

Douglas Young

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, November 10, 2000 8:18 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Belated Response(s)

Doug:

FINALLY! Here are some answers to your questions over three different e-mails.

9/16/00: You mentioned the link between Dolf Carlson and me. Yes, we go back to our cadet days at West Point where he and I were companymates. So you can see we started our careers together there and ended them together at the Army War College in Carlisle Barracks, PA, from where we both retired after 30 years service. We followed very similar career patterns as infantrymen, either in units with troops or in the various Army schoolhouses teaching and training. A great source of historical information for your research might be the "Military History Institute (MHI)" at the Army War College. They have a wealth of stuff, including actual radio logs on many units from Vietnam. They can be found easily on the Internet. I do not recall the designation of any artillery battery or battalion that may have supported us...sorry!

10/5/00: You mention the National Archives...let me plug the Army's MHI once more; you may be pleasantly surprised at what you find there. The story about the night mortar attack on C, 2/5, on 8 Feb 70, is absolutely true! The company had a new commander whose name I do not know. He had assumed command just two days before (on the 6th of Feb, I believe) at LZ/FSB Ike in Tay Ninh province, when we got orders to move the battalion on 7/8 Feb from vicinity Ike to vicinity Loc Ninh, north of An Loc/Quan Loi. I was the Bn S3-Air, working for Maj. William A. Hamilton, the Bn S3, and LTC. John R. Witherell, the Bn Cdr. We moved from 1st Bde, commanded by COL William V Ochs, Jr to 3rd Bde commanded COL Robert C. Kingston. C Co arrived in Loc Ninh on the 8th and proceeded directly to the field; it was the first day the new commander had with the company in the field. They were apparently observed moving into their night defensive position, and around 10 or 11 o'clock, I believe, they came under intense mortar fire. The commander was severely wounded and had to be MEDEVACed along several others. I don't recall accurately the casualty figures. LT Rudy Cariaga [REDACTED] and Mike Coursey [REDACTED] were there on the ground that night and probably have far more vivid recollection, to include the commander's name. I think he was a Captain and came from the Special Forces. I know the BN HQ had high hopes for him because he replaced a weak commander who was "ushered out" (relieved?) as I recall. I assumed command of C Co. on 9 Feb 1970, on the dirt airstrip at Loc Ninh as a First Lieutenant and stayed with it until my DEROS o/a 12 June 1970. Prior to assuming command I was a Platoon Leader in D Co, under CPT Robert W. Jones from the time I got in country in mid June 69 until 22 October 69. They moved into the TOC as S3-Air from 23 October 69 until 8 Feb 70. I feel sure our paths crossed some where during that time. Do you remember MAJ Kittleson who was the BN XO when LTC Drudick got hit in the face with shrapnel from a 120mm rocket in the attack on IKE in June 69? He was my chemistry professor at West Point, and we were having a beer in his connex in the rear when word came of the attack. I accompanied him to LZ IKE the next morning; he to assume command of the battalion temporarily, and me to take my platoon in D Co.

11/11/2000

Info removed by VNCA

10/15: (1) CPT Joe Anderson, USMA Class of 1964, did take the company from me in Quan Loi o/a 12 June 70. He had a well known BBC documentary done on him as a platoon leader; it was called "The Anderson Platoon." A few weeks after taking over the company, a film crew is alleged to have done the sequel called "The Anderson Company." That of course was C Co. 2/5. Joe's e-mail is janderson@chivasltd.com. We were subsequently stationed on the staff and faculty at West Point together in 1976/77 timeframe. I have a couple of really faded pictures of the change of command, and we had pulled out of Cambodia about a week before the change of command.

(2) C Co. 2/5 was the first American rifle company to combat assault into Cambodia on 1 May 1970. We initiated the first American fire base/LZ, and it was called X-Ray, to be sure, but I don't who named it that or why. I do know, like you, that it was not the first LZ/FSB X-Ray in the Cav's history. The BN CDR at the time was LTC Eldon D. Carr and the 3rd BDE CDR was COL Kenneth D. Mertel. Carr assumed command from Witherell o/a 21 March 70. This is NOT a mistake! It is accurate, and we (C Co.) began to build it before moving out on recon and security missions in the AO.

(3) I also have a picture of the sign reading FSB (fire support base) IKE. I know when I got there in June 69 it was clearly called LZ IKE, like you suggest. My guess, and that's all it is, is that a landing zone (LZ) didn't become known as a fire support base (FSB) until it was occupied by an artillery unit; LZ's were for infantry and FSB's were for artillery or something like that.

This should answer all your questions for now. Stay in touch and let me know how else I can assist you.

Warmest regards,
Bob