

MEMORIES

From Donald "Skeeter" PETTIBONE

Hello to All of you Rangers,

I have recently been in contact with Doug PARKINSON with whom I have spoken to several times lately. I have also spoken with Jim ROSS, my old friend and TL, and my friends of so long ago, Doc SUGGS & Bobby PEREZ. I have had a conversation with MODOLO and exchanged e-mails with Bill CARPENTER. It has really been a trip down memory lane.

An Khe, 1967, LRRP Hill, 1st Air Cav.

I haven't recalled some of the names such as Dave DICKINSON, Denny MOORE, Jay GRIFFIN, Leo COREY, Bob SUTHERLAND, Jim DODY, Doc GILCHREST, Joe HAVERLAND, Smitty, NEGNONE, CAMPBELL, LOPEZ, ELIAS, Willy WILLIAMS, GREENFIELD, Lt. HALL, Capt. JAMES, Top KELLY, Capt GOODING, Lt. Bobby, in many a year.

I know there are a host of others that photos and conversation will hopefully clear the cobwebs from a time long ago. I have often wondered about those of you whom I knew and lived with for a year and relied upon in some of the darkest of times. I also recall the many laughs and the outrageous optimism spoken daily regarding our return "to the world".

The courageousness of those of you who I was so fortunate to have served with has left an indelible perception of what true heroism really is. My time in Viet Nam, with you, to this day remains one of the proudest times in my life. It has always been with such great pride that I could answer the occasional question of Military duty with a simple, "I was a LRRP in Nam".

Through the years that have followed I have spoken rarely of our times, of my experiences, of the grievous losses, the torrent of personal thoughts of good and bad.

But I say these things here and now because in you, I know, I will always feel an incredible kinship that triumphs over suppressed feelings, of all kinds, no matter how much time has passed, because, I know, you know. And when one of your names is spoken, there is a keen sense of camaraderie, loyalty beyond words, a catharsis that transcends time and allows for grainy mental pictures of a bunch of skinny kids with high hopes and big balls.

I am happy to know that there are those of you who cared enough to have given of your time and thoughtfulness to endeavor to ensure that the LRRP legacy is not forgotten and always revered for the sacrifices that were made and the memories that we all share and will carry with us for the rest of our lives.

I hope to one day be able to share with my grandson, the personal heroes of my past, that would be you guys. To speak to him of the promise of the future, and ensure that he understands the price of freedom that has been paid by his forefathers. I want him to understand that it was the courage and vigor of men like you, who believed in an ideal and one another, so strongly, that fears were pushed aside and choked down so deeply until the mission was completed, that in many cases, cherished friendships and memories were turned away, in an effort to vanquish the fears, the hurt, the guilt, and of course, the sorrows.

Many lessons and values I hold dear today were fired in the jungles with you. What successes and achievements I have realized have been attained through hard work and dedication and accomplished due to the beliefs that were nurtured from my father, a Marine's Marine, and also through the experiences we shared and endured while in the service of our country.

It is in the greatest of regard that I hold each of you and I wish all of you the very best, in all things and in all that you do. I truly hope, one day, God willing, that I will see all of you once again.