

# **The Viet Nam Triple Deuce, Inc.**

**An Association of 2 Bn. (Mech)**

**22nd Infantry Regiment**

**Viet Nam Veterans**



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

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



**Editor: Dan & Vera Streit D 69 DMOR - HMOR**

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**Vol. 27, No. 3 September 2021**



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello again Triple Deucers,

Well, it's the 11<sup>th</sup> hour of getting set up to go to the next greatest reunion ever of Vietnam Triple Deuce and the 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment Society. You can still show up there in Dallas and join in with your Brothers and Sisters in honoring those whom we served with, those who paid the ultimate, and those who serve today in the Global War on Terror. Just check this newsletter or that of the 22<sup>nd</sup> IRS for details. The daily news today is a huge strain on all veterans. Gathering together in a reunion is guaranteed to be a good tonic for what ails you in dealing with your emotions today. Please take the time out of your busy life and join us September 30 thru October 3. You will not regret it...

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

## EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Like Dick said, the big Reunion is just around the corner, and I am really looking forward to seeing all my Brothers again. We realize that with the pandemic, travel has gotten more difficult, especially for those of us who are a certain age, but if there is any way you can get to Dallas next month, make the effort. Fortunately, I live in fairly easy driving distance of Dallas, so my wife and I will be able to travel in relative comfort and safety.

The Old Goats traveled to Ft. Drum, NY, to meet the new commander of Triple Deuce, LTC Adam Armstrong. Some of them wrote up their impressions of the trip, and those are included in this newsletter, along with photos.



Lon sent me this photo of Peter Holt, at the time (1968) a Sergeant E-5 in A company, 2/22. He is now the CEO of Holt CAT Industries and owner of the San Antonio Spurs professional basketball team.

DEEDS NOT WORDS

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

## REUNION UPDATE

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment Society reunion has been rescheduled for September 30 to October 3, 2021. It will still be in Dallas, TX. If you registered for the original date, last year, and submitted your registration fees to the 22<sup>nd</sup> IRS, those fees carry over to the new date. To verify your registration status, contact **Martin Oelklaus**:

[moelklaus@aol.com](mailto:moelklaus@aol.com) [If no email, call 816-805-0845]

If you made hotel reservations for any of the previously scheduled dates, those were canceled, and you will need to make new reservations. It will be at the Embassy Suites Dallas Park Central. The link for making hotel reservations is on the 22<sup>nd</sup> IRS website ([www.vietnamtripledeuce.org](http://www.vietnamtripledeuce.org)), or you can contact the hotel directly at (972)234-3300. Be sure to let them know you are with the 22<sup>nd</sup> IRS reunion to get the special rate.

## OLD GOATS AT FT. DRUM



Recently the Old Goats went to Ft. Drum, NY, to visit the new commander of Triple Deuce, LTX Armstrong. The visitors

included Skip Fahel, Jim May, Lon Oakley, and John Poggi (all 2/22 VN), along with Mark Woempner (1/22 2001-2002) and Pete Gaworecki (1/22 1967). The Triple Deuce guys all had something to say about the trip, and their stories are below.

### Jim May's Story Ft Drum Visit July 28-31, 2021

This story will be presented differently than the ones I have presented in the past. I will tell my story with as many of the general accounts as I can remember. Each of the other Old Goats will then add their stories to what I've written with the hope of providing a more accurate and complete story.

After a long absence the Old Goats Squad made an appearance at Ft Drum. The occasion was the celebration of Triple Deuce Organization Day.

I left home early in the morning and followed the northern route across Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York and arrived 9 hours later at Ft Drum. I wanted to arrive while the housing office was still open. I've learned, over many past visits, that things aren't as planned and that corrections can be quickly made if the housing personnel are present. I did arrive early; the office was closed. So, I went to the area where we were staying and found that the entry security codes that had been agreed to were not working. I called the 'emergency' phone number posted on the building and found that I had to leave a message. Things were not going as planned. I kept trying various codes and guessed the right code. Once in the cabin I found that there was no bedding or towels, something that had been ordered. Again, I called the 'emergency' number, and it was answered. I was told that someone would

bring the bedding and towels out. I mention all of this because I find that no matter how much of an effort I make, things are never as expected.

Well, I headed for Watertown to meet up with **Pete Gaworecki “C” Co, 1-22, 1967, Skip Fahel, “B” Co, 2-22, 1967-1968, Lon Oakley, “A” Co. 1969 and John Poggi, “C” Co. 1969.** Pete had collected these Old Goats throughout the day at the Syracuse Airport. **Mark Woempner, “HQ” Co, 1-22, 2001-2003,** would be arriving later in the evening. We had a good feed at the Fairgrounds Inn and then headed to Ft Drum and our quarters.

We met Mark, who’d spent the night in Watertown, at Longway’s Restaurant in the AM and discussed our plans for the day. From there we went back to our quarters so Mark could settle in. The rest of us were standing around when Mark appeared holding up the towel that had been provided with the bedding. It wasn’t much bigger than a dish towel. Mark was advised to use both sides of the towel after showering. I’ll add here that the new cabins we were staying in were too small with no amenities. In the future, the Old Goats will be staying at the Ft Drum Hotel.

We arrived at 2-22, 10<sup>th</sup> MTN HQ and made our usual noisy entrance. And, as usual, the two Soldiers at the CQ desk didn’t know what to say or do. This wasn’t a problem for us. Skip, as is his usual custom, headed down the hall to where the BN CO’s and the CSM’s offices are, announcing our arrival. We were greeted warmly by LTC Armstrong and CSM Harmon, a familiar face. Plans had been made for us to visit with our respective companies.

I was escorted to “G” Company, the Support Company, where I was greeted by the XO, LT Cutrone, and 1SG Gardner. The CO, CPT Jacobson, was at home. His wife had

recently given birth to their third daughter and the CO showed good judgement in helping out at home. After a brief visit with the XO and the 1SG I was escorted to the motor pool where most of “G” Company’s duties are performed. I was introduced to the Soldiers who were not involved in one form or another of maintenance tasks. I introduced myself as ‘one of them’ and then began my usual questions regarding their familiarity with the M-4 weapons. Many of these Soldiers are new to the Army and certainly new to an Infantry Battalion. I told them that should they be deployed, they would be expected to, in addition to their regular duties, guard the FOB’s they would surely be stationed at. And, that not becoming totally familiar with their weapons during a night attack would surely bring about disastrous results. As I was speaking, I noticed that more Soldiers were joining the group. The 1SG joined the conversation by saying that I was reinforcing what Command had been telling these Soldiers and that range time was on the calendar. I then went on to say that it was important for the Support Soldiers to get to know the Soldiers in the Line Companies. And that it was their responsibilities to see to it that the Line Company Soldiers had what they needed to do their work. I emphasized that they were all in the same Battalion and were as much a part of Triple Deuce as any of the Soldiers in other companies. CPT Jacobson joined us and we opened the visit up to Q&A’s. The questions are always good, they want to know what to expect during deployment, something the recruiters don’t spend any time on. I didn’t attempt to scare them, and I didn’t attempt to sugar-coat my answers. While I was making the point that “G” Company was part of Triple Deuce I asked where their Infantry Guidon was. I



was told it had been stolen. And, "G" company is not assigned to Triple Deuce, but attached and flies a Brigade Support Battalion Guidon. I told CPT Jacobson that I understood the relationship but did he want to also fly a "G" Company Infantry Guidon. He answered in the affirmative. The Guidon and Staff have been ordered and as soon as I get them, they'll be on their way to CPT Jacobson and "G" Company. With the visit over, I went back to BN HQ where I met up with the other Old Goats for a presentation by LTC Armstrong of where the Battalion is heading and what is being emphasized in training. If you are paying any attention to what's going on in the Nation with regard to the Military, you are aware of policies that might be considered as less than what's needed. I can assure the readers that LTC Armstrong, who has spent most of his Army career in the 75<sup>th</sup> Ranger Regiment, is all about building a fighting force. His attitude is that Triple Deuce is a Light Infantry fighting force and must be as prepared as any Ranger unit to meet any circumstance that they are tasked with. LTC Armstrong has adopted a set of challenges designed to bring Triple Deuce Soldiers to the highest degree of physical and mental toughness possible. And, so as not to interfere with policies that limit training, the challenges set forth by LTC Armstrong are voluntary. Some of these voluntary activities include a recent 50-mile hike around the woods on New Your State and while we were at Ft Drum a 20 mile ruck was conducted that began at 2200 HRS on the Thursday evening we had planned on having dinner with the Command Group. They came by the restaurant, said hello and went on the ruck. Nearly 300 Soldiers volunteered to join in on this event. Thursday evening was not without a special event. John Poggi was attending his first

visit with the Active Troops and as such was awarded his Old Goats Squad Certificate and Old Goats Squad Patch. Welcome to the OGS, John.



Friday morning found the Old Goats on the sports complex field where Soldiers and families were gathering. Contests between companies were going on while Heart 911, yes, the same group of 911 NYC First Responders, had returned to prepare and cook all the food that was going to be consumed by the Triple Deuce Soldiers and their families. And, like Heart 911, the AMVETS were present. They had lent their financial and personal support the Organization Day. Dawn Esposito gets the credit for bringing these two organizations together in support of Triple Deuce. Thank you, Dawn. While visiting with the Soldiers and families we saw a familiar face, **Dave Thomas, HHC, 1-1998 to 3-2003**. Dave is retired Army and works security at Ft Drum. After a brief discussion the Old Goats Membership Committee, that would be all of us, decided that Dave had more than qualified to be a Member of the Old Goats Squad. His Certificate, Patch and shirt are on their way to him. Welcome to the OGS, Dave.

Late afternoon saw most of the sports complex field being cleaned up with the items used for the various activities being

taken down. It was time for us to say so long to our hosts and prepare for our morning departures. We went back to our quarters, cleaned up and headed to Watertown for a meal. Texas Road House proved to be a good choice. We had time to discuss future plans for the Society and how to implement those plans. It wouldn't be a genuine visit to Ft Drum without some sort of problem at the gate. I'll let Skip tell that story. In the morning we parted company. I started my return drive to Maine while the others headed back to the Syracuse Airport. I arrived home just about nine hours later, a bit tired but quite pleased with the trip. It was good visiting with my friends and comforting knowing that Triple Deuce is in good hands.

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

### **Skip Fahel's Story**

#### **Visit with Bushmaster, July 29, 2021**

**CPT Thomas Runnigen** and **SFC Spiro Nino** picked me up at Battalion HQ and took me to Bushmaster. The first area was the Commo Cage. The most striking piece of equipment was the Soldier-Borne-Sensor [SBS], FLIR Black Hornet, the Platoon drone. It is about the size of the first drone I got my grandson when he was 7 years old. I wanted to take one home. I was also impressed with the hand-held radios used by the Company Commander, Platoon Leaders, and Squad Leaders. The Platoons now are able to communicate with the squads. Commo equipment has come a long way since the PRC-25. Next was the arms room to review all of Company weapons from individual to crew served. The new 9mm looks like a toy pistol

because of the light brown color. One change was the Company has two 81mm mortars where we had three; however, the Platoons now have a 60mm mortar. The Platoons have a lot of firepower! I then had the opportunity to meet with the Platoon Leaders. I discussed leadership, how my time in the Army enable me to perform in the civilian work force as a manager of ophthalmology practices across the country. I discussed the need for respect for the individual, teamwork, shared communications, and a learning organization. To respect their soldiers, to look out for their welfare, and they will look out for you. My final comment was the experience and lessons learned with B Company, Triple Deuce enable me to accomplish all the missions I was assigned during my second tour in Vietnam as Company Commander, B Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry, 11<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry Brigade, Americal Division, and bring all my men home.

CPT Runnigen and SFC Nino walk me around the Company area, we ended up in the Day Room where we interrupted the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon's Ping Pong Training. I talked with the men for about 10 minutes discussing leadership, trust, looking out for your foxhole mate. Be willing to talk with them if you see they are having problems. They should willing to seek help if they themselves are have problems.

I then headed to Battalion Headquarters for LTC Armstrong's briefing.

During Organization Day, I stayed with Bushmaster as they participated in the different events. At the end of the Company Commander and First Sergeants Challenge, I had the pleasure of talking with Brooke Runnigen while Thom was recovering. Bushmaster did not win, but put

up a good fight in all events, “Deeds, not Words”.

At dinner Thursday night with the LTC Armstrong and staff, after the presentation of the “Old Goat” to John, I asked everyone to show me their “Challenge Coin”, and to my surprise, LTC Armstrong had forgotten his. I told LTC Armstrong no to worry. We have the “Challenge Chap Stick” for moments like this. I then presented LTC Armstrong his ‘Challenge Chap Stick” while giving him the history dating back to June 23, 2009.



As a custom, Jim always gives me the keys to his SUV [I’m the designated driver]. We never had any problems returning to the post going through security in our prior visits. However, this time, security would not let me drive on post. The security guard told me the driver of the vehicle is now required to have a DOD issued ID Card, even if everyone else in the SUV had a DOD ID. On Wednesday, after some discussion, security still would not budge. I asked if we could just change driver here, and he said no. Told me to go back to the MP office registration parking lot. I asked where I can turn around. Then he said, OK, go on, but you will need the driver of the vehicle with and DOD ID next time.



On returning from dinner with the Commander and Staff, we were again stopped at the gate. The same story, need DOD ID. This time, we [Jim and John] gave security a more difficult time. This guard then stopped and called out “ID Check” to another guard in the gate Shed [His shift leader]. He again called out “ID Check”. Then door opened and the guard came out. Just as he got out, he saw us and said, “*you guys*” and gave a big laugh. He was an ex 2-22 medic we had met before coming on post during past visits. We talked for a while and then the told the guard to let us go.

**E. Q. Skip Fahel, DMOR**  
**Bravo 2-22, VN 1967-68**

## John Poggi’s Story

In late July I was privileged to join the “Old Goats Squad” of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment Society on their first Covid-era visit to Fort Drum, home of the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division and the storied Triple Deuce. It was an inspirational journey on several levels: an opportunity to meet with today’s young warfighters, an enjoyable interlude of hanging out and trading stories with some outstanding veterans of bygone wars, and a bittersweet rekindling of memories of being a young combat infantryman in a turbulent time.



At first impression, almost all of the Soldiers we met at Fort Drum appeared to be teenagers with little or no body fat – except that some of the “teenagers” held ranks like E-7 or O-5. The noncommissioned and commissioned leaders of Triple Deuce are uniformly impressive, and committed to building the best light infantry battalion on the planet. The headquarters and barracks areas are relatively modern buildings – one no longer sees the World War II era “temporary” wooden firetraps! – with well-equipped gym facilities scattered throughout. And while I continue to believe that 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon, Charlie Company of 1969 could go head-to-head with any modern unit in a jungle warfare environment, one area in which I would not want to compete with today’s young troopers would be any fitness contest involving pull-ups or dead lifts. Vietnam-era photos of shirtless grunts posed in front of their APCs do not suggest significant physical activity focused on developing pecs, delts or lats.

A highlight of our visit was the battalion “Organization Day” celebration on Friday, July 30, complete with athletic competitions, a bouncy house for the kids, and free barbecue for all served by New York 9/11 responders. The Old Goats all had a great time mixing and mingling, and I particularly enjoyed spending time with some troopers from Charlie Company – sorry, it’s Chaos Company today! – together with SFC Holsker and CPT Boonin. Among the reminiscences I shared was how many of the Old Goats went to war as individual replacements, and as a result greatly envy the experience and unit cohesiveness of today’s Soldiers, who train and deploy together as a unit.

Organization Day attendance by Soldiers and families was terrific, despite the fact that over half the battalion had participated

in the voluntary 18.6 mile “Norwegian ruck march” that began at 2200 the previous evening – and also, of course, in the battalion’s regular Friday morning four-mile run. LTC Armstrong had wisely emphasized that Organization Day attendance was voluntary – but for those who did choose to attend, the duty day would end at 1400. Coincidentally, 1400 also was the time the taps were opened at the beer truck. Visiting the Triple Deuce ranks as a bucket-list experience. In recent years our national leadership and the role of the military have been controversial topics, but I have a renewed confidence that at least with respect to the Army warfighters responsible for the crucial “Last 100 Yards” of combat, our country remains in good hands.

**John Poggi**

**C/2/22<sup>nd</sup> Inf 1969**

### **Lon Oakley’s Story**



The only adventure I had separate involved meeting ILT Anderson who I had covered in



his track career at San Antonio Reagan High while he was in high school. I was PA announcer for the district at the time and this shows just how small a world it is.



LT Anderson let me fire the Army's M4 weapon (new replacement for M16). See attached photo. Just an outstanding visit with Battalion Commander and staff. All winners.

**Lon Oakley, DMOR**  
**A Co., 1969**

## LEADERSHIP



What does it take to keep a light infantry battalion great, or make it even better? Six Company Commanders standing in a parking lot at 2200 hours on a Thursday night, ready to walk 18.6 miles. By 0300 all were rushing to grab some sleep on any horizontal surface they could find. Though optional, every one of them stood in front of their Company at 0630 hours, and ran our Battalion 4-mile race. Not five hours later, alongside their awesome First Sergeants, they battled each other in the Commander/First Sergeant competition – battling for the pride of their Companies during Organization Day Activities. Our profession is inherently physical, and has been since war was invented. As a leader, Fitness (of Skill) and Grit (of Will) just get you in the door... but these guys have to do it better than most, because they have to be less fazed by fatigue when decisions matter most. Non-negotiable. Beyond fitness and grit, they know their people, they know their trade, their listen to the sage counsel of our incredible NCOs (humility). Perhaps most impressively – they subordinate individual interests to make this feel like one Battalion rather than six Companies. They understand the importance of teamwork – and how that makes this a place where people want to work.

What does it get you?

235 Courage Battalion Soldiers stood on the start-line that night. Event was totally optional. To be clear, the individual commitment of each Soldier was both impressive and humbling at the same time. You also don't get that kind of a turnout without leaders standing in front - and together.

**LTC Adam Armstrong**  
**Commander, 2/22 Infantry 2021**

## NOTICE

**If your mailing label shows  
“2020” then your membership is  
expiring and you need to send  
in your dues.  
ASAP**

### IN MEMORIAM: RICK RISTAU

The soldier who is assigned to a platoon leader as RTO (Radio Telephone operator) is the closest person to that platoon leader in any combat environment. He literally has to be within arm's reach for the sake of radio communication that may save lives and win a battle. I had two of these outstanding men in Vietnam in the two platoons I led. They have been family to me since those days thanks to our reunions.

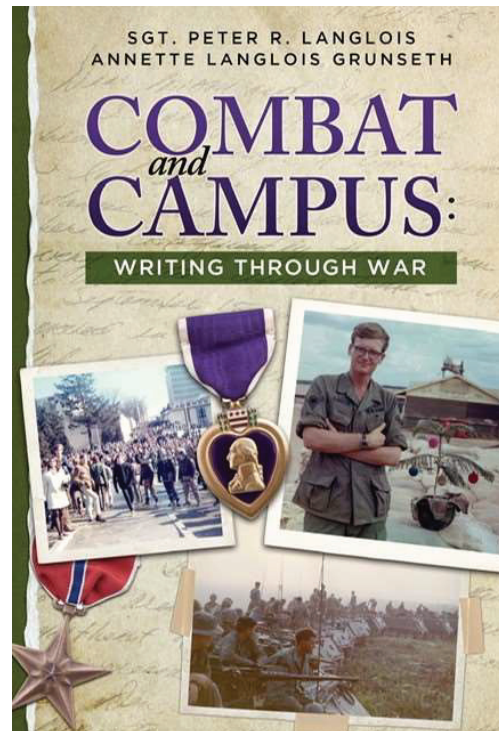
No one on the planet liked a cigarette and a Pepsi more than Rick Ristau. Those two ingredients were a big part of his every day 50 plus years ago and since. His wife Barb found him on the patio this morning with his last Pepsi and a cigarette. He had passed on to the next life enjoying his two vices and he will be missed by his large family and many friends. I have been proud to call him family for a long time. RIP soldier...

**Dick Nash**

## BOOK REPORTS

### PETER LANGLOIS

Peter Langlois was in Alpha in 1968-69, finishing his tour as the company clerk. His sister, Annette Grunseth, has published a book with photos and his letters home.



**As a journalist and soldier with the 25th Infantry Division, riding armored personnel carriers into rice paddies, engaging in night time sweeps of the jungle, Sgt. Peter Langlois chronicles the smells, sights, and sounds during some of the darkest days of the Vietnam war from 1968 - '69. He would return home to a nation still protesting the war in which his younger sister, Annette, had walked to class behind National Guardsmen marching across the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus. Their**

**correspondence and her poetry offer a unique perspective of the war in Vietnam and social change happening at home. Together, they share what was learned and what was lost.**

*"... There is no better way to understand how the Vietnam War impacted an entire generation than to read these eloquent letters and poems... they lead us to understand how the war continues to reverberate in our hearts and lives."* -- **Ruth W. Crocker, author of *Those Who Remain: Remembrance and Reunion After War***

*"...It's a riveting, heart-breaking, read, and I couldn't put it down."* -- **Robin Chapman, author of *The Only Home We Know***

Peter's photos have been posted in an album on our website, [Vietnam Triple Deuce](#), and the book can be purchased on Annette's website: [www.annettegrunseth.com](http://www.annettegrunseth.com)

## **BOB BABCOCK**

While the Old Goats were at Ft. Drum, LTC Armstrong inquired about books for the battalion library written by or about Triple Deuce soldiers. Here is Bob Babcock's response:

Adam, let me introduce myself. I am a Vietnam vet of B/1-22 Infantry, rifle platoon leader and XO from Nov 1965 at Fort Lewis, helped train the unit, took boat to Vietnam in July 1966, fought with them and returned home in July 1967.

I'm also the guy who the WWII 22nd Infantry leadership asked to take over the 22nd Infantry Regiment Society and open it to all veterans of all eras of the 22nd Infantry Regiment. As a result, I led the Society from 1995 to 2005 when I turned leadership over to Skip Fahel, then he did to Lon Oakley, and now Mark Woempner is the leader.

I am also a historian, author, and publisher. I have a lot of books that are related to 22nd Infantry Regiment that I will send to your home address. You can see most of our books at my web page - [www.deedspublishing.com](http://www.deedspublishing.com). If you see anything of particular interest, let me know and I'll be sure to include that to add to your library.

P.S. Later this month I will be elected to my 9th and 10th years as president of the National 4th Infantry Division Association. I have also been the historian of the 4IDA since 1998 and still hold that position.

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Deeds not Words!

Bob Babcock

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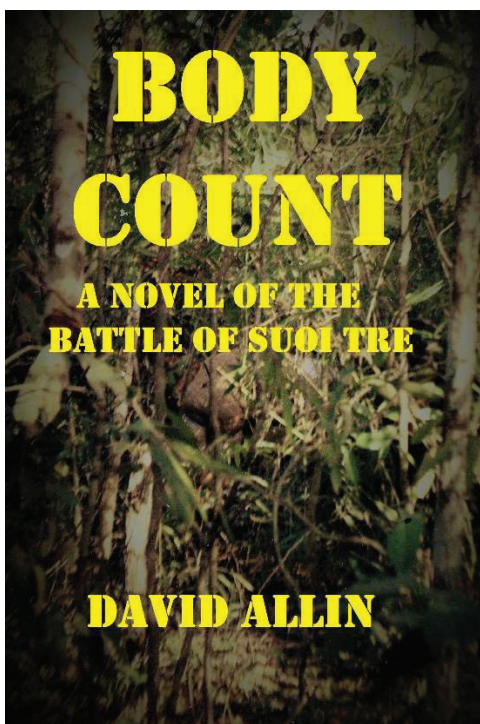
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## DAVID ALLIN

Your humble newsletter editor was also asked to contribute to the Triple Deuce library, and I have sent LTC Armstrong copies of all my Viet Nam novels. That includes my latest book, which is available from Amazon.com.



It was one of the largest single-day battles of the Viet Nam war, when over 2500 Viet Cong soldiers attacked an isolated fire support base manned by just 450 Americans. The base had been established just two days earlier in a clearing deep in the jungle of War Zone C, with all the troops and artillery air-lifted in by helicopter. Early on the morning of March 21, 1967, the Viet Cong attacked in a series of human wave assaults that overran the outer perimeter and threatened to capture the entire base as the defenders ran low on ammunition. A relief task force of mechanized infantry and tanks was struggling through dense jungle to come to their aid, but they were slowed

by enemy mortars and snipers as well as the terrain. Air strikes and artillery failed to stop the enemy onslaught, and the landing zone was too hot for helicopters to resupply the beleaguered Americans. BODY COUNT describes the battle and the events that led up to it from the point of view of three fictional characters who experienced it first-hand. While the characters are fictional, the major events of the battle are factual. Relive this historic battle and feel the physical and psychological toll it took on the men who fought it.

## HELLOS & COMMENTS

Richard Clarbour is seeking any information about his brother, Donald Clarbour, who served in Alpha Company (year unknown). If you remember Donald, please contact Richard at [Rickclarbour@gmail.com](mailto:Rickclarbour@gmail.com)

## GUEST BOOK HITS

## NEW FINDS

## TAPS