

DO XA Operation, April 27 - May 4, 1964

The U.S. Army aviation support for the assault on the DO XA Valley (also referred to as Sure Wind 202 by U.S.M.C.) involved the entire 52nd Aviation Battalion, which included both the 117th Avn Co, Qui Nhon and the 119th Avn Company, Plei Ku. I flew with the 117th on that assault. My UH-1B and crew flew the ARVN troops in, the first day and remained for the following four days for resupply and med-evac missions. We also flew out 150-200 captured weapons and ammo, including two US-made 30 cal machine guns, plus TNT used to make booby traps.

There was an Army H-37 from the 339th Trans Co flown by Captain Kerry Foster. I can remember talking to Kerry as we checked out the 50 cal holes in the side of a downed VNAF Skyraider.

That was one nasty assault! The 52nd Avn Battalion flew into an LZ that would only take two Hueys at once and it was in a very narrow valley. We were strung out in a line a mile long. Sixteen flights of two ships each could hardly be called a formation. We were under constant automatic weapons fire from ridgelines on both sides of the valley. Each Huey made seven landings in that LZ, which included at least two burning wrecks. As soon as the ARVN troops were out the doors, we climbed as high and fast as we could back to Gia Lang for more troopers, then back to that tiny, busy LZ.

There is a reference to the DO XA assault as found in The Wars in Vietnam, 1954 - 1980 by Edgar O'Ballance, Hippocrene Books, Inc, New York; pages 67 - 68.

"Generally, the ARVN troops did not look for trouble, more often than not simply running into it, but there were exceptions, especially when more helicopters enabled men to be quickly airlifted across country. One of the first ARVN successes of this nature occurred on April 27th, when 5,000 ARVN paratroops captured the NLF Inter-Zone HQ for the Central Highlands at DO XA, near the border of Quang Ngai and Kontum Provinces in almost inaccessible mountainous terrain which had been in VC hands since 1954."

KERRY FOSTER

William E. McGee