

## **We Remember**

Triple Deucers who contributed to these pages what they remember of those days when we were in the Army, in Viet Nam, back in the world and when discharged. Whatever your experiences, I am sure they will trigger some memories that will make you smile, laugh or even cry.



(Picture Description) In a mechanized unit, sometimes fairly extensive fox holes would be dug by the troops and reinforced. At night, the APCs would be backed on top of the hole to provide some protection.

What follows are letters and note contributed to the Vietnam Triple Deuce website over the years.

**These narrations have copied and pasted from emails and other electronic media sent to Vietnam Triple Deuce. Some reformatting to fit this media may have been made. If you have something you would like to publish, change or delete something, please send it to the [webmaster](#) with a note to publish it in the Remember Pages.**

**From Roger Cote, probably at the beginning of our tour (1966)**

Well my memory is not that good but I do remember some things. It's the dates and places that I have trouble with and names too. But speaking about beers in the field I remember clearly that there was a time that beer and alcohol was banned in the field. So before pulling out on operations Lt. James had us strip the tracks in the motor pool and line up all the ammo cans and C-rations, water can etc. on the ground behind the track. Then he would come by and inspect everything inside and outside the track. He would open the ammo cans (we used to hide beers in there sometimes) and look in all our personal gear. He would grin to the driver and then order him to open the engine compartment and inspect there (we used to hide cases of beer in there too). We were in Bravo squad Bob Northcott was the squad leader and Lt. James really didn't trust us so he would always inspect us last and then stand there and watch us load everything back up and then order us to mount up and not leave the track. So we did being the good soldiers that we were and waited as Lt. James walked back to his track and then we moved out. Life was tough in the field with the beer and alcohol ban. How tough? Well after about a week in the field one night the platoon sergeant came over to our track. He lit up a cigarette, took a quick look inside the track and asked if we had anything to drink. We said no that there was a ban. He said good, that was what he wanted to hear, now just make sure that I get my ration. So every night after we laagered someone from the squad would have to run over to give the sergeant his nightly ration. Then one day we broke a torsion bar and the maintenance guys had to take the floor boards out to replace it. Now we had to deliver rations to the motor pool track as well. Life just kept getting tougher as we were running low on beer. But then one day as we were beating jungle the lead track caught on fire from the brush and vines on the radiator or something like that and none of the fire extinguishers in the company had anything left in them except ours and it was half empty so we had to give it up. Now we had no way to get our beer cold. I guess it could have been worse. We could have hit a mine and all that beer would have exploded riding there in the frame of the track.

Another time when we were back in Dau Tieng on a very well deserved stand down we went to the Ty 1 On and got good and drunk. When the bar closed we went back to our squad tents with some more beers. Then someone got hungry so we went up to the mess hall to see if anything was happening. Low and behold it was open and everyone was making their own sandwiches. Someone mentioned something about not wanting to bother the cooks who had been working hard all day so be considerate and make your own sandwiches yourself. Well we were making these Dagwood style sandwiches when sergeant Arisola walks in and has a shit fit. As he is cussing and running us out of the mess hall he is making a sandwich for himself. Well so what, we were moving out to the field the next day on combat operations what are they going to do to us. When I was returning to my squad tent everything was blacked out and you couldn't see but I heard someone having a party in one of the squad tents so I dropped in to say hello. We opened a few beers and someone in there had taken a big tub of cheese out of the mess hall before we got run off. So we dipped in with our hands scooped out the cheese and ate it. I will tell you when your drunk and hungry late at night in

the middle of a war zone a tub of cheese sure tastes good. The next day when the sun came up we discovered that the cheese we were eating wasn't Kraft spread but Lard! We all had the shits. I don't know if it was the lard or the Ballantine Beer.

### **From Mario Salazar, (HHC/2/22), just before Xmas 1966, as I remember it**

In preparation for the Xmas truce, we arrived in base camp. Things were starting to get comfortable. A lot of big tents had been erected and toilet stands were all around. After showering and having a few brews at the *Ty I on*, we had had a good night sleep and things were looking up.

I was called to the company clerk's office and was given orders to go to Saigon to pick up a package that had been sent to the main (civilian) post office there. I didn't have a clue of what this was all about, since typically packages were sent to the APO and we would get them through regular mail call. Armed with my orders, I went to the Dau Tieng airfield and caught a transport plane to Saigon.

In Saigon, I went to the main post office and claimed the package. It was full of Xmas goodies -- candy, gifts, a fruit cake and others. It contained a note from my friend Jon Cristenson and had been addressed simply to Mario Salazar, US Army, Vietnam. (I don't know why people complain about the mail.)

I retrieved the package and noting that my orders allowed for three days (I don't know what the Army taught I was getting in the package), I registered in a fancy civilian hotel downtown. For the first time since I arrived in country, not counting one RR, I was sleeping in a soft bed, had a bathroom in the room and felt clean.

I had a ball! But most importantly, I LEARNED THAT NO ONE WAS LOOKING! In the next 9 months while I was still in Nam, I repeated the same process at least 3 more times. We would arrive at base camp and on the next day I would pack a bag and tell the sargeant that I had to go on sick call. I would report to the infirmary, but instead of returning to our area, I would go to the airfield and catch a plane to Saigon. I would stay there until the day before we were to go back to the field. Fortunately we never were called back out before planned. While in Saigon, I learned that as long as one acted as if one belonged, no one would challenge me. I did a lot of drinking and HUM... other soldiering things. I remember one night riding backwards in a motorcycle, through the back alleys of Cholon, to prevent being picked up for carefew violation, drunk as a skunk and going from one cat house to the next. Talking about stupid.

### **From Bill Matz.**

I figured out a similar scam when I was at Dau Tieng. As a medic I knew we didn't have an eye Doctor at our base. If you complained about your eyes they had to send you to CuChi. I complained about my eyes and was duly sent to CuChi to get them checked. My complaint was the suns glare blinded me, and made my eyes water. The eye Doctor told me to wear sun glasses and sent me on my way. Jeez, not even an overnight? At the airfield they had guys signing a manifest for the flight back to Dau Tieng. I asked what would happen if they had more people than seats. The Flight Sgt. said the others would have to wait until the next day. AHA! I moved to the rear of the line, and didn't get a seat. I spent about a week at CuChi frequenting the EM clubs. I stood at the rear of the line, and signed the flight manifest everyday, just to stay legal. I ran into one guy in the casual barracks who had been there for weeks! I had thought he was dead. He was still there when I left. One day they put everyone in the casual barracks on a nasty detail. I had learned at Fort Polk about using my real name for these things. I always had a fatigue shirt (Just for this sort of thing) with no name tag. I signed in as Ford, Glenn Sp/4. As soon as the NCO turned his back, I took off for the airfield and made sure I caught the plane. They

gave me some static, and threats of court marshall, when I got back to Dau Tieng; But I just said "Hey! I tried. I can requisition the flight manifests as evidence if I have too. No further static over that, but I never was very popular around base camp. Wish I had been smart enough to figure out a scam to get me to Saigon.

### **From Bill Matz, created September 16, 2000**

On the morning of December 8, 1965 I reported to the armed forces induction center on Van Buren Street in Chicago. This was a huge warehouse type building west of the loop. When I got inside we were all organized into groups and sent around to the various testing stations. We followed a yellow line, which was painted on the floor, between the various stations. We were given mental tests, and psychological evaluations. Then we were brought to a locker room, and told to strip down to our underwear. We were given a small brown paper bag to carry our valuables in. Of course some wag had to ask, "If I stick my valuables in that bag, where will I carry my wallet?"

Then we made the rounds of various stations for our physical exams. ("Bend over and spread your cheeks, and etc.") After all of the testing, examining, and evaluating was over; and the military had decided that we weren't diseased, moronic, or crazy, we were allowed to put our clothes back on.

We were then brought into another room and told to line up in rows. "OK, I want you men to count off by fives." "one - two - three - four - five - one - two - three..." I was a four.

"Alright, all of you fives fall out. Follow the sergeant over there. You men are now in the Marine Corps." The unlucky fives followed a Marine Corps Gunnery Sergeant out of the room. The rest of us were told to close ranks and raise our right hands. The army sergeant was very polite about it. He then administered the oath. "Alright Privates! Stand at attention, and stop milling around like a bunch of civilians at a circle jerk! You're in the Army!"

That evening we were marched out of the building, and loaded on busses to O'Hare Field. We boarded a chartered plane, I think it was a DC-3, and flown to Louisiana. For most of us, this was our first time on an aircraft. I remember seeing Christmas lights below as the plane flew over Memphis, Tennessee. The plane landed at Eglund AFB. From there, we were bussed to Fort Polk, La.

It was late at night when we reached Fort Polk. We were put into an ad-hoc formation, where we stood around waiting in a drizzling rain. Periodically we were marched off to various buildings for aptitude testing. We were also issued uniforms. We didn't get any sleep that night. We found out later that the army didn't have a barracks for us. This was one of the first big draft call-ups of the Vietnam War, and I guess the army wasn't quite ready for us. In the meantime, we crawled under other barracks to get some sleep and stay out of the rain. I think it was about two or three days before we finally had a barracks to sleep in. I'm not sure. This was one of two times, while I was in the army, that I became completely disorientated about time. The second time was flying home from Vietnam. We also had to carry our duffle, and personal, bags everywhere we went. It seems like it was raining during my entire stay at Fort Polk, which lasted about a week. We were eventually assigned a barracks.

I remember several incidents at Fort Polk. While we were standing in formation, a Corporal was lecturing us about something or other. A fellow behind me made a rude noise. The Corporal zeroed in on me. "What was that Private!"

"Nothing Corporal."

"What was that noise?"

"I didn't make a noise Corporal."

"YOU MAY LAH TO YO MAMA LIKE THAT. AND YO MAY LAH TO YOUR DADDY LIKE THAT. BUT DON'T Y'ALL LAH TO ME LIKE THAT. YOU LOP EARED SON-OF-A-BITCH! Everyone can stand here and wait, BECAUSE OF THIS MAN!" Fortunately the people standing near me knew I didn't make the noise. So I didn't catch any repercussions from my comrades because of this incident.

After a while, we were allowed to use the pay phone and call home. There was a long line of men waiting to use the phone. Eventually there was only one guy on the phone ahead of me. I couldn't help overhearing him. He was crying. "Ma, you've got to get me out of here. It's horrible. I can't stand it. All these guys do is swear, and talk about women, and gamble. I can't take it any more!"

I don't know who he was, and I never saw him again; but I truly felt sorry for him. If he thought he had heard and seen a lot up to then, I could imagine what he was in for as time went on. I really hope he was able to get out of the army. I wasn't the best of soldiers, but some people just aren't cut out to survive.

There were these "soldiers" wearing white helmets. Since us new guys "didn't know from nothing", we at first assumed that they were cadre of some sort. They usually seemed to be the ones issuing our uniforms, stenciling our duffle bags, and that sort of thing. I remember a conversation with one of these guys while he was making my dog tags. I had made some comment about "Where do I go to resign?"

He said, "Why, do you want to get out of the army?"

"Hey, I didn't want to get into the Army?"

"Do what I did... Drink a can of BRASSO in front of the Sergeant. After they pump your stomach, they'll give you a discharge."

"I said I'd like to get out of the army; NOT kill myself. Besides, what would happen if they didn't pump your stomach quick enough?"

He got a crazy glazed look in his eyes. "Whatsa matter? Are you afraid to die?"

I said something like "Yeah, that's why I want to get out of the army." and got the hell away from him quick. We later found out that the guys with white helmets were all waiting to be processed out of the army for various reasons... including section eight!

A group of us were tagged for KP at Fort Polk. This was my first experience with KP duty in the army; and it turned out to be my worse. When we reported to the mess hall the Sergeant had us all sign a roster. He then put us to work at the usual stations, DRO, trays, pots & pans, etc. I ended up on pots & pans. This was a consolidated mess hall, so it had a lot of activity. The work was long, hard, and dirty. This Mess Sergeant didn't make it any easier. It seems he was in trouble with the I.G., and was desperate to get his mess hall in inspection order. After all of the meals were over, and what I later found out was normal KP duty was done, this guy kept us on to prepare for his inspection. The Geneva Convention requires that he would have had to treat POWs better. Unfortunately, the Geneva Convention does not protect recruits from their own army. This Bastard kept us working for 24 hours without a break. What galled was the realization of my own stupidity. If I hadn't signed y correct name on the roster at the beginning, I could have drifted away at any time; and that son-of-a-bitch wouldn't have had the foggiest idea who I was. I never made that mistake again. I was learning some things

about soldiering we don't see in John Wayne movies.

After we had been at Fort Polk about a week, or ten days - like I said, I became completely time disorientated - we were gathered into another large formation, with all of our personal and duffle bags. "Attention! Count off by twos."

"One - two - one - two - one..." I was a two.

The "ones" were informed that they were being sent to the 3rd Armored Division, at Fort Hood, Texas. My group was to be sent to Fort Lewis, Washington, the 4th Infantry Division. We were loaded aboard buses, and transported back to Eglund AFB. Good-bye Fort Puke!

The flight to Washington, on DC-3s again, was very interesting. We flew through the Rocky Mountains, and the plane was lower than some of the peaks. Eventually we landed at the AFB near Seattle, or was it Boeing Field? We again boarded busses for transportation to Fort Lewis. The buses all pulled up in front of different barracks when we arrived. The first appearance looked promising. These were new three story barracks. The barracks at Fort Polk, when we were lucky enough to get them, had looked like something built when the French still owned Louisiana.

When we got off the bus, the First Sergeant, and other NCOs, were on hand to arrange us into platoons. My group was told we were now members of the 2nd Platoon, Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry, Third Brigade, 4th Infantry Division.

The next day we were marched down to the mess hall. They marched us everywhere in those days. ("To the latrine march! By the numbers - Open fly - One - Two..." Well not quite, but almost.) There was a group of ladies, at sewing machines. We gave them our shirts and jackets; and they sewed a patch on the shoulders with an ivy leaf device. We were told that we were now members of the 4th infantry division. We strutted around feeling like "old soldiers" for a little while, before an NCO (We called them "lifers") spoke up. He said: "You know there is only one reason the army assigns raw recruits to a unit before they've even started basic training. You men are going to train with the 4th, you're going to cross the pond with the 4th, and you're going to Viet Nam with the 4th."

We heard many other rumors during our training, but that one was true.

**From Bill Matz, created April 7, 2002**

Maybe My Mother Knitted It For Me?

Speaking of bringing "army issue" home, and on a lighter note. When I was clearing post, at Fort Lewis, after basic training; (I was going TDY to Fort Sam, after leave.) the Supply Sergeant charged me for a hat I was never issued. He said "It was checked, and you signed for it, so you owe the Army \$1.25."

He then reached out to take my gas mask, which was the next item on the list and WASN'T CHECKED. Now I'm sure it's pretty obvious to you, as it was to me, what had happened. I snatched the gas mask back, and said, "sorry this must be mine."

He said, "Why would it be yours?"

I replied "I don't know, but since I never signed for one, I must have brought it with me; and I'm bringing it home with me."

Now any reasonable person would have given me my \$1.25 back, and taken the gas mask. (I don't know what they cost to produce, but it had to be at least fifty bucks.) Not that stubborn S-O-B, he kept the money... and I took the gas mask home with me.

**From Mario Salazar (HHC 2/22 Mz) added 8/17/03 on events that took place January 16 and 17, 1967 Thanks Gary Hartt A 2/22 Mz. for the corrections/additions.**

*Stand by, keep observing*

During the 1966 Xmas and New Years truce, things had started to deteriorate. I am sure that to the outside world and the brass in Saigon there was no problem, but..

When the clock stroke 12 or thereabouts, that December 31, 1966 a number of people opened up with their weapons. Someone didn't aim at the sky but at sergeant Tate's tent, where he would have been. Fortunately he had been alerted and he wasn't anywhere to be found. His permanent transfer was implemented the next day, but that is another story.

I think that we all felt that things would get worse in the following days, and they did. Only a little more than 2 weeks later, we were all in the iron triangle participating in a blockade operation (Operation Cedar Falls) with the 1<sup>st</sup> Division, the 173rd Airborne Brigade, the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment and other units of the 25th Infantry Division. During this operation we would be hit a number of times and some of our friends would be wounded and killed. There was one particular action that has been etched in my mind forever. It happened on the night of January 16 and the early morning of the next day.

I had gotten lucky and instead of going on an ambush patrol or a listening post, I was monitoring the radios in the command track. Someone had received a bottle of Uzo, I believe it had been Anatole (Tony) Kononenko and it had been left behind the radio. Early in the evening an officer had walked in and had seen the bottle. He asked me to blow in his eye to determine if I had been drinking and then asked me whose booze it was. I answered that I didn't know. He confiscated a good half a quart of it that was left. I had some adrenaline going from then on, as I didn't know if the officer would be reporting the booze and somehow involving me with it.

In the tropics the sun goes down very fast and it turns from light to dark in a hurry. At that time of the year, the moon does not come out until after 8 PM. In the meantime, you can't see your hand in front of your face. On the other hand, I was happily reading a biography of WC Fields that had come with the last goody box from the Red Cross, by black out light. Just about the time when the moon came out, the command radio, one of the ones I was monitoring, came to life. Someone from the ambush patrol was reporting a lot of movement behind a berm in front of our perimeter and about 200 yards away. After the second call the battalion commander came on the line and directed the caller to *stand by, keep observing*. The same conversation was repeated at least 5 more times that night with the same results. In one of the other radios I heard some traffic on getting clearance from the "Regional chief" and the "District chief". It was apparent that these officials could not be located that night and the battalion commander decided that he wasn't going out on a limb and order artillery. The frustration was evident in the voice of the RTO when a decision kept been postponed.

At first light on the 17, the ambush patrol came in and after a debriefing with the battalion commander, a track was sent out to find out what the activity the night before had been all about. Having heard the conversations the night before and the certainty of the people of the ambush patrol about the presence

of the enemy so near our perimeter, we all watched as a reconnaissance armored personnel carrier left the perimeter and headed for the berm that we could clearly see. As the APC arrived at the berm, it attempted to go over it. As the track reached the highest point and continued, it rocked forward as its front went down and its back up. Just at this point, it hit a very large mine. The track was thrown up in the air as it rotated clock-wise with the front of the track, that had taken the brunt of the explosion, going up and over. As the track got to its highest point, I would guess about 20 feet up in the air, it was already on fire. It landed on its top and nobody got out. We all watched for hours as the track burned and the ammunition exploded, preventing any proximity by would be helpers. Four people died in this ill conceived *reconnaissance*. I may have heard the names of the draftees that died in this incident, but if I did, I did not remember them for long. On August 15, 2003, in response to my inquiry, Gary Hartt sent me the following message about the incident:

*the APC you are talking about was the one my good friend, "peanut" Yvon Hebert was KIA in along with 3 others. It was a recon track and it happened on 1/17/67. I did not see it blow but was told it burned for 6 hours and the only way they could sort out the remains was by dog tags. Hebert was from the northern part of Vermont right on the New Hampshire border and his address of record was Stratford, New Hampshire. I found his 89 year old father and we cried for 10 minutes during an hour and a half phone conversation. I also spoke with one of Hebert's 2 sisters and his older brother Claude. Yvon hebert was the first soldier to die from what they call the Northwoods area of Vermont/New Hampshire. Each year since, Tony Hebert(peanut's father) is the GRAND MARSHALL in the local memorial Day parade. Others killed in the APC were James Essary, Dale Schummer, and Edward Ralph Glenn, all draftees.*

The battalion commander was replaced soon after that episode. Some of the talk was that an effort would be set up to inform our congressmen of the horrible mistake by the brass. I guess the battalion commander's transfer was the way the Army handled it. As for us and any thoughts of revenge/justice, were forgotten in favor of instinctive survival as the situation got a lot worse. It all culminated with Soie Tre only two months and a few days later. I think the first three months of 1967 were the worst of my tour in Vietnam.

**From Lynn Dalpez (C2/22), events that took place during Operation Gadsen on 2/10/67**

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HQ 3rd BRIGADE  
4th INFANTRY DIVISION  
10 March 1967

SUBJECT: Combat Operations After Action Report.

TO: Commanding General  
25th Infantry Division  
Yada yada

1. (U) NAME OF OPERATION: Operation GADSEN.

(I'll go to the entry for Feb. 10, 1967. Another day that true American hero's died.)



## 11. (C) EXECUTION

### A. Chronological Summary

(11) 10 FEB 67 (D+8):

(b) 2/22 Inf. (M): At 1330H, Co C made contact with 4 to 6 VC at coord WT963765. The enemy employed small arms and one 57mm RR destroying 1 APC and resulting in 2 US KHA, and 5 WHA. At 1430H one reinforced APC was destroyed by RR fire and heavy SA fire resulting in 2 US KHA, WHA. TAC Air and artillery were used to assist Co C in breaking contact at 1920H, with unknown VC casualties.

### **From Clark Lohmann 8/6/03>**

Lynn I can attest to the riding on top of the APC's, May 27th 68 my last duty was on the road to Nui Ba Den we hit a mine or bomb so large that Jerry Pierce my buddy on the track behind us said the front of the APC cleared the ground with the back end up in the air and none of us were killed I took the worse of the people on there shattered my left wrist, ruptured my spleen had ammo indentations in my skin from the bandoleers of M-60ammo and woke 2days later with the left wrist and arm all casted and my stomach wired shut like the wire I use to use on my old 55 Chevy with cotton balls up and down the sides and tubes running out of my nose, first thing I did when I woke was pull the tubes and catch hell for it. I saw Jerry Pierce and Bob Price of the best company Bravo Ha Ha in Cleveland for my first reunion and they both thought for all those years I had met my maker, I can tell you the maker was with me many times besides this one and thank god no one was inside the track like you say.  
Clark L. Lohmann B Co 2/22 67-68

### **From Bob Price 2nd battalion, 22nd infantry 9/67 to 9/68**

To All: Don't know how many of you remember the events of 3/13/68; I'm sure that Clark Lohmann & John Eberwine do. Hard to believe 37 years have past, many of the details still appear vividly in my memory. The day started out uneventful but certainly didn't end that way for Charlie & Bravo companies. I was with Bravo Co. so the following is my account of the days events only from Bravo Companies perspective. We were informed that Charlie Co had hit a bad ambush somewhere in the jungle not to far from our basecamp in Dautieng. They had suffered 3 KIA'S and a number of wounded and were forced to extract themselves without recovering their dead to avoid even further casualties.

The KIA'S were, Dave Ditch, Todd Swanson & Lytell Christian three of the many members of the Triple Deuce who died heroically in Vietnam. Bravo co. was called upon to go back into the jungle to try and recover our dead brothers. We went into the jungle in our normal three column alignment; I was walking point on the right flank when all hell broke loose. We had ran into the same ambush setup and I saw a number of our guys in the center column get shot up. We all hit the ground immediately ; the NVA had set up perfect fields of fire and were raking us with machinegun fire and appeared to also be setup in the trees in front of us. We couldn't see them but they sure as hell knew where we were. I was trapped out front and was screaming at Clark Lohmann to cover my ass with his M60 machinegun to cover my withdrawal to the rear ( otherwise known as a retreat). I couldn't understand why Clark wasn't

firing until I turned around and saw that his face was bleeding; his machinegun tray had been hit by the first incoming rounds rendering it inoperable.

Movement was almost impossible; there was withering machinegun fire coming inches over our bodies covering us with leaves & tree parts. Clark raised his head slightly only to have his helmet shot off. I tried to inch back toward Clark and took a piece of splintered bullet in my left arm. We had no idea what was going on with the rest of the platoon, we were trapped out on the right flank. It seemed like an eternity then all of a sudden our crazy platoon sgt., a Sgt Chaney came up behind us snatched us up and told us to pull back behind our APC'S which had pulled up in the jungle a short distance behind us. Sgt Chaney patched us up & told us we were going back in to extract our wounded brothers.

At that time the firing became intense once again and we were forced to stay undercover behind the APC'S. It was getting near dusk at this time and the NVA decided to disappear into the jungle. I heard later on that Alpha CO. came in from another direction forcing the NVA'S decision to fade away. Don't know if this is a fact, maybe someone can verify it. Unbelievably Bravo Co didn't suffer any KIA'S & I'm not sure exactly how many of us were wounded. Unfortunately we didn't recover Charlie Co's KIA'S that day but all three were brought back the next day without further incident. This was just one of the "fun" days of the 365 days that most of us spent in Vietnam.

It's been a long time but the memories are still fresh. The three heroes mentioned above are only three of the 312 members of the Triple Deuce who died in Vietnam. Let's hope that none of them are ever forgotten. I'd love to hear from anyone else who was there that fateful day and hear their personnel recollections. Pass your replies onto all of my friends & relatives above as I'm sure they would like to hear your accounts.

Bob Price 2nd battalion, 22nd infantry 9/67 to 9/68

**From John Eberwine, Charlie Company 2nd Platoon, 2nd Bn (Mech) 22nd Inf Rgmt 25th Inf Div  
Sep 15, 1967 to Sep 14, 1968**

### **March 13, 1968 - Republic of Vietnam**

After so many years, the details may be somewhat cloudy, but I'll try to remember the important issues.

It was March 13, 1968, in the Republic of Vietnam, I was squad leader in 2<sup>nd</sup> squad 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn (Mech) 22<sup>nd</sup> Inf 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. We awoke about 5:30 am somewhere in the field. I've never been able to tell anyone exactly where we were, due to the fact that almost everywhere we worked in Vietnam looked like the same area to me, except for the Michelin rubber plantation. I believe this day we were North East of Dau Tieng, possibly East of Tay Ninh. The day started about like all the others in the field, I was hot, tired, filthy.

My platoon leader, Lt. John Clemente, informed me while I was eating some breakfast (c-rations) that today would be my last day with the Triple Deuce. He said that I (and a few other men in the company) was to be part of an *Infusion* plan with a leg unit somewhere. He said infusions were necessary because some outfits would lose a lot of men at the same time, so they would take some men from other units who had more time to go in Country, and swap them for men with short time left. I was originally part of a massive replacement in September 1967 into the Triple Deuce so they needed to swap some September men for men with other deros (projected leaving) dates. I never found out what leg unit I was supposed to go to.

Since I was to go in the infusion, Lt Clemente told me that my job that day would be to *ride the hatch* over the lead track and guide the driver with a compass. I don't remember exactly what time we started out, but it probably was by 7:00 am. We were moving across a clearing into a massive cluster of

bamboo and brush. It probably was at least a mile or more wide and I have no idea how deep. To my knowledge, we were not told by Army Intelligence what was expected that day.

Breaking the brush that day to lead the men was difficult, at best. We had flank security out left and right, (men walking on the left and right side of the track about 20 to 30 meters off) but we could not see them because everything was so dense. I was constantly tapping our driver on the side of his helmet to move left or right, as he kept drifting off the azimuth (compass heading) due to having to go around large trees and stumps. I recollect we were at this for a few hours when all of a sudden, I saw in front of us, running from my left to my right, a sandy trail and brush that had been cut back somewhat. Immediately, as soon as I saw this, I smacked the driver on the helmet to stop and all hell broke loose. Machine guns started fired from our front and I heard at least one RPG (rocket propelled grenade) and simultaneously I fell backward into the open top hatch and landed inside the track.

Right away the radio started with reports of men down.....our Platoon Sergeant, David Ditch, and our medic, Todd *Doc* Swanson, were hit immediately. To the best of my knowledge, Dave was on point on the left flank. I heard that Dave was hit immediately and *Doc* was behind him and as he moved up, to tend to Dave, he got hit also. It was mass confusion within minutes. No one could see where the enemy really was, except to know they were somewhere right in front of our track. Within a few minutes, I was monitoring the radio while the 50 gunner was blasting into the brush in front of us, when the back door of the track opened and wounded men were passed inside. One was gut shot, I believe he was Captain Cass' RTO (radio telephone operator). The Captain was pinned down with everyone else behind our track in a haphazard file.

Within a very few minutes there were 4 or 5 wounded inside the track and I was trying to help them and yell out to Captain Cass that the men on the ground were reporting on the radio that they were taking more wounded and we needed to get out of there and regroup. During this time, I started first aid on those inside the track. We seemed to be pinned down for at least 1½ to 2 hours. I spoke on the radio to each squad leader and confirmed they had all their men accounted for, so I told Captain Cass we could start to pull back. He said okay, so I finally gave the order over the radio to pull back.

Once we had pulled back sufficiently to take head count, I realized that no squad on the ground had accounted for Dave and "Doc" Todd. They were left up there, but from all accounts, they were both dead almost from the start. I don't remember a lot of details at this time, other than our LT Clemente was seriously wounded, his RTO was wounded, our Platoon Sergeant was KIA (killed in action) along with better than half our platoon wounded and they were Medevac'd (air lifted by helicopter) out. Someone came and got me and told me the Battalion Commander wanted to speak with me. I was a SP4 and was the highest ranking man left in 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon at this time. I didn't know his name at that time, I later found out he was Lt Col King James Kaufmann. He was told I had been on the lead track and he wanted me to lead an element from Bravo 2/22 back up to recover the bodies.

I remember telling him that it was crazy to send men back up. Dave was very special to me, sort of a father figure because he was 26 and most of the rest of us were 18 or 19. But I knew if we went back up, we'd lose many more men and Dave and Todd would not have wanted that. Dave and I, along with quite a few of the Charlie Company September 1967 replacements, were alumni of *Tiger Hill* in Fort Polk Louisiana. I didn't know Dave there, but we got close once we got to Nam.

Kaufmann told me that I was going to take men back up, and at first, I told him I would not go back up. I was scared to death. I had just escaped after being pinned down for almost two hours, and I did not want to go back and get killed. I honestly do not know why, but finally I started out leading a squad or platoon from Bravo company. Each step I took, I felt was going to be my last. I was petrified to be going back in. Just as we reached the area where I could see the sandy trail, all hell started up again. We all hit the dirt and I heard men behind me cry out that they were wounded. I yelled for the RTO to tell

them (Kaufmann) to bring us back out and I believe I was told to push forward. At that I freaked out. I got up and ran to the rear without thinking and got in Kaufmann's face and started screaming that he was sending men up to die. I really have no memory of all that I said, I received no punishment and do not remember much else about the rest of the day until later that night, I remember that 2nd platoon had about 6 or 7 men left in the field to pull guard duty all night. After fighting all day, we pulled guard duty for four hours each during the night.

I remember, the next day, we pounded that place with artillery for hours and hours. Then, some outfit went up and recovered the bodies, and did not find one single enemy body, or live ones for that matter. Somehow, during the night the enemy had "di di mou'd" (escaped). Later that day we were directed back into base camp. There I learned the Captain Cass had been relieved of duty. I assumed that it was due to pulling out and leaving Dave and Doc up there.

I requested and was allowed an audience with Lt. Col. Kaufmann. I was angry about Captain Cass being relieved and explained that I was responsible for telling Captain Cass we could pull out and that he should not be held responsible. I also told him that I *would not* be part of an infusion, since we had lost so many men, that I felt that I was needed now in the platoon. Kaufmann would not discuss Captain Cass with me, but did allow me to stay with my platoon.

For thirty one years, since 1968, on March 13th, I remembered Dave and Doc, and I remembered those men who followed me up to the front. All those years, I honestly believed that one or more were killed in that instant when the firing started again. Then in Dallas Texas, in May 1999 I met Bob Price and found out that he and a buddy, Clark Lohmann, both from Bravo 2/22, were part of that element and they had both been wounded. I have always felt that I ran out on them that day. It felt good to be able to tell Bob Price this story in Dallas, and to tell Clark this story in Cleveland in October 2000. They both gave me absolution!

by John Eberwine March 15, 2001

Charlie Company 2nd Platoon 2nd Bn (Mech) 22nd Inf Rgmt 25th Inf Div Sep 15, 1967 to Sep 14, 1968

### **From Jeff Condit Charlie Company, 2nd Platoon, 2/22 Mz.**

My recall of March 13, 1968 -- Jeff Condit

A day fogged a bit by the years but never, ever forgotten. I, too, remember us being close to Dautieng but a good piece out. Maybe 10 kilos outside the gate. Right after the rubber plantation ended on our right was a small village—the one across from which we had to dig up the fresh NVA graves one day. On the 13<sup>th</sup> we ventured 4-5 more kilometers and made a hard right into an open rice paddy area. I remember it being an unusual operation as, at one point, we put the APCs on line and advanced toward the woodline directly to our front. It was pretty disorganized and we had to stop several times for the lieutenants to hustle up to the CO's track for additional instructions. For a while, I thought that this might be a light day spent practicing war maneuvers for some officer's enjoyment.

We then briefly opened fire with the 50s straight into the woodline then stopped about 50 meters short. As luck would have it the 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon (Charlie Co.) was given the "privilege" of dismounting and venturing into the woodline. As I best remember it Herb Mock was on point I think Charlie Loveless was behind him. Beyond that I haven't a clue where people were. I was the RTO and was with LT Clemente about mid column. We (the LT and I) had broken through the initial brush and happened upon a trail. No sooner had Clemente asked for the "horn" to report that we found a trail than we heard Mock holler up ahead: "There's human shit up here". Within just a few seconds Mock hollered something like, "And I see the son of a bitch" and commenced firing. After that all hell broke loose.

I remember jumping backwards to get down but my radio got hung up on some bamboo and I dangled there for what seemed like an eternity. Being more interested in the integrity of my body (over some piece of Army equipment) I squeezed out of the radio harness and, by the grace of God, I fell next to an ant hill (about 3 1/2 foot high). I immediately took cover behind it then realized that the LT was lying on the trail having been hit. I first reached up and grabbed the radio (it was closer) and as I did a green tracer kicked up dirt in my eyes and mouth. I secured the radio on my left side then reached around the right side of the bunker to get the LT. I can't remember if I held a rifle out for him to grab or if I just extended my arm. (Maybe he extended his rifle to me). Nevertheless, I was able to pull him behind the anthill with me. He was shot in both legs and in a lot of pain. I remember lying there on my stomach with my radio handset on my right ear. I was disoriented a bit having moved a bit down that diagonal path. I, nevertheless, got on the "horn" and talked to whom years later I found out to be Awb Norris. I think that he was Colonel then. I remember him being calm and collected and trying to get me to give him a "sitrep" (situation report). As I said, in the pandemonium somewhere I had lost my bearings. He was trying to talk with me but the shooting was so intense and loud I had a hard time hearing him. Also, the LT was in a lot of pain and was yelling comments like "Leave me here and get everyone out...call in air strikes on them". In an effort to hear Norris I switched my handset to my left hand and placed a finger in my right ear and yelled at the LT to "shut the fuck up" because I couldn't hear. As I made that movement I think the same sniper saw me again and fired several more rounds—most kicked up dirt in my face and eyes but I'll always remember that one that traveled directly under my left armpit missing both my bicep and ribcage. I resumed my original position closer to the LT.

Sometime during this chaos someone hollered "medic". I didn't know who else was hit other than the LT but almost immediately the medic appeared to my left. He was hit instantly and fell forward. I remember his body jerking several times from being hit by additional rounds. He was no more than 18 inches away from me and I felt powerless to do anything. About that time Sgt.Ditch appeared on all fours over the medic's body. He, too, was hit instantly. And, he, too, fell forward and was partially on the medic's body. I felt powerless but remember foolishly saying, "Are you all right?" I saw him take one round then I remember the grimace on his face as if he knew it was a serious hit. He then reached down and pulled the medics bag out from underneath him as if to take get some relief in that area. The bag was completely covered in blood. And then the enemy zeroed in on him and, like the medic, his body jerked several more times before he fully slumped to the earth. Like the medic he was immediately to my left but was probably 12 inches away.

I established comms with Norris and he calmly said, "I'll have the APC's rev up their engines so that you can hear where we are". I think I yelled that out once so others could listen as well. I told him that based on the sound they were immediately to our rear probably 25-75 meters. He then said, "OK, I am going to have several of the 50s start firing above your heads and, as best you can, crawl out under the fire". I hollered that instruction to any of the men who could hear me and when the 50s started everyone who was alive started low crawling toward that sound.

I, of course, had the LT next to me, a PRC-25 (Radio) and an M-79 grenade launcher. I decided to take the LT and leave the rest. He was still awake and still had upper body strength and was able to assist the crawl by holding on. I initially tried first moving my body a few feet then reaching back and pulling him by the shirt up with me. I did that for what seemed like a half a mile (in reality it was probably 10 feet) then remembered something we were taught in Basic Training—I think it was called the "Slow man's crawl" or something like that. What I did was straddle the LT's body with all fours and had him interlock his fingers behind my neck. In that position I was able to crawl slowly but steadily and get us back to where the tracks were making the noise. I remember Loveless waited for us right outside a tree line that obscured my view of the tracks. He signaled for me to come in his direction, which he did. It seemed like it took forever but we finally made it to the tree line.

I thought that our worries were over but inside of the tree line was a small area of trampled bamboo where the APCs had been maneuvering in place to pick us up for evacuation. Crawling through that bamboo was probably the hardest piece of the journey. It was like having a giant pile of “Pick-up-stix” (the kids game?) and, as I crawled, parts of the LT or me would drop down two or three feet. We’d have to stop pull the body part out then move another few inches. I think that one of the drivers sensed that we weren’t progressing well and decided to back his track up closer to us. As he did he swirled around on his tracks and placed the left rear corner of the APC directly over our bodies. I was sure that after all of that we were going to be squashed to death by an APC! Others and I hollered, as it was impossible to tell if the driver saw or heard us. Thank God he stopped and the back of the track door opened. I finally was able to stand and the guys helped me then the LT inside the track. I remember we sat on the right bench and I rested the LT’s head in my lap. I remember that because so. That naturally caused a loud yelp from the LT. I then remember feeling an incredible sense of relief and safety as the APC noise increased and I could feel us APC rumble and bounce our way back to the rear.

My next memory was sitting on the ground next to the liter that the LT was on. By now I think he was delirious with pain and morphine and he told those around us that I should to be put in for the Congressional Medal of Honor! I don’t think that anyone there—my self-included—thought that he was rational by that point. I helped put him on the medivac then went to a track where Loveless and others were gathered. I remember that that was the only time that I cried in Vietnam. I don’t know if it was because of Doc and Ditch’s death or from the physical and emotional exhaustion I felt at that point. But I cried and it felt right.

I was vaguely aware of people off to my side arguing about going back to get Ditch and Doc. I think that it was an officer who came over to me and asked how sure I was that the two of them were dead. I told him of the bullets riddling both of their bodies and how motionless and unresponsive both of them were. In my opinion both of them were dead when the LT and I crawled out of there. He seemed satisfied with that and I think shortly thereafter the napalm strikes started. I have absolutely no memory of the rest of that day and night.

I work at a VA and part of my job involves evaluating veterans for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. One of the better questions I have found to separate the “real thing” from the fraud is “What was your worst day over there?” The legitimate cases usually don’t have to stop and think. They know THE day that changed them more than any other. Like everyone else in Charlie Company and the hundreds of thousands of others who saw the real “stuff” in Vietnam they know. I went through the Battle of Fire Base Burt and other horrific events during my 12-month tour but THE date for me has always been March 13, 1968. Thirty-seven years and one week past.

May God rest the souls of Doc, Ditch and the many, many other great, young guys we were privileged to know over there. And may their families gain some small comfort in knowing that in such a short period of time their boys became true heroes who touched and helped the lives of so many others.

Jeff Condit

03-20-05

## **From Mike Pounds**

OCTOBER 12, 1970 SOMEWHERE IN VIETNAM

The morning began like so many others . We were leaving our night defensive position and our squad was left behind to police the area and leave behind a suprise for “charlie”. A mechanical ambush. This was designed to eliminate “charlie’s” efforts to rummage through our trash in hopes to find anything he could to use against us. We had been successful in the past with these mechanical ambushes and i had no reason to believe that anyone other then “charlie” would be the one to trip the ambush. So we

completed our task and proceeded to join the unit at the night's defensive position. As we were pulling in to take our position I heard this loud explosion. I looked back to see the smoke rise above the tree line. It was strange. Most of our mechanical ambushes weren't tripped until after dark but it was still daylight. And as we were returning to the site to investigate my mind started listing the possible reason for why so soon. It wasn't till we arrived at the site that all my thoughts of what tripped the ambush turned to the one most traumatic experience that still invades my dreams today. If you can imagine what a stick of C-4 and a claymore, from a distance of two feet or less, would do to a human body I'm sure your imagination won't come near the actual image of what I have to describe as one of pure horror. As I stare at these two lifeless, headless bodies of the two children my first thought was what in the fuck have I done.

## MIKE POUNDS BRAVO COMPANY TRIPLE DEUCE 1970

### From Butch Jones

#### **My first introduction to the 2/22 Infantry Society and Vietnam Triple Deuce.**

Some time in the later part of 2007, some 38 years after returning from Vietnam and struggling with many of the effects of PTSD I received a phone call or e-mail (don't remember which) from a guy named Dick Nash.

At that time I was not aware of any type of help for the effects of PTSD or any organization associated with my tour in Vietnam.

At first I thought it was someone trying to get me to reenlist in the Army and I was not interested in any way, shape or form.

After a few days I called this guy Dick Nash back in order to find out what he was up to.

After talking with Dick and answering a few questions about if I was in Vietnam assigned to the 2/22 Inf. and other questions no one would have known about unless they were also there, I began to get interested in what he had to say.

Dick began to explain to me the purpose of the 2/22 Infantry Society and the Vietnam Triple Deuce and that in the following year 2008 there was going to be a reunion for the two organizations in Washington DC. I thanked him for the information and gave him my address and phone number for his records.

A few weeks later I received this news letter from the Vietnam Triple Deuce. All of this time I was very skeptical of going to any place that would only bring back the memories of a place I had been trying to forget for 38 years.

After I read through the news letter and set it on the table my wife asked me what that was, so I explained it to her the best I could. She asked me if I would like to go to the reunion and I replied that I didn't think so and the reason why. A few weeks had gone by and she said to me "Why don't we take a week of vacation and go to the reunion and visit Washington DC". She indicated it may be good for me to go. She had been putting up with me and my problems related to PTSD for many years so I agreed to go.

We made all the necessary arrangements and off we were to the reunion. When we finally arrived at the Hotel after a very long day traveling from California we settled into our room and called it a night.

The following morning we reported to the registration table for the reunion and received our name tags and documents needed for the reunion.

The first person I ran into was Ben Anderson, who I didn't remember from Vietnam, but after talking with him realized we were together in the same Co. in Vietnam. He kind of took us under his wing and began to introduce my wife and I to other guys that also happened to be in country with me.

We shared memories and photo's of our time in Vietnam and I was beginning to feel more relaxed about this adventure we were on.

Shortly after that, who do I run into, Dick Nash. He welcomed us with open arms and asked if we needed any thing to make sure we let him know.

The next day we all loaded onto buses and headed for the Vietnam Memorial Wall for a dedication to all our fallen brothers. As we placed our Regiment flags at the base of the wall for each and every one of our fallen brothers, Needless to say, my emotions were somewhat out of control but with the help from my wife and most of the guys I knew from Vietnam I managed to hold myself together.

As the reunion continued I was becoming to feel much more comfortable and could finely feel that I was on my way of coping with the PTSD in had suffered with for years.

On the last morning of the reunion I went to the memorial service for or brothers from the 2/22 regiment through out the years. When it got to the names of our brothers from Vietnam and their names showed up on the screen and some of the guys called out names of fellow brothers we knew while in country, I again lost my emotions and cried like a baby.

Since that reunion I have spent many hours at my local VA facility and with the help of the VA doctors and the guys I met at the reunion that encouraged me to get registered with the VA I can now say I am coping with my PTSD, not recovered, but coping.

I have attended almost all of the reunions since 2008 and look forward to each one that comes up.

I also stay in touch via e-mail with the guys I was with in Vietnam and still see most of them at the reunions.

Without the help from Dick Nash and my fellow brothers I truly do not think I could have recovered without them. THANK YOU ALL!

Charles "Butch" Jones

A Co. 2/22 Inf, 25th Div. 2nd Platoon, 2nd Squad, Vietnam 9-68/69

**From Unknown Soldier**

**Suoi Tre, III Corp, Vietnam, Tre 21 March, 1967**

Into Battle

I wish I could paint with words the scene I saw before us. Many have stated that it was a full- scale battle, and confusion reigned supreme. I certainly will not dispute that, but think that maybe those statements were understated. It was more like a small piece of Gettysburg, Normandy, or Iwo Jima.

After a false start forward, we had to stop to reload some of our platoon troops that had deployed at the tree line of the clearing. We saw targets everywhere, and that is why I believe that our Squad Leaders rightfully deployed their men to meet the enemy we could see in abundance. As it turned out, there were 2,500 of them...minus the hundreds that our fellow 3rd Brigade of the 4th Infantry Division soldiers had already dispatched. (We were attached to the 25th Infantry Division, at the time.) Naturally, our Squad Leaders felt we were at our objective and their training kicked in automatically. However, Sammy and I knew differently. We were ordered into the clearing, past the outer perimeter where we were at the time. We were not at our objective--enemy all over the place or not. Sammy was beside himself. He needed to get control of his platoon right now. Our squad, the 1st Squad of the 3rd Platoon, reloaded quickly, because we were with the platoon leader, Sammy Kay, knew what was expected. Then our 2Nd Squad took off towards the center of the battle, and the remainder of the 3rd platoon quickly followed, along with the rest of Charlie Company, as Captain White had ordered. The



word of the day was, “Move!”

Sammy Kay ordered me to stay on the horn once again, (That is what radiomen called their radios—the “horn”.) and keep in touch with the Squad Leaders. He jumps on top of our APC and tries directing the rest of the Platoon by yelling and arm signaling, while assisting Frosty on the .50 caliber machine gun. He was really getting upset because we had all opened-up on the enemy and the noise was so deafening it made it difficult for him to get control of the Platoon. One squad was heavily engaged and really did not have the time to stop and talk about it. They took off after the enemy that was upon them. Sammy directed the rest of us to continue to move forward towards the inner perimeter of the clearing, where our 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry; 2 Battalion, 12th Infantry; and 2nd of the 77th Artillery Brothers were fighting hand to hand, and close quarter combat. Then Frosty yells to me, “Lynn look! It’s the Quad 50!”

I looked where Frosty was pointing and there it was. Our beloved Quad 50 all blown to bits along with the enemy that had overrun it. Being mechanized infantry as the Triple Deuce was, the Browning .50 caliber heavy machine gun was our main weapon, and the source of much courage and bravado in facing a combat situations. It is the most powerful machine gun at the infantry’s disposal. We are not talking about a weapon could crack the block of a Chevy V8 engine when shooting at it, as civilian gun nuts would brag. No sir. This gun could shoot clean through the block of an engine with a quick burst of fire. When we Triple Deucers first saw four 50 caliber machine gun barrels mounted together on a heavy trailer mount—well, we fell in love. Apparently, the enemy had too.

At the time of this writing I do not know who the 2/77 Artillery Brother was, but he sure as heck used his head when he noticed that the enemy had overrun the Quad 50. What he did was to lower the barrel of his 105 Howitzer cannon and take a straight shot at the Quad 50. He hit it, and the enemy that had captured it, with a high explosive (HE) artillery round, blowing the Quad 50 and it’s occupants right out of the battle for good. I hope to find that man one-day and thank him. The enemy could have turned the gun on us as we entered the battle right where it was placed. I understand the soldier was decorated for his quick thinking under such pressure.

We had little time to ponder the fate of the Quad 50. We were rolling once again, into the center of the battle where our Brothers were in trouble. Ammunition was running low for those Brothers, and many guns were spent. Some artillery pieces were in the hands of the enemy. We had to get in there fast with our support and what supply of ammo we could provide for our Brothers. As we moved forward, our .50 gunners were pounding the enemy who had been caught out in the open. The Dreadnaught tankers were firing also. They fired HE rounds and a special round called a “beehive” round that was like a giant shotgun shooting thousands of dart-like objects called fleethets, point blank right into the enemy.

Kawham! “Lord take me fast.” I thought, as I turned to see how bad we were hit. However, we were not hit. It was the Dreadnaught tanks firing right next to us that startled me. I looked down range as the next beehive round was fired and saw the gruesome result. The enemy, the foliage, and the ground were all blown up together in a cloud like looking scene that left no doubt in my mind the tankers had hit their mark. Round after round they fired all the while our 50 gunners were pounding away at the many targets they had before them. I shouldered my M-16 and fired a few rounds before Sammy yells at me to, “Stay on the horn!” I could see the enemy getting hit through my sights, but fired a few shots anyway. Before going back down into the track and my radios, I noticed that our track drivers were running right over the enemy, dead or alive. Apparently our drivers used the track itself as a weapon, and quite effectively, or maybe they just did not feel like avoiding pedestrians this day.

Stay on the horn? Staying on the horn was like drinking a beer with the cap still on. I couldn’t get anything out of it! I couldn’t hear anything except some yelling because of the battle noise around me. “Get down there and stay on the radio!” “Down there” meaning inside the APC. Down inside the death

trap was the way I looked at it. I was retreating into my infantry training that told me to get on the ground and fire my weapon at the enemy before me, not stay down inside an APC that was an inviting target for the enemy that carried RPG's (Rocket Propelled Grenades). An RPG round is very effective against an APC. The occupants of a hit APC did not fare well at all when that happened. With that in mind, I got back on the horn, but all I heard was screaming on the radio and started to scream myself, just like in my nightmares. I was getting hysterical until, thankfully, my Squad Leader, Sgt. Joe Dietz, yelled, "Shut up Dalpez!" That was a real slap in the face. Joe was telling an R.T.O. to shut up? I am a radioman for crying out-loud. However, his yell brought me right back around to where my mind should be. I realized that I was contributing to the confusion, instead of helping to dispel it. 35 years later, I thanked Joe for that "Shut up!" I was okay after that, sort of, as we continued to move towards our objective, the inner perimeter. Air Force jets, helicopter gun ships, and The Triple Deuce were all adding to the fire power of the Brothers that were already there at FSB Gold, as we headed even deeper into the center of battle.