

# The Viet Nam Triple Deuce, Inc.

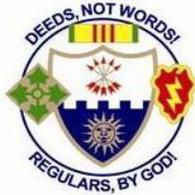
An Association of 2 Bn. (Mech)

22nd Infantry Regiment

Viet Nam Veterans

Together Then.....Together Again!.....

Thanks for Being There...&...Welcome Home



Vol. 25, No. 1

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This week has been an amazing one for me and a bunch of you guys who shared it with me exactly 50 years ago. I've talked one way or another with many of you and I've seen several common questions and statements between us, starting with "Where the hell did that half century go?" Seriously though, May 1969 was a very tough month on the Triple Deuce. Without going into unnecessary details it was filled with many trials, some defeats, and some terrible losses that steeled we survivors in ways that still show today. I am proud to know you Triple Deuce, and am proud to have been one of you in 69.

OK, what about this outfit now? What are we as an organization, and what are supposed to be doing? I'll tell you what we need to be doing more of, and that is finding every last one of us who was there from 66 to 70 and show them what they have been missing all this time. We don't have a Chief Locator any more. But we have POC's (Points of Contact) for each company and they are the guys who are digging into that task of finding and contacting the last of our Brothers, and who will help you dig up the contact info on your buds who haven't heard of or seen our web site. Use those guys, and use the Board too. We are all locators these days, and one other thing. When one of your buds appears in print or on the phone, welcome him Home like the Brother he is. And don't be shy to do the same for every Brother new find that does come into our midst. I was reminiscing with my wife the other night, and she reminded me of the dozen emails I received from guys that I did not know back in 1998 asking me to come to a reunion in Dallas. We took a very shaky step out of our comfort zone to go there, and had the time of our lives discovering this wonderful thing called Vietnam Triple Deuce. My point is that those guys didn't know me any more than I knew them, but because I had been in the unit I was family and needed to discover that fact. Please use this crazy thing call social media, or your phone, or a pad of paper, but write that guy who just appeared in the newsletter as a new find, and welcome him into our family. He needs it and so do you...

**Dick Nash**, A Co. & HHC, 69

## EDITOR'S COMMENTS



At the Atlanta reunion I was asked to help with the newsletter by wordsmithing the articles that were submitted and preparing them for insertion. Since then I have volunteered to take over the newsletter editing in its entirety, and I have gladly done so. While I am an author, I am not much of an editor, and I am still learning how to put this type of document together in a readable format, so please bear with me.

The good news is that Dan and Vera are guiding me through the process and will continue to actually publish the newsletter and get it sent out. Additional good news is that we have received many interesting articles that will fill the columns and provide entertaining reading to all of you.

For those of you who don't know me, I was assigned to Fourth Squad, Third Platoon, Alpha Company in April of 1969, under the able leadership of Lon Oakley and Dick Nash. A few months later I was "volunteered" to be the Intelligence Liaison to the local South Vietnamese and transferred to HHC. After Viet Nam I got out, got married, had a daughter, and moved to Denver. In 1973 I rejoined the Army to become a Russian linguist for Military Intelligence, served three tours in Germany, and retired as a First Sergeant in 1991. After twenty years in the health care industry, I retired again in 2013 and began my next career as an author, primarily of Viet Nam war novels. I am also on a hot air balloon crew, mess around with old cars, hike in the mountains, and enjoy life with my wonderful wife. I hope I can do justice to this newsletter.

**David Allin**, A Co. & HHC, 69-70

## REMEMBERING 14MAY69



*Editor's Note: This is a string of emails sent on May 14, 2019, commemorating the battle of the Crescent. The after-action report is available on the <http://www.vietnamtripledeuce.org/> website*

Hi, guys,

It's a bittersweet anniversary for us. 14 May 1969. For me it was a turning point in my life, a day that changed me in many ways, most of them for the better. After the battle of the Crescent, I knew I could survive anything, and I gained a tremendous amount of confidence in myself. I also gained the best set of friends I will ever have, and memories that have lasted a lifetime. There are a lot of trite phrases that apply, such as the engraved zippo lighters that said, "When I die I'll go to Heaven, because I've served my time in Hell," and the evergreen, "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger." Those kinds of sentiment don't really capture the entire experience, however. That battle, and that war, forced us to become men instead of boys, men with a knowledge of what life really means and just how precious it is. The down side is that today's anniversary reminds me of those that didn't make it home. I think of Captain Crocker, Phil McLeod, and Pine Heath, and wish they were still here to share their memories of that day with us. I am proud of my service, and proud to have served with such a great band of brothers, but I keep thinking of that song by the Grateful Dead: what a long strange trip it's been.

If you haven't already seen it, I've attached the official after-action report on the battle of the Crescent. Dick Nash sent me a photocopy of the report, which I transcribed into Word because his copy of the original carbon copy was hard to read. It isn't exactly the way I remember it, but hell, I'm old, and I didn't really see the bigger picture at the time. I was too busy covering our collective asses. Besides, it was written by the Bravo Company commander for some reason, and it's dated three weeks after the action, so who knows how accurate it was even then.

Stand tall, my brothers, and salute the fallen.

### **Dave Allin**

Thank you Dave for a very accurate compilation of each of our growth from that day, and the resulting strength, maturity, and of course grief that came to us all. I have some reservations about the after action report, as anyone who has been in jungle combat will have. No one ever knows what exactly happened. I will always think that Tex's wounds were from friendly fire created by some gook in between Alpha and Bravo who got Bravo to shoot at us by Bravo's accident, but the gook's intent. They played that game a lot when they could, as we all know. We are a Brotherhood with unbreakable bonds, and the Captain, Phil and Pine will always be a part of that Brotherhood because of their sacrifice. See you all in Dallas, and I will continue to think of you all every day the rest of my life...

### **Dick Nash**

Thank you brother. Was thinking of this over a cup of coffee this AM. Miss them too. I know they are all in a better place. Deeds Not Words.

### **Lon Oakley**

Dave, I appreciate your writing a memorable episode for a number of Triple Deuce vets. I agree that it changed most of our lives and in my case gave me a reason to celebrate life among the living. 50 years is a milestone but I hope to have many more reunions to share with my buddies. See you in Dallas. Thanks again.

### **Dennis "Tex" Holt**

I share your sentiment about getting stronger as a person. All of us share memories that will

always be in our minds. I feel comforted that I was able to find and visit Phil's gravesite, something that I always had in my mind to do. I wish all my brothers well and look forward to our Dallas reunion.

Aloha,

### **Joe Esser**

I thought of you all constantly when I was in Vietnam at the Cu Chi tunnels this February. Possibly the only thing that is really the same was the intense jungle heat.

You are in my heart forever for all that you endured back then during a terrible time.

With love,

### **Ruth Crocker**

Just one quick comment on Dick's thoughts. I agree 100% that I felt like we were getting fire from between us and Bravo Company. I agree that it was either VC or Bravo friendly fire. I remember when we dismounted and went to check out the concrete culvert; we saw movement to our left front, and that was the first time I experienced that "firecracker" effect of rounds over the top of my head. As we moved on I swear I saw someone duck into the culvert and motioned for us to initiate fire into it. (Donald Duck effect was in play so it was useless to try and tell anyone to do it). As we continued to move back toward the tracks we again experienced fire from our left rear. It was when I got back onto the track that I heard about Dick, Tex, Joe and David being wounded. It was a very scary and time of reflection for us all as we moved back out toward the road. I don't even remember where we wound up that night. We were all in a state of confusion without Dick. Rock did his best to keep us focused, but I will never forget that day.

### **Lon Oakley**

## **INACTIVE MEMBERS PROJECT**

During the Atlanta Reunion back in October 2018 a series of conversations took place regarding all of the VN 222 Vets who had either dropped their membership or never joined after being contacted. We came away from that event with a purpose to do what we could to re-establish connections with those whom we missed seeing and those whom we were

anxious to see again after 50+ years. The Board decided to undertake a mailing campaign in order to complete the task. A questionnaire was developed that allowed for comments and suggestions and was sent out to nearly 600 VN 222 Vets. A stamped self-addressed envelope was sent out with each packet. We wanted to provide every opportunity possible from those receiving the packets to respond. Details of how this was worked out and what some of the observations are can be seen in comments made by **Dan Streit** and **Lynn Dalpez** elsewhere in this Newsletter.

My comments are related to the logistics and costs of the Project. \$735 was spent in printing and prepaid postage envelopes. \$300 was spent in the actual mailing and another \$165 was spent in paying for returned packets. This is an expenditure of approximately \$1,200. The results were approximately 70 Members rejoining by paying dues. This is approximately 12% of the number we attempted to contact. I'm told that is a good response to a mailing. We also learned that approximately 60 Members moved and left no forwarding address or the time for forwarding mail had expired. And, sadly, we learned of the passing of 17 Members. The net is that approximately 450 VN 222 Vets received packets but did not respond. What surprised me the most was that, in spite of the questionnaire's invitation to help in contacting lost Buddies, not one response requesting that help was received.

In closing I will state that the Board did its best in this effort. Dan and Lynn are to be commended for all their hard work. My hope is that the Members are satisfied with the effort.

**Jim May, HMOR Prov., Co. 1968**

## **INACTIVE MEMBERS PROJECT (PART 2)**

Not every idea is a good one. Not every committee works harmoniously. It's hard to put a value on an activity designed to locate lost Brothers. Imagine a committee meeting with three members: one in Maine, another in Oregon and the third in Kansas. There was a lot of Internet time and even more telephone time. Now that the project is completed, each member will send a brief summary of his contribution to the total and his observation during the process.

Maintenance of the official membership roster evolved with the mailing list of the newsletter. When the roles of the members of the Inactive Members Project were discussed and finalized, it was determined that I would be the appropriate one to assemble the documents, get them to the printer, pick them up from the printer, and mail them. On the back side it became my job to document ones marked returned to sender by the Post Office, ones that most likely were received and ones getting the appropriate personal information in the appropriate place (on or off of the roster.)

Five hundred and ninety-nine packets were mailed. Forty one were marked Return to Sender while twelve were classified as No Contact. The statistics reported by Jim May are quite informative. Another number that would be interesting is the number of hours of hours Dalpez, May and I spent mailing, sending, receiving, and documenting. I am afraid that number might be overwhelming. I know it filled all of my "spare" time, often a full day at a time, sometimes just an hour and more, and often 3 or 4 hours in the evening. Was it worth it? As we did in Vietnam--"no man left behind"--we are doing now. If one Brother rejoined I would consider the mission a success.

**Dan Streit D/69**

## **INACTIVE MEMBERS PROJECT (PART 3)**

It was easy to see that our members will respond to direct mailings, as will their family members when the member cannot. Those that informed me/us of the member's passing did so with thanks and appreciation for the VN222, Inc. reaching out to their loved one and helping him cope and heal from his combat experiences. That is our number one reason for being. Without a strong pool of dues payers and volunteers, we cannot be effective with this venture. Dues and volunteers get the newsletters out, make the phone calls, set up the reunions, collect and archive our history, donate money for monuments honoring our fallen and support other organizations that help to preserve the military history of our nation. We also show veterans how to play the VA game—to insure they get the benefits they are entitled to. We provide comradery, a home base, and understanding not found elsewhere.

All of this, and more, takes a lot of money, making dues and donations very important. That's the way the world turns—on the almighty dollar. We need to say something to this effect in our next mailing, as well as the reason for two societies and the life member issue. We can't explain this fact just once and expect it to be remembered. Every single mailing needs the reminder. Maybe in every newsletter. "Remember! Your VN222 dues are separate from your 22IRS life membership." God knows I need reminding!

Return mailings should go to Jim May and not me, or anyone else but the Treasurer. Keep it simple. One contact for money issues. One return mailing address.

Sell the Locators services. "They can help you find your long lost buddies." "They can help you fill in the blanks about those days." Also, always a reminder that the VN222, Inc. is YOUR organization and not just for those who are the directors and corporate officers. Please replace the word 'they' with 'we'. TheVN222, Inc. is only as good as the members make it. Please, pay your dues and volunteer to help us all out. How? First step, contact your Company Locator, or any of us really.

One simple page with as few of words as possible on it. Think Peanuts comics. Comic strips with the fewest words in the dialog balloon become the top rated strips. Save the detailed articles and instructions for the NL. Again, KISS.

In the past we have spent our money on monuments, reunions, and corporate business. Spending the money for targeted mailings to members with return postage included works in getting members to respond. I believe it is money well spent.

God bless you guys,

**Lynn Dalpez, C/65-67**

## **CAMPBELL AND RASMUSSEN**

This is a narrative of my memory of the action of 02 June 1970, one that resulted in the deaths of SGT David Campbell and CPL Michael Rasmussen.

I was a shake-and-bake from a grunt unit in the 1<sup>st</sup> Division who was transferred to Triple Deuce in February 1970 when 1st Division was withdrawn. I had just been promoted to E-6, and I was surprised that I had been assigned to a mech unit. When I arrived in B Company, I was

immediately assigned to 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon as the acting platoon leader, since the battalion was, as always, short of officers.

On June 2, early in the day, we rolled up on this AO that reportedly had some serious enemy activity. While the TC's and drivers circled and set up the PC's in the open fields, the rest of us dismounted and began to advance into the jungle. We hit some resistance in the form of small arms fire, but it quickly ended and we moved in to secure the area. Sergeant Cooper, one of my most experienced squad leaders, told me, "I don't like this Sarge, I smell sweet rice cooking". A short time later we came across what turned out to be a linear bunker system, with a main area that had a small bamboo shelter, livestock wandering around, and food still cooking over an open fire. The bunkers lined a pathway for what seemed like 20 or 30 yards or more. We spent most of the day searching the area and clearing all the bunkers. This included throwing a frag into each bunker before entering. In one instance, we were told by our Chieu Hoi that there was definitely a VC inside one of these bunkers. The VC, a woman, refused to come out and so we threw in a grenade. This was the only additional contact made during that day.

After we finished searching this area, we returned to the PC's. Once there, it was determined that 10 or 12 guys from each of the three line platoons would return to the area just before dark, and set up three ambushes. We went in single file, with the rear-most platoons breaking off and setting up separately as they reached predesignated locations. My platoon was the middle platoon of this line of three, and after we broke off to set up, Campbell and Rasmusson's platoon continued down the path to their designated position. I was told later that SGT Campbell was walking point, carrying an M-60. Before they could get to their AP position, however, they themselves were ambushed.

The ambush, a "hit and run" style ambush, only lasted a minute or two, and then it was quiet. Except for the radio traffic. That lead platoon had a brand new 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant who became very excited, and over the radio he announced he had been hit, and that he had at least one KIA, three or four WIA, and one MIA. The company commander calmed him down in order to get a better situation report, and find out about the MIA. It wasn't clear at first that SGT Campbell was that missing soldier, and it wasn't until a couple days later that I found out that the KIA was CPL Rasmusson. Ultimately, the CO

gave us orders for the other two platoons to link up and move down the trail to reinforce the platoon that had been ambushed. This took some time as we were going through the same area of bunkers we had cleared just a few hours before, and we had no idea if the VC had perhaps reoccupied these bunkers, and maybe even had been part of the ambush. When the trail platoon caught up with mine, they were "diddy-boppin'" along the trail, smoking and joking, while I and my platoon were advancing cautiously and low-crawling. I was stunned, and HOT, so I got on the radio to that platoon's lieutenant and suggested strongly that he "break up that cluster-fuck before you get us all killed." I was finally told that Campbell was the one missing, so we called out his name at each of those bunkers, and when there was no response, we chucked in a grenade for insurance. Once we reached the ambushed platoon, we were told that they had several wounded and that Campbell was still missing. We set up in a circle to secure the area as best we could so that the wounded could be treated. All I had heard first hand at this point was that Campbell was missing, so we began looking for him. Nobody had told me about Rasmusson.

Once it was daylight, we were able to locate Campbell's body, and then we moved everyone back toward the PC's, as they were coming in to get us out of there. While most of us were still in the jungle, the bodies were transported to the tracks. I never did hear how they were transported to the rear, although I expect it was by chopper. When the rest of us made it to the PCs, the CO made a bee line to me and told me to hide behind one of the tracks and not let the battalion commander see me. I had no idea why, but I could tell he was pissed. When we made it back to the laager, I found out that the battalion commander had been in the CO's track monitoring the radio during the night's events and was really pissed that I, a lowly E-6, had spoken that way to an officer.

Months later, as I was out-processing to ETS, the company clerk handed me my personnel file, saying, "This is your 201 file. It has your complete Military History in it. Hand-carry it at all times. When you get on the freedom bird, you might want to look through your file. There is some rather interesting reading in there." I had no clue what the hell he was talking about, but I did what he suggested. And low and behold, there was a "Written Reprimand" for my 'lack of showing proper respect to an Officer.' It was signed by the Battalion CO. You can be damn

well sure that sheet of paper found a way of “falling into the shitter” on that airplane. (an “aw shucks” moment).

As I said, this is my memory of this action. I'm sure others who were involved in this might have a little different memory of it. However, like most of us, my memory isn't what it once was, and I will be the first to admit that. That's why I wrote this, so that it will be in writing and that these memories won't fade completely away. And I wanted to let everyone know that I sent in the names of Campbell and Rasmusson, along with the necessary verification information, to have them placed on the Rolls at the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor. That website is <https://www.thepurpleheart.com/>. I urge anyone who knows of someone who has a PH, yourself included, to look up the website and give them the information needed to get you and/or the others enrolled. And don't get your panties in a wad if they ask for a copy of your DD214. It can be a photocopy and you can block out any personal information that you don't want them to see, i.e., SSAN, Service Number, etc. There is a form you can fill out, and they will tell you what they need, and they will verify the information you give them, letting you know when it will appear on the Rolls. It generally takes 2 or 3 days, once they receive and verify your information. And don't be afraid to enter someone else who you know who has a PH. Last year, I entered the five guys from my hometown who were KIA, a guy I served with in the 1<sup>st</sup> Division who was KIA, and myself. I verified their eligibility by finding their graves on FindAGrave.com. If you have, or find, a photo of the government-issued grave marker, and the PH is legible, that's proof enough. Remember, if we don't remember, who the hell else is going to?

**Ben Barrett**, B Co., 70

## **WEAR YOUR TRIPLE DEUCE COLORS!**

Last year while visiting the half-scale traveling wall, I failed to wear my Triple Deuce colors, which is very rare for me. Had a great visit, snapping photos of the names of our fallen, etc. The hosts were absolutely great, thanks to the American Legion Post in Rocky Mt and Roanoke, VA. After returning home I found that I

had missed taking pictures of a couple of names, and that was all the encouragement I needed to return to get those pics. In the meantime, I put on my colors. I was approached by the Commander of the Rocky Mt. Post, who inquired about the colors of my shirt, telling me that he also served with the Triple Deuce! His name was Roy Muse from Bravo Co. We had a great reconnection talking about our time served in the Nam. Lessons learned! Wear your colors! We don't know who's out there!

**Harless Belcher**  
Charlie Co., '68-69

## **HEAD SHOT**

I am sitting here on April 1<sup>st</sup>, fixing to live up to the namesake of a fool. I'm also coming up on the 50th anniversary of the day in my life that changed it forever: May 14, 1969. The setting: South Vietnam, Fire Support Base Wood. I was in Third Platoon of Alpha Company, Triple Deuce. For the last four or five days we had been on RIFs (recon in force) in the area known to military mapsters as the Crescent. We had made contact two or three days in a row, so the powers that be decided to soften up the area a bit. B-52 bombers dropped 500-, 750-, and 1000-pound bombs on an area just south of the famed Black Virgin Mountain. We were probably five to ten miles away setting up, ready to proceed, and we could feel the ground shake, even sitting in or on the tracks. Needless to say, the thought was that no one in that area could survive that kind of destruction. As was the case in most of our encounters with the VC and NVA, we underestimated our foe.

This was a battalion recon, with four infantry companies on line moving to the designated area. We were spread out over a pretty wide section of some dense jungle, but it was mostly open flat terrain. Everything went pretty smoothly through the day, including lunch break. I was in Third Platoon of A Company, which was the outside platoon of our group, and my track was the last one in A Co. Early afternoon we were busting brush, avoiding deep craters that the bombs had made, dodging trees that were still standing in some form or another, and trying to just make it through another day of living. Andy was our driver and he was as good as there was. The driver and a 50-cal machine gunner were the only ones on the track; everyone else was dismounted and doing what

infantry was supposed to do: ground pounding, watching out for booby traps and two-step snakes, and looking for anything that moved in front of you. That is, if you could see anything in front of you. The terrain was a mess so mostly we were just trying to get from point A to point B. Rip was on the 50 and Andy hit a pretty good sized tree that didn't move much, except for the branch that fell right across the shield for the gunner. Rip was sitting in the turret, with his arm laying on the edge. Yep, the limb landed right on his arm and broke it. There was more than one way to get a dust-off from a remote area. From the first day of boot camp, the first rule you learn is never volunteer for anything. Nonetheless, when weighing the odds at the moment, I was pretty sure the right thing to do was hop on that track and ride for what little time we had to go. Need a 50 gunner? I'm your man.

I'd like to add at this point that a few months prior to this occurrence I had purchased a monkey from some kids and named him Jude. It was a popular Beatles song and seemed to fit. He was the company mascot and would go to anyone, especially if they had a snack. He wasn't picky. Almost everyone knew and liked him, with the exception of SFC Wade, "The Rock," our platoon sergeant. It seems Jude had gone in the track to recon for some snacks and found Sergeant Wade's stash of cigars. Jude broke about half of them, and he almost got his neck broken for his effort. Anyway, Jude was riding on the track tied around the TC shield.

We proceeded uneventfully for the rest of the afternoon, dodging and dipping and maneuvering through the destruction the bombing had caused, not figuring to make any contact with any living thing. Just when the word came down that we were heading back to base camp, Charlie made his signature move and opened up with sniper fire on the dismounted troops right in front of our PC. There was a good distance between the dismounts and us, but the incoming fire was picking up and we really couldn't open up with the 50's with those guys between us and the enemy. The action got heavier, and I just started firing at the tops of the trees, thinking maybe snipers might be roosting up there. Andy said we should turn back with most of the other tracks but I told him we couldn't leave the guys out front with no cover fire. He agreed, so we settled in to make the most of it. I don't know how long the firefight lasted, because suddenly I felt like someone had hit me square

in the head with a baseball bat. When I came to, I was sitting in a puddle of blood on the ammo boxes in the bottom of the track. I could see Andy looking at me with a shocked expression on his face.

The next time I came to I was lying on the ground outside the track and Doc Michalec was wrapping bandages around my head. I regained conscience one more time while in flight on the medevac chopper.



MEDICS CRADLE HEAD OF A WOUNDED 25TH DIV. TROOPER IN FIGHTING NORTHWEST OF SAIGON. (AP RADIOPHOTO)

The next time I realized I was alive, was when I woke up to see eight or ten doctors standing around my bed at the MASH unit I had been taken to. They talked to me, asked me some questions, and told me I had lost my left eye and some other things that I really didn't pay much attention to. The one question I had was, "Do I get to go home?" They assured me I was definitely not going back to the field for more combat. Lying there looking around and seeing everything, and having both arms and both legs, and being able to hear and speak, I thought what the hell. How bad can it be? I'm going back to the World!!

The rest of the story is hearsay, because I had no idea what had actually happened to cause my injury. Several years later Rip ( Larry Hoftiezer) looked me up in Dallas and I spent a couple hours talking to him about what happened. Dick Nash (formerly known as Lieutenant Nash, our platoon leader) wrote me a letter not too long after the Reunions started happening, but I was in the middle of raising two wonderful daughters and working and coaching them in soccer, and I ignored the letter for several years. I attended my first reunion in Colorado Springs 2012. I haven't missed one since.

Sitting across from the guys that were my brothers in combat and hearing them tell me what had happened that day filled in so many blank spaces. I won't go into all the gory details,

but the love that was shown to me helped me, and I think it helped them, too. I was a blank page but they all had answers to questions I didn't realize I should ask. I found out that I was hit with a friendly fire 50-cal bullet that no one should live through. It hit Jude first and went through an ammo can full of clothes and what-all before going through the TC shield and hitting me. My family has given Jude hero status for having saved my life by deflecting the bullet just enough to let me survive. It makes a good war story, so I'll go with it. At least I made it home to get married to a "buddy" that had written me the whole time I was away, and now I have two daughters and five grandkids. Can't complain about that.

## Dennis "Tex" Holt

### THE BATTLE OF DAU TIENG

*Editor's Note: In researching my next novel, I asked for guys who were involved in this battle to send me their recollections. Frenchie was kind enough to send me this vivid memory.*

Here is how an 11B was assigned to D Company. I was drafted in 1968 and trained at Fort Polk, LA, in the infantry. When I arrived in 25<sup>th</sup> Division at Cu Chi, I was sent to a tent with other soldiers and told I would be going to A Company. Someone walked into the tent and asked if anyone knew how to weld, because their welder was on R&R. Three of us raised our hands, but they chose me. Their previous welder never came back, and I ended up staying in D Company.

Delta was a mechanic unit, but I was an infantryman. When I had my first bunker duty, I could not believe how small the bunker was inside. I told the guys that I was not going to stay inside to pull guard, so I set up three layers of sand bags all the way around the roof. I brought up the M-60, a grenade launcher, a LAW rocket launcher, hand grenades, and ammo. I was ready for battle.

On the night of February 23, 1969, I was scheduled for guard duty, but a guy named Brown, a mechanic in our unit, came up to me and asked if I would trade places with him because he wanted to be on guard with his friend, Walter Sturgeon. Since I was new in country, I said, "No problem." It was around midnight when we started getting rockets inside the base

camp, which was not unusual. Normally we had six guards on duty at our bunker, but on that night we only sent four. The enemy breached the wire at the airstrip and between the 65<sup>th</sup> Engineers bunker and 2/22 bunker.

Those who were not at the bunker were put on Stand To in the motor pool. We were told to be ready to go and help secure the air strip perimeter. Then they called and said they had a track that was in from the field, and they were going to send it instead. The track was almost immediately hit by an RPG, and I believe we lost one. We were told to Stand To again. It was around three in the morning when an F-105 fighter jet flew directly over us, and as I looked up, I swear I could see the pilot turn his head looking at me as he released a napalm bomb. It seemed like it was in slow motion as it tumbled end over end until it hit just outside the perimeter in a ball of flame. Being so naïve, I was in awe, with the artillery going off, the gun ships in the sky, and the M-42 Duster laying its guns level and just firing at will.

Early in the morning they told us to go and support our bunker, but because there was so much action and bullets flying all over the place, we could not reach them until around two in the afternoon. As we headed that way, I saw dead bodies all over the place, and it was very sickening. I want to throw up, the stench was overwhelming for me, the smell of gunpowder hung in the air, but somehow I kept my composure.

When we were nearing the bunker, they were carting off Walter on a gurney. He was covered, with his arms draped over the sides. My heart sank as I watched them leave; he slept right across from me, and had been showing me how to adapt.

When we arrived at the bunker, I saw a dead VC nearby. Later Brown told me that the VC broke in between us and the 65<sup>th</sup> Engineers. The enemy killed all four of the engineers, and got behind our bunker and fired an RPG in through the doorway. Sturgeon was hit with shrapnel, and Brown lost part of his nose. Brown told me that all their weapons had jammed and it was my understanding that all of the men were inside the bunker, fighting with just hand grenades. Everything was in such a mess. I came to realize that they were vehicle mechanics, and didn't know how to unjam weapons. I repaired the weapons and reorganized the top of the bunker. Brown was never the same again, and, for that matter, neither was I.

After securing our area, we left to relieve the guys who were on duty all night and part of the day. We headed toward the air strip, where they still had light fighting going on. The first thing I saw as a tank with soldier draped over his gun turret, dead. It seemed like a movie from WWII. The VC were still coming out of the tunnels that they had dug in from everywhere. They had VC in a forty-foot culvert, and GIs were throwing grenades in from each opening, and still some came out. I saw the track that had gone to the airstrip instead of us, and it was badly damaged. They have a picture of it on the website (Battle of Dau Tieng). We left the airstrip and went to the D Company compound to get ready for me and the others to go on guard duty that night.

I had guard duty for the next four days, and we were attacked each night with rockets and gun fire from the tree line. It was time for me to go into action. They would only attack at night. I know I wore out the M-60 machine gun and the grenade launcher. I shot the rocket launcher into a two-story house, and they claimed to see heads flying. I have no idea if anyone actually went inside to find out. They had a sniper shooting at our bunker who was inside of our perimeter. I went out to try and locate him in a tree, since there was a forest around us. I had a grenade with buck-shot rounds. They radioed that they had found him tied to a tree while shooting at us, and they had killed him. The next day the muscle on my arm was black and blue from the butt of the grenade launcher, and my eye was black and blue and yellow from shooting twelve rocket launchers. They started calling me the Lawman.

I know that if I had been on guard duty on February 23 I would have died, because I would not have gone into the bunker to fight. I was staying on top. I would, however, have been able to repair the jammed weapons.

I was one of fifteen guys who received a Bronze Star. I received another one during my tour, but I never received my Combat Infantryman Badge. I think the captain assumed I was a mechanic by MOS, and not infantry. At the two reunions I attended, in Las Vegas and Atlanta, I wanted to wear my badge proudly, and I am working to get it awarded. I hope it works out before the next reunion and I can wear it on my shirt.

It has nothing to do with the Battle of Dau Tieng, but later some Bravo Company guys came to me to modify a new track to carry a Gatling gun. I had to modify the turret and build a bracket to hold a 1,500-round canister. I asked them to let me know the first time they used in a firefight.

Two weeks later, they finally came back into the base camp and told me they had killed eight VC. The gunner held the trigger for 15 seconds and ran out of ammo.



**Gerard "Frenchie" Marceaux**  
D Co., 69

## **ON THE ROAD IN VIETNAM**

By D. Bing Bingham

During the Vietnam War, almost none of the lower ranking infantry soldiers knew where they were in the field. Generally, only the noncommissioned officers and officers could point to a spot on the map and give their exact location. Karl Karlgaard of Happy Valley, Oregon, was an exception to that rule. He served part of his tour in Vietnam as a radio operator in an infantry platoon. It was his job to relay his platoon leader's orders and requests. His platoon leader needed to know their exact location on a map. Karl quickly learned how to use 1:50,000 scale military maps of Vietnam. These maps were classified until after the war ended. Now they are available through the United States Geological Survey. These maps—most dating between the late '60s and early '70s—cost \$9 for a color copy covering about 700 square kilometers. In the mid-'80s, Karl attended a reunion in Washington, D.C. He took the opportunity to visit the National Archives and discovered the same military maps he had used in Vietnam. The archive staff made copies of several maps from the 25th Infantry Division's area of operations. Karl noted on the maps the bases and locations he knew. Throughout the years, he updated them with "After-Action" reports as he found the locations of other fire support bases and battles. The locations on these maps were all laid out in the Military Grid Reference System (MGRS)—a metric system

used by NATO countries. The system uses a group of letters and numbers to indicate locations on the map, similar to the latitude and longitude coordinates familiar to GPS users. Karl used the maps when he visited Vietnam in 2001. "I wanted to stand right where we stood at these bases 40 years ago," he says, "not just see a hazy location somewhere in the distance." Karl had a list of about 10 fire support bases and a few other locations he wanted to see. He brought map copies, but no GPS for fear of having it confiscated by the People's Army of Vietnam. "I tried to follow our trip on the maps, but it was difficult to do without the GPS," he says.

Discovery of More Resources The following year, "Where We Were in Vietnam," by Michael Kelley was published. It has thousands of MGRS coordinates for fire support and patrol bases, airfields and cities. Karl began his quest to stand on the same ground in earnest. He increased his points of interest in Vietnam to about 150 and was specifically focused on a couple dozen spots. He switched his GPS software to handle MGRS coordinates and plugged in the information from the old maps. He also wanted to find the same locations on Google Earth, which uses latitude and longitude for locating a position on a map. Karl printed out aerial photos from Google Earth to help him correlate waypoints with terrain on the ground. Still, finding his way around Vietnam on his latest trip, in 2009, took a juggling act. "As we drove I had my laptop running the GPS software and the GPS connected to give a real-time moving map on the laptop screen," Karl says. "Many of the trails and cowpaths I recalled from 40 years ago are now paved, two-lane roads that didn't show up on either the GPS or old tactical maps ... although sometimes they were found on Google Earth photos." Even with the help of a local guide, Karl and his companions drove through former Fire Support Base Schofield twice before they found it. There was absolutely nothing there to indicate the spot. "The base is nothing but a memory now," says Karl. "This area was so desolate in 1968. Now it's full of houses and businesses." □

## HELLOS & COMMENTS

**Erhard P. Opsahl**

608-838-4226

[Epopsahlw@aol.com](mailto:Epopsahlw@aol.com)

HHC, Recon Platoon & A Co. Sept. 67 to Sept. 68

**Kenneth J. Zipp**

845-781-8625

[kenzipp@yahoo.com](mailto:kenzipp@yahoo.com)

C Co. 25<sup>th</sup> ID, 1-69 to 4-69

**Louis A. Gross**

989-392-8810

[lounprma69@yahoo.com](mailto:lounprma69@yahoo.com)

A Co. 2/22, 25<sup>th</sup> ID.65-67

Louis writes, "Still kicking. God Bless you all"

**James F. O'Leary**

617-853-0489

[olearyjim@comcast.net](mailto:olearyjim@comcast.net)

A Co. 2-22 68-69

Jim would like to hear from anyone who served in Alpha, 2nd Platoon from Sep 68 to Apr 69.

Jim writes, "Would like to thank **Bennett Anderson, Butch Jones** and **Rosie Rosales** for the info they provided on Doc **John Lutze** who was KIA on 8 NOV 1968.\*

\*John E. Lutze was assigned to Alpha Co. when he was KIA, he was not assigned to Delta Co. The confusion appears to have been caused due to the Delta Co. CO providing the information about the incident in the official report.

**Willie J. Smith**

773-848-5803

[Wsmith607@aol.com](mailto:Wsmith607@aol.com)

B Co. 4<sup>th</sup> ID, Dec 65 to July 67

Willie would like to locate **Milton Jones** and **Sgt. Maple**.

## GUEST BOOK HITS

Name **Kirk Olsen**

Location Austin, MN

Merry Christmas to all of my Vietnam brothers and hope you all have a great New Year.

HHC S-4 67-68.

Posted on Wednesday - Dec 19, 2018

**Name Lynn Dalpez**

Location Oregon

Merry Christmas Triple Deucers and a Happy New Year. Posted on Tuesday - Dec 25, 2018

**Name Anthony Mantuano**

2nd.22nd Inf 25th Inf Div MECH Vietnam 67-68

Email: doubleagle7585@outlook.com

I received a letter from Vietnam Triple Deuce INC. asking me to pay my dues. I am a life member of the 25th INF, and my records are with them. The letter did not mention the 25th Div. which most of us came from and put in different units, like Triple Deuce. The 25th INF had our back many times in 67-68 as we would cross paths or even work together. I wear the 25th Infantry patch. I thought the 22nd was part of that.

Posted on Friday - Feb 8, 2019

## Taps

**Clark L. Lohmann**

B Co. 2-22 67-68

Age 72 Survived by wife Barb Lohman, daughters, Ann Ronning and Joy (Daren) Wollesen; son, Scott Lohmann; three grandchildren, Katie, Jackson, and Lauren; sisters, Caroline Lohman, Cindy (Charlie) Wheeler, and Judy Hoffman. Military honors were by American Legion Post 331. Interment: Omaha, Nebraska Nation Cemetery.

**Timothy Hike**

A Co. 2-22, 25<sup>th</sup> ID, Oct 68 to Oct 69

Died June 2009

By his daughter Erika

**Donald Combs**

B Co. 2-22, 25<sup>th</sup> ID, 66-67

Died 1-19-2018

By wife Linda Combs

**Wayne "Butch" Steffey**

C Co. 2-22, 25<sup>th</sup> ID, Sep 67 to 68

Died Aug 2016

By wife Bonnie Steffey

**Stanley Charles Winkler**

Co. 2-22, 25<sup>th</sup> ID, 67-68

Died 3-6-2017

By his wife Georgia

"He loved the reunions and getting together with Gordon and Cynthia Kelly at their Maine home." He was a retired Master Sgt.

**Michael Madder**

No unit info

Died 8-15-2012

By his wife

**Charles A. Doressin**

B Co. 25<sup>th</sup> ID, 66-67

By wife

**Billy D. Payton**

HHC, 2-22, 25<sup>th</sup> ID,

Died 5-14-18

By his wife Peggy

**Jeffrey P. Meriam**

C Co. 25<sup>th</sup> ID,

Died 9-30-15

By wife Kit Meriam

**Jim Hardin**

C Co. 2<sup>nd</sup> BN, 22IR, 4<sup>th</sup> ID, 1967

Died 2-14-19

By wife Iris

**James Ray Franklin**

B Co. Weapons 68-69

Died 5-22-18

By Karen P. Franklin

**Jerome A. (Jerry) Hickner II**

B Co. 25<sup>th</sup> ID, 67-68 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon

Died 5-9-15

Agent Orange

**Gary L. Smith, LTC Ret**

B Co. 25th ID, 67 to 68

By wife Kendra Smith

Died Jan.10, 2017

**Steve Borchert**

C Co. & HHC, 67 to 68

By his wife Mrs. Borchert

Died Jan. 6 2019

**Louis Kimes**

C Co. 4<sup>th</sup> and 25 ID, C Co Original

By Lynn Dalpez

Died 3-22-19

**Rodney Lewis Thomas**

C Co. 68-69

By Harless Belcher

Died 2015



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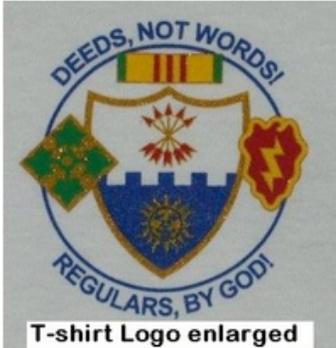
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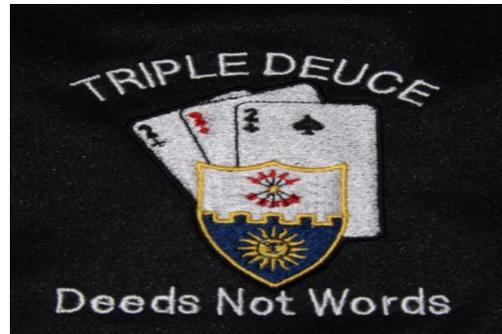
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