

THE LAW

By

Jim Regan

It was a usual day in the Company AO, about Mid-May '69, Rangers doing what they do when they are not in the bush. The call came out of our TOC< "WE GOT A TEAM IN CONTACT!" The energies and adrenaline pumped as we all did our "magic" to recover the team. They had made contact with a company size unit of NVA. I grabbed my gear and PRC 77, jumped on the Mule and headed for the revetments where my "Calvary Horse", a slick from Charlie 1/9 Cav was already cranking.

Gunships had already been "bounced" for the team. Cobras from 1/9th Cav and 2/20th ARA (Blue Max). Response from those folks was never a problem or question. All they needed from us was a call and they hauled ass to the team's AO to support. Tube Artillery was cranking.

The remainder of the company prepared for the worst and prayed for the best. Rangers grabbed their gear, which was always ready. Web gear, flack jackets, steel helmets with chin strap down. Everything that they would need if inserted into the "bee hive".

As I flew to the team, it was a First Platoon Team, I monitored the radio, they already knew that I was in the air and how many minutes out from the PZ. The CO did his usual on the radio. "Watch your security, semi-automatic fire, keep me posted!" Capt. "P." had a way that calmed down folks even in the most trying times, "COMBAT!" Well the RTO reports that the PZ is "Hot" and they just suffered a KIA. The five man team is down to four. As we approach the PZ we can see the Cobras and LOHs making their runs and it's a horrendous site. Miniguns and 2.75 rockets tearing up the area.

Another call from the RTO, "We have two WIAs." WOW! These guys are hurtin'. Smoke is popped and we slam into the PZ. I had told the Crew Chief to keep the door gunner under control so we don't fire up the team. It was a small PZ but seemed as big as a football field. We could see the green tracers, could see the muzzle flashes from the Mike 16s AK 47s, hear the steady thunk of the "Chunker", and saw what I thought to be B-40 rockets slamming into the area around the team.

I unassed the bird and beat feet toward the team. As I approach the TL, I throw my claymore bag with M-16 mags. Always carried about twenty extra. "Where's the dead guy?" I hollered. TL pointed to his right, towards the tree line. The guy with the chunker turns and I throw a claymore bag full of HE at him.

I'm really "pumped" and as I streak toward the dead guy I see the ATL, Blanchard. He is lifting an extended LAW to his shoulder. I'm running about a hundred miles an hour and am right behind him as he squeezes down on the trigger mechanism. He sees the motion behind him, I turn my head away and wait for the back blast to blow my head off!! Nothing happens! IT'S A DUD, A MISFIRE! Blanchard throws the LAW at the bad guys.

I reach the dead Ranger and flop down. Yes, he is surely dead. Let's go Regan, get your stuff in gear and get out of here. I try to pick him up so that I can hump him over my shoulder. No go, he's not so big but he's "dead weight." So I laid down with my butt into his stomach, grabbed as much of his web gear and fatigues as I could and rolled over on my knees. Up and running for the Bird! The team is still putting out suppressive fires and moving toward the bird. The wounded Rangers are doing OK and able to move on their own.

Now comes the hard part. The terrain is much like that of the Florida swamp area. Humps of grass so that you can't really put your feet down solidly. It seems as if everything is in slow motion. I no longer hear the firing of the weapons. All I hear is the steady beat of the rotor blades. They seem to be a hundred miles away. Approaching the slick, I wonder if I'll have the strength to finish the run.

The team has reached the bird and are on board. As I near the bird, the door gunner suddenly decides that he wants to get into the act. His M-60 is scaring the daylights out of me. He's firing directly over me and all I can think of is "Oh no, they're right behind me and I ain't going to make it!" I know in my heart that the bad guys are going to get me or the door gunner is going to "stitch" me with 7.62 rounds! I do a low crawl for the last yard or so. Hands reach out and grab my burden and haul me into the slick as it lifts off from the PZ. The team and the door gunners are "coming out HOT" and expend about a million rounds into the AO.

As I sit there with the Dead Ranger's head in my lap I think, "Man, I can't even remember this guy's name!" Blanchard is having a "Hissy Fit" about me and the close call with the LAW. He settles down and they start to look after the wounded Rangers. Only "Te Te" stuff. Nothing now but the routine radio calls to Slashing Talon 65 that we were out and on our way home. Crew Chief breaks out the cigarettes and we chill.

Before we land I remember, this is Dan ARNOLD. Don't know much about him, I forget where he is from. He was a quiet, solid Ranger. I never got close to anyone during my tours, in the 'Nam. Sometimes I think I should have done better, and spent time chit chatting with the soldiers. That just wasn't my deal. I may be bad on names but I remember lots of faces.

I daydream now and then and recall mostly the good times we had, like stealing latrines from the civilian engineers, and stuff from Bien Hoa, (Requisitioning), and watching LURP the dog "bait" other dogs, and keep the rats under control, flying to Vung Tau to get a Ranger out of the Hoosegow. That's another TALE!

I try to remember all the funny stuff. Like running around the base road with the Ranger trainees and terrorizing them. Hearing LURP the dog tearing thru mosquito nets in the billets at night chasing rats as big as cats. Then the scary stuff creeps

into my mind. I'll never know how I survived. Yes I do know, it was because I was serving with the best Infantry outfit in Vietnam. Rangers who led the way.

Thanks,
Jim

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