

**B Company
2nd Battalion (M) 22nd Infantry
Monthly Recap
April 1967-April 1968**

**[Posted to Facebook Each Month]
50 Years Ago
2017-2018**

E. Q. Skip Fahel

First 15 Days With the 3rd Platoon, Bravo, 2-22 Triple Deuce

After receiving a briefing from the Battalion XO at the base camp at Dau Tieng (Camp Rainier), I was taken to the company area and meet LT Jack Pryor, the Company XO. He briefed me on the Company and Company Commander. CPT John C. Bialkowski. I would be joining LT Tom Tracy, 1st Platoon Leader and LT Bill Addison, the 2nd Platoon leader, replacing LT Scott Coonce as the 3rd Platoon Leader. The 4th (Weapons) Platoon was led by the Platoon Sergeant. After the briefing he directed me to the Platoon Leaders tent where I could store my belongings and then to the supply tent to draw my equipment. After storing my belonging and drawing my equipment I was taken to the helicopter pad to wait for the helicopter to take me to the Battalion. I got on an OH-23, my first helicopter ride, to go out to the Battalion. One of the first things that I saw after taking off was Nui Ba Den (Black Virgin Mountain), which would be a focal point during my first tour.

The Battalion was in the final phases of Operation Junction City, operating in the area around the Special Forces Camp at Prek Klok (North of Tay Ninh City). We landed at the Battalion laager position and I was directed to the Battalion Commander, LTC Ralph Julian. LTC Julian welcomed me to the Battalion and informed me that the B Company Commander, CPT Bialkowski would be coming to pick me up.

The Company had four Platoons, 3 Rifle Platoons and a Weapons Platoon, each Platoon having 4 APC's (Armor Personal Carrier)/Tracks. The Weapons Platoon APC's carried one 81mm mortars in each track, with the fourth carrying the Platoon Leader and FDC (Fire Direction Center). In addition, the Command Group consisted of 2 APC's, the Company Commander and the communications/maintenance track for a total of 16 APC's. Each of the APC's had a .50 Cal machine gun.

CPT Bialkowski picked me up in his M-113 APC and we headed back to the company area. There I was introduced to the First Sergeant, Arthur Werner, (Who served with Merrill's Marauders in WWII). CPT Bialkowski briefed me on the current Company operations and mission. He then called for LT Coonce telling me LT Coonce would be staying with me for a day or two.

LT Coonce came and took me to the Platoon area. As we walked around the Platoon, he introduced me to the Platoon Sergeant, the Squad Leaders, and other men of the Platoon. The Platoon authorized troop strength of 44 men, but only had 27 in the field at this time (Never got over 30 men in the field and as low as 18).

After the tour of the Platoon, we walked back to the 3-1 track, my home for the next 8 months. The 3-1 track was the 1st Squad of the Platoon. The other tracks in the Platoon were the 3-2, 3-3, 3-4.

SGT Slater was the first squad leader, PFC Tom Priesthoff the track driver, and SP4 Tom Izbicki my RTO (Radio Telephone Operator). In addition to the PRC25 radio, Izbicki's weapon of choice was the M60 machine gun. My call sign on the radio was Fullback Bravo 3-6 or just 3-6, my RTO was 3-6 X-Ray.

Here is a list of brothers that were with me in the 3rd Platoon, Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion (Mech), 22nd Infantry Regiment, Vietnam 1967-68. **(If you know of any one that is not listed, or have complete name, please let me know)**

Kenneth Anderson, Meduardo Archuleta, Richard Bartels, Gary Beeman, James Blount, Joseph Brecko, Richard Cobb, John Cooper, Thomas Cox, Clyde Davidson, David Fisher, Tony Fusco, Elton Gill, Kenneth Gladdish, Donald Gregg, William Hawkins, Joe Huerta, Thomas Izbicki, Richard Jensen, Jacki Johnson, Edward Kubisky, Raymond Lee, John Leshner, James Meek, Melvin Pichon, Thomas Priesthoff, Ron Russell, Tracy Slater, Willie Smith, PFC Stroup, Thomas Tuluzek, John Yoshikane, Dan Vannoy, Alan Zweig. (Brothers of the 3rd platoon that gave their all: **Thomas Priesthoff, David Fisher, James Meek** (Medic), **Edward Kubisky, Dan Vannoy**.)

I was lucky that for the first month, the Platoon did not see any direct action. We had a variety of missions and covered a lot of ground in the Brigade area of operation. This quiet time gave me a good opportunity to get to know the men and the men to know me. It provided the time needed to get accustomed to the life in the field and gain confidence in my leadership and decision-making, and work on my map reading.

Most of the men of the Platoon trained together at Fort Lewis, and came to Vietnam on a boat. In later years, they are referred to as the "Boat Originals", where all others, like me, are the "replacements."

It was an advantage being assigned to a mechanized unit because you did not have to carry everything on your back. When we went dismounted, all we had to carry was our ammo, water, and a few rations for the day. We were able to carry an increased load of ammo, an extra M-60 machine-gun, this was in addition to the Izbicki's M60. All added to our firepower. It made movement easier, and once we did get into contact, you appreciated the lightweight. Another noteworthy item about a mechanized unit was the firepower available. If you got into contact, and the tracks were with you, it was great to see the jungle and anything else being torn apart by the .50 cal. Also, the three 81mm mortars were there to provide that quick fire support.

However, if you carried everything with you, there was no need to go back to the base camp. We would only use the base camp to get the other side. We would pass through the base camp entering by one gate and going out the other, stopping only long enough to get fuel and some supplies, and then continue the movement. We did not stop and spend the night at Camp Rainier until July, and that night was cut short.

However, even with the lighter load, the first few weeks were difficult on me. When we were dismounted, I had my steel pot, flak jacket, water, M-16, 45. Cal., compass, maps, and 1 or 2 cans of C-rations, not much of a load. What made it hard was the heat and humidity. Within 10 minutes of starting the movement on foot, I was dripping wet from sweat, and exhausted. Nothing could prepare you for the introduction to the climate. During that first month, I lost 20 pounds. But over time, you got use to the climate.

The movement through the bamboo was the hardest and took the most out of you. *I can still remember Izbicki's using every four-letter word you could use going through the bamboo one day.* Cutting trail through the thick jungle was not too bad if there was a high ceiling of trees to keep you in the shade. In the jungle you had to contend with all the insects, and especially the red ants. The worst thing that could happen was to have a nest of red ant's drop from the tress on you. Then at night, the mosquito, thank god for the insect repellent. Walking the rice paddies was easy, but you did have the sun bearing down on you. We had the advantage of operation on relative level terrain with many clear areas. We did not have to climb up and down and hills or mountains.

We could return to the tracks at night, we would have a hot meal, cold drinks (to include beer), ice, and other comforts that were not available to the other infantry units. Being mechanized, we could get resupply and mail every day. We carry everything in our tracks; we had radios, chairs, tables, clothes, soft drinks, beer, blankets, pillows, paper and pens, reading materials. I remember getting into the track one day after resupply, and all the ammo was under the cases of beer and soft drinks. The tracks also provided excellent protection from small arms fire, weather, and a dry place to sleep. At night, I had a cot set up in the track to sleep on. Later, I would sleep on the bench of the APC. But I would always sleep with my boots on.

During these first 15 days, the Platoon conducted sweeping operations, both mounted and dismounted, provided road security, went on night ambush patrols. We ran the road between Dau Tieng and Tay Ninh and around the Black Virgin Mountain. The company went deep into War Zone C and operated around the Prek Klok firebase. The company came under ineffective mortar fire and some

sniper fire, but no heavy contact. However, several times, other companies in the battalion were in heavy contact.

First Contact



On May 17th, 1967, B Company, 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry, 4th Infantry Division was engaged in its first heavy contact with me as the Platoon Leader of the 3rd Platoon. The contact resulted in loss of seven brothers of the 2nd Platoon (**Larry A. Crisci, Robert M. DeDominic, Lynn C Hays, James R. Michael, Jasper N. Newberry, Andrew J. Short, Roger D. Thompson**), and 14 wounded, and two APC's destroyed. On May 18th, on the road to FSB Fang, the VC/NVA hit the 1st Platoon and the 3rd

Platoon with RPG's and small arms fire. The 1st Platoon suffered one KIA, (**Allen K. Dearden**). The 3rd Platoon did not have any men hit.

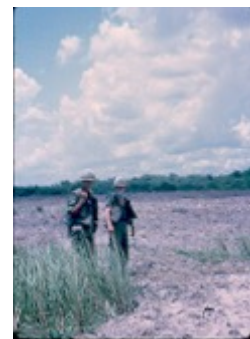
June 1967

After the losses in May, B Company, 2nd Battalion (M), 22nd Infantry is attached to one of the other Infantry Battalions [Either the 2-12 or 3-22, I don't remember] in the Brigade. The battalion departed in the late evening on a road march to Saigon, pulling into Long Bien at first light. During the movement from Dau Tieng to Saigon, B Company provided the rear guard for the movement. The 3rd Platoon was the lead for the company and we had gunships flying over us the whole way. B Company was assigned to the Long Binh Post with the mission of one of the ready reaction companies for the Saigon area, with the other battalion companies assigned to other locations in the area. The Bravo



Company was inside the wire, but we still had to build and man these defensive positions at night. (Just had one man in bunker with one hours shifts) The company had squad tents for sleeping and relaxing. Lt Tracy and I had one tent all to ourselves until the new LT joined the company. CPT Bialkowski had his own small tent.

With the beginning of the monsoon season in late May, and getting our daily heavy downpour in June, we were happy to have the tents to stay dry. However, we did have flooding after each rain. Two to three inches of standing water and mud in our tents. The floors of the tents had wood pallets so we did not have to walk in the water or mud except when we were outside. A few hours after the rains, the ground would be dry again.



The company received replacement troops for the 2nd platoon, a new 2nd LT for its platoon leader, and 3 replacement M-113's. The new platoon leader was 2nd LT Joe Weiss. LT Weiss was later moved to the Weapons Platoon, and then to Battalion. LT Weiss ended up in a Brigade assistant staff position.

During the day, the company would send one platoon out to conduct sweeps in the areas around of Saigon proper as directed by the Saigon command. Since the 2nd Platoon was not up to strength, the 1st and 3rd platoons rotated going out on patrols. We tried to schedule the patrols before or after the rains. At night, the company would stay in the company perimeter. The company also provided security for a sand pump barge on the Saigon River at night. Each night, one squad would be taken to the river and taken out to a barge and picked up in the morning.

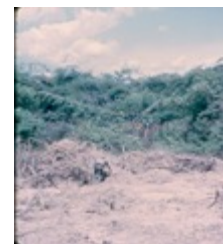


On one occasion, the 3rd platoon mission was to provide security for an LZ. This required the platoon travel some distance on the streets of Saigon. The platoon was making good time in the traffic, when a MP jeep pulled up along the lead M-113, and directed the M-113 to pull over to the side of the road. The squad leader directed one of the MP's back to my track. The MP came up to my track, and I leaned over and asked what he wanted. The MP asked for our "convoy clearance." I told the MP that I did not know what he was talking about, and I was on a mission to secure a LZ. The MP said that he did not care; I still need a convoy clearance for the platoon to be on the road.

I call the CPT Bialkowski and told him what was happening. He told me to hold tight, and he would get back to me. Thirty minutes later, CPT Bialkowski called and informed me that the MP should be getting a call giving me permission to proceed. The MP received a radio message and the platoon was able to move out and secured the LZ before the choppers came in.



The company did not have any contact during the time in Saigon. However, during one of our platoons sweeps, we found an old bunker, inside the bunker was a VC. He did not put up a fight since he was hungry and tired. He did not have a weapon, but did have two old grenades. This was my first POW.



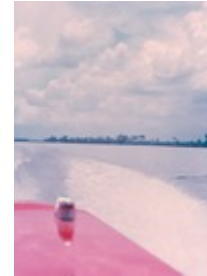
One of the benefits of being in Long Bien was the access to the PX and clubs. The men not out on patrol or on some other detail [Which CPT Bialkowski was

good at assigning] were able to take advantage of the PX and clubs during the day, but had to be back at the company area by 1800 hrs, which was not always the case. CPT Bialkowski had daily company formations at 1830 hrs to check on the status of the troops. There were a few Article 15's handed out by the CO for not being back in the company area on time.



The whole company was able to spend one day at a recreation area along the river. There we ate, played volleyball, basketball, football, and taking boat rides on the river. Some of the troops even got a chance to water ski. It

was a fun day.



At the end of June, the Company was directed to move out to Dau Tieng and join the battalion. This time, the march was made during the day. A few days after we hooked up with the battalion, we got on new Company Commander, CPT James Bristol.

July 1967



Captain James Bristol assumes command of the company from Captain Biakowski.

For the first 7 days of July, the company provided road securing for the MSR (LTL26) between Tay Ninh and Dau Tieng. During July 8 to 16, the 3rd Platoon

July 8 to 16, 1967

On the morning of July 8, 1967, Company B 2nd Battalion, (Mech), 22nd Infantry is given the mission to establish positions along highway 26 in the vicinity of Ap Phuoc Binh. The mission was to provide

road security with the company staying in two positions for the next 8 days. [Although not described in the mission, I believed that there was the hope of drawing VC/NVA into attacking the units and drawing them into a large-scale firefight. Why else would they have a lone platoon in this position at night.?

CPT Bristol sets up two positions along the highway; the first consisted of the Company Command Group, 1st, 2nd and weapons platoon, (335465) and the other with the 3rd platoon (315485). The first position, the Company Commander would send the platoons out to secure the highway from its position to the junction of LTL 26 and 239, and have them return at night. The 3rd platoon would provide security from its position, with one squad running the road south from its position to the company position and back north to the edge of Tay Ninh. In support of B Company, the other two companies of the Battalion, plus one company from the 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry, which could be air lifted to the contact area, and one troop of the Cavalry Squadron out of Tay Ninh.

The 3rd platoon position was located approximately 2000 meters to the north west of the company command position along the MSR. The company was to move into position on the morning of the 9th and prior to that date, draw the required supplies for the mission. It was estimated that the mission would last 7 days.

On the morning of the 9th, Company B moved into position. The 3rd platoon moved into its position approximate 100 meter east of the MSR in the rubber trees, with the four APC's forming a perimeter that measured about 50 meters across. The platoon leader, after discussions with the company commander, started construction his defensive position with the following in mind:

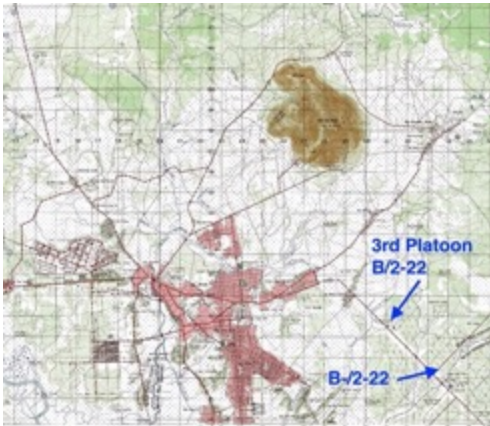
1. If attacked, the platoon would have to defend for 30 minutes before help would arrive.
2. Main avenue of approach would be from the east through rubber plantation.
3. Attacking forces would be at least a squad size force or more.
4. Attacking forces would want to get as close as possible before firing.
5. Attacking forces would use mortars, RPG's, and machine guns in support.

The platoon leader, in discussion with the squad leaders planed for the defense with the following actions:

1. Main fighting positions would be to the front of the APC's.
2. The 50 cal machine guns would be ground mounted.
3. Each squad would construct two fighting positions with overhead cover.
4. Each squad would place at least 10 claymores in front of their sector.
5. The platoon CP would be located in the center of the perimeter.



6. Single strand barbwire would be strung around the perimeter in the rubber trees with cans attached.
7. Anti-intrusion devices would be used.
8. A listing post would be manned at night, located 150-200 meters to the east of the perimeter. Manned by 3 men with both a radio and landline.
9. 75% of the ammunition would be off loaded from the APC's.



During the period of July 9 to 14, the company provided the road security with no indication of enemy activity. The 3rd platoon continued to strengthen its position, and conducted limited patrols into the rubber plantation to the east and northeast. During this time, there were no signs of enemy activity in that area.

On the evening of July 14, the company received orders that A Company would relieve B Company and take over the mission, and that B Company would take on a like mission in another location.

On the morning of July 15, A Company relieved B Company. I asked the Platoon Leader of the 1st Platoon, A Company if he wanted any of our defensive supplies, he replied no. The 3rd platoon of B Company retrieved all defensive items.

The 3rd platoon linked up with the company and the company moved back to the brigade base camp at Dau Teing for maintenance stand down for one night. The company would move out the next morning for it new mission. After pulling maintenance on the equipment, the men took showers, put on clean uniforms and went to the mess for a steak dinner. The movie projector was then set up, and after the movie, the real surprise for the night. CPT. Bristol introduced the stripper. The troops went wild. All through the night there was plenty of beer.

At approximately 0015 hours on July 16, Battalion alerted B Company that the 1st platoon of A Company was under heavy attack and that the company should prepare to move out. We had to drag the men out of their bunks and pore them into the APC's. Most of the men went right back to sleep in the APC's. At that moment, the Company was in no condition to fight. At 0100 hours, B Company was ordered to move out with



its lights on. The 3rd Platoon took the lead [I was in the second track], followed by Command Group, 1st Platoon, Weapons Platoon, and the 2nd Platoon.

The Company departed the Base Camp, and I would guess that over 30% of the Company was drunk. I was directed to move as fast as I could. The movement to the contact area was nerve-racking, and I was scared the whole way. I was fearful of the road being mined, and of the drivers driving off the road. We were lucky that we did not hit a mine or ambushed. The Company did have air cover and would recon by fire. All during this time, some of the men continued to sleep.

By the time that B Company reached the contact area, the rest of A Company and the Cavalry Squadron Troop had arrived and in position supporting of the 1st platoon. B Company was placed in the rice paddies to the southwest to secure the landing zone for the dust-off. There was still some light contact with the withdrawing VC/NVA, but it would not affect B Company. The men continued to sleep.



1st squad, 3rd platoon, B Co. looking at damage to A Company 2/22 Inf. on July 15, 1967

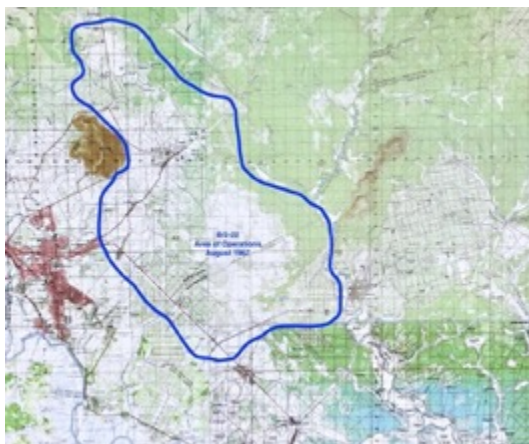
At first light, B Company was given the mission to conduct dismounted sweeps through the contact area and move to the east and attempt to establish contact with the VC/NVA. The company moved out with the 1st Platoon moving to the northeast and the 3rd Platoon to the east. The 3rd Platoons searched to the east for 3000 meters, and then moved to the south, and then back to highway 26 and the contact area. The Command Group and 2nd Platoon followed the 1st Platoon. The 4th Platoon secured the APC's. During this sweep, we found several fighting positions, a mortar position, and tracks that lead to and back from the contact area.

The 1st Platoon of A Company had 3 killed in action, with an additional 24 wounded out of Platoon strength of 33. Three of its APC's were destroyed.

August 1967

3rd Platoon, B Company, 2nd Battalion (M), 22nd Infantry

On August 1, 1967, the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division is relieved from assignment to the 4th Infantry Division and assigned to the 25th Infantry Division.



August is not a good month for the 3rd Platoon. We sink a track and get all 4 tracks of the Platoon stuck in the mud.

Again, the Company is providing road security on MRS between Tay Ninh and Dau Tieng and the roads around Nui Ba Den. There is a lot of standing water on the roads around Nui Ba Den. In addition, the Company conducts searching operations and ambush patrols in the area.

The 3rd Platoon, B Company is the lead element of the Battalion movement from the MSR to jungle northwest of Dau Tieng (Vicinity of 400560), approaches a stream. The 3rd Squad track with SGT Gill, is in the lead to cross the stream. However, the far bank is too steep for the track to climb, as the track backs up, it backs into a bomb crater, and begins to sink. The Battalion is forced to find another crossing and leaves B Company to get the track out. SGT Gill dived into water and hooked up cables (Tow hooks on bottom of track) to tow the track out. Four tracks were required to pull 3-3 out of the water. Once on dry land, the back hatch was lowered, and everything not tied down came out with the water.

Battalion Commander and Company Commander were not happy!



B Company is conducting mounted searching operations in the area northeast of Nui Ba Den (Vicinity of 325615). The Company was conducting this operation with the 1st and 3rd Platoons operating



independently with the Company Command Group, 2nd and Weapon Platoons on a static position. The 3rd Platoon would

move in the rice paddy area along the tree line, staying 150 to 200 meters from the tree line, and then make a turn towards the tree line with the tracks on line. The troops would dismount approximately 50 meters from the tree line and advance into the tree line for about 100-150 meters. If nothing found, would move back to the tracks. We did this 4 times. On the 5th time, we were about 50 meters from the tree line in a grassy area, when the 3-1 track got stuck. I halted the platoon and set up security and then move the 3-3 track to pull the 3-1 track out. The 3-3 track then got stuck, and then the 3-2, and finally the 3-4 track. All of the tracks were now stuck. I kept CPT Bristol advised, and when I told him all of the tracks were stuck, he had a fit, threatening to make the Platoon stay there the rest of the day and night. After a lot of 4 letter words, he directed the 1st Platoon to move and assist. The 1st Platoon arrived, and staying out of the grassy area was able to daisy chain the tracks and extract the 3rd Platoon with a lot of wisecracking comments from LT Tom Tracy, the 1st Platoon Leader and the rest of his Platoon. CPT Bristol had some more 4-letter words for me when we got back to the Company.

After sinking the track and getting all 4 of the tracks stuck within 10 days, I stayed away from CPT Bristol for a few days.

September 1967 (Part One) **3rd Platoon, B Company, 2nd Battalion (M), 22nd Infantry**

LTC Awbrey G. Norris assumes command of the Battalion from LTC Ralph Julian.

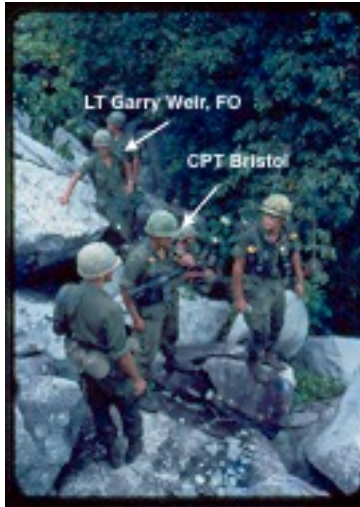
The company gets two new platoon leaders, Lt Dean Springer, 1st Platoon [Lt Tom Tracy becomes the Company Executive Officer], and LT Bill Donald, 2nd Platoon. (Lt Joe Weiss is assigned to Battalion) The Company also gets its largest group of replacement troops.



The Company begins the month conducting operations in the area of north of Nui Ba Den along TL 4. On evening of September 2, the Company establishes its night position about 2000 meters northeast of the saddle of Nui Ba Den (Vicinity

of 292615), just east of 243. Ambush patrols are sent out to the northeast of our position. As we sit in our defensive position, we look at Nui Ba Den and can see a great number of lights moving on the mountain. The next morning, we get orders from Battalion to move to the base of the saddle, then move up the saddle.

At approximately 0730 hrs., the Company begins its movement to the base of the saddle dismounted, leaving the Weapons Platoon to secure the tracks. The 3rd Platoon is in the lead, followed by the Command Group, the 1st Platoon, and 2nd Platoon. About 500 meters from the base, CPT Bristol changes the formation from the column to having the 3rd and 1st Platoons going on line, (with the squads of each Platoon also on line. The Company has a front of about 250 meter). We reach the base of the saddle (Vicinity of 280604) 45 minutes after departing



the night position.

Once we start the climb, the Company changes formations again, with the 3rd Platoon in lead in a file formation because of the difficulty of moving up the saddle. The steepness of the slope, the rocks, and thick vegetation made the movement extremely slow, and we had to keep changing out the point men.



We continued up the saddle for a few hours, and then it started to rain. CPT Bristol informed Battalion that he was stopping the move up the saddle and we started back down, just turning around and heading back down, with the 3rd

Platoon now at the rear of the movement. Going down was harder than going up, a lot of slipping and sliding on the rocks and in the mud.

During the movement to the saddle, the climb, and return to the Company area, we saw no indications of any NVA/VC activity. B Company was lucky. It was one of the few units that operated on Nu Ba Den that did not have contact with the VC/NVA. On September 4, the Company continued its patrolling north of Nui Ba Den along TL4.



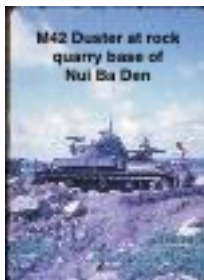
On September 4, at approximately 1030 hrs., A Company operating along 243, spotted some NVA/VA in the vicinity of the saddle where B Company climbed on the 3rd, called in artillery and then moved to sweep the area. As they approached the base, A Company was engaged by a large NVA/VC element.

Battalion ordered B Company to hold in place and directed C Company to move to support A Company. About two hours later, B Company was ordered to move to a position to be able to support (Vicinity of 288608). During this time, artillery, air strikes to include gunships and the Air Force were hitting the area. As darkness set in, both A and C Company pulled back to B Company's position, where we all settled in for the night. Again, we could all see lights moving on Nui Ba Den and in the Saddle. Artillery was called in all night on the Saddle.

The next morning, A Company moved back into the contact area, and again received fire, but not as heavy as the day before. Artillery and air strikes were hitting the base of the saddle. Later in the morning, a battery of 155mm self-propelled howitzers showed up and moved into a position to direct fire on the contact area. A company was pulled back and the rest of the day artillery and air strikes hit the area. Later in the afternoon, some C-47 Chinooks flew over the contact area dropping 55-gallon drums of tear gas and napalm.

We spent another night at the base of Nui Ba Den, and next morning pulled out to continue with our road security mission along TL4 with A and C Companies remaining in the area.

On September 16th, 1967, B Company was conducting sweeps in the area around Soui Da with the 1st and 2nd Platoons. The 3rd Platoon remained with the Company CP for security and a reaction force. It was a quiet day with no signs of the NVA/VA. Around 1500 hours, the 1st and 2nd Platoon closed with the Company. The 3rd Platoon would provide the ambush patrol for the night and I would take the 1st & 2nd Squads out on the ambush. At 1905 hours the patrol moved out to set up a position at a trail junction about 1400 meters south of the Company position. At approximately 2130 hours the patrol reached the junction and set up for the night. Two hours later, it started to rain, and rain for the next 2 ½ hours. At 0313 hours, I receive a radio call from CPT Bristol that my daughter was born (No name was given, did not find out name until later, (Candace Marie) and that mother and daughter were doing fine. At 0645 hours, the squads retrieved the claymores and we departed the position and returned to the Company.



For 3 days, the 3rd Platoon provides security at the rock quarry at the base of Nui Ba Den. Also assigned to provide security is a team with a 40mm Duster. Each night the Duster would fire harassing fire onto Nui Ba Den. It was fascinating watching the Duster fire its tracer rounds and the explosions as the rounds impacted the mountain.

September 30, 1967: An ambush patrol from the 2nd platoon walks into an outpost of C Company, 2-22 and a fire fight erupts. One man (C/2-22) is killed by friendly fire and 9 men are wounded from both B & C 2/22.

October 1967

3rd Platoon, B Company, 2nd Battalion (M), 22nd Infantry

The company continues to provide road security, and changes its main area of operations to conduct patrols in and south of the Michelin Rubber plantation.

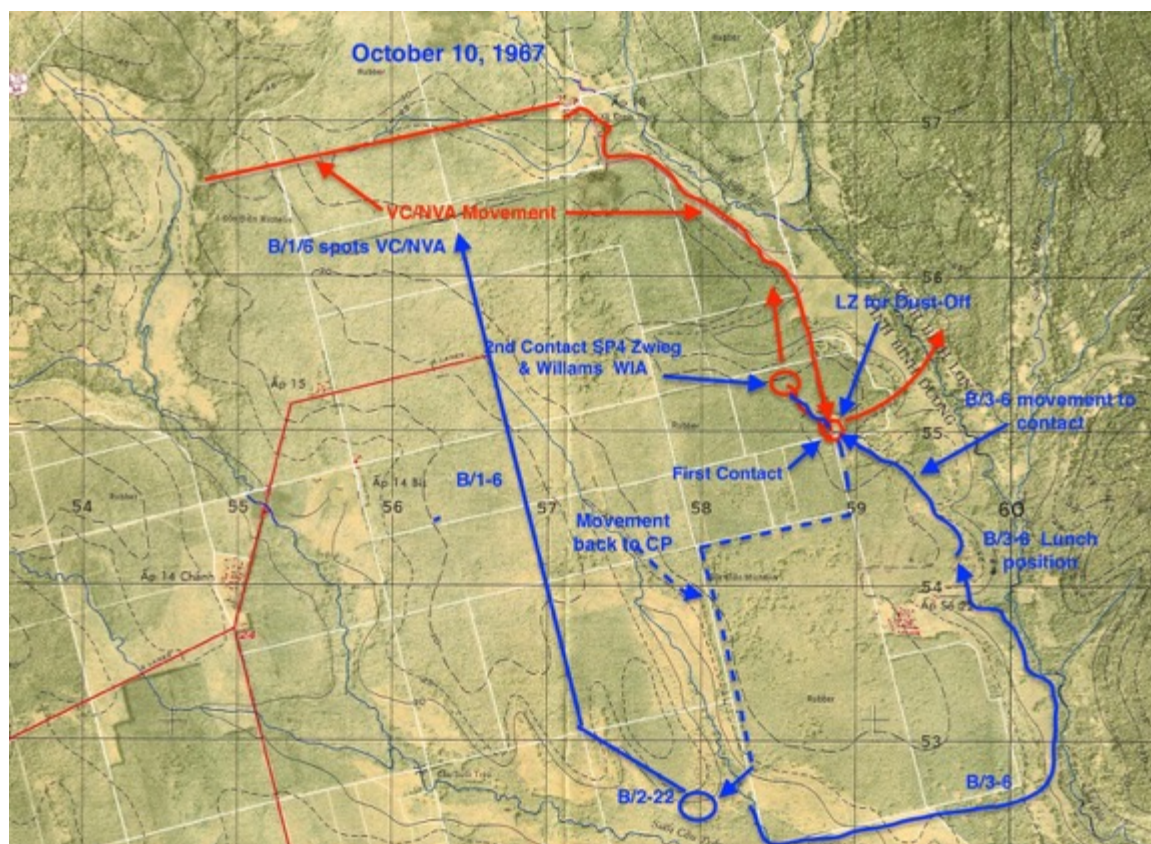
October 7, 1967, I flew back to Dau Teing to see the dentist. RPG's, small arms, and grenades hit the Company the next morning. Two of the 2nd Platoon tracks are hit and 5 men lightly wounded. I see dentist and have a tooth pulled and return to field in the afternoon of October 8th.

October 10, 1967 Company is conducting patrols in the northeast section of the Michelin Rubble Plantation. At approximately 1200 hours, the 3rd Platoon is alerted by CPT Bristol that the 1st platoon has spotted an estimated VC/NVA platoon on bicycles moving to the east on the perimeter road of the plantation (569571). CPT Bristol directs the 3rd Platoon to move to engage the VC/NVA on the road at 589551. The 3rd Platoon engages the VC/NVA and they jump off their bikes, with one group running to the northeast and another group running to the northwest.



On the move, I direct the 3rd squad (6 men) to stay and secure the bikes and take the 1st (7 men) and 2nd (7 men) squads with me pursuing the VC/NVA moving to the northwest. The 1st squad is about 50-75 meters behind the fleeing VC/NVA, with me, my two RTO's and platoon medic, behind 1st squad and 2nd squad behind me. The 1st squad is spread out in a line formation spanning three rows of rubber

trees. The men of the first squad are engaging with M16's, M-79's and one M-60 MG. They are leaning against trees, in the kneeling positing, and prone firing. Bark from the trees, tree leaves and branches, and dirt are flying everywhere from the 1st squad fire, but the VC/NVA keep running. The chase and firing go on for about 150-200 meters, with the bark, leaves, and dirt still going everywhere. The ground vegetation is getting heavier as we move.



With platoon in pursuit, **Allen Zweig**, (Bravo 3-6 X-Ray) my RTO with the company radio on my right, and **William "Willy" Smith**, the 81mm RTO/FO on my left a step ahead. I have the handset from Allen's radio to my ear when he spots a VC/NVA to our right flank preparing to fire. As Allen turns to engage, the VC/NVA opens fire with AK47, hitting both of my RTO's. With radio handset to my ear, I'm pulled down as Allen goes down (586554). ***Allen takes the round that could have hit me.*** The platoon medic, **SP4 James Meek** is right behind us and immediately begins to assess injuries and provides aid. The 2nd squad engages and secures the wounded. I help Sp4 Meek removed the radios from both men. SP4 Meek tells me that both men will need to be evacuated, but the wounds are not life threatening. I get on the Company radio and update CPT Bristol on the contact and the need for a medivac. During this time, the 1st squad continued the pursuit, but stops when they hear that we have taken WIA's. The 1st squad is about 50 meters from me as I pick up the radio, and move to join the 1st squad. The fire that hits Zweig and Williams is the only incoming we take, and we can no longer see any VC/NVA.

With only the 1st squad with me, and the 3rd squad securing the bikes, I decide to break contact and move back to the 2nd squad and wounded. I consolidate the position and prepare to move to the point of the initial contact to bring in the

dust-off. We pick up Allen and Willy and move to join the 3rd squad. The dust-off comes in, picks up Allen and Willy. After the dust-off is completed, we gather up the bikes and supplies and move back to the company position.

The platoon captures 24 bicycles carrying medical supplies. The 3rd squad fines some blood trails while securing the bikes. Both RTO's return to duty in mid-November. This is my first contact since the contact on May 18, 1967.

After this contact, I sat in my track rehashing the day's events, it hits me for the first time since I have been in Vietnam, something bad could happen to me.

B Company switches between road security and patrolling the Michelin for next two weeks. **Lt Bill Donald** returns from a sweep and gives CPT Bristol a captured VC/NVA turtle.

October 23, 1967, Company is in night position (604495), after a Chinook brings in our rations for the day, the chow line is set up and the men start heading to get there evening hot rations. I am briefing the 3rd squad leader on the ambush patrol for the night when there is an explosion in the center of the perimeter. The security nearest the tree line opens fire into the trees. CPT Bristol orders a cease-fire, and all is quiet. The Artillery Forward Observer (**LT Gary Weir**) fines some of the larger shrapnel and identifies it's from a 105mm round. The Company was hit with friendly fire. The Company has one KIA, **Eddie Fisher** (3rd Platoon), and 11 WIA, 5 serious.



SSG Ernest Murray joins the company. SSG Murray was my 1st SGT in Company A, 5th Battalion, 31st Infantry, 197th Infantry Brigade at Fort Benning, my first assignment as a 2nd LT. SSG Murray takes over command of the Weapons Platoon.

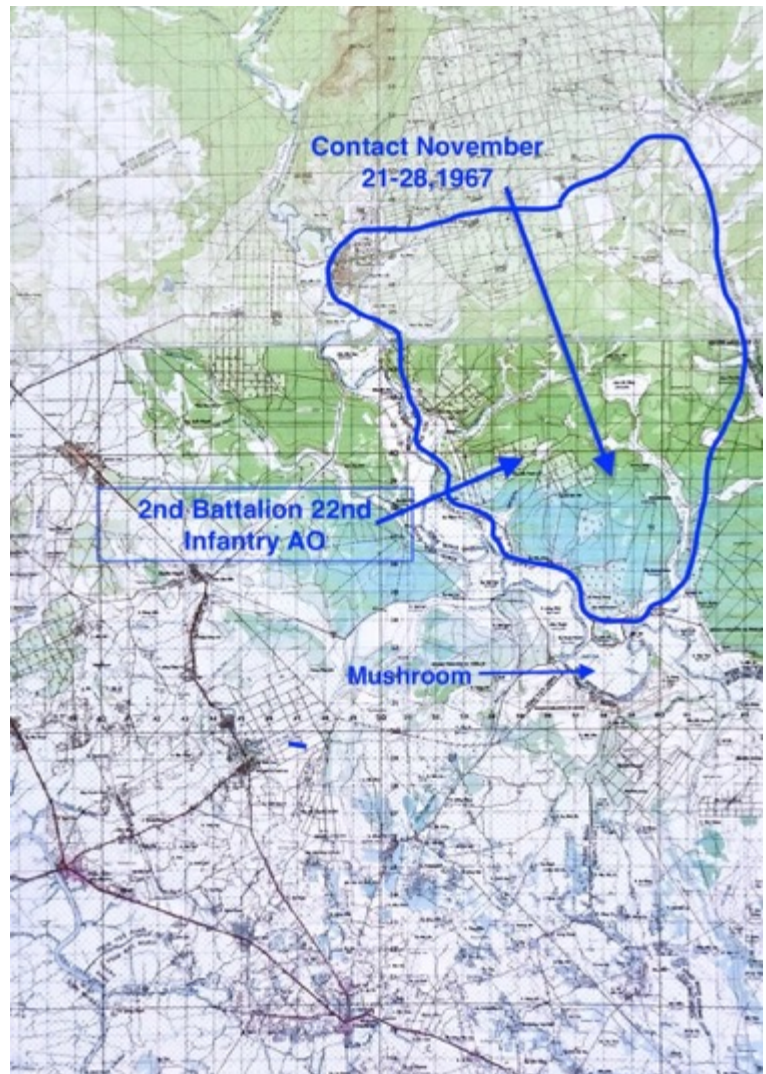
November 1967

The Trapezoid

3rd Platoon, B Company, 2nd Battalion (M), 22nd Infantry

As I enter my 7th month in the field, I receive some good news, confirmation of my R&R. Will be going to Hawaii on December 22, 1967. Will be spending Christmas with Mary, but returning to Vietnam for New Years. CPT Bristol also told me I would be taking over as the Company Executive Officer in mid-December before going on R&R. Just 40 plus days left in field. By the end of the month, I was ready to get out of the field! CPT Mike Mitchell assumes command of Bravo company.

On the last day of October, the Company goes back to the Dau Tieng Base Camp to get resupplied and join the rest of the Battalion. Once resupply is completed, the Battalion moves out to its new area of operations in the southern part of the 3rd Brigade Area of Operations. The area will be along the eastern bank of the Saigon River and south of Dau Tieng and the Michelin Rubber Plantation in the area called the "Trapezoid." This was the first time the Battalion operated in this part the AO since the operations in early part of 1967 during Operations Cedar Falls.



The mission is assisting in the resettlement of Vietnamese living alone or in small villages into larger government controlled villages, and conducting search and destroy patrols in the area. Before we are able to move any villagers, the 1st Platoon walks into a bobby trap area and has 6 men wounded. This is going to be a very bad area.

The movement of villagers requires all of the villager's belongings to include all of their livestock. The water buffalo would be moved by air, either loading them on a Chinook (not the most desirable method) or swing loading them below the

chopper. Which was fun to watch. After all the inhabitants of the villages are removed, the villages are destroyed.

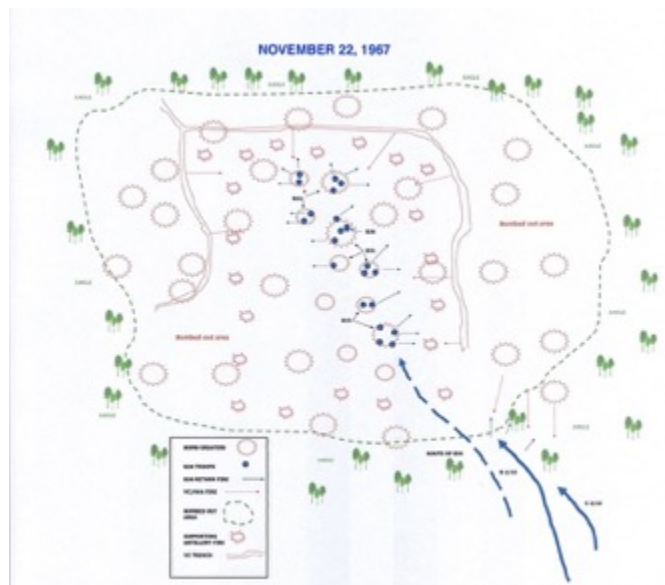
November 21, 1967, while conducting S&D operations northeast the "Mushroom" bend on the Saigon River, the 1st Platoon, B Company under the leadership of Lt Dean Springer, encounters a VC/NVA force in a trench line with bunkers, resulting in 5



seriously wounded. The 3rd Platoon went to the aid of the 1st Platoon and was able to bring fire on the VC/NVA enabling the 1st Platoon to break contact. This contact is the first in a series of contacts that last until November 28, 1967.

November 22, 1967, B

Company is given the mission to go back to the area of contact of the 21st. SP4 James Friar, from the Battalion S1 Section (PIO), asked if he could go with Bravo Company and joins the 3rd Platoon (SP4 Friar is the one who takes the pictures of the Platoon during the contact) The 3rd Platoon is in the lead as the Company enters a bombed-out area. The rest of the Company halts as the 3rd Platoon continues its movement. The



The Platoon is a column formation with the 2nd Squad in the lead, followed by myself, my RTO (SP4 Zweig, who is carrying a shit load of smoke grenades, which came in handy marking our position), the 1st Squad, and the 3rd Squad in the rear. The movement is very slow and difficult with all the destroyed trees and bomb craters of different widths and depths. With the slow movement of the 3rd Platoon, the rest of the Company halts at the tree line and the Platoon gets approximately 150 meters ahead of the Company. The 3rd Platoon is ambushed. As the first rounds are fired, the men of the Platoon dive into the bomb craters for cover and protection. The Platoon is receiving fired from the front and right flank. Once in the bomb craters, the men return fire. From my position, I move

up to take a look to see several rice hats (Only see the tops of the hats) moving in a trench to my front.



I call Bravo 6 to give him a status, since he can hear that we are in contact, we are retuning fire, with no one hit at this time. I give him my location and request fire support to my right flank and front of the of our direction of march. The first



round that are fired come from the Company 81mm mortars and the Battalion 4.2 in mortars.

I'm told Fullback 6 (LTC Arb Norris) is flying over the area of contact, and will be directing the fire missions for the 105mm Artillery support. I request that the artillery fire to the front of the Platoon with the 81mm and 4.2 mortars fire on our right flank. Bravo 6 relays the corrections on the fire support with the assistance of LT Ken McKenize, the Company FO.

The Platoon is taking incoming from AK-47's and machine guns but no indirect fire or hand grenades and returning fire with M-16's, M-60's, and M-79's. Both sides keep up a steady stream of fire.

In his position above, Fullback 6 joins the Company radio net, and informs us he can see VC/NVA movement in trenches to the 3rd Platoons front and both flanks. He directs that the Battalion 4.2 mortars shift their fire to the left flank.

For over an hour, the 3rd Platoon is under fire. At one point in the contact, flying above me are the Battalion Commander, Brigade Commander, Assistant Division Commander, and the Division Commander. Stack helicopters!



At one point, supporting fire was brought in within 50 meters to our front. Airstrikes are requested and hit the tree line to our front to try to stop and reinforcement by the VC/NVA. Gunships hit the trenches in the bombed-out area. As the incoming fire stops, the stack Command helicopters can see VC/NVA still moving in the trenches, and continue with the artillery fire. After about 3 ½ hours, the Platoon is directed to move back and join the Company and head back to the laager position. It is a slow movement from bomb crater to bomb crater until we reach the tree line. The 3rd Platoon comes out of the contact with no casualties.

November 23, 1967 Bravo and Charlie Companies are directed to move back into the contact area, again with the 3rd Platoon in the lead, but with the Company maintaining contact with the rear of the

Platoon. We advance past the location of the contact of the 22nd, and again take fire front out front. Artillery is called in and we hold in place. Both Companies are directed to pull back to the Company laager position and artillery and airstrikes are called in for the rest of the day. The Battalion enjoys a Thanksgiving meal with all the turkey and trimmings.

In the early morning hours of **November 24, 1967**, the VC/NVA mortar our position, with Charlie Company taking some lightly wounded. However, the VC/NVA mortar team is ambushed by a patrol from Charlie Company, killing 7 VC/NVA. In the morning, both Bravo and Charlie Companies move into the contact area. This time there is no contact. The Companies spend the day destroying the bunker complex, but are unable to complete the task by the end of the day. The Companies move back to the laager position.

November 25, 1967, Bravo and Charlie's Companies move back into the base camp complex to complete its destruction. An element of Charlie Company is ambushed, and starts what will become a prolonged contact of 5 hours. Cpt Bill Allison, Company Commander of Charlie Company commits the rest of his company to extract the wounded, and that element starts taking casualties. The Company is not able to get all of its men out. Cpt Allison request a Platoon from Bravo Company be attached to Charlie Company. Bravo Company sets up to the rear of Charlie Company and secures the LZ for the dust-offs. With the 3rd

Platoon, Bravo Company attached, the 3rd Platoon, Charlie Company on the right (With its APC's) and the 3rd Platoon, Bravo Company on the left (Dismounted) begin their moving to retrieve the men still in the contact zone. Cpt Allison is following his 3rd Platoon

Both Platoons are able to advance under fire to an area short of the two wounded men from Charlie Company (LT Mlynarski and LT Van Patten). The 3rd Platoon, Bravo Company is just behind the two, with 3rd Platoon of Charlie Company off to the right.

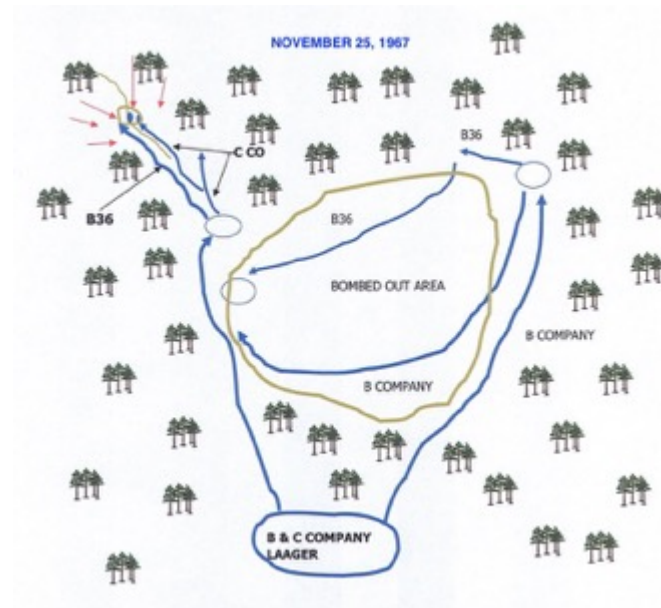
I have two Squads on line (1st Squad on the right and the 3rd on the left) with 2nd Squad in file on our left flank. There is a small gap between the 1st Squad and elements of Charlie Company, but we are maintaining visual contact. I have positioned myself behind the 3rd Squad.

All elements of Charlie Company are under heavy VC/NVA fire from their front and right flank, while the 3rd Platoon, Bravo is receiving heavy fire from its front, and a few rounds from its left flank.

The 3rd Platoon Bravo Company continues its slow forward movement until the 1st Squad spots the two down men of Charlie Company. I move over to a termite mound that is several meters behind the 1st Squad and then move up to a position where I can observe the down men. At this time, I am about 10 meters from them. The 1st Squad is about 7 meters from them. I direct SP4 John Yoshikane to move forward and try to extract them. John is able to get to LT Van Patten and pull him back a few feet.

LT Ken McKenzie then comes forward and rushes past me and hits the ground next to John. With the assistance of John, Ken grabs LT Van Patten, pulls in back to my position, and is wounded in the back. Lt McKenzie then lifts Lt Van Patten to his shoulder and carries him to the rear.

After many attempts to pull LT Mlynarski back, John is unable to move Lt Mlynarski since his arm is entangled



with a tree limb. To untangle his arm would require John moving in to the kill zone. I did not want to risk any additional men at this time.

Also, Charlie Company has taken additional casualties, and is attempting to break contact. The fire to my front is increasing, with any movement drawing fire, we are also taking additional fire from our left flank. I yell out to John to see if he can tell if Lt Mlynarski is WIA or KIA. John crawls up some more where he is able to determine that the LT is KIA. I notify CPT Allison the LT Mlynarski is KIA, and ask for guidance. Cpt Allison then request that he be able to pull back out of the contact area. He is very concern that any additional attempts to retrieve Lt. Mlynarski will result in additional casualties.

With the support from LTC Norris, the Brigade Commander approves the withdrawal from the contact area. With the 3rd Platoon of Bravo Company providing covering fire, Charlie Company is able to withdraw from contact and pull back to the Battalion laager position. Once Charlie Company clears the contact area, the 3rd Platoon of Bravo begins its movement back. Both Charlie Company and the 3rd Platoon Bravo Company close the Battalion laager, and artillery and air strikes are called in on the base camp.

On this day, Charlie Company suffered 25 casualties, with Lt. Robert Mlynarski, Lt Robert Van Patten, PFC Dennis Estes and PFC John Gibson KIA. The 3rd Platoon Bravo Company had no casualties.

(Read CPT Bill Allison article on the week of Thanksgiving, 1967)

November 26, 1967, Charlie Company moves back into the contact area of November 25, and is able to reach the location where Lt Mlynarski was hit. There is no contact, and the Company is able to retrieve Lt Mlynarski. The Company makes a sweep of the area and finds over 20 VC/NVA KIA's and some weapons. CPT Allison made the following comment about the base camp: "Air strikes that were called in on the unfolding VC complex, revealed one of the most elaborate base camps that I remember the battalion ever finding. The camp was, among other things, an ammunition and fuse factory. There was a foundry where the VC were melting pieces of our destroyed personnel carriers and casting the molten metal into grenades."

November 27, 1967 the Battalion remains in the laager position as artillery and airstrikes are called in on the base camp. All indications point to the VC/NVA withdrawing from the area.

November 28, 1967 at 0800 hours, the 3rd Platoon Bravo Company departs the Battalion laager to make a limited sweep of the area to see if the enemy had cleared out of the area. The Platoon moves to the north and then to the north east so that it can approach the base camp area from the east. The Platoon is in

a column formation with the 1st Squad in the lead, followed by the 2nd Squad, the Command Group, and the 3rd Squad in the rear.

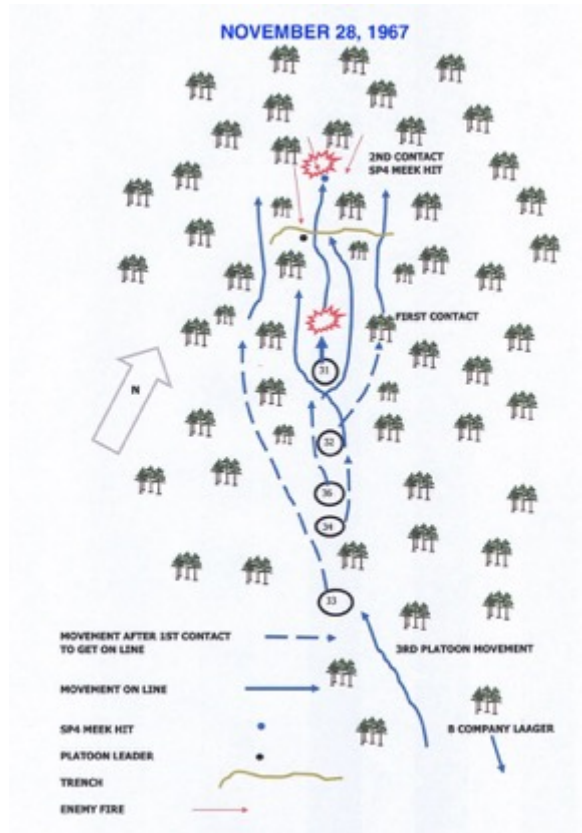
As the Platoon pushed into the bombed-out area for about 150 meters, when the lead element comes on a new trench. As the 1st Squad was calling in this trench, the VC/NVA opened up with small arms and machinegun fire from 3-4 positions from their front and right front. I requested artillery support and directed the 2nd Squad move to the right flank of the 1st Squad with the 3rd moving to the left. I moved up to the rear of the 1st Squad. The objective was to get the Platoon on line so all of the Platoon could return fire. The 3rd Platoon was able to get quick reaction from the artillery because one artillery section was in direct support of the 3rd Platoon and was following our movement. After the initial fire mission, the rest of the artillery battery joined in. I made one adjustment to the fire mission and after the mission was completed, stopped the artillery. At this time, SP4 Meek was with me and my two RTO's.

It took a while for the 2nd and 3rd Squads to get in position, and by that time, the enemy fire had ceased. The Platoon remained in position for another 10-15 minutes and waited for instructions. Cpt Mitchell directed that the platoon should move forward to see if the enemy had truly pulled back. The Platoon moved out on line and moved about 75 meters when it was hit again with small arms and machinegun fire. I again called for artillery support and received the same rapid response. At this time, I was about 20 meters to the rear of the Platoon line.

After I called in the fire mission, I realized that there was a trench 2-3 feet in front of me. The trench had a berm on both sides that was about 4-5 inches high and a foot and a half across. Thinking it would be better to be in the trench, I eased forward, and just as I pushed off to dive over the small berm and into the trench, a tree branch caught my flak jacket and stopped me cold. At the same time a machinegun burst of 3-4 rounds hit the berm to my front and the dirt flew into me. The rounds hit right where my back would have been if the branch did not stop me. I untangled the branch from my flak jacket, and eased myself back, and felt fear for the first time. I closed my eye and thought of Mary and Candy, would I make it out of here. After about 30 seconds, the artillery rounds hit, and shocked me into action, I called for the radio to make the corrections to the artillery fire.

After I gave the corrections, the 1st Squad reported the SP4 Meek was hit during the initial burst of fire. The 1st Squad Leader, SGT Tom Priesthoff then directed one of his fire teams to move forward and retrieve SP4 Meek. Again, it was John Yoshikane, that went out to pull SP4 Meek back. During this time, the Platoon was still under fire, and additional artillery fire was being directed by the Battalion Commander flying above. Cpt Mitchell directed me not to maneuver against the enemy, but to hold in place. I moved forward to a point about 5 meters behind the 1st Squad.

SP4 Yoshikane and SP4 Cobb brought SP4 Meek to my position, at one point, SP4 Meek's head was resting right beside me. SP4 Yoshikane informed me that he was KIA. The enemy fire stopped, I informed Cpt Mitchell we had one KIA. He directed that the Platoon should fall back to a position to dust-off SP4 Meek. The Platoon pulled back to a clear area and called for the dust-off. Once the dust-off was completed, the Platoon moved back to the Battalion laager.



The order was given that the Battalion would be pulled out of the area on the next day, and artillery would continue with a B-52 strike on the area.

During the previous 6 days of contact, myself and the men of the 3rd Platoon felt we were invincible, nothing could stop us, nothing could happen to them. We did not show fatigue, either mental or physical. For six days, we ruled the world. But the death of SP4 Meek hit us all, hit me especially hard. We made it back to our APC's and it appeared we all collapsed at once. Not a word was spoken. The stress and fatigue of the last 6 days had hit.

I just sat in the track, closed my eyes, and all I could see with the dirt flying up in front of me, SP4 Meek lying still beside me. I hoped when I opened my eyes, I would be home. I did not want to be there. I looked at some of the men in my platoon, I saw the look of lost, I wanted to talk to them, but I did not know what

to say. How could I provide comfort and encouragement if I was so emotionally drained and dejected? That was the low point of my two tours.

After about 30 minutes of just sitting there, LTC Norris came over to the Platoon. He called me aside. He started out by saying "Young man." He told me I had done an outstanding job of leading the Platoon. He continued saying there are many men here today because of my leadership and the actions of the Platoon. You and the Platoon responded to the challenge and hardships to accomplish its



"Trapezoid"
Painting by Jim Nelson
Lt Fahel and RTO Zweig
Action of November 25, 1967

missions. The Platoon showed a spirit of togetherness that enable them to fight as one. He said that the last 6 days had been hard on me and the Platoon, but I had to get myself together, the Platoon needed its leader. We are in a hostile land, and it is quite now, but all hell could break out. The way to get out of here is to be

a good soldier, leader, to continue to perform, and not let fear take over. Stay here a few minutes to reflect, pray, and then get back to being the Platoon Leader of the 3rd Platoon, B Company.

LTC Norris then went around to the men of the Platoon, talking with them and providing reassurance and understanding. As he talked to each man, I could see the expression change from despair to a positive look. The men started talking.

LTC Norris was a true leader and inspiration to me. He was able to get me out of my misery and continue to lead the Platoon. I was able to get myself together, and go talk with the men of the 3rd Platoon.

I have relived this week over and over, and still cannot understand how SP4 Meek went from being at my side to being in front of the 1st Squad after the first contact. I see the dirt flying towards me, I see the rice hats to my front.

I would be in the field for another 17 days.

After meeting Jim Nelson at my first reunion in Cleveland, and discussing the contact during the 1967 Thanksgiving week, Jim painted the "Trapezoid."

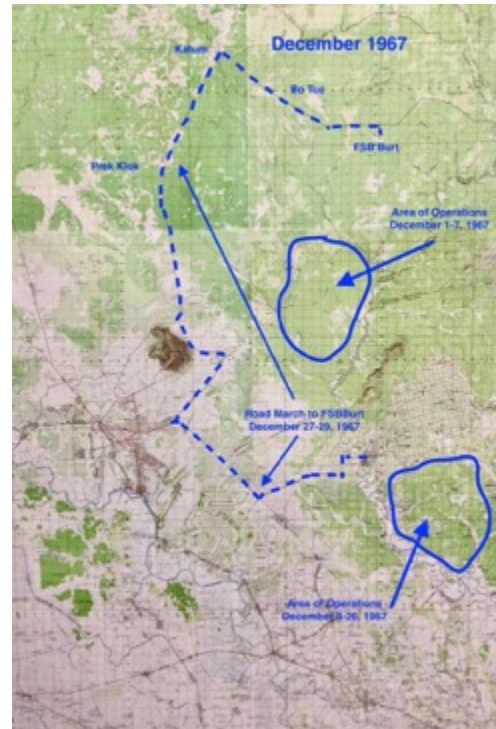
December 1967

3rd Platoon, 2nd Battalion (Mech) 22nd Infantry

After the rough final week in November, the Battalion moves out of the Trapezoid to an area of operations north of the Michelin. After one week in this area, the Battalion moves back to the Trapezoid. LT Gary Smith joins me on December 12 to spend time with me in preparation for taking over as the Platoon Leader on December 15. Can't wait until I head back to the Company area to take over the Executive Officer duties of the Company. The days seems to go by so slow. I have a hard time sleeping on the evening of the 14th.

I return to the rear in the afternoon on resupply chopper December 15, 1967. I shower, get a clean uniform, and head to get good meal in the Company mess hall. While eating, 1st Sargent James T. Sills joins me and briefs me while we eat. After the meal, I go to Battalion HQ to get a briefing from the Battalion XO, Maj Schultz. One item I get out of the briefing is when I return from R&R, I will rotate the Battalion Staff Duty Officer with the other Company Executive Officers, Lt James, A Company and Lt Sherman C Company. I head back to the Company area and move my personal items from the platoon leaders tent to my room in Company HQ that has the Orderly room, mail room, and sleeping areas for me and the 1st SGT.

The next morning, the Company clerk wakes me up to inform me that one man of the Company was killed by friendly artillery fire. Tom Priesthoff, was the driver of the 3-1 track when I took over the 3rd Platoon, and then promoted to a Squad Leader in late September was the causality. Tom was wounded by friendly artillery fire as the battalion was pulling out of laager to return to Dau Teing.



About an hour later, I was informed by the S1 that I would have to go to Graves Registration and identify the remains. Tom was one of the few men of the Platoon that I got close to besides my RTO's. I had the 1stSgtT go with me. When I walked in to where Tom was laying, his body



"Camp Rainier"

Dau Tieng, South Vietnam 1967-1968

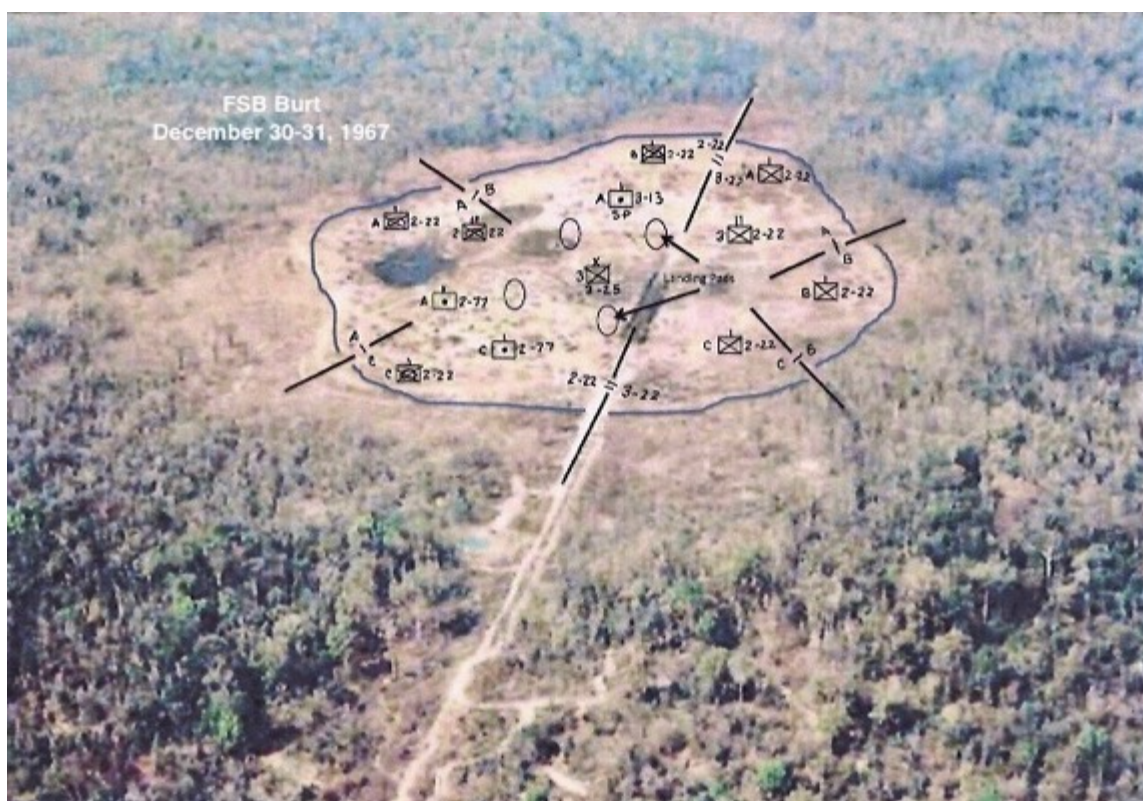
Home of the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, The Funky Fourth, until August 1, 1967 when it was redesignated as the 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, The Electric Strawberry.

was covered except for his left hand, but I could identify Tom by his High School class ring. His face was uncovered and I confirmed the remains were Tom.

Three days later, 1SGT Sills and I had to identify the remains of PSGT Dave Ashford of the 2nd Platoon who was killed by one of his own men as he walked the perimeter.

On December 22, 1967, I departed for my R&R in Hawaii. Mary meets me at Fort DeRussy, and we go to our hotel. The first meal in Hawaii for me is a Chef's Salad and a glass of whole milk. Mary and I take in the sites of Hawaii for the next 6 days.

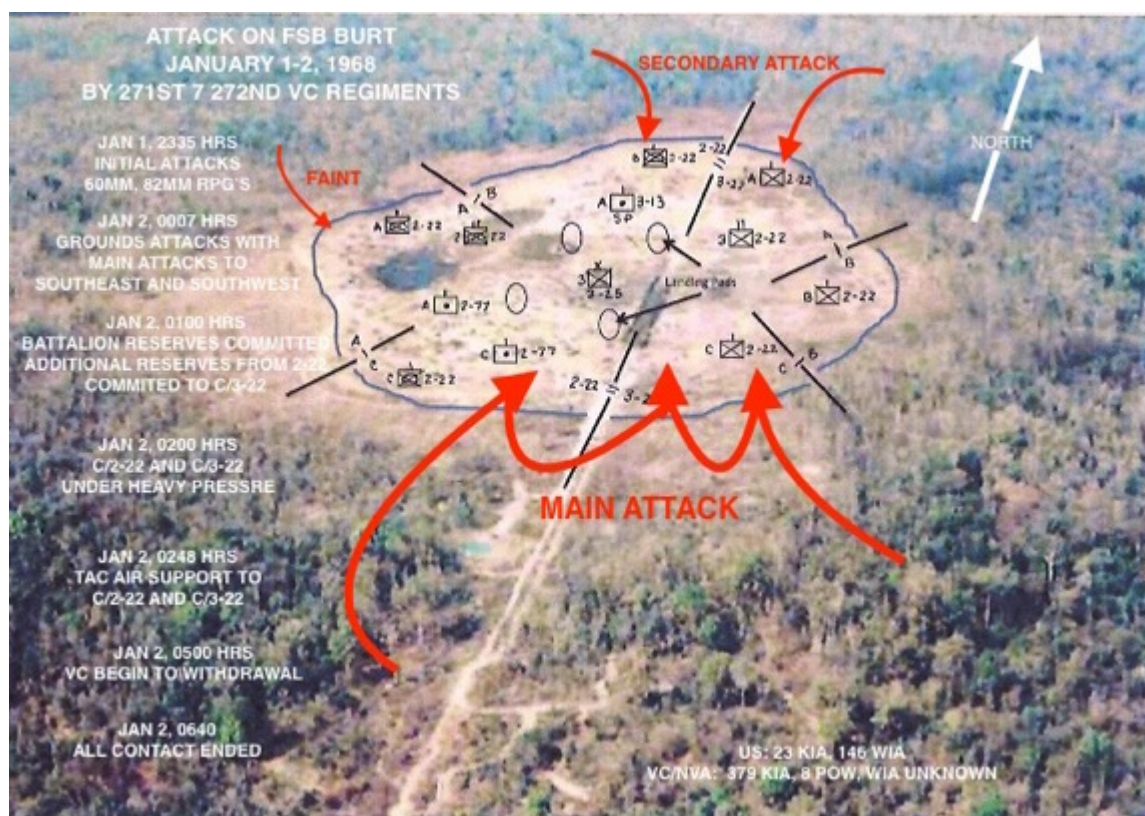
The Battalion returns to Dau Teing on December 26, 1967, get resupplied and then departs on the road march to the new Battalion Area of Operation and Fire Support Base Burt. The Battalion closes in to FSB Burt on December 30, 1967.



On December 30, 1967, I departed Hawaii after spending seven days on R&R. I landed in Saigon on December 31, 1967, but was too late to catch a flight to Dau Tieng. I spend the night in Bien Hoa. During the night, there were several mortar attacks in the area around Bien Hoa, and the night skies were lit up with flares all night. I was able to catch the first flight out to Dau Tieng scheduled to depart around noon on January 1, 1968.

January 1968 **B Company, 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry**

On December 30, 1967, I departed Hawaii after spending seven days on R&R. I landed in Saigon on December 31, 1967, but was too late to catch a flight to Dau Tieng. I spent the night in Bien Hoa. During the night, there were several mortar attacks in the area around Bien Hoa, and flares lit the skies all night.



I was able to catch the first flight out to Dau Tieng scheduled to depart around noon on January 1, 1968. When I got to the company, was informed the Company was operating up north and they had closed into the FSB. The FSB was located about 15 clicks south of the Cambodian Border near Soui Cut. The FSB was named Burt. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 22nd Infantry were in the FSB with 3 batteries of artillery (2 105mm and 1 155mm SP). I spent the rest of the day getting caught up on the mail and Company paperwork. Also found time to go to the PX and get a Super 8mm movie camera.

In the early morning of January 2, 1968, the company clerk (SP4 Dan Dittman) woke me to tell me the Firebase was under heavy attack. I got up, dressed, and went to the Orderly Room to listen to the company on the PRC47 radio. (*The Company HQ building was divided into two parts. The front 2/3's housed the Orderly room with the desks for the Company XO, First Sergeant, Company Clerk, and mailroom. The back 1/3 was the sleeping quarters 1st SGT Sills and myself.*) I listen for a few minutes, but the reception was poor.

I decided to hop in my jeep and go to the Battalion TOC (Rear) (Tactical Operations Center.) When I got there, the Battalion XO (Ed Schultz), S4/HHC CO (CPT Ted Sucher), S1 (CPT Malcom Waitt), and A Company XO (LT Greg James (the Battalion duty officer for the night), along with several NCOs were monitoring the Brigade, Battalion, and Company radio nets. Soon after I got there, the C Company XO (LT J. Sherman) arrived. Listening to the radio chatter, it sounded like the whole perimeter was getting hit, and hit hard.



From listening to the men, who were at FSB Gold (Soui Tre) right after I took over as the platoon leader of the 3rd Platoon in April, it sounded like it was going to be another major battle. But this time it was at night and the Battalion was already in the perimeter. The firebase was getting close in artillery and TAC Air support with the southern part of the perimeter getting hit the hardest. The 3rd Battalion was getting hit hard, and our C Company was also in the thick of things. B Company, on the north was getting hit, but not as bad as the units on the south.

After about an hour, I was tasked by the S4 to take two 2-½ ton trucks to the Ammo Supply Point (ASP) and load up with ammo for the Battalion. Once loaded, bring back to the Battalion helicopter supply pad. He said to monitor the Battalion log net and he would give me the type of ammo to pick up. I telephoned the company and told the 1st SGT (James Sills) to round up the men and

the Company's 2-½ trucks. Once I gave him the message, I continued to listen to the radio traffic, and departed the Battalion TOC after about 10 minutes.

You could look to the north and see the glow of the flares over the battle area.

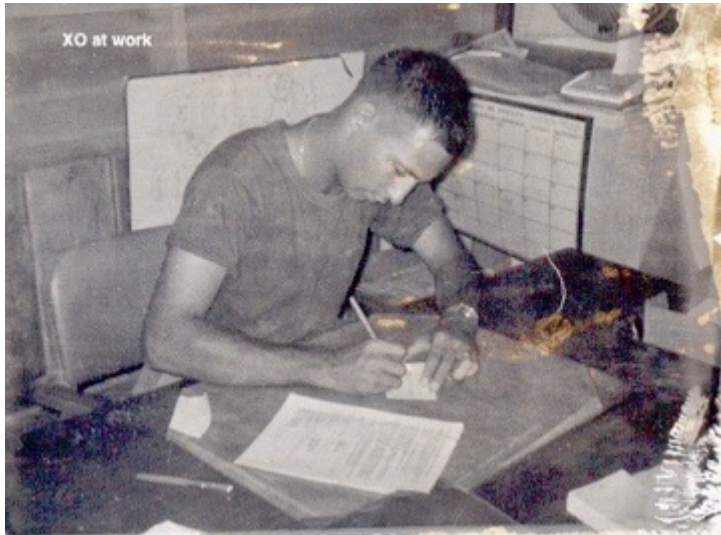
Back at the Company area, I was ready to move out to the ASP in 15 minutes. I told the 1st SGT to round up all combat able men in the Company rear and have them prepare to go out to the field while I was getting the ammo.

On the way to the ASP, I received a radio message from the S4. He told me that he had talked with Fullback 6 (LTC Norris) concerning the ammo requirements, had contacted the Brigade S4 and given the ammo requirements to him. I would be picking up M-16, 50 Cal MG, grenades, Claymores, 81mm and 4.2-inch mortar rounds. When we arrived at the ASP, the men there were already working on ammo requirements for us as well as the requirements for the 3rd Battalion and the artillery units in Burt, and the artillery units in other FSB's firing in support. The priority for the loading went to the artillery units that were firing in support of FSB Burt.

It was about an hour and a half before we headed back to the Battalion supply pad and dawn was breaking. The men (13) from the Company, as well as the men from the other companies of the Battalion were waiting. Several loads of ammo had already left. The priority for the choppers was the ammo. C Company was hit the hardest and their men had priority and left on the first Huey not carrying ammo. We were waiting on the

pad when I received word that it would be about two hours until the next chopper would be available.

We headed back to the mess hall for breakfast. I stopped at the Company HQ, called CPT Mitchell who gave me an update on the Company's action and casualties. We had one KIA (Robert Campbell) and 10 wounded. After breakfast, I headed to Battalion to receive an update from the Battalion XO on the overall battle. By this time, the battle was over, and the units were policing the battlefield.



I returned to the Company and had 1st Sgt Sills round up the men again and headed back to the supply pad. I had the men load on a CH-47 that came in. Once they were off, I headed back to the Company. I contacted CPT Mitchell to see if there were any additional supply items

that he needed. He told me that he would check with the platoon leaders again to see if anything else was needed after their early morning supply. I asked CPT Mitchell if I could come out to the field, and he told me to call him back later.

Later in the morning, I was contacted by the Battalion S1, and told that I would have to go to Grave Registrations when the remains of the Company's KIA arrived to make identification. He told me he would notify me when the remains arrived. In midafternoon, I received word from the S1 that the remains of PFC Campbell arrived at Grave Registration. Since I was not completely sure I could identify PFC Campbell, I had 1st SGT Sills come with me. We arrived at Grave Registration and made the identification. This was one task I hated. I did this task 11 times as Company XO. But 1st SGT Sills and I were not the only ones that had to do this task on this day.

When I got back to the Company area, I contacted CPT Mitchell to see if I could come out to visit the company. He told me to wait until the next day to come out. That night, everything was quiet. I remained in the Company orderly room and played gin with 1st



SGT Sills. FSB Burt receive a mortar rounds in the night, but no ground attack.

In the late afternoon of the 3rd, I flew out to FSB Burt (With my Super 8 camera). Once on the ground, I reported to the CPT Mitchell, who gave me an update on the battle and the current operations of the Company. At this time, the Battalion had relocated to the east side of the perimeter. I then went to visit with the 3rd Platoon, and talked with LT Smith. I made my way around the 3rd platoon, and talked with the men. I was really proud of the men; they did a good job during the battle. I also talked with Lt Springer and Lt Donald.

I spent the night in the Company Commo APC. There were more mortar attacks in the night with no damage. The next day, there were more mortars attacks and I watched a few air strikes to the east of the perimeter. I walk the perimeter to the locations of Bravo and Charlie Companies during the attack. I also visited the 4th Platoon (81mm mortars), and dropped two rounds when they got a fire mission. In the late afternoon, I got on a chopper and returned to the Company Rear.

I settle in to the routine as the Executive Officer. Breakfast, paperwork, lunch, paperwork, dinner, paper work, sleep. I would take about an hour for breakfast, maybe two hours for lunch, and another hour for dinner. After lunch and before dinner I would make sure that everything requested by CPT Mitchell (Rations, ammo, repair parts, mail) was ready and taken to the chopper pad. Some days it called for an afternoon nap. During the times that the Company was operating near the MSR, the items would be loaded on our 2 ½ ton trucks and I would lead a convoy to the Company in my jeep. (A danger that I did not realized at the time)

I would try to go out to the Company at least once a week to get face time with CPT Mitchell and others men in the Company. I would catch the first supply chopper in the morning (There would always be a chopper in the morning to pick-up items in the morning that had to be returned) and get on the last returning chopper in the evening.

Every third night I would be on duty as the Duty Officer (DO), who's main responsibility was to check the Battalion's bunkers on the perimeter. The DO would also be in charge of the Battalion reaction force if need. Each Company was required to provide 5 men for the reaction force each night. Each company would have their own reaction force for the defense of the company area.

I would check the bunker at least three times, and sometimes four during the night. I would drive my jeep along the perimeter road that was just behind the bunker line, stopping at each bunker. Driving the perimeter when there was some moon light was not bad, but when there was no moon light or very little, it was difficult. With only the blackout lights, I drove off the road a few times.

During the month, the Company continued search and destroy operations in the area around FSB Burt. All the companies in the Battalion had action during this time, some of it heavy, and destroying numerous buckers and capturing supplies. On January 20, 1968, the Company was hit by RPG's, resulting on the death of Edward Kubisky (Was in 3rd Platoon) and 5 WIA's. Company returned fire resulting in 3 VC KIA (Body Count).

I made four additional trips to the company in January, two when the Company was at Burt, and two at other Company positions in the AO. Few out in the morning and returned in the evening.

On January 28th, the Battalion closed down FSB Burt and began its movement south out of this area of operations. On January 30, 1968, Charlie Company secured a stream crossing location while the engineers installed a platoon bridge for the Battalion and other Brigade units to cross. Once all elements crossed, the bridge was removed. On January 31, the Battalion is give the order to make a road march to Dau Tieng. The Battalion closed into Dau Tieng in the late evening of January 31, just in time for the beginning of the TET Offensive by the NVA/VC.

February 1968

B Company, 2nd Battalion (Mech) 22nd Infantry

TET Offensive starts. Dau Tieng base camp gets hits with mortars and 107mm rockets.

The Battalion is tasked with the security of the base camp, keeping the MSR open between Dau Tieng and Tay Ninh, conducting aggressive patrolling in areas along the MSR, around Dau Tieng, to include going into the Michelin Rubber Plantation. The Companies and Recon would split the MSR security, with one company securing (Or Recon) Check Point A to Check Point B, the other (Or Recon) taking Check Point B to Checkpoint C depending on the locations of the search and destroy operations. The other Companies or Recon would conduct patrols during the day and one Company or Recon returning to secure the Base Camp at night while the other Battalion units would laager in their area of operations. Bravo Company is in and out of the base camp all during the month.



The base camp is hit with more mortars and rockets during February since any time I have been with the Company. My thoughts that the XO duties would keep out of harm's way vanished. The Company area was hit by mortars on 4 occasions, and once by a 107mm rocket.

At 1750 hours, February 23, 1968, Company mess hall is hit by 107mm rocket. Wounds 8 and destroys the cherry pies requested by CPT Mitchell. At the time the rocket hit. I was conducting an inspection of the Battalion's bunker line. I heard the rockets coming, and got to the nearest bunker for safety. After they hit, when outside of the bunker and could see smoke rising from the general area of the Company.



During one of the mortar attacks, two rounds hit near the Company HQ, sending shrapnel into the building. We were lucky that no one was in the HQ at the time. There were three holes in the wall behind my desk.

The threat of a ground attack on the base camp increase a required that the Duty officer tour the bunker line every two hours at night. Several times during

the month the bucker line received incoming small arms fire, but did not have a ground attack.



On February 26, 1968, LTC King James Coffman assumes command of the Battalion from LTC Awbrey G. Norris. MG Mearns, Command General of the 25th Infantry Division passes the Battalion Colors from outgoing to incoming commanders. All Companies are operating outside of the base camp. The Company XO represent



the Companies in the Change of Command Ceremony. Lunch is served after the ceremony.

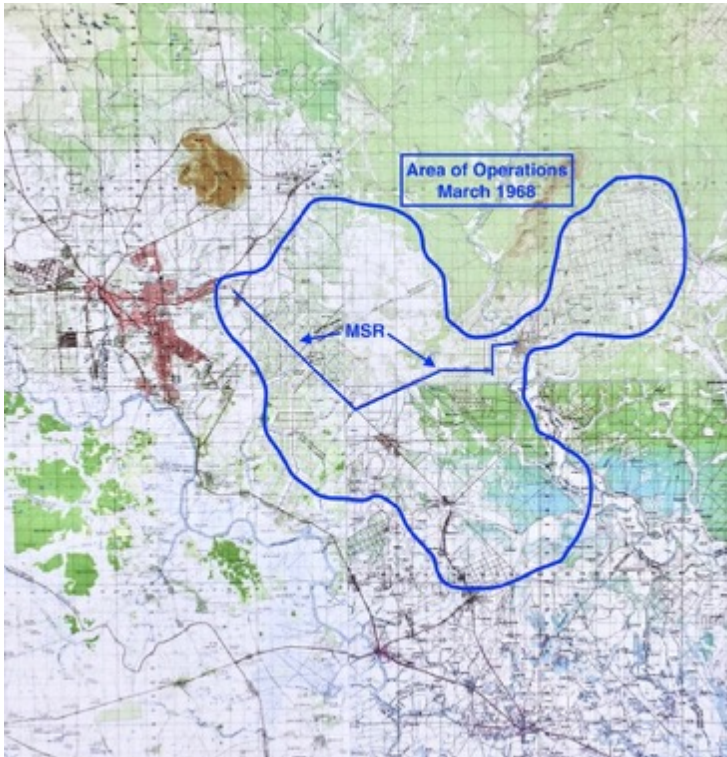
During the month, B Company had three APC hit mines, and at least two men who steps on mines. The Company suffered 2 KIA's and 17 WIA's. KIA's in February 1968: Thomas M. Ross, 2-2- 1968 (1020 hrs, 546496); Steven P Linna, 2-4-1968 (1555hrs at 510488)

March 1968

B Company, 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry

Getting short, less than 60 days, settled in to the daily routine as XO. We are in the TET Counteroffensive Campaign.

The Battalion continues to provide security along the MSR between Dau Tieng and Tay Ninh. When not on the road, conducts aggressive search and destroy mission in the Michelin Rubber Plantation and the areas astride the MSR. The companies and recon rotate back to the base camp for security at night. When company is providing base camp security, it is tasked with sending out ambush patrols at night. It seems units of the Battalion have some type of contact every day/night. The base camp continues to receive income mortar and rocket fire. Several times mortar rounds land in the Battalion and Company areas.



When the Company was not in the base camp, I tried to get out to the visit at least two times during the week. I like being out in the field versus the same every day activities in the base camp. Do not spend the night. Most of the time I take a chopper out. However, when Company is operating along the MSR and will be there for the night I will take a small convoy to resupply the Company. In the late afternoon, I drive my jeep and lead the convoy of a 2 1/2 ton with POL and the 2 1/2 ton with supplies food (To include beer, soft drinks and

ice), ammo, mail, and misc. supplies that were requested. Did not realize how dangerous this was until many years later.

I take my super 8mm camera out with me and get some good movies of the Company movements and one of the extraction of a Vietnamese Recon Unit by helicopter with me popping the smoke marking the LZ. At base camp I get movies of the company and battalion areas, and I also get a good movie of a Flying Crane lifting off with and M-113 from the resupply pad.



The Red Cross "Donut Dollies" visit the company two to three times a month. They set up in the mess hall and the troops that are in the area join them there. They spend about two hours with the troops of the Company and then go to the other Companies in the Battalion.

Go out to the trash pit outside the wire with the new troops to test fire weapons.



We also have fun firing other weapons: AK-47, SKS, Thompson 45. Cal, Burp Gun, M-1 Carbine, M-79, M-14, .45 cal pistol.

CPT Mitchell APC hits a mine, he is blown off and dust-off is called to evacuate. 1stSSG Still notifies me that CPT Mitchell has been wounded but there no information on how serious the injury is. About an hour later, I get a call from Major Schultz to pack my gear and get to the helipad to fly out to the company

and assume command. Within three hours I'm on my way out to the field. My first stop is at the Battalion CP where I am briefed by LTC Coffman and Major Schultz. After their briefing, I'm flown to join B Company. Since the commander's track is destroyed, I take over the Commo APC track as my command track. I call the platoon leaders, (Lt Springer, Lt Donald, Lt Smith) and update them on the status of CPT Mitichell and let them know that I have assumed command. I brief on the mission as explained to me by LTC Coffman and Major Schultz.

When briefed by LTC Coffman, he told me that I would be in command until my DEROS. I would remain in command of B Company until 5 days before I rotated back to the States. I would be in the field until April 21st. I am not happy about this. I was not looking forward to spending my last days in the Vietnam out in the field with the Company.

The aspect of being in command of the Company with LTC Coffman the Battalion Commander was troubling. Cpt Mitchel had told me of the problems with LTC Coffman. The next day I was able to talk with CPT Allison, C Company Command, who also told me about LTC Coffman and gave me guidance on dealing with him as the Company Commander.

During the last few days of March, the Company continued to provide MRS security and conducting operations along the MSR.

KIA: Joseph Pat Strippoli, Jr. 3-17-1968
David Wayne Derry, 3-22-1968

April 1968

B Company, 2nd Battalion (Mech) 22nd Infantry

(This ends my recap of 50 years ago in Vietnam with the Triple Deuce)

April 1, 1968: 26 days and a wake-up—Deros. Short!! But still in the Field. Looking at getting out of the field on April 21st

The Company begins the month Opcon to the 1st Brigade, 25th Division operating in the area northeast and east of Trang Bang and along the Saigon River. The missions are both road security and search and destroy. The Battalion is also tasked to provide one Platoon for convoy and road security from Tay Ninh to Bau Co and staying at night at Bau Co for security. The Companies and Recon rotated the mission

As Company Commander, I stay in one position while the Platoons are conducting the search and destroy mission. Have two Platoons out and hold one Platoon for security and reaction force. The Weapons Platoon is also with me for fire support. On road security I position the Command Group (My Track, and the maintenance track with the Weapons Platoon in the center of area of responsibility) while the other Platoons run the road and outpost along the MSR.

On April 6, 1968, B Company is conducting searching operations along the banks of the Saigon River. LTC Coffman is flying over our area of operations along the river spots 3 sampans moving towards the west bank of the river. He instructs me to move to that location and conduct a search along the river bank. I move the Company to the location and send one Platoon upriver and one Platoon downriver.

Talk about doing something dumb. This day April 6, 1968, I did the dumbest thing during my life. How could 8 men be so stupid? In looking back at this over the years, I think how lucky the 8 of us were that day.

In searching along the bank, the 1st Platoon finds a sampan. I make a decision to get into the sampan along with the rest of the command group.





The Command group is myself, my two RTO's the Artillery FO and his two RTO, plus two me from the 1st Platoon. The command group gets into the sampan to look for bunkers from the water. We moved out, staying within ten meters of the bank. We moved along the bank line for about 50 meters, when a VC surfaced between the sampan and riverbank. He surfaced just 5 feet from the sampan. The RTO, sitting in the front, sees the VC break the surface of the water fires his M16. He empties the magazine into the VC driving him back to the bank. It was lucky that he did not tip the sampan. The VC must of thought VC's were in the sampans.



After this, we all decided the best place to be is on dry land. We move the sampan to the riverbank and get back on dry land. The 1st Platoon finds a bunker entrance, inside the bunker are two females and one male. We are able to get them out and find five hundred pounds of rice in bags

The company continued to search the area for the next two hours, 5 additional bunkers are found, all containing foodstuffs. The supplies are taken back to the APC's and airlifted back to the base camp. The Company destroys three sampans.

On the 8th of April, the company is assigned to secure the MSR and operating away from the Battalion.

On April 9th, the Battalion is placed back under control of the 3rd Brigade. The Battalion is given a new mission. Early on the morning of April 9, Company B is directed to move and link up with the Battalion located north of Trang Bang. The Battalion will then move to the junctions of TLT 13 and 243 northeast of the Black Virgin. North of the Soui Da Special Forces Camp, the Battalion will establish a night position and send patrols out. The next day, the Battalion will continue movement on TLT 13 to the junction with 244. The Battalion will then move north of 244 and set up a Battalion size patrol base.

Once the 2nd Battalion is in position off 244, the 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry under command of LTC Flint, will be air lifted to a clear area 2800 meters south of the junction of TLT 13 and 244. The 3rd Battalion will be landing in the LZ at mid-day on April 11th and will begin sweeping to the north to the 2nd Battalion who will be in a blocking position.

On April 9th, at 1030 hours, B Company meets up with the Battalion, and the Battalion moves out. The order of march is A Company, B Company, Battalion Command Group with Recon, and C Company. The Battalion moves without incidents to Soui Da area and establishes its night position and sends out the patrols. Recon is sent to the bridge over the Soui Ba Hao to secure for the movement of the Battalion the next day.

On April 10th, The Battalion moves out of its night position to continue to the location of the blocking positions on 244. The Battalion order of march is C Company, B Company, Command Group, and A Company to the bridge over the Sanh Doi without any problems. The jungle on both sides of the road had been cleared back for about 100 meters to a point 4000 meters east of where the road makes a sharp right turn. C and B Companies cross the bridge and advance along the road for about 1000 meters when C Company received 5 to 7 rounds of sniper fire. C Company returns the fire to the south. The LTC Coffman orders both C and B Companies to pull back while artillery and airstrikes are called in on the contact area.

Both companies pull back to the bridge and hold in place for over an hour while the air- strikes and artillery rake the area. The LTC Coffman then ordered both companies to move out again. The companies are able to move to the point where they received the sniper fire, when again, the lead platoon received additional 3-5 rounds fired at its lead APC. Company C returned fire, and the Company Commander request permission to continue its movement, but the LTC Coffman refuses, and has the companies pull back again. Another hour is wasted before both companies move out again.

The time is now approximately 1430 hours, and the Battalion is nowhere near getting to its blocking position. LTC Coffman orders the Companies to move out again. This time the lead APC gets 500 meters to the east of the point of sniper fire and the lead APC hits a mine. The damage is light, just blowing the track off. The explosion does not cause any injuries. However, this is another delay for the Battalion. It takes another hour to repair the APC and get moving.

The lead APC gets to the trail junction that is 4000 meters to the west of 244 without further incident. The time is now approximately 1700 hours, and the battalion is stretched out on TLT 13. The LTC Coffman orders the Battalion to halt, form a defensive position in the vicinity of the C Company. The laager is a rectangle shaped tied into the tree line at each side of the road. Each Company sends out ambush patrols and LP.

The Battalion will move out at first light to move to its objective. Later in the evening of April 10, the LTC Coffman calls the Company Commanders together to discuss the mission of the next day, and what happened today. None of the Company Commanders were happy with the location and shape of the night position. Too close to the tree line. All the Company Commanders agreed when C Company received the sniper fire, LTC Coffman should not have pulled the Battalion back. He should have let C Company return fire and direct the airstrikes

and artillery onto the target and continue the advance. With the tree line cut so far back, there was little chance that any serious ambush could happen. The pulling back just delayed the Battalion and put it in a bad defensive position for the night.

At first light on April 11th the Battalion moves out with the same order of march as the day before. The move to new laager west of 244 was made without incident. As we made the turn off TLT 13 north on 244, we passed the two burned out



APC's of the 2nd Platoon, B Company that were destroyed on May 17, 1967.

The Battalion was in its laager position (Vicinity of 452665) at 1315 hours, LTC Coffman has A and C Companies to search out to the northeast and northwest from this position. B Company remained in the laager for security.

Later in the day, the 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry is airlifted into the area south of our Battalion operational area, to conduct company size operations. At 1600 hours, all Companies of the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry closed into on night laager. The 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry set up their night laager position (449609) south of the 22nd Battalion at a distance of approximately 6000 meters.

(244 ran north south would provide a direct route the 3rd Battalion. Once you hit the junction of TLT 13 and 244, there is a small trail leading south into the clearing where the 3rd Battalion is located. This trail is just wide enough for one APC.)

At the laager of the 2nd Battalion, each Company is directed to send out a Platoon size ambush patrol in front of their sector, and to establish listening post. At 1900 hours, the three ambush patrols departed the Battalion laager. By 1930 hours, all three patrols had established their ambush positions. The listening posts are in position about 100 meters in front of the companies. 3 to 5 men manned each listening post. The listening post have both radio and land line communications.

On April 12, 1968 (Good Friday) at approximately 0230 hours, the 3rd Battalion reported receiving incoming mortar rounds. Five minutes later, the 3rd Battalion reported the mortar fire increasing, and their units on the south of the perimeter are receiving small arms fire. Around 0300 hours the Brigade Commander alerts the 2nd Battalion to be prepared to move to the assistance of the 3rd Battalion on order. The LTC Coffman called for his Company Commanders and 10 minutes later briefs the commanders. If the Battalion was ordered to move out, the order of march would be C Company, followed by B Company, the Battalion command group with Recon, and the rear would be A Company. LTC Coffman directed that no action was to be taken at this time.

As I left the Battalion CP, I was walking with CPT Allison. CPT Allison told me he was not going to wait for LTC Coffman to tell him to recall the ambush patrols. If the order was given to move to support, then we needed to be ready to move. I told him I would do the same. He also told me to monitor the Brigade radio net, as he was doing to follow the action. I got back to the command track and recalled the ambush patrol. I keep the LP in position.

Around 0315 hours, the 2nd Battalion received incoming mortar rounds. The Battalion was hit by at least 12 rounds. The 4.2 mm mortars of the Battalion fired counter mortar fire, silencing the mortars.

At 0315 hours, the 3rd Battalion was still receiving mortar fire, and small arms fire, but the volume had not increased. The situation was still under control. The ambush patrols of B and C Companies had closed the laager. LTC Coffman was not informed that the patrols of B and C Company had been recalled.

At 0400 hours, the 3rd Battalion reported that it was now under ground attack. The VC/ NVA were attacking from the south and southwest. Artillery and air support were supporting the 3rd Battalion. At 0415 hours, the 3rd Battalion reported that two of its positions in the south had been overrun, and that the Recon Platoon, acting as the Battalion reaction force has been committed to the holes in the perimeter. It was estimated that there was at least a company size enemy force attacking the 3rd Battalion. LTC Flint requested that the Brigade Commander commit the 2nd Battalion to move to support the 3rd Battalion. It was estimated that it would take the 2nd Battalion at least 2 hours to reach the 3rd Battalion, and that was if there were no attempts to block the 2nd Battalion.

At 0400 hours A Company ambush patrol engages unknown number of VC/NVA with small arms and claymores. VC/NVA return fire with 60mm mortars. A Company suffers 3 KIA and 3 WIA. Five VC/NVA are KIA.

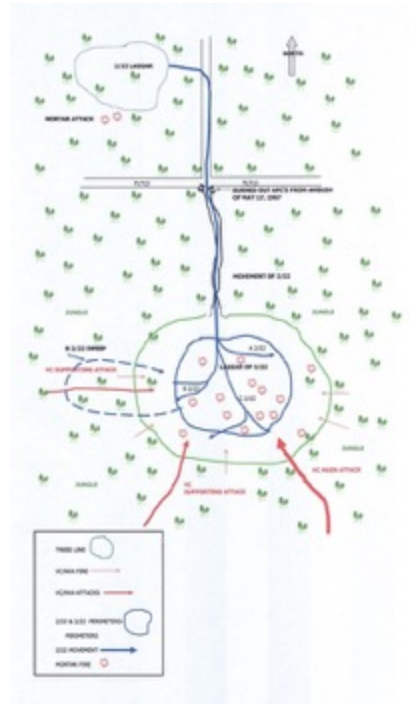
At 0430 hours the Brigade Commander committed the 2nd Battalion to move to reinforce the 3rd Battalion. LTC Coffman gives the order to pull in the patrols and LP. The order of march was as it was outlined by the LTC Coffman in his briefing. LTC Coffman asked how long before the units were ready to move. CPT Allison replied: "Fullback 6, this is Charlie 6, moving out now". I responded: "Fullback 6, this is Bravo 6, following Charlie 6"



Within 3 minutes of receiving the command to move out, both C and B Companies were moving. Once LTC Coffman realized that B and C Companies were moving and the last element of B Company cleared laager, he directed A Company to join the Battalion once it recovers its ambush patrol WIA's and KIA's. LTC Coffman directed the Command Group with Recon move out to link up with B Company.

A Company would be ready to move in 20-30 minutes. If Bravo and Charlie would have waited for LTC Coffman order to pull in patrols, it would have been another 30-45 minutes before we would have been able to move.

The order of march for B Company was with the 3rd Platoon in the lead, followed by the Command Group, 2nd Platoon, Weapons Platoon, and 1st Platoon. The Battalion movement would be mounted until it met any type of enemy contact. Both C and B Companies were on the 244 heading south, with the speed of the movement ranging between 3-5 miles per hours. The lead platoon would stop ever so often to Recon the area to the front; they would do this with their night vision devices, and with dismounting the troops. This did slow the Battalion's movement.



At 0600 hours, the lead APC crosses highway 13, and was about 1200 meters from the position of the 3rd Battalion. The 3rd Battalion reported VC/NVA inside the perimeter, and it was estimated that the Battalion had over 50 men wounded. The enemy fire was concentrated to the south and southwest of the Battalion, and C Company of the 3rd Battalion was hard pressed to hold its positions.

As B Company approached the junction, the I recalled the contact of May 17 & 18, 1967. The two burned out APC's of the 2nd Platoon were still there, a haunting sign of the time. It was not a pleasant memory, and with just a few days left in the field, a cold chill came over me. The Company kept moving and was waiting for additional information on the status of the 3rd Battalion.

C Company was now within 200 meters of the 3rd Battalion. There were no signs that the VC/NVA had any troops committed to the north of the Battalion. This surprise us, no effort was made to block our movement from the laager position. The CPT Allison requested information and direction. LTC Coffman directed both the B and C go to the 3rd Battalion radio net and get directions from the 3rd Battalion Commander. The LTC Flint directed C Company to move straight through the Battalion area to the south and deliver a high volume of fire on the tree line to the south and eliminate any VC/NVA inside the perimeter as they move east. LTC Flint said that he would have guilds to lead the Companies in the perimeter.

LTC Flint wanted B Company to follow C Company into the perimeter and move to the southwest to clear out the perimeter and to bring their fire on the tree line in that direction. Once in the perimeter, I put the 2nd and 3rd Platoons on line as they moved to the gap in the line that separated C and A Companies of the 3rd Battalion. The company moved to the perimeter and started laying down a heavy

volume of fire with the 50-cal machine guns. The troops dismounted and began firing their personal weapon and pushed 10-15 meters past the 3rd Battalions positions. The time was now 00620 hours. The company continued firing until it receives orders from the battalion to cease fire, which came at 0645 hours. All contact end by 0730.

With the perimeter secured, I got out of my track and walked the perimeter checking on the Company. I also walked to look at the VC/NVA bodies within the perimeter. The VC/NVA penetrated the perimeter and the men of the 3rd Battalion regrouped and fought and reestablished the perimeter as the 2nd Battalion approached.

The 3rd Battalion was now having the dust-offs come in to evacuate the wounded. The Brigade Commander came into the perimeter and met with both of the Battalion Commanders. It was determined that the 2nd Battalion should move out and attempt to establish contact with the enemy. The plan was to have C Company push to the south and B Company to push to the west with A Company to push to the northeast. All Companies move out dismounted, leaving the tracks in the perimeter. The Companies started their movement at 0800 hours. They were instructed to move, and if they did not establish contact with the enemy within 2500 meters, that they were to hold, and move back to the perimeter on order.

Company B moved out with its platoons in column, with the 2nd Platoon in the lead, followed by the Command Group, 3rd Platoon, and the 1st Platoon. The Weapons Platoon remained in the perimeter. The company moved to its stop line, held in place for the next hour, and waited for instructions. LTC Coffman directed the company to move 500 -700 meters to the north and then to head back to the perimeter. On the way back to the perimeter, the Company finds one VC/NVA KIA.

During the sweep C Company engages two VC/NVA resulting in two VC/NVA KIA, they also find one M-16 rifle and one 90mm recoilless rifle.

Company B closed the perimeter at 1400 hours. The 2nd Battalion established a perimeter, and it was used to airlift the 3rd Battalion out of the area. The 2nd Battalion would remain in the area and conduct searching operations.

During this battle, the 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry lost 16 men killed with 49 wounded. The body count for the enemy was over 150. The 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry had no additional wounded after the three men that were killed in the mortar attack.

During the following 6 days, the Battalion conducted both Platoons and Companies size operations with A and C Companies having heavy contact during

this time. (A Company had 6 KIA's and C Company had 1 KIA). Although B Company conducted several patrols during time, we did not any contact while finding trenches and bunkers. This was my last tactical operation during my first tour.

On April 20, 1968, I gave up command of B Company, 2nd Battalion, (M), 22nd Infantry, and departed the Company on the last chopper out to return to the Battalion base camp at Dau Tieng. I remain in the base camp for 4 days, and then went to Long Binh and departed for the states two days later.

KIA Jose Antonio Marrero-Rios, 4-21-1968
Gene Covey, 4-21-1968

The last official duty I had was the letter to the parents of SP4 Gene Covey who was killed in action on April 21, 1968.

In all the contact I was in, both the light and the heavy, I did not fire my weapon. It was my belief (Whether it was right or wrong) if I was firing my weapon, I was not providing the leadership to the troops. I had to stay in a position that would provide me with the best opportunity to observe, lead, and direct. To see and understand what was happening, to provide the information to my commander and directions to squads and platoons. To call in and direct the fire support, whether it be artillery, gunships, or air strikes. If I was firing my weapon, then I was not doing my job.

During my time as a Platoon Leader, I lost one man to enemy fire and one man to friendly artillery. The platoon had a total of 4 men wounded. As Company Commander the Company had limited contact with no casualties.

I departed Vietnam on a flight landing at Travis Air Force Base outside of Sacramento, CA. As we approached the coast of California, we flew over the Golden Gate Bridge, at that point I knew I was home.

I returned to the States to see Mary and Candy and reported to our next duty station in Omaha, NB as the advisor to the Nebraska and South Dakota Army Reserve. Besides advising the reserve units, I was the Notification Officer and Survivors Assistance Officer for soldiers lost in Vietnam. This duty was the hardest duty I ever had. I made multiple notifications and was the Assistance Office for several families.

I stayed in Omaha until I received orders for my second tour of Vietnam in September 1969. I would join the 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry, 11th Light Infantry Brigade, Americal Division. I would command B Company, take over as the Battalion S-4, and later command HHC.

The experiences, lessons learned, and outstanding leaders I served with in the Triple Deuce enable me to provide the leadership to B Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry. To survive 6 months in command and not losing a man and inflicting damage to the enemy.

Our area of operations looks a lot different now. Most of it covered by a Lake Dau Teing. You can take a sightseeing cruise on the lake or a cable car to the top of Nui Ba Den.

COMMENTS FROM BOB PRICE ON THIS RECAP

I vividly remember running the road that night trying to go to save our brothers in 3/22. All of us were scared shitless fully expecting for the Gooks to ambush us at any time. When we pulled into the field around 1st light 2nd Platoon, Bravo Co pulled to the right side to witness total carnage. All of the foxholes were close to the jungle line with a number of tall termite mounds mixed in. there were a number of dead American's all around us & a lot of dead Gooks. One dead American M60 machine gunner was in a foxhole with a large stack of dead Gooks stacked up in front of his position. He took out a lot of Gooks but unfortunately died from a bullet in the center of his forehead. He had a cross on his helmet but God wasn't around that night to save him. He was a really big guy, 4 of us struggled to carry him to a central gathering point. Me & the other guys from 2nd Platoon carried in a number of other dead Americans a site that is still seared into my brain. I had been in country about 8 months at that time & was used to seeing dead Gooks but never this many of our own. I walked point on 2nd Platoons sweep out into the jungle & came face to face with a claymore mine while heading back into the perimeter. I was already in the kill zone so I just walked up & pulled out the firing pin. Turns out it was left there by a 3/22 ambush patrol that had made a hasty retreat back into the perimeter to escape the attacking Gooks. Good thing that you & Bill Allison made the move when you did, it would have been a lot worse if we didn't get there at daybreak.

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Manage

April 12, 2018

50 years ago, today it was Good Friday in Vietnam. Really bad day for our brothers in the 3/22. there entire Battalion was attacked by a large Vietcong/ NVA unit in the middle of the night. Things got bad real fast & part of their perimeter was over run. Getting low on ammo & calling artillery practically on top of themselves. things were really desperate. My Battalion the 2/22 was about 3 miles away set up in a small clearing in the jungle . Hearing how bad things were we pulled in our ambush patrols. , threw all of our gear in the tracks (we were a mechanized infantry battalion). & headed out on a rescue mission. With Charlie

Co in the lead with Bravo Co (my unit) right behind we headed down a narrow trail in the jungle fully expecting to be ambushed at any time . We never moved at night mounted on the tracks & we were all scared shit. The trail happened to head almost straight to the field where the battle was going on . We broke into the field about dawn with Charlie Co breaking to the left & Bravo Co going right. We drove right into a field of carnage , There were numerous Dead Gooks inside the perimeter along with a number of dead American soldiers as well as many wounded. Thank God we got there when we did or things would have gotten a lot worse. My Platoon carried in a number of KIA's to a central gathering point feeling extreme anger toward the animals we were fighting. Total of 16 KIA's with 50 + of our brothers wounded with over 150 dead gooks all over the field. Years later at a reunion Nick Dragon one of the 3/22 survivors of the battle came up to me , shook my hand & thanked me for being part of the rescue mission . He said they all took hope when they heard the 50 cal machine guns & the roar of the tracks as we drew close to the battle. We would have expected the same out of them if our unit was being overrun.