

RESURECTING TEAM 52

From Charlie R. Beasley

I was recently rereading Gregg Jorgenson's book, MIA Rescue LRRPs in Cambodia about the mission in which **Cochrane** and **Laker** were killed. After that mission our company retired team 52 for some period of time. Two or three months passed and one day I was approached about the idea of putting Team 52 back in action and I was to be the team leader. I never thought that Team 52 was jinxed in any way but on one afternoon for a few hours I guess I might have thought that history was being revisited.

Team 52 was to be inserted in a low lying area next to a river with a huge network of trails to our north. We were inserted into this marshy area and as I had feared, we had no communication with anyone except the helicopter pilots. One of the pilots told me that the choppers had to break station for fuel at a fire base not far away. He said that they would be back to check on us without any delay.

We were left alone and I was still trying to reach our relay station (Yankee) when my ATL, Noah **Williams**, who was positioned next to me reached over and squeezed my arm very hard. He did not need to say anything because I knew someone was coming probably to investigate the area where the chopper had been just a short time before. Team 52 was well hidden in thick brush with a small clearing to our north, the direction from which the enemy was coming. The team was in a circle and Noah Williams was positioned such that the enemy was coming directly to him. The stillness was unreal. I remember hearing two clicks as Williams safety switch on his weapon was shifted from off to semi-automatic to full automatic. In less than a second he was firing at an enemy that was within six feet of his gun barrel. (No exaggeration) That triggered a close quarters gun battle that lasted for a short period of time.

Within a few minutes I heard the gunship pilot responding to my call Talon 52 contact. We popped a smoke and had the gunship work out the area very close to our position. I could see two bodies within ten feet of our position. It was within an hour of being dark and we received word that we had to strip the bodies before we could be extracted. The gun battle had ceased, but it was an eerie feeling to have to step out into a clearing to strip the bodies.

Our team was lucky to have escaped with only two minor flesh wounds as I recall.