

STARS AND STRIPES

Interview of Rick Arden

Attached is a transcript of a recording of an interview I did with Stars and Stripes, after a mission in March 1970. I had it converted to CD a few years ago. I have been thinking that I should send it to you to be part of our archives because it is probably very rare and a piece of our history. I don't remember exactly why they interviewed me, if they ever told me, but I remember that because the area we went to was so far from any firebase in an area so remote and unknown and the fire fight so long and intense that it was something of a big deal at the time.

Hope you can use it

Rick Arden (69-70)

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW

Stars and Stripes Reporter: this is army Master Sergeant Revis Taylor with the 1st Air Cavalry Division in the Republic of Vietnam speaking with Specialist 4 Richard Arden, a team leader, Company H Rangers, 75th Infantry Airborne with the 1st Air Cavalry Division.

Rick, you just completed a mission. Would you tell us about it, please.

Rick Arden: I was working for the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Air Cavalry Division. They put us in an area far north in 2nd Brigade, near Cambodia, where they wanted us to recon an area where there has not been any U.S. troops for about five years.

They wanted us to check it out and find out what was up there. After we were inserted, we moved west toward a road that was on our map, to check out and see if the enemy was using it.

On the way we found what looked like a pretty good, well used trail. I marked it on my map and went to check out the road, and came back to the trail two days later and set up an ambush on it.

About two o'clock that afternoon we had six come down and engaged the ambush. We killed three of them and had a firefight and had helicopters come on station and they killed eight more.

S & S: were the North Vietnamese in any special type of formation when they came down the trail into your ambush?

RA: No, they were just walking behind each other.

S & S: After you had sprung the ambush, about how long were you engaged in this firefight?

RA: About one hour.

S & S: And did it complete the mission for you once you had killed the North Vietnamese?

RA: No, after contact was broke, we moved out on the trail and checked the bodies.

S & S: You Rangers travel in very small groups, you are in hostile territory. Once you see that perhaps you may need assistance, does it take very long for that assistance to arrive on the scene?

RA: No. When we sit up beside the trail, we call them and tell them if we are going to just monitor or ambush and when we call and tell them we are in contact, they get the support out right away.

S & S: I imagine being a Ranger takes a special kind of courage. Do you get very lonesome out there?

RA: I don't know about the special kind of courage, but it sometimes does get pretty lonely.

S & S: What about your supplies? Do you carry all you need on the mission?

RA: That's right, we carry all our food and water and everything we need. Sometimes, the pack we carry weighs up to 90 pounds.

S & S: That's a heavy load for you. A moment ago, you mentioned that helicopter gunships came to your assistance. How long did it take for them to arrive on the scene?

RA: Well, usually it only takes them 10-15 minutes for them to get out there. But because we were so far away this time, it took them about 45 minutes.

S & S: Well, you are back in Phuoc Vinh now. You have been back for a day or two, how much longer do you expect to be here before going back to the reconnaissance area once more?

RA: I expect to get a frag order tomorrow, and we will pack up and leave the next day.

S & S: What do you mean when you say frag order?

RA: A frag order is a fragmentation order. It is just an order we will get that tells us where we are going and what support we will have.

S & S: Puts you on the alert that you will be moving out soon?

RA: Right

S & S: Do you make any special preparations before you move out on one of these missions?

RA: Yes, we do, we coordinate with our intelligence sergeant about intelligence from the area. We rehearse everything we are going to do on the mission.

S & S: What do you think about this H Company? Is it a pretty good outfit or no?

RA: Well sir, I think it's the best.

S & S: How about the training? Is it pretty easy or pretty difficult?

RA: It is very rough, it is very worthwhile.

S & S: Rick, your soon to be a sergeant, I understand. When do you think that will come to pass?

RA: Very soon I hope

S & S: I'm sure you do. Where's your home back in the United States?

RA: Marmet, West Virginia

S & S: All right, Sir, thank you very much, and the best of luck to you for the remainder of your tour. Specialist Four Richard Arden, a team leader with Company H Rangers, 75th Infantry /Airborne, 1st Air Cavalry Division, in the Republic of Vietnam. This is Army Master Sergeant Revis Taylor.