

Journal March 13, 1997

Hi.

Well, I got your package and the stuff was great. Keep those Oreo's and pepperoni coming and a few more cans of that fruit.

We have spent the last couple of days in contact here in the Bong Son plains and in the hills. We eliminated the enemy but had many casualties.

Two of my pals got wounded and one was K.I.A.

On the 11th I had my first big encounter. We were out in the low lands early in the day and it was beautiful. We were just lounging around.

We were getting word that a unit was getting hit heavy and that they were in need of more men.

The word finally came down to "saddle up" and that we were going to help these guys out.

I had no idea of where or what. We generally never know much. Maybe that's a good thing.

The choppers came and in we went. I had no clue (as usual) to what was happening. As we rose up into the air I wondered, how long before we get there, what do I do when I get there, what is the scene. Is it Chaos or snipers.

I asked my friend Richard Rowell what do we do.

He told me to get out of the chopper as soon as it hit the ground.

Get out as soon as I could.

The whole company seemed to be up in the air.

All around me were choppers full of G.I.'s. maybe 15 or 20 choppers.

It was very impressive and exciting.

The word was that the Huey gun ships were going in first to blast the area and give us cover as we got off the choppers. Again I was told to

"get the fuck out as fast as you could". I remember I was a bit dry mouthed.

Far out in the distance I saw the hills ahead with a large plume of smoke rising up. The birds were right there, just like that. The lead Hueys were letting go with rockets and machine gun fire. There was one section of the hill being blasted to hell.

Then the sensation came of the helicopter dropping quick like a yo yo on a string.

GO! GO! GO! I heard... as I hit the door I saw immediately that I had to jump down several feet and that the chopper could not possibly have landed on the rocks.

I saw a man waving me down frantically and just like that, I was flying out of the bird. I hit the ground and rolled toward a rock and the ground man said,

"Down the hill, move down the hill". I rose up and saw in front of me the incline

down. Off the left and right I saw huge rocks with GIs already in position behind them. From the scene I could tell that all the action was to my left.

I hit the hill and I could hear actually feel the bullets around me.

They were so close. I looked ahead for a place to go to, "I need one of those rocks" my mind screamed, but no rock was close enough and I

went down behind a large bush fearing that I would not make the

distance to the other guys. I lay there looking down the hill and all these guys

were sitting down and shooting now and then from around the boulders that protected them. The Gun ships were

blasting away and I was curled up by the bush.

As the time went by I was getting cramped up and stretched out to regain the

feeling in my legs. The Top of the bush was blown away and I said, "Shit, this guy has me in his sights but is

just at the wrong angle for him to see me. I was froze more than ever.

I kept looking down at the guys on that hill who were relaxed because they were

out of the line of fire. What a bad break for me. I don't know how long I was there.

The Hueys were back with another salvo of fireworks for the hill as they hit someone

came running by and said lets go, down. I got up, pointed my m-16 to the left and sprayed a magazine, assuming I was giving my self cover along with the chopper support, and took off running like hell. As I neared the bottom of the hill my boot gets caught in between the rocks and I fall like a broken twig. I'm O.K. I say to myself.

keep down. My knee is ripped open but not bad.

Just like that, guys are walking around. There is sniper fire from the rocks but we hear that there are guy up there cleaning out the "Gooks". I think Sgt. Edmands gives me a smoke and asks if I was all right. Then a war magazine guy takes my picture and I got up.

We made our way down into the trench and saw where the enemy had attacked from. I did not see any bodies but I remember seeing a helmet of a G.I. all bloody and the name of De Marco or Di Mico . Dafranco some thing similar and that the guy was from Queens.

Later on we patrolled the hills throwing grenades into spaces in the rocks where someone may have hid. Late that afternoon we were standing high atop a hill calming down when one of the R.T.O's gets hit from a sniper. I was 10 feet away. He fell and we opened his shirt and saw one a tiny hole where the bullet went in. No exit wound.

No Blood He was hit in the stomach. Probably a carbine round. All I remembered was heans of bug spray and put them in a circle, filled them with insect repellent and lit them up so that the chopper could see us and pick the kid up. It worked and I heard that he survived. What a day. I learned that Richard had got shot coming out of the bird.

The sun is out and it hot and very bright. Everyone is waiting for new clothes. The choppers will bring them soon.

I am sending a map that I came across. You can find more places and see where I have been. The boxes are great. Fruit in the can, cookies, and writing paper. We get candy and cigarets so no need for that stuff.

Thanks for everything and I'll be seeing you soon.

Love
Anthony