

Douglas Young

From: Douglas Young [webmaster@tallcomanche.org]
Sent: Saturday, February 07, 2004 1:47 PM
To: Ed Boyt
Subject: RE: C 2/5 Cav

Boyt

Broda (KIA Nov 65)

Harper - KIA Oct 65

McElwee

Hi Ed - -

More and more, as each day goes by, I envy you retired guys!

Okay - more questions.

Reference the mortars. It was SSG Jack Hembree who told me he had been the Mortar Platoon Sergeant, and that just prior to deployment, his platoon was moved from Delta Company to C Company - as were all the other mortar platoons. But - - you already had a platoon of 60s? Who was the Platoon Sergeant and/or Platoon Leader?

By the way - when I was with the company, we technically had a mortar platoon, but it was really a squad made up of 6-8 short-timers who worked for the 1st Sergeant. They carried one 60, with a few illum rounds - no HE - just to get us some light when we got hit at night before we could get artillery illum in for us. They acted as the company reserve in the center of the night defensive position.

Okay - see how dumb I am - Reply By Indorsement to whom? Were these Congressionals?

Doug

-----Original Message-----

From: Ed Boyt [mailto:████████████████████]
Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2004 10:52 AM
To: Douglas Young
Subject: Re: C 2/5 Cav

Doug,

RBI's is the acronym for Reply By Indorsement. Damned if I recall the attachment of an 81mm mortar to each company because we had organic 60's in each company. Check with Mullen and OKeefe on that one. They must have turned D Company into another rifle company after I left because during my tour it was still the weapons company; however, we did experiment with TO&E changes from time to time depending on the mission.

Concerning Sgt Harper's death, by the time I was informed, nobody indicated that it was an accident. This is understandable because it's much easier to chalk it off as a result of hostile fire than face all the administrative crap along with the embarrassment of such a thing. Hembree and McElwee could be (after all these years) right.

eb.

-----Original Message-----

From: Douglas Young
To: Ed Boyt
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2004 9:33 PM
Subject: RE: C 2/5 Cav

2/7/2004

Info removed by VNCA

Hi Ed - -

I'll reply to a bunch of your emails.

First - congrats on the prostate cancer. Hope your "looker" doc is correct!

Next - I had quite a talk with Jack Hembree yesterday. One of the things that was new to me had nothing to do with Harper. He told me that he actually trained most of the time as part of Delta Company, which was the battalion Heavy Weapons Company, but just prior to deployment, they moved a platoon of 81s to each of the three rifle companies. Is that correct? Also, does that mean there were only three rifle platoons organic to the rifle companies prior to that time? Finally - do you know if this was an actual TO&E change, or was this just something done when you went to Viet Nam. I know the 106 recoilless rifles were pretty much parked, except for base defense at An Khe or maybe at LZ English later. Do you have any idea when Delta Company was changed into a rifle company, and Echo Company added? (Later E Company was composed of the battalion mortar platoon and the battalion recon platoon - that's all)

Next - you sent me an email saying you "**received a stack of RBI's requiring all information about his death and subsequent evacuation of the body.**" What's an RBI? (Have mercy on me - remember I got out of the Army.)

Finally - here is what I am getting from both Hembree and McElwee. As I've said before, keep this confidential.

It seems the mortar platoon was humping across the rice paddies, staying off the dikes. That meant humping through wet rice paddies. (Must have been fun with base plates and tubes.) As they approached each paddy dike, the first guy would often have to boosted up the slippery slope, then he would help the next guy up, etc. A guy named Ferguson was one of Hembree's RTOs, and he was atop the dike and turned to assist Harper up. He extended his M16 - muzzle first. The weapon discharged, and Harper was dead very quickly. Hembree and McElwee's story is just about the same, except McElwee did not know the name of the guy who shot Harper. Hembree knew nothing of Broda.

As to the incident you mention below about the semi-drunk with a .45, that would not be the only incident like that. I know of an actual out-and-out murder that happened in 1971 - was a drug case.

As to asking Kelly, Talton, Mullen et al, Kelly told me awhile back he had heard it was a single shot from a .50 caliber, and that what I used to have posted on the site. Now - he may have known better and just gave me the "company line", but I doubt it. If he was your RTO, you would have known if he had known.

Finally - if you would rather talk on the phone about all this, that's fine. I hope you trust me enough to know I am not muck wracking - just curious about what really happened in Viet Nam. Its interesting stuff

Take care - -

Doug

-----Original Message-----

From: Ed Boyt [mailto:]
Sent: Monday, February 02, 2004 3:19 PM
To: Douglas Young
Subject: Re: C 2/5 Cav

Doug,

Go ahead and ask them (Mullen, OKeefe and Bethune) about these two situations. Don't leave out Kelly and Talton, you'll never find out unless you ask. I remember an incident after I had left C Company where one semi-drunk GI took a .45 and killed another member of the company. Please keep me informed concerning all this.

2/7/2004

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eb.

— Original Message —

From: Douglas Young
To: Ed Boyt
Sent: Sunday, February 01, 2004 2:55 PM
Subject: RE: C 2/5 Cav

Hi Ed - - thanx for the fast reply.

I know this might sound hokey, but I'm hesitant to ask the others who served during your time. Weird, I know, but I'd like your permission to talk to them.

I have trouble getting in touch with Bethune. Mullen I trust to be cool. Also, I recently heard from Jack Hembree, who I understand was a Platoon Sergeant at the time.

What say you, Six?

BTW - how's it going with the prostate problem? Haven't heard in a awhile

Doug

— Original Message —

From: Ed Boyt [mailto:]
Sent: Sunday, February 01, 2004 10:48 AM
To: Douglas Young
Subject: Re: C 2/5 Cav

Doug,

In both cases, I didn't get to the scene until later, although in Harper's case a Life photographer (Enrico Saricini) was near and took some shots. If there had been an accidental shooting, I believe that Enrico would have told me; however, one can not be sure. In Broda's case - to the best of my memory - he was killed and evacuated before I could get to the area. McElwee could be right on both counts but I would have to check with the other guys who might have been near the incidents and could expand the stories.

Colder (wind chill -04) for the past few days. A snow and ice storm is headed our way for tonight and tomorrow.

As an afterthought - Bethune and Mullen might be able to throw more light on these matters than me.

eb.

— Original Message —

From: Douglas Young
To: Edward A. Boyt
Sent: Saturday, January 31, 2004 2:15 PM

2/7/2004

Info removed by VNCA

Subject: C 2/5 Cav

Hi Ed - - how the hell are you?

The rest of this email is to be held in confidence. I am asking you some questions because the two of us were the CO of the same company.

I just got through talking to James McElwee on the phone. He told me that SGT William Harper's death in October of 1965 was accidental, not combat. His story was that you guys were operating in an area where there were terraced rice paddies, and the first guy up an embankment would help the next guy up. In this case, the point man was a young, small trooper from Pittsburg (McElwee could not remember the name), who extended his M16 to Harper as an assist to get up the embankment. The rifle discharged, and Harper took a round in the left side, effectively killing him instantly.

Trust me on this, Ed - - this is *not* something I will put on the web site. Harper's family, nor the guy firing the shot need read that kind of shit on the Internet - but I would like to know if the story is true. Jack Hembree has indicated he wants to talk to me as well, but I have yet to hear back from him via email with a phone number.

Also - we talked a little about Broda's death in November. Everyone agrees it was friendly artillery fire. McElwee's spin is that there was overhead fire that night, but that the target was so far away that you could not hear the rounds impact. In other words, there was incoming fire in support of C Company. Couldn't hear the tubes firing either - just the rounds going overhead. So, if you guys were on the gun-target line, a short round would have gotten Broda. But - the odd thing McElwee said was that Broda was out in front of your perimeter by about 20-25 meters - that they found him leaning up against a tree. McElwee says he didn't hear the round impact (may have been asleep). Also, he said he never saw any blood on the body.

So - was it a short round? If so, what the hell was Broda doing out in front of the foxholes? Any thoughts on that?

I'm not digging up dirt, Ed - just trying to get facts. I assure you, I will not put derogatory information on the web site. For instance, I know of another incident in 1971 listed as KIA when the guy was actually shot by his own squad (it was an accident - the kid didn't use the password) , as well as a drug murder in 1971, and an officer relieved for drug use. I know lots of stuff like this, but I don't put it on the site.

Call me if you wish - or just take you time to reply via email.

Hope you're not having to dig out from too much snow!

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2/7/2004

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