

Who Am I?

"Name: Frank Mezzanotte"
"Arrived RVN: August 1970"
"Transferred: November 1970"
"Company: A Company"
"Platoon: 1st Platoon"



Frank Mezzanotte

I was born in the Rockaways, Queens County, NYC in 1950, and grew up across the bay from Idlewild Airport (now JFK). I was drafted at the age of 19 and processed through Fort Hamilton, Brooklyn. We were flown to Fort Jackson for further processing and then bussed to Fort Gordon for Basic Training. I was assigned to Fort Polk for Infantry AIT, and afterwards received orders for Vietnam. Just before heading home for leave, a special formation was called and all or most of the orders were changed. About a third went to Fort Hood, another third went to Fort Rucker, and then my third went to Fort Lewis. At Fort Lewis, I was assigned to an artillery unit that was training to go to Germany. My job was to set up as a guard on the perimeter as the 155 self-propelled

howitzers were firing. We trained for about 3 to 4 months, 5 to 6 days a week, and then were flown to Germany for the 30-day NATO maneuver. After we returned, all of us infantrymen from Polk started receiving orders for Vietnam - I think I was there about a month waiting for mine. I arrived in Vietnam in August 1970. By November the 3rd Brigade of the 25th was being withdrawn, and I ended up serving the rest of my time with the Americal.

I developed some close relationships throughout my service time. Probably one of the closest was Mike McCain who was with me most of my time - during training, at Fort Lewis, and with the 25th in Vietnam - I've included some of the pictures I have of him when we were in the Triple Deuce. I also got close with Mike Schiller who was with me and Mike McCain through training, Fort Lewis, and ended up with the Americal in Vietnam. I was able to hook up with him a couple of times in Vietnam and kept in touch shortly after discharge. I met Mike Golden when I was in the Triple Deuce (pictures included) and our friendship continued after discharge. Others that I met and recall with fond memories from the Triple Deuce include Dennis 'Ranger' Heideman, Randy Gilstrap, and Doc Barley. I met Bill Alessi and Skip Mather at Fort Lewis - we spent some time together in DC at The Wall in the early 1990's. I visited Skip Mather out in Portland in 2011, just months before he died of brain cancer. I'd like to mention two of my hometown buddies who didn't make it home. Dennis Jackowski was drafted with me and was killed in Vietnam in 1970 while serving with the Americal. Anthony Caraccilo and I went all through school together - he was killed while serving in Vietnam with the 5th Mech.



8 The Company Sign.JPG | I think I took this picture in November 1970 when we were all hanging out in the company area at Cu Chi waiting for orders to come down. That's Randy Gilstrap on the left, Mike McCain in the middle, and Mike Golden on the right. We were on our way over to the pool - see the



9 CuChi At The Pool.JPG | And here's a picture at the pool! That's Mike McCain in the back holding up the peace sign and Mike Golden with the cigarette in his mouth and the towel on his shoulder on the right. There are 3 others in the picture and I only have 2 other names on the back of the picture - Tom



10 Mike & Dennis.JPG | That's Mike Golden and Dennis 'Ranger' Heideman promoting 'peace' and 'love' back in the company area at Cu Chi. That was also November 1970 when we were waiting for orders. (992x976)



11 Snake & Ranger.JPG | This is another picture that Dennis (Ranger) sent me. Carl Yamasaki, who I believe was from Hawaii, is in the center of the picture and that's Dennis to the right. The picture was taken before I was 'in-country' in April 1970 at FSB Devens, if I'm reading Dennis' handwriting correctly on the back. Carl, who I was introduced to as 'Snake', was still in-country when I was there. I believe I only got a few chances to speak with Carl, but I do remember him as a great guy, very mellow. I was very surprised to see his picture in the July newsletter! Until you hear from someone, or see his info someplace, you never know if he's still alive or not. (1504x1024)



12 Night Position In Trapezoids.JPG | This is one of our night laager positions while we were supporting the Rome Plows. I wrote the Trapezoids on the back of the picture and assume that's what the particular area that we were in was called? (992x976)



13 Rome Plow.JPG | A good part of my time in the 25th saw my unit providing security for Rome Plows (pictured here) that were pretty much clearing areas to eliminate any possibility of enemy concealment. These plows were similar to bulldozers and were actually made by the Rome Plow Company in Georgia. (1136x1152)



14 SP4 Rice.JPG | What I have written on the back of this picture is: SP/4 Rice, APC driver, 1st platoon, man of courage. Regrettably, I don't remember his first name. What I do remember is that I was told how he saved another's life by entering a track that was on fire and pulling a fellow Triple Deucer out. Yes, definitely, a MAN OF COURAGE! (992x976)



15 Doc Barley.JPG | I guess from the name, Doc Barley, that you can tell he was our medic. I don't think I ever knew his first name, but I do remember that he was from Florida (I think) and he was quite a character. (1152x1136)



16 Mike McCain suited-up.JPG | Here's Mike McCain again - this time with flak jacket and steel pot - found in the Trapezoids in deep thought. (992x976)



17 Couple of Rome Plows.JPG | Here's a good shot of 2 Rome Plows going about their business - again courtesy of Dennis Heideman. (1440x992)



18 Levelled By Rome Plows - Saigon River.JPG | This is what a typical area looked like after the Rome Plows were finished. I believe that's the Saigon River in the background. (992x976)



19 APC.JPG | I'm not sure what track that is and who is on top of it, but it does appear that it's stopped and they're checking out something in the distance possibly. Unfortunately when you took pictures then, you didn't get to immediately review them. You were lucky if you got to review them in a month! (992x976)



20 VTR.JPG | This picture shows a Variable Track Retriever (VTR) that was in Cu Chi at the time. Looking at it brings back memories of one or two of our tracks getting stuck in the mud one day. If my memory serves me correctly, I believe that a 'Skyhook' helicopter actually brought a VTR to the field to help us. It took like half a day or more but we eventually got the tracks out just before night fall. (992x976)



21 Armored Cav.JPG | This is part of an armored cav unit that we passed on the road outside of Cu Chi. (992x992)



22 Resupply.JPG | This was always a welcome sight - a Chinook bringing us resupply! (992x976)



23 Loach.JPG | Usually the sight of one of these meant that the battalion commander or above was coming for a visit. I don't ever remember seeing him - I'm assuming that he would just meet with the higher-ups? (1504x976)



24 Along The Village Road.JPG | The Vietnamese children would line up on the side of the road when they heard the tracks coming. I'd throw some candy out to them from our 'care' packages and they'd all run to get it.
(992x976)



25 Further Down The Road.JPG | Children along the road waiting for their handouts.
(1008x976)



26 To The Americal.JPG | This I took to send home. I remember what we were told when processing in to the 25th: no matter what you tell them, your loved ones at home are thinking that you're in hand-to-hand combat situations every single day. So, while processing into the 1/46th Infantry with the Americal up in Chu Lai, I took a walk down to the South China Sea with a new buddy (Rick who was coming in from the 4th) who took this picture. As you can see, I wrote 'Hi Mom' in the sand - which I thought was a great idea, at the time anyway - and sent it on home to her.
(992x992)