody remember the flare show on Christmas Eve and New Years Eve." I remember. I was still an FNG in December 1969 but I remember that on New Years eve we were in C-2, and pulling perimeter guard. Before we went out to the bunker line, we were told not to shoot flares at midnight. The leadership had not been amused when everyone went through a month's worth of pyrotechnics on Christmas eve and they didn't want a repeat on New Years eve. Oh well, at least they made the effort. It was an impressive light show. Once was enough though, not worth extending for in Viet Nam to see the 1970 light show.Ê I'm sure glad we didn't get hit at 0200 New Year's day, because we would have had to light our zippo lighters for illumination, we'd blown the basic load of flares at midnight.

Jim

Hey Jimmy,

I was at that show also, Sgt Barrows raffled off two tickets and I won one of them, I can't remember who the other guy from our platoon was. Camp Eagle sure was a long, long way from C-2 in more ways than distance.Ê That was a nice Christmas day. See ya

Wally

One day in December 1969, I think it was around Christmas, HQ platoon set up a memorial for those troopers who had died or left us because of wounds. They had attached bayonets on M16's and placed helmets on the rifle butts. I was astounded at the amount of people that we had lost; most of them were so new at the time of their casualty that I didn't recognize their names. A catholic priest presided over the ceremony. As part of the ceremony, the priest asked if anyone would like to have communion, and if so, he would give us "general absolution. When I asked what that meant; he said that our past sins were forgiven without us having to go through confession because of the extraordinary circumstance we were in. We had a clean slate. I lined up immediately. My last communion was nearly 10 years ago, and I felt that if all my sins were forgiven without me having to confess, it was the best damn thing the church could had done for me, and now I could die as pure as the driven snow, sin-wise. It was still raining. It was still muddy.

New Year's Eve

Subject: Sitrep: New Years 1969 Around New Years of 68 I found out that I was being sent to the 11th Cav. At that time we were told that that would be trained on the Sheridans that the 11th was receiving. I always checked Stars and Stripes to see what kind of shit the other units were getting into and it always seemed that the 11th was always in the middle of something. New Years Eve of 68 was spent at Red Devil. 1st Plt was partying hardy that night and brought the New Year in as only a Cav Trooper can. From what I can remember that was the last contact I had with the platoon as I and the others that were infused to other units started outprocessing. Never did have a chance to say farewell. Hope everyone had a safe New Years.

Jim M.

39 might have been in Quang Tri alone for repairs - or our whole platoon might have been in, but I know Matthieus and I were in the 75' guard tower on the QT perimeter New Years 69/70. We added a few flares and star clusters of our own to the celebration. You're right Turtle, great memory and impressive sight. I've longed for a few of those star clusters on several holidays since (especially if I could keep getting them paid w/ those "unreal tax dollars")... wheeee.....

Skee

Rains

FOXHOLES LTeeF, I can remember after being there for some months we started putting a firing position between the tracks every night. Easy enough in the sand at Qua Viet but a real pain in the ass in some of the soil out west. I started taking the tankers bar and sledge hammer and punching a hole down about 12 inches into the ground with the tankers bar and them stuffing it full of C4. A quick placement of a claymore blasting cap and a walk to the other side of the tank and BOOM we had the finest foxhole US taxpayers could buy. You remember that? Malan Hey Jerry,

I remember we used to cheat.....we would dig under the APC about 8 inches of sand from under the bottom of the APC, between the tracks, made for a nice, out of the rain sleep in comfort foxhole G.I.'s are so resourceful...:-)

Wally

Wally, I remember doing that as well. Can't remember doing it during the rainy season. Don't remember it ever turning into a swimming pool under there do you? Jerry Jerry,

I remember it was during late January to early April, we had rain, but I can't remember how much during those months, I do know it rained like a cow pissing on a flat rock during December and early January 1970.

Wally

RAIN Wally Mendoza wrote:

I wonder how many of our troopers suffer from the same stuff, it makes me crazy because I have no one to share it with who really understands except you all out there on this net...

The rain,
The dark,
The quiet,
The little noises,
The movement in the hedge,
The imaginary gooks,
The real gooks,
The tension,
The artillery,
The commo checks at 3am ...

Hi Wally and all Cav Brothers, When I spoke at the first reunion, I simply mentioned thoughts and memories that have been stored in my soul for all those many years. You are quite right that only those who have been there and done that would understand. Many times since then, as I see and listen to the rain, I think to myself "Thank God I don't have to sleep in this shit tonight". Not to mention all the other things that went along with those long nights, such as being scared, nervous, and wondering if this might be the night some of us may buy the farm. Hearing that others have the same thoughts, memories and feelings as I have validated my own. EARL
(40)

Hi Wally,

You are so right about the rain. Trying to stay dry, and the mud! I remember the day four or five of us were sent to A Troop, it rained all day. Got to Quang Tri and the First Sgt. pointed to this new tent still folded up, and said this is your home. Put it up! Nice to just look out the window now.

Mack.

Can't figure out the problem with the rain. I was talking to my office staff about it today and I was telling them that it is so strange that Nam vets have a problem with flashbacks and little sounds, and the sounds of rain, and the smell of diesel and all that shit, and I was saying how it does not affect other veterans from other wars as much as us.... I mentioned that perhaps it has to do with the distance from home we were.... Korea was just as far, North Africa was as far, Europe was far as hell also, but Nam was not only far from home it was..... "10,000 MILES AWAY!!!!!" I don't give a shit how far Korea was or the Alemain, "10,000 MILES" is a long f___g way from home. And that is what we heard from the beginning of AIT until we left to come home. Somehow I think that played into our Psych (did I spell that right?) we were just kids then and I don't give a shit if its true or not, but 10,000 miles is a WALLY NOT ON MY WATCH Wally, I particularly liked this part of your recollection, it's right on, it matches what I think of as our typical Nam experience. Other stuff comes in flashes - contacts, weapons, unusual situations, interesting characters, bizarre sights, things imprinted by the feeling "Wow, this is weird but it's real." But dark and quiet can bring back the imaginary gooks, and rain - well, then you can't even HEAR the enemy sneaking up. I wonder how many times there was somebody out there who was just checking out our position looking for an opportunity? Stands to reason, many times I think. Though I don't usually dwell on old combat experiences, I recognize their importance in my life. They were important to me, at the time vitally important to others as well, and thus ???

Sensory Overload

Hey guys,

I've mentioned this to a couple of you before, but it's worth another mention to satisfy curiosity. What sounds or smells in particular remind you of your time in Nam? And what tunes do you particularly associate with that time?

A helicopter overhead still gives me the creeps, even though all the choppers were ours! And there's a damned air raid siren in the middle of my town which goes off at noon - three days ago I made the mistake of coming out of the library right near by just at 12 noon, off went that damn siren. I was at Nancy twice when the sirens went off for mortar/rocket attacks, and I still react! Very unpleasant. But rain on the roof I like - reminds me I DON'T have to sleep in a damn hole in the rain!

The smell of diesel fuel reminds me, and most especially the chemical that used to be in OFF! insect repellant until (apparently) the formula got changed. Same chemical we had in bug juice, reminded me strongly of nights on watch every time I smelled it. For that matter, peaceful nights with few lights cause me to scan around without thinking, guess I'm looking for somebody trying to creep up on my position. We all had those kinda nights back then!

As to tunes: In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida was like a "theme song" (thanks 1st Platoon!), Joe Cocker's cover of "With a Little Help From My Friends" was something I played often in base camp, and when I got back to the World "Spirit in the Sky" was playing. Just a few of my fav old tunes!

How about for you guys?

Frank ~

Choppers sound good to me...real good. So does a chainsaw....all that's missing is the solid ribbon of red tracers coming from the sky.

The Doors...Jimi Hendrix...Cream....The Beatles White Album....to name some of my favorites. We don't listen to them much at all anymore though): But I have VERY fond memories.

Smells...of course, diesel fumes. I like that. Seedy truck stop restrooms with the smell of raw diesel fuel tracked in strike up less pleasant olfactory recall however. Wet leaves and damp loam bring the smells of laying on ambush back....as does a rain in the summer woods.

Let us not forget smokeless powder (?cordite?)...that smell...the sound of choppers....with a cut from the Fresh Cream album playing in the back ground.....

This has me thinking more about this than I have in years. How about hot motor oil...remember dumping it on our M60s to cool the barrel? 50 cals too. I remember it getting so hot it just flashed. Not good. Then you REALLY stood out, and by then, the barrel was shot out anyway.

Any damp, musty smelling clothing or bedding. Seems like nothing dried out for months!

Smells....hmmm....burnt toast. Not everyone would know that one though (: Damn but it's been a loooooong time.

I live in the Midwest (black dirt) so when we visit the south with areas of red soil I always think of the raw red firebases ripped from the top of a hill.

How about food. Fruit cocktail? Round salad crackers? Cheap peanut butter? BLACKBERRY JAM? Canned baby lima beans?

And don't forget the paper towels in a bundle setting on the sink in that truck stop restroom I mentioned...remember the smaller version with 3 or 4 sheets? You'll need them after you eat.

Amen to all the sounds and smells you guys listed.

- I'll never forget the hot, humid air that engulfed me when I got off the plane after landing in Vietnam. I experienced the same feeling when I landed in Fiji a year ago while on vacation. All I could do was stand on the first step of the plane stairs and remember everything that happened to me that day in Vietnam. I sure got a lot of strange looks from the other disembarking passengers.

We had a guy in my platoon who scored a copy of the latest Janis Joplin album - "Pearl." I think his girlfriend sent it to him. He played that thing non-stop. To this day, every time I hear "Me and Bobby McGee" or "Mercedes-Benz" I just drift away back to those days thirty years ago.

I can still easily identify a "Huey" helicopter over any other by their sound alone. There are also fewer flying around. The smells are the things that I think about. I work in an area where there is a lot of diesel exhaust and the smell reminds me of the field all the time. Remember in the monsoon season, we would try to dry our equipment in the exhaust of the tanks and tracks. Here's another smell. When you went to Quang Tri and picked up the laundry you left 2 months ago and the gooks dried it over burning buffalo shit.

Viet Nam always had a smell, burning shit, incense, rotting vegetation, but the shock of getting off the plane in Ft Lewis after a fresh rain and the smell of pine trees was awesome. I never smelled anything since that matched that.

I have very few friends that had the Viet Nam experience. I'm not a hunter, but many of my friends are. I don't talk about Viet Nam with them much, because I think they feel a little guilty about dodging the draft or perhaps they don't believe some of the things. Like I clearly remember things like releasing the butterfly trigger on a 50 and having the rounds cook off. And like Rebbec, pouring 30 weight oil on the barrel and have it ignite.

Smells? I recall landing at Cam Rahn Bay at 2300. It was 98 degrees and 99% humidity. The stench of EVERYTHING rotting was like a punch in the face. Diesel fuel everywhere, including on our hooch floor to keep the dust down. Burning shit.

Tunes? We Gotta Get Outta This Place, He Ain't Heavy (Youngbloods), and the Beatles Hey, Jude. I can hear Jimmy Mann and Don Huey tuning their guitars now...

I don't think I've been anywhere with darker nights. Glad I shared them with you guys.

Right, most everybody says diesel fuel, right down wind from the latrines, I can still smell it, sounds, i live right close to disneyworld, they shoot off fireworks three and four times a night, right across 1/4 theres a tourist helicopter ride, flies over the house all frigging day put those two together and its flashback city, Nam was queiter than this place, I gota move out of this place..TUNES Steppinwolf, Doors etc, i wish they had CDs back then.....

When I first came home, any time I saw shrubbery, I wanted to take a piss! That was one habit I had to put on the shelf ASAP. If a fighter jet streaked overhead, (we have a lot of military flights here in Honolulu) I would duck my head and raise my shoulders involuntarily because, damn, jet noise moving fast overhead sounds just like Incoming to me. Worse, remember that certain odor that large army tents gave off? That wet dog/sharp cheese smell? Running into that smell would give me a sense of deja vu.

Speaking of which, a bunch of years ago, my wife asked me, after watching yet another T.V. show where a deranged Vietnam vet was running amok, "how come you don't have flashbacks?" I don't know, I said, "maybe not enough time has passed, or something." I feel very cheated. I would love a flashback! You know, I would suddenly think I was back riding in the grenadier's seat behind the driver yelling at him to concentrate on staying precisely in the track of the PC in front of us. It would be like a movie or something. I should carry popcorn in my pockets just in case a flashback happens.

I actually do have a recurring nightmare; it has nothing to do with anything I experienced in Vietnam. This is true, I have this dream every few years or so, that I'm back in the service. Somehow, I get reactivated or something, and I'm back in the 2nd Armored Division in Killeen, Texas. Yikes! That was an experience that gave me more trauma than anything that happened to me in the Nam. While assigned there, my talent for avoiding details or army work was stretched to the limit! You can't imagine how stressful it was to hang out at the snack bar, bowling alley, or gymnasium day in and day out and not arouse the suspicion of anyone who outranked me. But then, I was just a humble draftee, who was drafted out of college because he dared to protest the war, that didn't want to be there in the first place.

Looking back, though, the only thing that was worth anything during my service in the Army was my time in the field in Vietnam. Though I hated it with all my heart, I loved it with all my heart too. I never felt = freer and more competent in my life! It was a gas riding around the DMZ, armed to the teeth with "In-da-gadda-da-vida" playing on the eight-track hooked up to the battery. We were ready to bring it down on anyone who tried to fuck with us! I mean we bristled with 90mm cannon, grenade launchers, M-16's, co-ax's, 50 cal machine guns, M-60 MG's, and murderous intent. It was great to be in combat arms. And remember, when

we went on R&R, that we discovered that combat soldiers were a rare breed? I didn't run into very many of us while waiting for a flight out in Danang! There was just REMF's. HA! Those bastards were busy shooting smack and making up war stories so they could feel as if they had balls. We have all kinds of veteran plates here in Hawaii. We have several distinctions: Veteran, Combat Wounded, Vietnam Veteran, and Combat Veteran. I chose the Combat Veteran plate. There are hardly any of those plates around.

I agree with what you guys are saying and MAN are there similarities. I understand when you say all else pales...it does. I don't know about that post Viet Nam disorder either. When I see Vets from Nam "traumatized" by their experience I always wonder. My wife's cousin married a Vet that is really screwed up. Total disability from emotional wounds! He SAYS 4000. tax payer and Chrysler Corp.(he did work for several years) dollars a month. As I've gotten to know him I am of the opinion Nam is a great excuse for being #@&%ed up. He didn't see much more shit than we did. We were SO lucky...at least I was/am. We're combat veterans that got a little taste of it all; from the tracks (tanks for some) to foot patois and of course the night ambushes. I can identify with the guys on Rat Patrol and Combat reruns, the history channel Darby's Rangers and of course the Rambo movies. I kinda, sorta, just a little bit, had some of those experiences. And because I did I feel much better about me. I realize some guys in the troop died and some took the experience more deeply than I, BUT when I watch (last night!) our guys on Hill 275 or see movies of D-Day, or Tripoli with WWI trench warfare, or any of 10,000 other battles I know I had no clue how brutal war could really be. thousand times I am so glad Viet Nam was my war. I wouldn't have wanted to be with any other unit in any other war! When I think back about when I was on the Repose (hospital ship) and try to imagine the terror I would have felt if it were part of a sea battle....sheeeet...not for me. Damn...look at Braveheart or some of that other medieval crap...THAT would REALLY suck! When I came to Nam I had no clue (still don't say some). I didn't know what a joint was or any of that stuff. My first night at LZ Nancy the 'advanced party' had me drinking from Beaufort (their VC skull) Two guys.....taught me what a joint was some months later. I liked that better than hot (or cold) beer. And this all gave me the opportunity to come home and do a little "Easy Rider". Yes, I had me a chopper. Partied plenty hard for a few years. Been in the car business ever since I got off the GI bill and went to work. I don't smoke anymore but I do drink. I too love firearms and have a small arsenal. I collect and make custom knives (mainly switchblades...honest), watch the war movies, the history channel, and do a bit of drag racing. We have a motor home and love camping with a microwave. Life has been good to me ...very good...but I do agree with who ever of us said they felt something when the Dessert Storm boys came home to all the flag waving for a few weeks in the sand and I STILL feel my worst foes in Nam were the people at Berkley and Kent State. And the liberal sons of a bitches that spawned from there!!! Oh well...what do I know or care.

Damn, for somebody who says they don't know or care, you sure said a mouthful. You are 100% correct when you say we got a taste of it all. I went to Nam as an 11Bravo and counted my lucky stars when I was assigned to a Cavalry outfit (even though I wasn't sure what a Cavalry outfit was at the time) but it sounded better than a straight grunt unit. Yes, some times were better than others (I know I liked LZ Nancy way better than Quang Tri base camp. It's like we had our own little corner of the world at Nancy. I liked Cua Viet duty a lot better than the DMZ even though ambushes across the Cua Viet River kind of sucked. I wouldn't trade my experience over there for anything.

I was a sergeant by now and we were in LZ Sharon one night for just an over-nighter. We all got cocked and decided to borrow a jeep to get back to our location on the perimeter. We get caught and they lock a bunch of us up. They get a hold of old man Robinson, he's at the Officers Club and really hammered, and he comes down to get us out. The officer of the day was a Capt. Luce. The old man always wore Cavalry crests on his collar and in the dark this Capt Luce thinks the old man is a Major. Robinson keeps calling this guy Capt Louse and is jumping all over this guy's rear end. Robinson says that he ain't about to leave in the morning without us because we are all good men and he needed us. He finally bs's us out of jail and promises this Luce that he will bust me because I was the ranking guy in the jeep we borrowed. We get back from the mission about a week later and the old man calls me in and tells me I'm too good a soldier to be sent back to the states less than a sergeant so he never did anything to me, except I think he got me a beer that night.

One day we were set up as a blocking force for some unit that was doing a sweep. We were to stay in this one position all day long. I got bored and made a bolo out of a pair of socks, some dirt, and a length of cord I had around. The area was flat and there were no targets to practice throwing this bolo at except the antenna on the tank so I used it as a target. I got pretty good at hitting the antenna over the course of the day. Late in the afternoon a Vietnamese kid comes by us driving a couple of water buffalo with a stick. I think the buffalo is a perfect target for my new bolo so I grab it up and start running towards the buffalo swinging this bolo and taking careful aim at one of them. When I release the bolo it comes out of my hand before I intend it to. Had I been aiming at the kid I couldn't have made a better shot. The bolo opened up and the string hit him in the chest. The two socks full of dirt wrapped around him a couple of time and both hit him in the chest. The kid went down like a load of bricks. Boy I felt bad that day. The kid wasn't hurt badly and was happy to be bought off with C-rations. Probably joined the Vietcong the next day.

I think "Bastards of the DMZ" fits the description of the troop very accurately. When we got a stand down day a lot of the time we didn't even get to go to our base camp. We had the pleasure of going to someone else's and got to watch them eat hot chow and shower while we ate C-rats and stunk. The one thing I thought they did a pretty good job on was keeping us in beer and ice. On A17 Jordan didn't drink beer and between J.B, Sgt Barrows, and myself we averaged 4 cases a day. I'm pretty sure that's why I haven't had any Agent Orange problems. Would probably be dead if I had drunk the water.

I remember the first time we sat up with straight leg infantry (1/11?). It was late afternoon and we had just finished our C-ration dinner and we had some odds and ends of stuff that none on A17 would eat (even the gooks would throw some of that stuff back at you), so I threw it off the side of the tank. These grunts looked at that stuff and then at me and ask "you throwing that away? Mind if we have it?" I felt bad for them...2 beers 1 little piece of ice, starving to death. I let them have the garbage and swapped ice-cold beer out of our cooler for their hot beer. We struck up a conversation and I told the I was sure glad I had my job VS theirs. To my surprise one of these guys says he wouldn't trade jobs with me on a bet. So now I'm thinking this guy has sunstroke for sure or he's so malnourished it's affecting thought process. I had to ask him why he wouldn't trade flat footing for riding with cold beer and more C-rats than he could eat. He said when the shooting starts my ass will be below ground and you guys will be a very big target with no place to go. Guess it depends on your perspective.

Man I never felt that I was nothing but a good soldier. I served with the greatest group of men one could ever ask for. In Ken Dye I had a true born leader that not only knew his shit but truly cared for us guys as his brother. I would have followed this guy to the end of the earth and would never question anything he told me. In Lucky Lou, our driver, we had the best damn guy to ever handle the steering sticks of an APC. This guy could drive the shit out of anything with or without wheels. Not only could he drive, He was the luckiest SOB I ever met. I knew as long as Lou was driving I was safer than being home on the expressway. As for the rest of the guys I pounded ground with, well I could never say enough to do them justice. Sniper Tom, Paul Schiano, Preacher, Dan Lohman, Kerry Pebble, Frank Long, Rat Gilcreast, Clarkie, Al Hall and any other trooper that I pulled Ambush with were some of the best soldiers the USA ever produced. It was an honor and a privilege to have served with these guys and I would still to this day trust my life and the lives of my family with anyone of these great Americans.

I really felt I was invincible as long as I was with this group.

Peace, Rag

I just had a question about an incident that has haunted me since I returned. This has nothing to do with Smith. I witnessed a terrible incident when I was in country not long and it has been with me ever since. I think it was out behind Nancy or Sharon, not really sure. I was riding a PC and kinda riding shotgun on the side deck, right behind the drivers hatch. Mostly to hang on to the TC cupola. Or maybe the wind was blowing the exhaust smoke further back and gassing me? We followed a river and then left it and crossed this big field, kinda roly-poly. As we entered the field I noticed a couple of Viet civilians. Man in his 40's and young girl possibly in her teens or maybe younger. I could never tell the age of those people. Any way's they were walking toward our column which was following an old tank trail, traveling at about 15 maybe 20 MPH. As the PC I occupied approached them (the civilians) it had caught up a roll of concertina wire, somehow that wire was already rolled out on the ground or maybe it had fallen from the PC, I don't know. But it ended up extended out a hundred feet or so, as long as a roll of concertina was ? I don't remember. IT had become entangled in the rear sprocket or one of the idler wheels on the side opposite me and the driver. It turned at the same RPM as the wheel it was attached to, and was whipping the ground to our right rear. Just about the time I had noticed it sticking out rolling along and flailing the ground as it bounced 2 or 3 feet above the ground. It was picking up grass and sticks and spinning them into the air. The whole thing was surreal to me at the time, you know how you see something happening and you can't do anything about it, and you know the results are going to be catastrophic? My head turned forward to gauge how far away the ole man and little girl were away, and to see if they might escape the impending danger. I saw the ole man yell something to the girl, and then I saw him jump over the jagged razor wire leaving the girl to fend for herself. The poor child was immediately caught by the flailing wire and wrapped in a tight cocoon of sharpened steel. Kind of like those Mexican finger trap things. This whole thing happened in a matter of seconds, and I sat, either on my butt or was stooping-squatting on the deck or near the TC cupola, behind the driver. I reacted as fast as I could, without thinking almost; I extended my right leg and kicked the driver square in the back of his head. That was the first thing that came to my mind. I really didn't have any time to do anything else. Well, as you can expect the driver, threw out the anchor and we just about did an endo by the time we stopped. You remember how the suspension was on those PC's when you stood on the brakes. As the vehicle rocking back forward following the initial stop I was practically running off the plywood cow-catcher or shield located on the slopped front of the of the old PC's. I made tracks over to the place where the girl lies in her cocoon bleeding profusely. I tell you, It made me sick! I thought she might be dead meat, but I think she survived! At least as long as she lay there, waiting for us to cut her out. An other vehicle must have

witnessed the whole incident transpire, maybe several others. I remember others ran up with their wire cutters as she wailed and began cutting her out. I still remember that I had thought it was really quite a fast response from the guys who had to locate their wire cutters rolling around in the bottom of their vehicles and beat feet over to the scene of the accident. But it seemed to take a long time to cut her out. As soon as my driver had been able to free himself from his CBC helmet and secure the vehicle he came looking for me, with blood in his eye. I found myself trying to explain my kicking him in the head with vigor and haste. I remember he still hadn't grasped what had happened, as he ran up to me. I really thought I was going to get my ass kicked, but he finally understood my dilemma and spared me. I remember the ole man came up and was greatly concerned for the girl I assumed at the time, was his daughter or granddaughter. It seemed like forever till the dust-off arrived, and when it did they had to take the ole man too (I think). Maybe she was so young she couldn't communicate with the medical people or that was their concern. Anyway, I think they did take him on the same Huey. I never saw either again. I have always wondered how that turned out. I can see the whole experience in my minds eye even today. I remember being really angry at the ole man for jumping and leaving her. But in retrospect maybe that's all he could do. And I think they would have both been better off if they had laid down and put their faces in the dirt? Who Knows? Like that picture of the little Viet teenage girl shone on the cover of Life magazine, Naked, screaming, burning with napalm. How could anyone forget?

I believe we all did our best, but I always wondered if maybe I could have had a better sense of what was about to happen, and done more to avoid it. I think the driver was Jim Mann. Or someone with about his general build. I have no idea who the others were, guess might be, SS maybe PR? I just don't remember. Do you have any recollection of this incident and who the missing faces might be? I would be interesting to find out who they were and also about how they remember that day? Sorry to burden you with the gory details, thought you might remember? Anyway that's all for today. That's enough, right! Wild Bill Dodds 'Peace Bro.'

Bill, That is one awful incident to have witnessed. Nothing else the old guy could have done but yell and jump. Give him the benefit. Nothing better for you to do but make the driver stop, however you could. You did. Give yourself the benefit. I have no further info, wasn't there, never heard of it. Keep in mind, though, however sorry that incident was, you did what you could. Violent times, bad things went down. That's the nature of life-and-death struggles involving a lot of force. The thing is, you were there, you dealt with it as best you could, better than an SOB who didn't give a shit and just thought, "Oh, lookit that, poor gook kid caught in the wire." Better for her that you were there and not somebody who had no heart and didn't give a damn. Don't put too much weight on that pic of the little naked girl on the magazine cover. There was a story behind that photo op, too bad I don't remember it anymore, could be researched, but the situation was not what it supposedly depicted. Ditto that photo of the vietnamese officer blowing the brains out of a VC. There's a story there. You never know when what you see in the press is propaganda of some sort or another. But you have a pic in your brain, and you know how you personally reacted, and nobody but you, Bill, can pass judgment on your actions. Looks clean to me - if that young lady still walks the earth, and she knew the whole story, she might even thank you. Think of it - you were called upon to do something or not - was it not good that it was you who had the responsibility? LTF

LTee,

Great note. I know exactly how you feel. As an NCO my biggest fear was to have someone under my command get hurt or killed. I spent many a sleepless night

wondering if I was a good enough leader to keep my people safe and out of harms way. I was very lucky to have been assigned to a unit that was very well trained and had some of the brightest and best leaders a soldier could ask for. Ken Dye trained us all well and we operated as a fine tuned machine. About a year ago I called Don Barnes and the first thing he said to me was Thank you for training him so well as he felt that is what kept him alive in Nam even after I left. Now that is the ultimate compliment any soldier could ever give to another soldier. I told Don it wasn't me that should get the credit as he was smart enough to listen and learn and that is what saved his life, not me. Rag

I can honestly say that back in 1968 Vietnam was not a very important part of my life, I feel that the two above commo net messages reflect the feelings of many of the Troopers who were responsible for the safety and welfare of other Troopers; at times you had to be a real pain in the ass, at times you had to face your limitations, and at times you had to know when to look the other direction. Now, 30+ years later I think this also plays a part with these very same Troopers attending or not attending the Reunions; living down or living up to your past.

The reunions have been, and will continue to be events that I truly look forward to so that I can be with a group of true American Heros that mean so much to me. I was deeply honored, personally, when my wife and daughters attended the last one in DC. Up to that point they knew very little about what we did over there. They simply knew that it had an enormous effect on my life. Talking to other Troopers and their families, helped them understand why and how some relatively normal everyday things and events have the effect on me that they do.. Guess they feel the ole man isn't as weird as they thought ! EARL 40 Any trooper reading this who has not been able to attend our reunions should really give serious consideration to doing so. Not so much for the war stories but for the opportunity to be with the guys who been there, did that, the same as they did. The experience is priceless ! I know from personal experience that family members who attend, that they feel the same way. Wally, the rain will end soon, but the memories will not. EARL 40

"For my own part, I had been a volunteer, enlisting the day after high school graduation, and then a couple of years later going to West Point on an enlisted man's competitive appointment. So, I never really felt griped about being in the 'Nam. (Felt as though I had taken the King's coin and elected to wear His uniform, so it would be hypocritical of me to bitch about doing His bidding, you know?) However, one of my strongest reactions to VN was an abiding anger at a Congress and a country that would not let the boys from Yale or Princeton or similar such stations have the same "opportunities" as the boys from Appalachian coalfields, Harlem, blue collar families (such as my own background). I never figured out if I made a horse's rear end of myself as a platoon leader or a company commander...I always tried to do honorable justice to meeting the needs of the military organization and its mission, but with an overriding sense of not wanting to put my fellow troopers in harm's way for what seemed like an obviously unsupported and restrictively prosecuted war effort. (Maybe I didn't serve either very well that way, but what was it Cronkite used to say?... "And that's the way it is, folks" ??) " Thanks, Hank [Henry, "Hank" Gregor, was a platoon leader in the 1st platoon, 1969-1970]