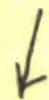


12 July 70. by Captain Eugene M. Brooks, Platoon Cmdr., Aero - Rifle Platoon, B 2-17 Cavalry.

...I've seen a lot of people hit but I knew your chances were pretty slim. Especially when I found out that the Marine who had pulled you out of the aircraft had given you a morphine shot.

...facts on what happened the day you were shot down, that Marine recondo unit was pretty well surrounded when you got there. The Dinks that shot you down were on the east side of the ridge line that ran north. They had RPG's and AK-50's with them. We were put in a LZ that was about 800 meters west. After we had moved south about 100 meters ridge line we started to run into the bad guys. S. two of them with his M-16. They were just standing in the direction you had crashed. As we moved toward the coast we could see where they had dropped personal gear as if they were really beating it. When we were about 250 meters from your bird Dink hiding behind a tree and when I opened fire broke out of the brush and we nailed them. to the Marine's, we found they had killed six. We went down the ridge line to where your LOH was and found three more K.I.A., two with AK-50's and one with an RPG with five rounds, we could tell they had been hit with a minigun, so old boy, you really nailed them to the wall. The bird

too late
& too
little



Seemingly,
LTC Gene
Brooks
died of
cancer
in 1993

was laying upside down against a large tree on a steep slope. You were laying out in the front of it on your back. WO-1 Shelters was sitting against a tree dazed and in shock. I spotted and boy what a site. I thought he had died, until I went up to him and discovered that he wasn't blood but red smoke. I guess that in all the time he must held in the hospital for about five days, I guess he really received a shrapnel hit to you, you still had your helmet on and a hole in the k. You were unconscious but shaking, I think you fly the aircraft. There wasn't much blood but you went off it looked like they had gotten you for sure. A dust off got you out on a jungle penetrator about thirty minutes later. Your aircraft was riddled with AK - 50 holes and shrapnel from RPG's. We just threw a WP at it and destroyed it.

"RPG's"
(plural)



Of the various
letters I trust Gene's
the most; a) he was
on the ground in
command of the infantry
platoon, b) he was a
two-tour vet (1st tour
as a 1st Lt, c) he is
dead & has no reason
to live.

12 July 70. by Captain Eugene M. Brooks, Platoon Cmdr., Aero — Rifle Platoon, B 2-17 Cavalry.

... I've seen a lot of people hit but I knew your chances were pretty slim. Especially when I found out that the Marine who had pulled you out of the aircraft had given you a morphine shot.

... facts on what happened the day you were shot down, that Marine recondo unit was pretty well surrounded when you got there. The Dinks that shot you down were on the east side of the ridge line that ran north. They had RPG's and AK-50's with them. We were put in a LZ that was about 800 to 900 meters to the west. After we had moved south about 100 meters to get up on the ridge line we started to run into the bad guys. Sgt. Adams killed two of them with his M-16. They were just standing in the trail looking in the direction you had crashed. As we moved up the trail toward the coast we could see where they had dropped equipment and personal gear as if they were really beating it out of the area. When we were about 250 meters from your bird, I spotted another Dink hiding behind a tree and when I opened up on him, two more broke out of the brush and we nailed them. When we got up to the Marine's, we found they had killed six. We went down the ridge line to where your LOH was and found three more K.I.A., two with AK-50's and one with an RPG with five rounds, we could tell they had been hit with a minigun, so old boy, you really nailed them to the wall. The bird

was laying upside down against a large tree on a steep slope. You were laying out in the front of it on your back. WO-1 Shelters was sitting against a tree dazed and in shock. He was the first one I spotted and boy what a site. I thought he had been shot all to hell, until I went up to him and discovered that all the red stuff wasn't blood but red smoke. I guess that in all the excitement he had just held on the red smoke. He wasn't injured at [all] except they kept him in the hospital for about five days because he kept pissing red smoke, I guess he really received a snoot full. When I got to you, you still had your helmet on and I could see the bullet hole through the right side of your visor and coming out the back. You were unconscious but shaking, I think you were still trying to fly the aircraft. There wasn't much blood but when I took your helmet off it looked like they had gotten you for sure. A dust off got you out on a jungle penetrator about thirty minutes later. Your aircraft was riddled with AK — 50 holes and shrapnel from RPG's. We just threw a WP at it and destroyed it.

11 Aug 70. by 1st Lt. Charles D. Detchon

You asked me what I knew about the crash. Well, it was early in the afternoon when the "Blues" were scrambled. It didn't take two seconds for the word to get around that it was your bird down. From that time on, there was hustle like I've never seen before. We must have done at least 100 Kt's plus on the way out there. The LZ that was picked out was about 1.5 K's west and down hill from the crash site. We pushed hard there too. When we reached the crash site, a couple Marines from "3rd Recon" were doing what they could for you and the co-pilot (WO-1 Shelters) we used to call him "Flaky" because we always told him he wouldn't last long. No one ever called him that again. Incidentally he went into "slicks" after that crash.

We had some trouble getting the dust-off to pick you up first, but with some harsh words over the horn, we got you out first, but not as fast as I had hoped.

I felt that both of you were lucky to be found alive. The aircraft was a mess, also had a lot of fuel leakage. Now, as to what hit you in the head, I can only say _____. I can't remember for sure, but some said an RPG hit somewhere on the ship and it could have been shrapnel. The wound was severe, but it wasn't direct. I really don't think you were hit with an AK, or I should be writing to a ghost! If it was an AK you were lucky. I feel it may have been a big piece of shrapnel because nothing went "through". There was only one wound, I could see at the time. You were lucky, but not lucky enough.

10 Aug. 70. by Cpt. Charles M. Burke, Operations Officer, B 2-17 Cavalry

You said you wanted something written down on what happened the day you were shot down. Well, here is as much as I can remember.

The reason you were flying in the first place, was because we only had two scout pilots and you were tired of pushing papers. Do you remember the day prior when you landed on that road in the Ashau Valley and picked up a few cases of 23 MM ammo? Remember what I told you about getting too short for that kind of [stuff?] Well, anyway, you wouldn't listen to me, so I sent you on a VR mission to the Bach Ma. It was a nice day and the top of the mountain was in the clear.

About half an hour after you took off, we got a call that there was a Marine ranger team in contact in the valley. They wanted a pink team ASAP. The other two teams were down for rearm and the next call I got was from you, saying that you were in the valley and that the Bach Ma was too boring. (Cpt. Sterrett was your gun cover.)

You found the team (two were dead, two were injured, and two were still kicking) and you soon found out where the fire was coming from. (The location of all this was about a klick and a half east of the Caribou Airstrip, right at the base of the east ridge line.)

I guess you must have seen a couple of Gooks because you must have been manuvering for a good shot. Anyway, you flew the same ground track in the same circle three times. On the third pass, they opened up from several locations with AK-47 and RPG fire.

One RPG round hit in the tail boom and a whole mess of AK rounds hit in the cockpit. One round hit your helmet from the right front and came out the back. The Aircraft started to spin to the left and at the same time entered an almost 90° dive.

The aircraft hit a tall tree, (with the top of the rotorhead first), slid down and crashed at the bottom. It came to rest on its right side.

Your co-pilot forgot to drop the red smoke grenade. He held on to it all the way down, consequently everything had a nice red gorey tint to it and he was pissing red smoke for a week (that and a bloody nose were all the injuries he received).

The Marines didn't waste any time getting to the aircraft. However, for some reason, they didn't bother getting you out. The Blues were inserted about 20 minutes later and they literally ran about 400 meters uphill to the aircraft. Along the way they blasted two Gooks right on the trail.

I guess about an hour later you were on an aircraft headed for Phu Bai. Northrop met you when you arrived at the hospital. You didn't stay there long, though. They moved you to the hospital ship as soon as you were ready to travel.

BLI
Air

PIN
min

L Z

KLI

Kt's

RPG

MIN

AK-

4 Mar 70. by Major D.J. Larcomb, C.O. B, 2-17 Calvary

As you know I was over you when you went down so here is the straight story. I watched as you made a gun run into the enemy position, then you made another, then in the 3rd pass Charlie nailed you, and you spun to the left and crashed in a sort of open area near the Marines. Of course, we immediately got the rifle platoon out and you can't believe the speed they made it to an LZ. As you might remember there were 0 LZ's near by but we accepted a marginal LZ about 400 meters or so to the west of you. The platoon fought its way down to the Marine position and killed 2 dinks on the way. As soon as the platoon got moving, I ordered some of the Marines to get to your chopper which was about 75 meters down the hill from them. Reluctantly, they went and found you strapped in but Mr. Shelters was off to one side in semi-shock. It seems he had a red smoke gernade ready to throw but forgot to throw it so he inhaled quite a bit of red smoke. He's OK now. Flying slicks. Eventually less than an hour after you went down the Medivac came in and picked you up. Cpt. Brooks and Lt. Detchon helped load you up and off you went. We got everyone out then with no further casualties. I expended over 1000 rockets in the area so I know we hurt Charlie pretty bad. The Marines also killed 6, so a few enemy died that day.