

## Michael N. Tousey

TELEPHONE: [REDACTED]

April 2, 2003

Dear Jim,

These are about half the articles that I saved. I'll get to the rest in the future. Just to help you out in using these, I'll make a few comments.

I came in country as a grunt, and was with Delta from July to about Christmas, in a machine gun team and then with mortars. When we returned from Duc Lap to the Ban Me Thuot area (in Mid December?), Delta set up at Battalion. Some engineers were blowing 55 gallon drums in half with det cord. A piece about three inches long and half an inch wide hit me in my upper right arm and I was off to a hospital in Ban Me Thuot (no purple hearts for getting hit by a flying shitter in those days, but it apparently brought me to the attention of Colonel Sulenski). When I came back out, he called me in and asked if I would be Battalion Stringer (I don't know how he found qualifications in these facts, but I was really happy about the assignment).

As you can imagine, the project was not independent journalism. The mission, as given to me and as I developed it in my own mind, was to give exposure to commanders who were accomplishing their missions and to get unit names and individuals some attention.

We worked under a number of rules: no American casualties were ever mentioned or shown in pictures; enemy dead, wounded and captured ("detained") were okay, but no pictures of blood and gore; Americans never lost; etc. As a result, this material does not provide an accurate historical record, but it might contribute to one. Division PIO checked all enemy casualty figures, which created some trouble for me when our officers felt I was changing them to lower figures than they reported to me. PIO apparently had someone checking official reports.

I had a weekly deadline (cannot remember the day, but I could figure it out with an old calendar and referring to where I wrote letters from). This meant I had to return to Enari weekly to turn in film and stories (Damn! They had showers and cold beer there, but I toughed that aspect of the job out.) I usually would get in late in the day (almost always after chow), clean up and head for the club. The next day I spent the morning writing up stories, working on press releases for sending home (I tried to get all this done when guys came in country, the story was always the same—promotions, R & R, going home—so I could prepare it for typing and have it ready when it happened). Then I would head over to Division PIO to turn stuff in, meet with the pros there to discuss the previous weeks material (why it was or was not used, etc.), get film and stop at the PX to get stuff ordered by guys in the field. If everything was done, I could get to the Club (I usually went with other guys who were in the rear for one reason or another, along with some of the guys who were back there all the time). Next morning I would grab some breakfast and head out to the field for a plane or chopper going out to, or at least toward, the Battalion for another week (sometimes got detoured to unexpected places).

At Battalion, I would review the logs, and talk to people (officers or NCO's) about what was going on and where. After writing up what I could based on that info, I would pick a unit to head for based on what I had learned (if time allowed, I repeated this stop on the way back to Enari). With the Companies, I usually hung out with the CP at night, except for Delta where I was with my old platoon most nights. Daytime, I looked for stories (just bull shitting to see what of interest had been happening) and humped wherever if they were moving. To keep people from getting pissed with me, I

made a point of taking a watch every night. Since the Colonel had set me up, it was pretty good. I produced stories regularly, and no one felt they could screw with me except him and the Bn XO. That changed a little after Colonel Sulenski was killed, but not much. If you pay attention to the dates, you will see a significant break in material after February 23, as I was hit and sent to Japan at the beginning of the Chu Prong fight on March 2. I think some of the stuff you already have fits in this timeframe, and some with my byline probably was written by somebody at Division who came by the hospital and got the information. Some of it sounds like my writing and some does not.

As to writing the stories. I tried to take down as much as possible close to verbatim, but also usually asked guys if it was okay if I put a few words in their mouths when I wrote it up. This was always agreeable, and I made it a point to keep the quotes close to my notes and accurate. Surprisingly, the most successful story I ever wrote came right at the beginning, the larcenous pig. As you can see, it got printed all over the country, but I am told it went on AP or UPI and was printed at home as well. I also had one photo which went on the wires and was printed at home—of Charlie Company in a coffee plantation near Ban Me Thuot. I had it framed and it has been hanging on my wall for over 30 years. To me it represents the feeling of endlessness we all felt early on in our tour of duty. I have sent a copy which I would like back.

I also came across a number of black and white photos, but with no information attached. I do have contact sheets with my notes attached to the back. If you are interested, when I get some time I can try to match the notes to the prints and identify who is in them. Let me know if you want them and we can work some way out to get them to you without risking losing them.

Hope you can use this. If you need more help with it, let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Michael".

Michael N. Tousey



TELEPHONE: 

April 2, 2003

Dear Jim,

Here's the rest of the stuff I have. I tried to get every reference to either Battalion—hence the scholarship reports. Also, I think my copy machine toner is running low; I hope that is not a problem.

The two articles about "Lt X" have nothing to do with the assigned topic, but they were the most interesting thing printed for the whole six months, so I thought you might like to look at them. Unfortunately I was not around for the first two and never saw them, and do not have the later one or ones.

The breaks in coverage are a result of my time in Japan, and R&R (in May to Bangkok, then I picked up an extra one in June to Tepei). I left for Camranh and the trip home about 7/15/69. I may have had some stuff printed after that, but hey I was gone! I picked out a kid to do it after I left, but I do not remember his name. It would be interesting to know how he did.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mike".