



John B. Konek

MR. MIKE LAW

RE: THREE SHOOT DOWNS ON HILL 883, 1969

DEAR MIKE:

GREETINGS AGAIN. I FOUND SOMETHING OF INTEREST THAT I THOUGHT YOU AND U.H.P.A MEMBERS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT.

I WAS READING A BOOK BY LT. COL. B.H. NORTON FROM HIS MISSION DIARY WHILE HE WAS WITH FORCE RECON IN 1969. IN HIS BOOK HE MENTIONS THE SHOOT DOWN OF TWO ARMY UH-1'S AND A LOACH. I COULD FIND NOTHING ON THE SHOOT DOWNS OR DEATH'S OF THE TWO-THREE PLOTS INVOLVED.

FROM BOOK

: AS DAWN BROKE ON THE THIRTEENTH OF DECEMBER 1969, THREE FLIGHTS OF MARINE F-4B PHANTOMS WERE CALLED UPON TO BLOW THE TOP OF HILL 883, LOCATED ON THE EASTERN SIDE OF THE A SHAU VALLEY, HALFWAY BETWEEN THE OLD FRENCH AIRFIELDS OF TA BAT AND A SHAU. THIS PLAN ALSO CALLED FOR A FORMATION OF ESCORTED ARMY HOVYS TO LAND THREE TEAMS FROM 3RD FORCE ON TOP OF HILL 883. ONCE THE HILLTOP WAS SECURED, THE MARINES WOULD BUILD AND DEFEND A 292 RADIO COMMUNICATIONS SITE KNOWN AS ZULU RELAY, ENABLING THREE OF OUR OPERATIONAL TEAMS TO BE INSERTED INTO THE VALLEY. THEIR PATROL INFO. WOULD BE RECEIVED ON HILL 883 AND THEN RELAYED BACK TO PHU BAI.

THE FIRST DAY OF THE NEW OPERATION GOT OFF TO A VERY BAD START. THE MARINE CLOSE AIR SUPPORT CAME IN ON TIME, THE BOMBS HIT THE SIDES AND TOP OF HILL 883 AS PLANNED, BUT THAT FIRST ATTACK DID NOT NEUTRALIZE THE ENTRENCHED ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS OF THE