

GAMBRELL'S LAST MISSION

From Bill Elliott and Pete Eisentrager

Wild bill

I think my shortest mission was on was when Al **Gambrell** broke his leg. .Our LZ was a mountain side. I rememger I jumped out on the low side and Al jumped out on the high side of the mountain. .He rolled to the bottem and over a bank into a dry creek.. I can still hear the dry rocks clatter as he landed on the bottom.. Even though compromised as hell, the rest of the team gathered together and were laughing, not at Al , but at Buddy **Bradly's** comment as he unassed the chopper on the low side of the mountain., "Wow .. look at Al go ..." He really was bookin' up .. there was no catching him A couple of others and I stood guard while Al was retrieved and carried up the mountain to the original lz for pick up. Half an hour max mission I'm thinking.

DUTCH

Albert **Gambrell** was TL, Dutch **Eisentrager** was ATL and Herb "Buddy" **Bradley**, had all been out together before. Wild Bill **Elliott** was rear scout and new to the team and 2 others who were on 1st or 2nd time missions were there. Elliott also carried the medic bag.... Why we had a drop zone on the side of a rocky steep hill, I don't know. As usual the TL and 2 others went off the skids on one side and the ATL and the others when off the other. Bill an Dutch had the short side with 1 other. As soon as we hit, you could hear "Albert" scream. The drop-off and the rest of the choppers saw what happened and Dutch was on the horn. The drop-off chopper swung around and started to side-step to us. We had already pulled Grambrell up higher and 2 guy's had our backs. The pilot came as close as he could come. Main rotor just about clipping the side of the hill.....tail rotor seemed to stare at our face. That big Alabama boy took all of us to get close but the door-gunner jumped out and helped and we finally got him in. You could still hear that Lurp over the chopper noise. He ended up breaking the ankle in two.....just glad it didn't compound. He still has many pins in there, holding it all together.

All of us got back in the chopper except Buddy. Buddy had got his 16 strap tangled in the skid and was just barely in on the floor. 2 guy's had grabbed him before he fell out,....because that chopper pilot had most likely wet his pants and didn't want to stay there any longer. Actually that pilot and entire crew were the best I've ever seen. They had the balls to do the impossible and make it all happen.

Buddy was actually calmer than the rest of us. But in talking with him, he really didn't want to know if he could fly. Stayed that way until we landed at the MASH.

Dutch had got the medic bag and shot-up Grambrell. Finally quiet, Albert was just concerned about his bush hat.....he wanted it for his boy. Made him happy to shove it in this shirt. Sadly when he got to the medivac tent,....they freaked out at the green faced soldier and proceeded to strip him of all his clothes.

2 day's later. 5 men went out to some God-forsaken place. Must have been close to the China sea. Almost no trees. Found a island base-camp that hadn't been used recently. The river was shallow and crystal clear....spooky....and more so, that there were no birds or any living creature around. Glad that mission was over.....5 guy's most were new. Last I heard was that a large NVA unit was found in the same area later.

Soooo. Bill that's my story and I'm stricken to it. Always have been glad to know that you were there with me.

Dutch