

May 10-13, 1969

Diary May 23 - Aug 7
1969

died shortly there after.

This was my first contact with a seriously wounded person. His arm was busted in many places and hung like a rubber hose. The side of his head and upper back were partially blown away.

At first I remember acting panicky, but shortly was surprisingly calm. I think it was because of the help of the other Medics that kept me that way. I was not needed for the other two KIA's, because they killed instantly by incoming mortar.

The days that we were hit by the gooks, we killed many and took quite a few unhurt and wounded captives.

After all this; it luckily was our turn to go in and secure the LZ. We sure needed the rest.

Since I've been here in "C" company a lot of weird things have happened.

The first day I got to the company, the company decided to use a mule in the jungle to carry heavy weapons. That didn't work to well because the mule slowed us down too much, so about four days later we sent it back to LZ Jess on the log bird.

Another weird thing that happened was on one of our CA's. One helicopter crashed to the ground about three clicks from our target. Luckily there was only minor cuts and scratches.

Just a couple of days ago just after receiving log; with our platoon in the lead for point, ran into a hive of bees. Boy, I've never seen anybody move so fast in the opposite direction. Two men from our Platoon, and one from the CP were Medivaced back to Tay Ninh. We now still have a couple of men running around here with fat arms or faces. I thought I was to escape the bees; but I didn't. One of the men came running up to me yelling "Medic, Medic", with bees swarming around his head. Well instantly one of the bees decided to stick his little stinger in my ear lobe. We got most of the bees out of the area by popping smoke. When I needed mine most; I reached back for it, but found out someone had barrowed it earlier without letting me know.

That wasn't all that happened that day. The day was late when we got to our FOB area so we were digging our holes in the dark. We only got about half way finished with our hole when it started to rain. Everything was getting wet, and the foxhole was filling up faster with water than we could dig it. After finally setting down to rest on the nice wet ground, the gooks decided to return to their bunkers located just outside of our perimeter. Everybody got up and jumped in their fox holes of mud. What a mess. I've still got mud on me now from that day. So far I think that that day was the most miserable of them all.

I could go on and on with the little crazy incidents that happen day after day. But I would be witting in this book for ever.

From here on in this book I'll be writing about the things that seem interesting to me; when I have the time.

Saturday May 24, 1969

Today we CA'd from our old location to a point near LZ Ike. It was heard that the NVA might be in this area. Well we did find out that they were in this area. You wouldn't believe that they would still be here after the area had just been bombed earlier by B-52's.

Our company had to find out the hard way. Our 1/6 element was walking point when two men got wounded. One was Sergeant Dodd on the left file, and the other was a man from the right file. Dodd was wounded on the lower portion of his right leg. I applied a pressure dressing; and gave 1/4 gram of morphine. The other man was shot in the stomach.

Both were Medivaced about 25 minutes after contact. Dodd will make it for sure, but I would put only about 60% odds on the other man making it.

After we pulled back I noticed two bullet holes through the right side of my pack. At the times the rounds went through it the pack was to my right side luckily. The only things damaged in my pack was a bottle of calamine lotion, desenex ointment, and a pair of scissors. Makes me mad, now my packs no longer waterproof.

Right now we are set up in an open field just outside of the bunker complex. After we left the attack area Jets and Choppers came in and took over, so I hope there aren't any gooks left because we're low on ammo, and this open field is kinda flakey. Especially with a full moon out; just enough to try to write this in the half clouded moonlight.

well all that's left is to see what happens.

Doc Watson's Tall Comanche Diary (Vietnam 1969).wps

Tuesday May 27, 1969

Well the area was gas before we went in. We found some of the packs; but were torn apart by the gooks. The two guys are okay, and are being transferred to another hospital.

Nothing happened lately. Looks like we Charlie Alfa tomorrow. Sounds like another bunker complex.

Can't believe it. Has rain in the last four or five days.

Think I'll get an Army ring.

Better start plans on the "A" Frame.

Friday 13 June 1969

Well we've been out of the LZ for about a weeks now. We went into the LZ the day after we spotted the gooks in a trail near a bunker complex. We killed one and couldn't find the other. We were near one of their training areas. What a layout. Just like back in the states.

Well everything went okay at the LZ. A few gooks here and there tripping flares, a few mortar rounds close, that's about it.

Then it happened. One day after coming out of the LZ. First off earlier in the day we ran into a couple of gooks riding bikes down the ole Mustang. We fired at em and chased em into the woods. So no more of em. We recieved log and was waiting for a CA. We had eighteen birds to pick us up for the CA. The first eight were coming in and all hell broke loose. We were getting AK fire and mortars. The first lift got out and left the rest sitting (down low). I was lucky and was on the first lift. We were heading for our destination, but turned back to help out the rest of the company.

Well when we were back we jumped out of the bird and stayed low because there was still small arms fire. We ran to an old FOB area where everyone was setting up. We all dug those old foxholes deep, believe me. Well after getting half way organized I had heard about the wounded. 3/6 Mike India was killed while trying to get on the chopper. Our Mike (1/6), RTO (Frank), and Logman (Rick) were all wounded. There was a total of about 14 wounded still haven't heard any word on any of the wounded.

We left on foot to get to another clearing to make another CA. As we were leaving we had more small arms fire and mortars. No one was hurt, except a few of us got sick after lying down by a CS canister.

We got to our clearing and was ready to CA again. The birds were coming in, but one recieved fire. That was the one our CP was supposed to go out on. Boy you should have seen that bird coming in. He was coming just perfect, we thought. He was just about to land and he started spinning right between us. I back up about 20 feet to avoid the rotter tail blade. Boy did it come close. Well the Chinook came in and hauled the bird out. Then we were on our way with a safe CA. The bird was shot by a couple of gooks walking on the Mustang Trail below.

Anyhow we CA'd out of the area close by. We then humped back into the area where we first had contact. We saw bookoo gooks, but none ever got close enough to kill - - - Sofar all's okay. No contact, no gooks, and we're still working on the Mustang.

8:00 AM

2/6 just got back after chasing chickens with HE rounds in a 79. Missed the chickens.

Sunday June 15, 1969

Well Friday the 13th definately showed up as bad luck. We had one man killed and one wounded. Both in two six. But later that day we ran across ten thousand pounds of rice (40, 120 pound bags).

I'm 6 Bandid now. Big deal. At least I don't have to risk my neck going out on patrols. It was on a patrol that we got the one KIA and one WIA.

Tuesday June 17, 1969

Well right now it's raining, and I'm nice and dry in my hooch. Just got through filling my canteens.

Last night we had a freck accident from the artillery. One of their marker rounds landed in our perimeter at our night location. It was a dud round until it

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May 10th thru 13th Comments to Doug

Doug,

The following is from the notes I had written in October 1969 after my return home from Vietnam. I am pretty sure that these are the same events that you had described on the Tall Comanche web site for the May 10th thru 13th period. I have added comments to where I have questions when comparing my notes to your story. I just hope that I am not confusing the heck out of you.

May 10th & 11th?

It was about the 2nd week of May and after spending a peaceful night in dense jungle, Tall Comanche was ordered to saddle up and motivate. The company moved out from our NDP in three columns, and pushed through the dense brush until we came out of the jungle into a large clearing. Here the company secured the clearing as we awaited the arrival of our slicks for a Combat Assault. The slicks arrived at our PZ and lifted our company in three sorties to our LZ which was another large clearing in another area of the jungle.

The company regrouped into three columns and moved back into the jungle as we followed parallel and to the right of the Mustang Trail. This part of the jungle took on a very different appearance than most other parts of the jungles that we had been in. The trunks of the trees were very large, tall and void of all branches until they reached high above forming a canopy blocking out the sunlight. It was very dark and humid, and there was very little vegetation on the ground due to the lack of sunlight. As we paralleled the trail, were able to see a great distance ahead as we traveled through the many large trunks, making our travel much safer and faster.

I remember this canopy of trees well because this part of the jungle was so much different than any other that we had traveled through. It is possible that I am describing a part of the jungle that we had traveled through after picking up supplies and ammunition to take to Ridge Runner on June 19th.

After making pretty good progress, we came out from under the jungles high canopy and into the bright afternoon sun. This area again was now very typical of the many areas that we were used to humping through, with large bushes and tall thickets of bamboo giving us plenty of cover. It was in this area that Tall Comanche stopped for a break. The majority of the company was positioned to the right of the trail with a small portion of the perimeter extending across the trail. As a precaution we had M-60 positions temporarily set up in the brush at both portals on the trail where the trail passed through our position. Trip wires attached to trip flares were strung across the trail as an advance warning in the event we had intruders. My position was behind a large bush next to the trail and near the M-60 position at the forward part of our formation.

I sat down next to my pack and was looking through it for something to eat when trip flares down the trail had gone off. Two NVA soldiers riding their bicycles down the Mustang Trail from our rear, had ridden across our trip wires setting off the flares. When I heard the trip flares pop, I could see the two NVA soldiers through the smoke and sparks as they dropped their bikes and packs, and started running back down the trail from the direction that they had come. The trip flares drew the attention of the two troopers manning the M-60 on that part of the trail and had started firing M-60 rounds in the direction that the NVA were running.

When the two NVA soldiers had dropped their bikes and didi mau'd back up the trail, they had run right out of their Hoi Chi Minhs (*sandals of tire treads with inner tube straps*). A small patrol was quickly assembled and sent out running after the enemy. The two NVA soldiers had time to get away and were not to be found. The patrol on their way back, had retrieved the bicycles, packs and sandals, and brought them back to the CP. Upon examination of the packs, several papers of possible importance were found.

I remember this event as being sometime in the afternoon. We were just taking a break and hadn't set up our NDP in this position yet. I also remember seeing two NVA dropping their bicycles. Tall

May 10th thru 13th Comments to Doug

Comanche opened up on the NVA, but I don't recall any return fire. Maybe I am getting this event confused with another.

A report was called back to the rear on the radio pertaining the contact that we had with the enemy and the items that we had confiscated. A short time later, Tall Comanche was told to dig in and that this location was to be our NDP for the night.

The platoons moved into their positions providing us with a circular perimeter and started digging in. I stayed at my position behind the bush next to the trail and also started digging. My position was still fairly exposed to the trail from both directions, so for this night I had built up a berm on both the front and back of my foxhole. It was starting to get dark and noise and light restrictions were now in effect. I finally had a chance to grab a bite to eat, but wasn't able to cook anything, so I opened up a can of sardines and finished off my meal with some peanut butter cookies that mom had sent me.

Tall Comanche would have to be as quiet as possible if we were to surprise anymore NVA that might be using the trail during the night. It was starting to get dark, so I climbed down into my foxhole and tried to find a comfortable position for the rest of the night. The moon was exceptionally bright on this night, so I grabbed my stationery and began to write some letters back home. It is hard to write under these conditions, but you take every opportunity that you can to let everyone at home know that you are okay. I'm sure those back home were questioning my physical state, when they received my letters with my writings wandering all over the ruled pages.

Some where halfway through my second letter I had fallen asleep. It was early that next morning that I was awakened by a loud pop and the hissing sound of one of our trip flares going off. I grabbed my M-16 and peered over the front berm of my foxhole and could see the bright flash of light coming from a trip flare in front of our M-60 position on the trail. The trip flare had been set off by two NVA soldiers and I could see their scurrying silhouettes running for cover as the flash from the claymore mines were detonated from the M-60's position. The M-60 then lit up and started firing down the trail in the general area that the NVA were seen.

Now others of Tall Comanche that were nearest the trail, had also opened up with their M-16's and M79 grenades and fired into that area of the trail. There were a few short bursts of enemy AK-47 return fire during the skirmish, but after about fifteen minutes all was quiet out front.

I only recall that there were again two NVA, and I thought that they were walking down the trail when they hit the trip flare. We did receive a few rounds of small arms fire from them.

It was now dawn, and a patrol from 1st Platoon was assembled to go out and recon the area. I was with the patrol as we moved out of the perimeter past the M-60 position and to the left of the trail. Knowing that the enemy may still be in the area, we were moving out slowly and watching carefully as we approached the area that the NVA were seen last during the recent engagement.

After a few minute the patrol was signaled to halt. The point man motioned to take cover and that we had NVA out front just to the left side of the trail. We all took cover and dropped to the ground with weapons ready. There was an NVA soldier under a thicket of bamboo and we could see his legs protruding out from under the bamboo. After several minutes we could see that there were no signs of movement from the soldier, so several were sent forward to investigate. When the team got close enough to the enemy, they signaled that he looked like he was dead. The soldiers AK-47 was laying near his side and our team moved up close enough to poke him a few times with their M-16's and removed the soldiers rifle. The NVA soldier was motionless and would not respond. He was pulled out from under the thicket of bamboo and it was found that he was still alive but was unconscious. Two troopers from the patrol picked him up under his arms and drug him back to me. I had them bring him back to a clearing where there was a bomb crater near our perimeter where I had room to check him out.

While I started to attend the wounded NVA soldier, half of the patrol went back out to further recon the area. The other half of the patrol stayed with me while I tried to give medical attention to the soldier. The soldier's entire face was bloody and burnt and most all of his hair was singed off. It looked as

May 10th thru 13th Comments to Doug

if he took the back blast from one of our claymore mines. I was unable to find any other wounds on his body.

His pulse was weak and his breathing was very shallow. I was sure that he wasn't going to make it, but I would do what I could for him. While checking his signs, I removed some papers from inside of his shirt and handed them to 1/6 Mike, who immediately took them to the CP. I opened up a canister of albumen and took his right arm and applied a tourniquet to the upper part of his arm. I had a hard time trying to get this patients vein to pop up so I could insert the needle, but finally did and started the albumen to drip and again checked his signs. The soldier started to respond and managed to open his eyes for a second, but then his eyes rolled back. His breathing had stopped and his pulse was gone, and I closed his eyelids as I laid him back down.

The rest of the patrol had now returned, and they were dragging in another NVA soldier that was dead. I checked him out also, and could find no wounds on his body that would determine his death. I assumed that he must have died from the concussion from a claymore mine. He was then laid at the edge of the bomb crater next to the other soldier had died.

These were the two NVA that I remembered. One was wounded and later died and the other had been killed. I don't remember another that was wounded and Medevac'd out. We did have a bird come in to pick up the bicycles, weapons, personal items and papers. The slick came in off to the side of a bomb crater to take on the items. If there was a wounded NVA to be Medevac'd out, he would have probably be taken out from the bomb crater and not by jungle penetrator. So I must be getting this event confused with another. I don't ever recall a wounded NVA being lifted out by a jungle penetrator at anytime.

I had sent a trooper get me a shovel so that I could bury them. The shovel was given to me and proceeded to dig them a shallow grave next to where their bodies were resting at the edge of the bomb crater. When I was through digging, I asked for help to put the bodies into the graves. Before I could get them buried, several bystanders from one of the other platoons had insisted to have their pictures taken with the bodies. They proceeded to pose by putting a foot on the body and a rifle to their side while others took turns taking their pictures. They were posed as if they had just killed a couple of deer. I am sure that they intended to send these photos to their family, friends or girlfriends. I thought that this whole ordeal was really disrespectful even though they were the enemy, and it was my hope that nobody would ever see the photos that they had taken.

I finally had someone help me place the bodies into the grave and quickly covered them. I knew that sometime after we left the area that the NVA would at sometime retrieve their dead to take back to the rear for a proper burial. Just as I was finishing, the enemys weapons, packs and bicycles from the two encounters were brought out to the bomb crater. A slick was near and was to pick up what we had confiscated. The slick came overhead from my front and hovered above the bomb craters edge as the NVA's gear and papers were loaded aboard.

When the slick left, Tall Comanche was ordered to saddle up and to get ready to move out. We set up into our three columns and proceeded to move out. Again we were staying to the right and parallel to the Mustang Trail.

May 11th & 12th?

I don't recall any of the events for the day of the 11th and the morning of the 12th mentioned. I just recall moving from our NDP from the above event to another NDP location a short distance away.

May 12th & 13th?

We couldn't have humped more than fifteen to thirty-minutes from our ambush location when the company was halted. Tall Comanche was ordered to set up our NDP on the Mustang Trail at this new location. This to me seemed to be a really flaky situation. It seemed like we couldn't have moved more than 1,000 feet from our previous NDP, and I thought for sure that the NVA by now would have known our exact location.

May 10th thru 13th Comments to Doug

We had word from the rear that the NVA were gathering a short distance away, and possibly the grouping was as large as a Battalion. They had said that it appeared that the NVA were organizing for a major attack against some force, possibly LZ Ike.

The morning had started out hot and sunny, but by the time we started to dig in it had started to rain. At first the digging was easy, but it wasn't long before the rain turned into a downpour and the dirt was getting heavier as it got saturated with water. The foxhole was now starting to fill with water and the entrenching tool was of no use under these conditions. Instead I had to use my helmet to bail out the water and try to scoop out the mud. I couldn't keep up with the water running into the foxhole, and by the time I had finally finished digging, the water had risen to my chest.

Most of Tall Comanche was sure that we would be attacked by the NVA on this day, so extra claymores were set up on the outside of our perimeter as a precaution. I even had a det-cord leading to my foxhole from a claymore mine that was set up outside of the perimeter. I set the clacker for detonating the claymore on top of the muddy birm on the front of my foxhole so I that I would remember where it was when it was dark. I was taken outside of the perimeter by one member of 1st Platoon and was shown where the claymore was positioned. It was straight out front and a little to my right and was there just in case those on the front line got into real trouble and I would need to detonate it.

My clothes were soaked clear through and I was covered with mud. I needed to get out of the rain, so I snapped Rick's poncho together with mine to make us a hootch for the night. I hung the ponchos over a rope tied between two bushes, and secured the sides by tying each corner to a bamboo stake. I was now able to get out of the rain and had plenty of time to kill before it was to get dark. Under the cover of our hootch, I took this opportunity to try to finish a letter but soon tired. We hadn't gotten much sleep the night before, and before I knew it I had fallen asleep.

I had slept for a couple of hours and when I woke it was still light out and the rain had finally stopped and my clothes were almost dry. I walked over and looked into the foxhole and was surprised that all of the water had drained from it. I was hungry so I lit up some C4 and started to heat up a can of "C" Rations for dinner. Again it started to pour and again I was getting pretty well soaked. It was raining so hard that the can of spaghetti that I was heating was filling with water, so I moved the burning C4 inside of our hootch to finish heating up my meal. I was now huddled up in my poncho liner and sitting on my helmet trying to keep out of the river of water that was flowing through. I would roll the hot can of "C" rations back and forth in my hands between each bite to try to get warm as I looked out of the front opening of the hootch and was mesmerized by the splashing rain drops in the expanding puddles. It was now starting to get dark so I decided to stay in the hootch and call it a night. Rick had returned and pulled his helmet up next me and we talked for a while about all of the good things back home. After a short time we had both fallen asleep sitting up leaning against each other.

At about 0300 hours in the morning, we were awakened by the "puff, puff, puff" from NVA mortar tubes in the distance off to our right. I grabbed my helmet, M-16 and medical bag and scrambled through the mud to the foxhole. After I had gotten in, I was surprised to find that the foxhole was again filled with water, this time to the top. Rick had moved out through the darkness to another area of the perimeter to get to his position during combat.

For the time being it was all I could do to keep my head down. The mortar rounds were hitting outside of our perimeter to my front and left. They kept pounding one right after another, and each explosion would brightly light up the area with the colors of yellow and red. We were now also receiving B-40 rockets and small arms fire. The mortar rounds were now getting closer to our perimeter and were landing just in front of our foxholes on the front line. After about thirty-minutes of continuous incoming, the mortars and B-40's had finally eased to an occasional round here and there, but the NVA were hitting us hard with small arms fire.

The NVA were now advancing on our position and were now close enough to throw Chi-com grenades into our perimeter, with several were landing a few feet in front of my foxhole. AK-47 rounds were hitting the trunk of the tree in front of my foxhole, and I could hear many of the rounds hitting the branches on the bush behind me as the rounds were whizzing over my head. Our troops on the front line

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were returning fire with their M-60's, M-16's, M-79's and hand grenades trying to hold the NVA back.

I just had to get down lower into my foxhole, the incoming rounds were too close. I took off my helmet and started bailing water as fast as I could. Every time I would throw out a helmet full of water over the side, it kept running back into the foxhole. Somehow I finally managed to get the level of water down, at least low enough to be able to get my head down.

After about a half-hour the Cobras had come aboard. We were sure glad to see these guys! We were being hit extremely hard, and their rockets and mini-guns were a very welcome emergence. Because of the extremely heavy rain, visibility was low and the Cobra's were having trouble locating our perimeter. They asked Tall Comanche to light up our perimeter and word was sent out to all positions to light up.

I carved a small shelf out of the mud on the side of my foxhole just below the ground line. I lit up some C4 in a "C" Rations can and set it into the cavity hoping that the bright blue flame wouldn't be seen by the NVA. Others were using heat tabs or pointing flashlights up into the air to help indicate our positions. I had to continue bailing water out of the foxhole to keep the can of C4 from floating around.

The Cobra's notified us that they could now see the outline of our perimeter, and were now able to fire their rockets and miniguns close to our perimeters edge with accuracy. They had now slowed the advance of the NVA, and I'm sure if we didn't have the Cobra's on this night, that we could have been overrun by the NVA.

The NVA were hitting our front line positions in front of me and to my left extremely hard. The enemy seemed to be concentrating on the M-60 position right in front of me. The two in the foxhole had been wounded and were pulled back to 3/6 Bandid's position, thus leaving this position open until replacements could be put into place.

With the M-60 position unoccupied, one of our troopers in the position to the left had seen an NVA soldier come through. He was unable to fire at the enemy because there were several of Tall Comanche positions in his line of fire. He sent word back to the CP that Charlie had entered the perimeter. Word was sent out to all positions to be on the lookout for Charlie and that he was inside of our perimeter.

This must have been the same event as on the morning of May 13th. This was the only time that I recall that we had an NVA in the perimeter.

I was ready with my M-16, and I knew that the NVA was probably out in front of me. I was so scared and it was so dark that nothing could be seen unless there was a flash of light from one of the Cobras rockets hitting out front. I was worried that I wouldn't know if it was friend or foe if I heard someone crawling up to my foxhole. Then I heard the NVA soldier pass nearby on my right. I couldn't see him, but as he was passing by I heard him calling out, "Furst Sergeant, Furst Sergeant!" I quickly put out my C4 and faced towards the rear of my foxhole and was ready with my M-16. I just stared out into the darkness towards the center of our perimeter, waiting and expecting that he might come my direction. I kept waiting for each rockets blast to cast some light, and when it did, it would only light up the area for a few seconds so I was watching ever so intently.

A few of our troops from the center of the perimeter had moved from their foxholes and were searching inside of our perimeter for the enemy. The NVA soldier was easy to find because he was still calling out loud for the First Sergeant. After a few minutes, I heard rifle shots from somewhere near the center of our compound. I wasn't sure that they had gotten him until the word was passed around that the First Sergeant had found him and shot him. Now I was wondering if maybe other NVA may have gotten through.

The NVA were all around our perimeter and hitting us hard, but we were getting hit the hardest

May 10th thru 13th Comments to Doug

still to my front and left. One of our trip flares went off on my right, and the trooper in the closest position to the flare had picked up his clacker and pushed the button to blow the clamore. The claymore wouldn't fire. Another clacker was picked up, the button was pushed and that claymore wouldn't go off either. A couple minutes later the trooper crawled back to my position and asked me to blow my claymore. I reached for my clacker and pushed the button. Mine wouldn't work either. We learned later that the NVA had crawled in earlier, found our claymores and disconnected them.

We were lucky that the enemy didn't turn them around on us. Usually the NVA would leave the claymores connected, but would turn them around facing towards our perimeter. Then if we detonated the claymore, its blast would be directed towards our perimeter.

After being engaged in combat till dawn with the NVA, the incoming fire had finally ceased and the NVA had pulled out. It had finally stopped raining as daylight was starting to show and the company now finally had a reprieve. From the nights encounter with the NVA, Tall Comanche had suffered one dead and several seriously wounded troopers. A Medevac was on its way and would be here shortly to pick them up.

A patrol from 2nd Platoon had been assembled to recon the area outside of our perimeter as soon as visibility would allow. After about thirty-minutes, it was now light enough for the patrol to go out. They headed out into the area to my front and left where we had received the strongest concentration of enemy small arms fire. The patrol had been out for about thirty-minutes and had found many dead and several wounded. When they returned they had one Chieu Hoi and arm loads of NVA weapons and ammunition.

I only recall a Chieu Hoi and don't remember a wounded NVA. I have a picture of Duc interrogating the Chieu Hoi, but the picture is too dark to scan and can barely be seen when projected on a screen. I remember that we had confiscated more NVA weapons than at any other time.

The Chieu Hoi had been found near two dead NVA and was hidden under a thicket of bamboo. After the NVA had pulled back, he had stayed behind to surrender. He was found sitting in the squatting position with his hands up, and when discovered said "Chieu Hoi! Chieu Hoi!" when our recon team approached him. The 2nd Platoon Sergeant walked towards him with his M-16 trained on him and motioned with his rifle for him to stand. When the Chieu Hoi stood, the Platoon Sergeant grabbed him and proceeded to beat the hell out of him. The Sergeant had just lost a good friend during the nights encounter and was now taking his revenge out on the captive. Then a couple of others had also joined in kicking and hitting the NVA. Then with one on either side of the captive, they grabbed him under the arms and drug him back into our perimeter. Again members of the recon team started to beat him until our First Sergeant "Top" Allen had run up to them and pulled them off of the Chieu Hoi. I'm sure if the First Sergeant hadn't interrupted they would have killed him.

When the recon team returned, they reported that they saw many bodies and that there were still a lot of weapons and ammunition to be picked up to our left. Another patrol from 1st Platoon was quickly assembled and it was my turn to go out. When we got into the area of the NVA's attack, we found that it was still littered with weapons, ammunition and many NVA bodies. We picked up everything that we could and had our arms full and knew that we would still have to make another trip to bring it all in. The other areas around the rest of our perimeter were checked and were clear, except for the discovery that our claymore mines had been disconnected and tuned on us. One of my finds while on patrol was a hammock, and from now on I wouldn't have to sleep on the ground.

When I returned with the recon team, the Chieu Hoi was squatting in front of a bush with his hands up and was being interrogated by Duc, our Vietnamese Kit Carson. At first the Chieu Hoi had remained silent. Duc was persistent and the Chieu Hoi finally started to cooperate and was talking up a storm. After the interrogation, I asked Duc what the Chieu Hoi had told him. He told Duc that he was a captured Arvin (ARVN - Army of the Republic of Vietnam), and was forced to join and fight with the NVA. He said that he was with the NVA Battalion force that attacked us and that they had us surrounded. The NVA's Battalions Command thought that our company we would be easy to take, so they had sent in their company of newest recruits just out of training to give them some experience. They had come in from our

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left while the rest of the Battalion surrounding our perimeter waited. He said that we had killed or wounded most of his company and when they pulled out, many were taken back to the rear to be treated for wounds or buried.

We had taken inventory and found that we were almost entirely out of ammunition. The CP had reported our night's conflict with our command in the rear and requested log birds for ammunition and supplies. They would then pick up the Chieu Hoi and the confiscated weapons. There were so many NVA weapons and gear, that another slick had to be sent out to pick up the remainder of our find. The Chieu Hoi was sent out on the last bird.

After we got everything sent out and had received our supplies, Tall Comanche was ordered to move out. We spent most of the day humping again through the jungle, and later in the afternoon we had come to the edge of a clearing. Here we were to await a CA to secure LZ Ike. By that evening, Tall Comanche was lifted off safely and at LZ Ike for a much needed rest.

The following are photos that I will be sending (soon) and are from the May 13th event.

The photo of the SKS rifle is being held by one of the SGT's of 2nd Platoon (his name might have been Berry)

left Some of the many NVA weapons captured. We had already taken out two loads of weapons and this is what was for the last bird to take out.

Loading captured NVA weapons into the slick. All of the slicks came in at this position next to the bomb crater.

This LOH was the last bird to come in.

I am also sending a couple of scans of a Safe Conduct Pass in case you would like to put them somewhere on the site.

The following event happened about this period of time. Again maybe I am confusing it from the events of May 11th or 12th.

Near the same period of time of the above events, Tall Comanche was attacked by the NVA while following the Mustang Trail in our typical three column formation. We had started down a gentle slope from the dense jungle and were moving into an area that opened up and was littered with bomb craters. The foliage on the trees and bamboo in this area had been thinned out by Operation Arc Light at some earlier period of time. Just as half of Tall Comanche had moved into the area of the bomb craters, we all heard the "puff, puff, puff" of NVA mortars coming from somewhere nearby on our left. We all hit the ground and took what cover we could find. The mortar rounds started hitting us everywhere within our files and all we could do was keep down as low as possible. After about five-minutes of incoming mortar rounds, the NVA had stopped firing on us and had pulled back.

One of the incoming mortar rounds had hit near an unfortunate trooper in 3rd platoon while he had taken cover in one of the bomb craters. When I heard that the 3rd Platoon member had been hit, I ran forward to see if I could help. Both 2/6 and 3/6 Band-aids were already there providing medical attention to the trooper. The wounded trooper's pulse was gone and he had stopped breathing. 2/6 Bandaid, Donald Ambrose was giving the trooper mouth-to-mouth and 3/6 Bandaid, Dan Hooks was applying field dressings to several of his wounds. Don asked that I hook him up to albumen, while he was trying to get him to breath again. Dan reached into his medical bag and handed me a canister of albumen. I wrapped a strap around the trooper's upper arm for a tourniquet and opened up the canister of albumen. I inserted the needle into his vein, while Dan held the bottle of albumen up high and started the drip.

We were sure that this trooper wasn't going to make it, but we did everything that we could to try to save him. The right side of his head and the right upper portion of his back had been partially blown away. The man's right arm was shattered in so many places that it hung straight back behind him when we lifted him to take him to the Medevac. There just didn't seem to be much hope.

The Medevac had arrived and smoke was popped as the slick appeared from over the trees and

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was guided in for the dust-off. We carried the wounded trooper to the Medevac, and the medical personnel on the Medevac immediately hooked him up to oxygen as the bird was taking off for the rear. Unfortunately we found out about thirty-minutes later that he had died enroute to the hospital. Another trooper was also killed during the mortar attack and had been killed instantly by one of the incoming mortar rounds. He had been attended to by 6 Bandaid was also put aboard the Medevac.

After the two had been Medevac'd out, Tall Comanche regrouped in our three files and continued on through the area of bomb craters and back into the jungle following the Mustang Trail. The NVA were no longer in the area and had run off after the attack.

As we were again moving through the jungle, the thought of the earlier encounter with the NVA had left me in a very disheartening mood. We had two troopers killed, and there was nothing that we could do for them. This was my first experience at giving medical aid to a trooper who had died. I had attended several wounded by this time, but all made it back to the rear to recover. My fatigues were soaked with the troopers blood, and up until this point I didn't know that blood had an awful odor. The odor from the blood was making me nauseated. I had to wear these blood stain fatigues until I was able to receive a new pair of fatigues many weeks later. Day after day until I had gotten new fatigues, the smell of blood would remind me of the trooper that we couldn't save.

If these are different events than those that you had written about, maybe you can tell me when they happened. I was with 1st Platoon at the time, and didn't always really know everything that was going on. It wasn't until I was with the CP that I had a more complete picture of events. The above information was taken from my October 1969 notes, and I do remember most all that I had written. Many things have been forgotten and am afraid that if I don't get this information down soon, I may start to forget even more.

Thanks,

Jerry "Doc" Watson