

FOUR MAN MISSION

From Clare **MICHLIN**

I don't know if it was the first, last or one of many but I went on a 4 man mission during the summer of '68. Steve **Tefft** was the TL, an instant NCO John **Eargle** was the ATL, Ray **Frith**, and myself, Clare (Mick) **Michlin**.

They sent us out northeast of Camp Evans to the sand dune area where a company of grunts had been working all day and found nothing. We were given a list of VC tax collectors, VC purchasing agents and other local VC officials hoping for a POW.

They put us one each in the grunts extraction lift ships and as each one landed, we sort of slithered out and hid in one the many bombed out buildings in the abandoned village that the grunts had been working.

This was a fairly open area, so we just hid in one of the buildings as the grunts were extracted. We planned to wait for dark before we moved out. As the last load of grunts left, and we could still hear the rotor noise, Gooks started popping every where strolling around as if nothing was unusual. Remember, that the infantry had been there for hours and found no sign of the enemy.

A trail ran right next to the building we were in and a lone VC came down the trail. As we leaned out the front window to see what we were hearing, he walked by so close that we could have slapped him in the face. He was looking at something in his hand as he passed and didn't notice us until he was several steps past. Then he turned and looked at us. (WE also had with us for the first time an M-16 with a big clunky silencer on it that we were testing.)

SSgt. **Tefft** shot him several times with the not so silent, as it turned out, M-16. The effect it did seem to have was that you could hear it, but you couldn't tell where the noise came from because the gooks that were walking around started running around with no obvious sense of where they should be going.

When the rest of us started shooting, as became necessary, they figured out where we were and it got interesting for a few minutes until the gunships that were escorting the grunts that had just left came back and covered us until they could reinsert the grunts who again found nothing except the three gooks we killed.

We were debriefed by the intel officer of which ever battalion asked for the mission and he turned out to be George **Paccerelli**, shortly before he took over command of the LRRPS.

Before we went out, we all thought it was pretty cool, until Barney, SSgt. **Barnes** who was the operations NCO, said "be careful". He was not a sentimental man and was as likely to tell you to go ---- yourself but never "be careful".

SSgt **Tefft** was on his second tour as a LRRP and was really good at his job and was the best TL I had and he was a Gook magnet. We used to get inserted and shot out of our AO sometimes twice per week.

So, as it turned out with none of us hurt, it was a pretty good few hours. The grunt unit was impressed with us, and we were quite proud of ourselves even though not much of what happened was really under our control.

With regards, Mick