

HISTORICAL OCCURRENCE

"SHOOT" WHAT?!

From Chuck Schwinn

It was getting toward the end of the day when we came across this wide, well used trail. On one side of the trail was a large open clearing; the other side bordered the usual trees, undergrowth, wait- a- minute vines, etc. We decided to set up close to the trail and monitor it for the remaining part of the day and leave out come early morning. Spanky **Seymour** was the TL, and I was the ATL. I can't recall the names of the other team members but they consisted of one that had a couple missions under his belt. As for the others I think it was their first mission.

Morning had arrived, claymores had been pulled in; the other members were guarding perimeter. We were all more or less in a kneeling position. Spanky and I, facing each other, were looking at our map discussing our next direction of movement when Spanky said in a normal tone of voice, "shoot". Because of the tone I took it to mean like "well gosh". Looking beyond me, Spanky grabs his weapon and hollers to the other three, "shoot *@*#@#*!"

As I turned, looking over my shoulder I saw them. My heart started pounding and seemed to drop to my knees. A patrol was coming out of the wood line on the other side of the opening and was heading toward us. About that time they spotted us. In one motion I rolled, grabbed my M-79, and started lobbing rounds toward them while the others were firing their weapons.

As they turned and fled some of them dropped their back sacks. We gathered all we could find and headed out of the area; later be extracted.

It was in later discussion with one of the team members that he said during his time at guard that night he heard movement pass by but didn't inform the rest of us.

Although we were back at base camp my heart dropped again at the thought of what had happened and what could have happened. Someone was watching over us.

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THE WRONG AO FROM Chuck Schwinn

As my mind sometimes wonders back to yesteryear I think about some of the missions I was on; those that were not so good and some that, after reflection, have a sense of comedy to them. Getting out of the situation with no injuries, this one was comical to me. One would have to close their eyes, visualize the picture, and put themselves in it. The chopper came in, hovered, and the team bailed out; over eight foot to the ground.

Why these chopper pilots chose to hover so high I'll never know. The shear impact with all that weight will jar your eye teeth and everything else about you. We're on the ground, grouped up, and heading in an uphill grade to the tree line. Now there is this big mound between us and the tree line. Reminds me now of a bare Indian mound.

As we approach this mound there is this unmistakable sound; thump. There are three sounds that are etched in my mind; the sound of a chopper, an AK-47, and a mortar round being fired. Thump, you could hear the mortar shoot and then the explosion. Oh, oh, the white cloud upon explosion indicates that they are firing WP rounds at us. Luckily someone was very bad at estimating the target range. Now we put it in high gear and head toward the mound to seek some type of cover.

The RTO is feverishly trying to make communication with base camp. There is not supposed to be any friendlies near us. They make corrections and fire again. It's getting closer. We run around the mound; nothing for cover except your own rucksack. Can't hide under it too well. They keep adjusting and we keep running around the mound. Finally we make commo and they are able to find who was firing and got them stopped. Thank goodness.

Now that it had stopped we needed to get out of the open into the trees. After we got into cover and regained our composure I told the TL that we needed to find out where they had dropped us; we were obviously in the wrong AO. He looked around but couldn't figure it out and asked if I could. I told him I would look around to see if I could. I looked at the map and scanned the area around what should have been our AO and spotted some of the terrain features that we were in and told him I thought we were at that point.

He wanted to know how we could confirm it. Simple I said. Call a fire mission for one round of smoke hanging about 200 meters. If we see the round on explosion we're in luck, if not we look some more. It was set up and made communications with a firing battery. Gave the coordinates; next communications went like this shot, shot out, splash, splash out. Looked up and bingo the cloud of smoke above. Now that we knew where we were we could find a PZ to get extracted.

I, along with others, came to the unit in May of '68. I want to thank all those who were involved at that time in the company training we received; the map reading, communication, calling in artillery, physical, and medical. Starting as a team member, advancing to ATL, and then to a Team Leader, the training gave me the confidence needed to be able to perform our missions.

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