

**THE NEWSLETTER FOR
THE LRRP/RANGERS OF THE 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION
DURING THE VIETNAM WAR**



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THIS NEWSLETTER IS DISTRIBUTED IN JANUARY AND SEPTEMBER OF EACH CALENDAR YEAR. IT IS FOR THE MEN WHO SERVED IN THE LONG RANGE PATROL UNITS OF THE 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION DURING THE VIETNAM WAR. THESE UNITS ARE: LRRP DET., 191ST MI; HHC (G-2) LRRP; CO. E (LRP), 52ND INF.; CO. H, (RANGER) 75TH INF.; AND DET. 10, (RANGER) HHC, 3RD BGE.

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The 75th RRA will reimburse
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PRESIDENTS REPORT

January 2015

Greetings and salutations from Big White Ski Resort in the heart of British Columbia, Canada. By the time you read this we would have had a great Thanksgiving, a very Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year and way too much wine. Hope all your holidays were as pleasant as ours. It's now that time to start your planning for the reunion in Killeen this June. As with many of you I too am getting a little bored with the social highlights and quality of food that we have had in Killeen. That being said I still find it nice to see everyone. Give it some thought.

Once again we will host our raffle after the luncheon. Members can bring, mail to the hotel, or give to some one that is coming item that are to be raffled off. Each year the items for the raffle get better and better. Thanks to all that contribute in gifts and in buying the tickets for the raffle.

As I said earlier the reunion is in Killeen 10-14 June 2015; at the Shilo Inn, and the reunion after that is in Las Vegas 8-12 June 2016 at the Palace Station Hotel. For the Las Vegas reunion I don't know if you can even book this early but I understand it is a huge facility and there should not be a problem getting a room there. That should be a well attended reunion.

As you all know one of our members has provided fund that would allow us to pay the travel and lodging expenses for a member or maybe a couple of members to attend the reunion. I don't know who could use those funds but I am sure that we have a member or members that would like to attend but can't because they don't have the funds available to make it happen. Please if you would like to come; know some one that would like to come but can't because of funds let me know. Let's spend the funds that have been allocated for this very generous offer. Send me an email or phone call to make this happen.

Well that it for now hope everyone is having a great winter and I'm looking forward to a great winter of skiing again here on the mountain. Times seem to be flying by and before you know it, it will be time for the reunion in Killeen.

Take care.

John LeBrun

TREASURER'S REPORT

From **Bob Carr**

reopened acct. 7/17/14

start bal	\$12563.26
dues& merch	\$622.00
expenses	
newsletter	{ \$691.00 }
folder for treasurer	(\$19.12)
tot exp	{ \$710.12 }
end bal	\$12475.14
Brick fund	\$1,429.00
all in same acct.	

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THE "WHO ARE THESE GUYS" PICTURE IN THE LAST NEWSLETTER PROMPTED THE FOLLOWING STORIES.

FROM Bob Good, 1/9 pilot

Good to hear from our LRRP/Rangers. I don't remember George **Richardson**, but I probably inserted/extracted him and his team mates on more than one occasion.

Other C Troop Lift pilots who would also have probably hauled him in and out were: Rob Zastrow, John Gretzinger, Phil Grandy, Jim Pressman, Mark Boisseau, John Atkins, Steve "Spiffy" Karas, and, of course, we were always covered by the dauntless pilots and gunners of the Red and White platoons

The only individuals from H Company that I remember now are the company commander, Captain **Pacerelli**, the first sergeant, Jerry **Price**, Platoon Sergeant **Wallace**, Lt. **Rice**. Several other guys' faces are still back there, but I've lost their names in the mists.

They were all a great bunch of guys and we in Charlie Troop had some of our most memorable days and nights in action with the boys from H Company. The night Major Felton was killed, we were inserting Blues to reinforce a LRRP team. Then, after we recovered the Blues and LRRPs, John Gretzinger inserted CPT **Pacerelli** and one of his teams onto Felton's crash site to check for survivors and get a body count. As I remember, they had to be rappelled onto the crash.

There was no nearby clearing for either insertion or extraction, so they had to move about five hundred meters through thick trees and brush to a clearing where they could be flown back to homeplate. I wonder if **Richardson** was in that team, ii July 1969.

ANOTHER STORY: UNWANTED ASSISTANCE FROM COMMAND

At least in the 1/9 Cav, 1st Cav Div, we jumped through all kinds of loops getting out to reinforce LRRPs or pull them out, as the situation required.

It also seems like we had to pull a fair amount of those extractions at night, also.

One good story about night extractions I remember was at Phuoc Vinh in AO Chief, the area around the base camp which was under the command of the DIVARTY commander. I think it happened either in Dec '69 or Jan. '70.

A LRRP team was in contact and we responded with a Huey for the team and a Pink Team (LOH and Cobra) to cover. When our guys got there, they found the division commander, assistant division commander and the DIVARTY commander, all in different helicopters, all on the LRRP frequency telling the guys what to do!!!

John Atkins was flying the Huey, and when he could get a word in edgewise he keyed the mike and said (something to the effect) "If everyone who is a spectator will just get off the air and let those of us who are trying to do the job talk, we'll get this thing over with."

He said there was absolute silence on the air, so he continued, "Thank you, Talon this is Cavalier --, please flash your strobe every few seconds so i can get you located, then keep it up to guide me in." The team flashed their strobe light as he asked, he flew straight into their position and picked them up, without further incident.

Of course, the Cobra and LOH were firing and giving them all cover. When he got back to our operations shack he told me what happened (I was flight opns officer) and we'd probably get some flak for what he said to the senior officers.

I remember thinking it funny and told him not to worry about it, after what he said they were probably embarrassed that they were interfering with the mission. Anyway, the team was safely extracted and no one got into hot water from division.

Thanks for all you guys in the LRRPs did.

Bob Good

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LOWER BACK PAIN

To all:

I am curious as to what the percentage of us (former combat LRRP/Rangers) have chronic and possibly severe lower back issues. I have had lower back surgery years ago and now in the last six or seven years, deal with the off and on debilitating pain attacks treated with epidurals from a pain management clinic, and in between those, hydrocoden medication when needed to function beyond the sciatic nerve torture of pain down my leg. I did submit paperwork to the VA years ago describing why I thought that this could be service related, but as anticipated, they denied it offhandedly. I contend that jumping off chopper skids from seven or eight feet (most times),, with up to 80-85 pounds on your back if you're the RTO, together with ammo, grenades, several gallons of water, claymores, spare radio batteries, spare M79 rounds, meals, poncho liner, etc., you land on the ground like a pile driver. That's okay when you're a young, mean fighting machine. But, look what we did to ourselves and paying for it now. Take that mission insertion leap off the skids and compound it with humping up and down the mountains of the Central Highlands for six or seven days, and then back stateside, driving your legs and body into the ground even more (crash and burn) by jumping out of C-130 aircraft several dozen times (not to forget a tree landing or two). Is this lower back pain infliction random, or do most of you suffer as well? Any response from Bill Hand is null and void, as ladders are not in this equation (my ladder disasters came after my backs initial destruction also Bill).

I would like a roll call of guys, say with at least a dozen missions and more, as to whether you suffer from the lower back issues I described.

(I'm not sure the number of missions matters, except that you may need several body crushing landings to set the destruction of your back in motion, for it to then lie and wait for age to set in) . I once found that good vodka helped ease the

pain, but my wife said the side effects were worse than the hydrocoden so I had to give it up.

Anybody out there with similar issues and suspicions of how you ended up with the busted back? I would think most of us, but don't know. That's why I'm asking.

Hand, I sincerely hope you are healing well and will come out of this with a better back than you had before climbing up those steps. Get well soon!

Jim Ross

RESPONSE

Jim,

I have had chronic pain in my lower back ever since my days in Nam, 68-69. In addition to the weight we carried and the distance jumped from chopper skid to the ground, that alone will wreck a back over time, we had to pulled out by McGuire rig. The chopper pilot pulled us through the trees witch snatched us out of the strap seat and left us hanging by the rope that was around our chest. That puts a lot of strain on the back. Don't remember know how long the flight was to a nearby base camp but do remember how agonizing the pain was. I recall thinking at that time that if I could get to my knife I was willing to cut free and take the drop but that was the last thought I had. You can pass out hanging like that. Unfortunately VA compensation didn't accept that when filed as a claim. We all put our bodies in a lot of torture during that period and now we are paying for it.

May God Bless

Chuck Schwinn

VA EXPERIENCE

I asked the VA for a re-evaluation because of my back. During the evaluation, I told everyone in ear shot that I had a back problem. The physician assistant who interviewed me told me to give up trying,, the VA would give me nothing for my back. The max they ever gave for backs is 10-% However, she did put me in for sciatic nerve damage, and I got 20% for that.

Bill Carpenter

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Veterans Day 2014 at The Wall Washington, D.C. By Ken White

This year's Veterans Day Observance at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (The Wall) on The National Mall in Washington, DC marked the 30th anniversary of the dedication of The Three Servicemen Statue located at the southern end of Constitution Gardens at the treeline overlooking The Wall. The statue, which is made of bronze, was completed two years after The Wall was completed and was dedicated on Veterans Day 1984. It was intended to commemorate the Vietnam War while complementing The Wall by adding a more traditional component to it.

The statue has stood the test of time, and ironically, has proven to be a powerful addition to The Wall. You might remember that the statue was a compromise agreed upon by the veterans groups responsible for the construction of The Wall and the U.S. Department of Interior, which had responsibility for the management of The National Mall, along with the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, which was responsible for approving any monuments to be built on it. You might also remember that it was only after the U.S. Supreme Court gave the veterans the 'green light' to construct a Vietnam memorial on the mall that the federal government stopped trying to block them from doing so. And finally, you might remember that negative reactions to the design of The Wall were so strong that U.S. Congressmen complained about it being too abstract, calling it a "giant tombstone" and "black gash of shame," and that the Secretary of the Interior, James G. Watt, refused to issue a building permit for it. The statue was intended to appease the congressmen and Watt by providing a more traditional depiction of veterans of the Vietnam War.

The statue was designed by Fredrick (Rick) E. Hart (1943-1999), a stone carver who learned the art of carving while working at the Washington National Cathedral as a mail clerk. He was born in Atlanta, Georgia and moved to Washington, DC as

a young adult where he developed an interest in sculpture and completed an apprenticeship in stone carving. His design is of three Vietnam War soldiers who are purposefully identifiable as Caucasian, African-American, and Hispanic-American. Hart said of his design "You are supposed to see three soldiers, but there are a lot of things I want you to feel as well. I want you to see that these are very young people, and I want you to feel that they bore an excruciating burden." Hart died in 1999 in Baltimore at the age of 56, two days after doctors at Johns Hopkins University Hospital diagnosed him with lung cancer.

The models selected by Hart for the figures in the statue were Marine Corporal James E. Connell III for the Caucasian figure; Marine Corporal Terrance Green, Rodney Sherrill, and Scotty Dillingham for the African-American figure; and Guillermo Smith De Perez DeLeon for the Hispanic-American figure. Connell said of the statue: "This statue is a tribute to all who fought, but in particular, to those who fought and returned to an unwelcoming country. It represents the service and sacrifice of millions of American men and women who answered their country's call, and having done so, came home to suffer even more at the hands of their own countrymen, people for whom they put their lives on the line." He attributes his role in the statue to making him the person he is today. "That statue, and being a small part in the healing and sacrifice it represents, inspired a lifetime of service to America's veterans. These events clearly shaped my life's focus, and ultimately, my destiny. It has been a remarkable and humbling experience." Connell went on to serve 20 years in the U.S. Senate advising on veterans legislative initiatives, and is currently serving veterans as a Public Affairs Officer at a VA hospital in New York.

The weather for this year's observance was splendid. It was sunny and dry with temperatures in the low-to-mid 70's, and as you might imagine, a large crowd of veterans, family members, and friends were in attendance. There was also a number of youth groups from the immediate

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Washington, DC area, as well as from other parts of the country that were there to offer expressions of gratitude for our service to the country. Students from Forest Park High School, Woodbridge, Virginia handed out thank you notes that read: "Thank you for answering the call of service of the United States of America when she needed you most. Thank you for ensuring our freedom against all foes. Thank you for coming to Washington, DC today to honor and remember your fallen comrades in arms. Your valor will never be forgotten. Thank you."

I'm happy to report that our unit was well represented at the observance. LTC Jim **Wright** (1967), who we knew as a 1st Lieutenant at LZ Uplift in eastern Binh Dinh Province in 1967, Sam **Dixon** (1971) and Cathy, and yours truly were in attendance. Terry **Smith** (1970-71) usually makes it to the observance as well but we didn't see him this year.

Jake Tapper, lead reporter for CNN, was the day's master of ceremonies. Jan Scruggs, founder and president of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, was out of town on travel and unable to return to Washington in time for Veterans Day. Secretary of Defense, Charles T. Hagel, was the day's keynote speaker. Hagel was drafted into the Army out of college at the University of Nebraska and served in the 9th Infantry Division in the Mekong Delta. He served in the same infantry squad as his younger brother, and they are thought to be the only brothers to have done so during the war.

Remarks were provided by Major Gen. James A. "Spider" Marks USA (Ret.). Gen. Marks was most recently the Commanding General of the U.S. Army's Intelligence Center at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, and was the senior intelligence officer for the Iraq War in 2003. He is an Honor Graduate of Ranger School, a Master Parachutist, and a 1975 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

Diane Carlson Evans and Arlene Adams-Cataldo also provided remarks. Ms. Evans is a former Army nurse who served in Vietnam in the burn unit of the 36th Evacuation Hospital in Vung Tau and in the 71st Evacuation Hospital at Pleiku,

30 miles from the Cambodian border in the Central Highlands. She completed a total of six years in the Army Nurse Corps, and led the effort to get the Vietnam Women's Memorial built on The National Mall. Arlene Adams-Cataldo also served as a nurse in Vietnam. She served two tours of duty at the 12th Evacuation Hospital in Cu Chi from 1969-1970. "I was unprepared for the combat conditions. It was action from the moment I got to Cu Chi. You expect to save lives. You don't expect to feel helpless and unable to save lives. The 12th Evacuation Hospital was constantly shelled which made it very scary. When I returned home, I worked at a community hospital and never said anything about Vietnam." Ms. Adams-Cataldo was also involved in getting the women's memorial built. She is a member of the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation Board.

The 1st Cav Association in conjunction with the National Capitol Region Chapter hosted the 6th Annual 1st Cav Veterans Day Dinner at the Crowne Plaza Washington National Airport Hotel in Crystal City. It was close to a sellout with most of the Cav units represented with troopers who served in Korea, Vietnam, Bosnia, Gulf War, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Dennis Webster, Executive Director of the 1st Cav Association, was the master of ceremonies.

This year's dinner was also attended by a number of Pathfinders (Black Hats) from the division's 11th Pathfinder unit. The Pathfinders were assigned to the combat aviation units in the division, including the 227th, 228th, and 229th helicopter battalions, to provide control for take-off and landing of helicopters using visual and electronic signaling devices. Several of them, including Joseph Tracy, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania knew Al **Harris** (1967), who served in both the LRRPs and Pathfinders. Joe stayed in touch with Al until his death in the late-1990s.

See you at The Wall on Memorial Day 2015.

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They Saw Us First

From Bob Ankony

The U.S. military tradition teaches that the infantry is "the queen of battle." Like the queen in the game of chess, the infantry is the most powerful and versatile piece on the battlefield, and it is the only force that ultimately takes and holds the ground.

One of the most elite infantry forces in the world is the U.S. Army Rangers. Its history dates back to Colonial America, when rifle companies from Rogers' Rangers made long-range attacks against French forces and their Indian allies and were instrumental in capturing Fort Detroit. During the Revolutionary War, many colonial commanders were former Rangers. One, General John Stark, commanded the First New Hampshire Militia, which gained fame at the Battles of Bunker Hill and Bennington. Stark later coined the phrase "Live free or die," New Hampshire's state motto.



TWO TEAMS, LZ BETTY

Ranger history lived on, and during the Vietnam War, Rangers were tasked with making long-range reconnaissance patrols. Our military occupational specialty was listed as 11F4P (infantry operations and intelligence specialist). Our motto was "*Sua Sponte*" (Of Their Own Accord). Every man had volunteered for our unit, including the intensive additional training, and knew what he would be facing. We all had chosen to be exactly where we were. We operated under G2 and G3, division intelligence and operations, and it was the job of Company E, 52nd Infantry

(LRP), to be the eyes and ears for the First Air Cavalry Division—a 20,000-man force with 450 helicopters. We reconnoitered areas where the division was planning operations. We also patrolled along its flanks during operations, informing larger units where the enemy was or was not, protecting the troops from surprise attacks, and optimizing their use of force.

Our teams were only five or six men strong, but our advantage wasn't in numbers; it was in stealth and training. All team leaders and most assistant team leaders were graduates of the U.S. Army's Fifth Special Forces Group Recondo (from "Reconnaissance Commando") School. Since our patrols ranged from four to eight days, we carried ninety pounds of gear, including several dehydrated meals. But we could never carry enough water, so we topped off our canteens in streams whenever we were lucky enough to come across them.

Life depends on water and sunlight. Long-range reconnaissance patrols depend on silence and darkness. Staying alive meant not being seen: staying in shadows, living deep in vegetation, never being silhouetted, and being alert always so we could find the enemy first.

We carried a wide array of weapons: 5.56mm CAR-15 carbines and M16 rifles, 40mm M79 grenade launchers, .45-caliber 1911A1 pistols, hundreds of rounds of ammo, M26 fragmentation grenades, M34 white-phosphorus fragmentation grenades, claymore antipersonnel mines, one-pound blocks of C-4 and TNT high explosives, trip flares, parachute flares, strobe lights, binoculars, and survival knives. But those were merely defensive weapons. Our real killing weapon was the twenty-three-pound battery-operated PRC-25 radiotelephone, commonly referred to as the "Prick Twenty-five." Depending on weather, terrain, and type of antenna, it had a range of fifteen miles and was like having a telephone to God (or Satan, depending on which side you were on). It could bring the horrific firepower of the U.S. Air Force, Army helicopter gunships, or large air-assaulting infantry units. Or it could call in the cold,

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impersonal artillery to pound a position until the terrain was reduced to bare churned earth, and the enemy to flecks of pink mud.

At least, that's how it was supposed to work. But things didn't always go as planned. Sometimes, the enemy saw us first. When that happened, a recon team did what it could to stay alive. My team faced that situation four times.

* * *

The first incident happened on Tuesday, April 2, 1968. We had spotted several North Vietnamese Army (NVA) soldiers and a woman the day before. And using our radiotelephone, we directed three scout helicopters and three helicopter gunships, which killed an officer and an enlisted man. Then an infantry company air-assaulted and swept the area, and we worked our way west through the vegetation to locate fleeing enemy soldiers.

The next morning, we came to a long grassy clearing a hundred meters wide, which seemed to run forever both north and south. Pausing at the edge, not wanting to cross such an opening in daylight, my team leader, Sgt. Doug **Parkinson**, and his assistant team leader, Staff Sgt. Bob **Carr**, debated alternative routes. But finally, they determined that there was no way around the clearing without moving a tremendous distance to our flank. Deciding it was best to cross as a team rather than expose ourselves one man at a time, we started our move. As we entered the clearing and crept forward step by step, I felt naked even with a rifle in my hands, grenades at my waist, and a heavy load of gear in my rucksack. Sweating from both heat and anxiety, I looked at **Parkinson** and our Montagnard front scout, **Dish**, who was leading the way. I stared into the vegetation across from us, knowing that our fate rested not on skill but on dumb luck.

Once we reached the middle of the field and were completely exposed, I thought, *well, if anybody's there, this is when they're gonna open up*. But a minute later, nothing had happened and we were across. Pausing a moment to catch our breath, we worked our way inside the tree line, where suddenly, we smelled cooking food. There, before a large bunker half-buried in the ground, pots of rice were

still cooking over a low fire, and some clothes were drying off to one side.

Realizing we had stumbled across an enemy force of unknown size, we retreated across the same clearing to where we knew it was safe. Then we radioed the tactical operations center to tell them of our find. They sent a white team of two scout helicopters, followed by a red team of two helicopter gunships that rocketed and machine-gunned every suspected site. Then they airlifted in the nearby infantry company. We led them in sweeping the area and searching the bunker, where we found several blocks of TNT, two rifles, a submachine gun, and a pistol complete with holster and belt. That's when we realized the only reason we had survived: the enemy had seen our team heading directly at them and ran, thinking we were point for the 160-man infantry company operating in the area.

* * *

The next incident happened on Sunday morning, April 21. Operation Delaware had already begun two days before, when two brigades—about 11,000 men and 300 helicopters—from our division air-assaulted A Shau Valley, near Laos. My platoon rappelled down to the 5,000-foot peak of Dong Re Lao Mountain, known as “Signal Hill.” We were there to provide a vital radio relay site for the troops slugging it out in the valley, for approaching aircraft, and for communication with headquarters in the rear. This was day three, and a lot of the fighting had already happened. Approaching Signal Hill from the air, we could see a crashed helicopter on the peak, several dead Americans, and dozens of men who had survived the fight so far.

There were still enemy snipers, so our company commander, Cpt. Michael **Gooding**, ordered Sergeant **Parkinson** to make a patrol around the peak. We slogged through the mud to the western side of the mountain, where we came to the crashed helicopter, lying on its side on a steep embankment, and the perimeter of debris just beyond it. Then, stepping over an enemy fighting position where they had abandoned pouches of cartridges and two grenades, we pushed through a dense wall of

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mud-covered branches and trees, twisted and broken from the bomb blasts and bangalore torpedoes (interconnecting tubular explosives) used to clear the LZ.



DOUG PARKINSON, SIGNAL HILL

After pushing our way through the thick mat of debris, we entered dense virgin forest swathed in a thick blanket of fog—the cloud cover that surrounded the peak. The cool, moist air felt good in my throat and lungs as I looked around, studying the vegetation. We were glad to be finally out of sight of our helicopter detachment above, again dependent just on one another.

After we had quietly moved another hundred meters down through the eerie fog-shrouded forest, **Parkinson** touched **Dish** in front of him and whispered, “Let’s turn south for a heading alongside the peak.”

Bracing our feet on slick tree roots and the stems of huge ferns, we groped along from stalk to frond to keep our balance, slowly maneuvering through the fog and undergrowth that limited our visual contact to the men immediately in front of and behind us.

Suddenly, after an hour of this slow, painstaking progress, I had just grabbed a sapling trunk so I could step onto the roots below, when shots went off right in front of me. Raising my rifle and cautiously moving in that direction, I saw an NVA soldier lying on his back. Sergeant **Parkinson** and **Dish** were still shooting him, making his body quiver with every shot.

Since **Parkinson** and **Dish** were on both sides of the soldier, in line with me, I held my fire and looked for other threats. But after we determined that no

other NVA were in the area, we went over to the blood-soaked body.

Dish explained: “I walk past, not see him. But he think me NVA man, so he stand with no gun and speak.” It made sense: In this fog, **Dish**, a small, dark-skinned Montagnard who stuck leaves and grass on his fatigues just like the enemy, could easily pass for one.

Dish had turned around just as **Parkinson** caught sight of the NVA from his rear. The NVA, realizing his mistake, stood there, arms at his sides, mouth and eyes wide open, as **Dish** and **Parkinson** raised their rifles and opened up on him.

* * *

The third incident happened at last light while my front scout, Gair **Anderson**, my assistant team leader, Bruce **Cain**, and I were each placing a claymore mine facing an enemy trail. It was a well-used trail, four miles west-southwest of Quang Tri City, and we had heard enemy troops only the night before, casually talking as they walked along. We were confident that more enemy troops would return. Then, just as we slipped in the detonators, a dark figure suddenly appeared on another trail, a hundred feet away.

It was Friday, July 19, 1968—my second patrol as team leader of a long-range reconnaissance patrol, and already my second enemy contact. In the first incident, eleven nights earlier, our five-man team had run head-on into an enemy patrol. Gair had quickly fired a long burst into the patrol’s lead, and we retreated into the jungle. But this time, we had only a small spit of ground and the Quang Tri River behind us, so we had to fight.

As the three of us stood there, struggling to see in the fading light, the unknown figure, apparently unsure who we were, stopped, stepped back, and slightly raised his rifle. Gair was closest, and Bruce the farthest back. Gair glanced at Bruce and me, and seeing that everyone was still in position, he raised his rifle, aimed, and cracked off a shot, which sent the guy sprawling backward. But he was in an upright slouch, still facing us and looking alive enough that I raised my CAR-15,

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flicked the selector to auto, and emptied the twenty-round magazine in two long bursts of tracers that swept across his legs and chest.

I was worried that the soldier could be the lead of a much larger force, so we threw grenades past him and I got on the PRC-25 with our tactical operations center to notify them of the contact.

They sent a slick and two helicopter gunships that rocketed and minigunned the area, and we were extracted to our base at LZ Betty. The next morning, I led two platoons of infantry to the area of contact and conducted a sweep, but we found only the body along with his AK47, two loaded magazines, a sandbag and a sock full of rice, a small rubberized poncho, and two clean pairs of U.S. military socks. I had gone into the field that day without any socks because all mine were dirty, so I sat down next to the body and slipped on a pair. His decision to verify before shooting us had saved our lives and cost his.

* * *



**LZ BETTY, ENROUTE TO PATROL
BRUCE CAIN, WITHOUT HAT,
BOB ANKONY AND TONY GRIFFITH**

The last incident happened early Saturday morning, July 27, 1968. It was our second day of an eight-day patrol in terrain of 50- to 150-foot hills covered with short elephant grass, scrub, and cactus. It was sunny, with temps in the nineties. Because the heat had dried nearly everything, once our canteens were empty we drank from muddy streams.

At first light, I ate an orange, skin and all, for breakfast. (By then I had reached the point where I

could not stomach another meal of the same rations.) Then I shook some foot powder onto my heat rash: thousands of tiny red, itchy bumps on my crotch, butt, and feet. I tied my boots, and we mounted our gear and zigzagged northwest, where we came to a wide ravine covered in hip-high elephant grass.

"What do you think?" my assistant team leader, Bruce **Cain**, asked, kneeling down with my front scout, Tony **Griffith**, and me to scan a stretch of thick vegetation on the far side.

"I don't know, it's pretty big," I said, scanning the area with my twenty-power spotting scope. "You just never know what's in there."

Setting my scope down, I said, "All right, I think only one of us should cross first, to scout it."

"You don't think we should all cross together?" **Cain** asked.

"Nah, it's six of one and half a dozen of the other."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Well, if we all go and Charlie's in there, they might run, thinking we're a platoon."

"So what's wrong with that?"

"Nothing, but if they hunker down and open fire, we're all gonna be in a world of shit."

"So what're you gonna do?"

"Send one man."

"Then you gotta send **Griffith**."

"Nah, Tony's too new."

"You can send me, Sarge," **Griffith** piped up. "I can carry my weight."

"Not this time, Tony—I'll go," I said, looking across the field again.

"Well, one of you better get going," said **Cain**, "before the sun gets higher."

"All right," I said, picking up my CAR-15. My palms felt sweaty. "But give me a minute after I cross, so I can scout the area and give you a wave."

"We'll do that," **Cain** said as I stepped out into the wide-open field while my team watched from cover.

Moving ahead slowly and deliberately, I kept my rifle at my hip and studied the vegetation on the far side. I reached the middle and most vulnerable part of the ravine, imagining how it would feel to be

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hit with a sudden burst of bullets, when suddenly a Vietcong (VC), wearing just shorts and an undershirt, jumped up in the grass seventy feet ahead, holding a rifle. For a moment, we stood facing each other, both frozen in fear. I was 19, and he didn't look any older. I raised my CAR-15 as he made a mad dash for a clump of vegetation. Taking aim, I let loose a long stream of tracers that swept across his left hip and right shoulder.

But instead of falling, he only stumbled and kept on running. Not knowing whether I had hit him or whether he had friends in the area, I emptied the rest of my magazine at him as he disappeared into the vegetation. Then I ran back as fast as I could.

When I got back to my team, I looked to where the VC had run, and said to Bill **Ward**, my radiotelephone operator, "Get Redleg Three Five on the horn!"

It was time to call in our big guns at LZ Pedro, three kilometers south, manned with a battery of 105mm artillery. **Ward** dialed two knobs on the PRC-25 to their frequency as I shot an azimuth at the enemy's position with my compass. After writing down its direction and range, I pulled out my map, figured our location relative to our reference point, and took the handset from **Ward**. Being our lifeline, it was always wrapped in plastic and taped to protect it from moisture. I put it to my ear and squeezed the rubber-booted switch underneath. "Redleg Three Five, this is Slashing Talon Five Niner, over."

"Go ahead, Five Niner, this is Redleg Three Five."

"Roger, Three Five. Request fire mission, over."

I then gave them the direction and range relative to the reference point on our map, known only to us and command so that enemy troops monitoring our frequency couldn't figure our location.

The fire direction center for the battery found our reference point on its maps and determined our position and elevation, along with the enemy's. With those factors and wind conditions known, the artillery crews could calculate the charges for their shells, and settings for the guns. Then they swung three of their six 105mm howitzers in our direction.

Seconds later, high-explosive shells screamed overhead and slammed into the thicket of vegetation,

exploding in plumes of bright orange, shaking the earth, and sending up debris and clouds of black smoke. "Redleg Three Five," I said amid the thunderous noise, "this is Slashing Talon Five Niner. You're on target. Fire for effect, over."

"Roger, Five Niner," LZ Pedro replied as each howitzer fired several more shells in rapid succession.

Moments later, we radioed cease-fire since it was obvious that if I hadn't killed the VC already, he was certainly dead from the artillery.

We then mounted our gear and vanished into the hills.

* * *

The First Cavalry Division would end the Vietnam War suffering more casualties than any other division: 5,444 men killed in action and 26,592 wounded in action.1 Company E, Fifty-second Infantry (LRP), redesignated Company H, Seventy-fifth Infantry (Ranger), participated in the two largest battles of the Vietnam War—the Tet Offensive and the siege of Khe Sanh—and air-assaulted into A Shau Valley, the most formidable enemy-held territory in South Vietnam. It became the most decorated and longest-serving unit in LRP/Ranger history.2 Company H also fought in Cambodia, and it lost the last two Rangers of the Vietnam War. Its lineage passed to Second Battalion, Seventy-fifth Ranger Regiment. Since 9/11, the regiment is the only continuously engaged unit in the Army. Today's Rangers do not patrol. They don't train allied forces or engage in routine counterinsurgency duties. They have a single-mission focus: they seek out the enemy and capture or kill him. Their mission sets Rangers apart as pure, direct-action warriors.

CITATIONS

1. Marine Corps deaths available only in aggregate, not by unit.
2. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Company_E,_52nd_Infantry_\(LRP\)_\(United_States\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Company_E,_52nd_Infantry_(LRP)_(United_States)).

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NONFICTION BOOKS

by and about LRRP/Rangers
in Viet Nam

The Ghosts of the Highlands by Kregg P.J. Jorgenson, Ivy Books. This is about the beginning of the 1st Cav LRRP/Rangers, 1966-67

LRRP Company Command by Kregg P. J. Jorgenson, Ballantine Books.
The 1st Cav LRRP/Rangers, 1968-69

Acceptable Loss by Kregg P. J. Jorgenson, Ivy Books. Kregg's autobiography, 1969-70.

MIA RESCUE LRRPs in Cambodia by Kregg P.J. Jorgenson, Ivy Books. One mission gone bad during the Cambodian Invasion.

Above All Else by Ron Christopher, PublishAmerica. Ron's autobiography about being the TL of the first team to pull a mission as the 1st Cav's LRRP/Rangers.

One-Zulu by Curtis "Randy" Kimes, published by author. About one mission, May 7-9, 1968.

Lurps: A Ranger's Diary of Tet, Khe Sanh, A Chau, and Quang Tri by Bob Ankony
University Press of America, of Rowman and Littlefield Publishing group, 1967-68

In The Jungle ---Camping with the Enemy
By Jim "Spanky" Seymour, Outskirts Press
Memories of Spanky's LRRP missions, 1967-69.

OTHER BOOKS

For What It's Worth by David Klimek, published by author. Dave's experiences during the Cambodian Invasion before he joined H-75th.

A Troop, 9th Cavalry by Ron Christopher. PublishAmerica. Ron's experiences with the "Blues" A-1-9 before he joined LRRP.

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PULLING SLACK

From Bill Carpenter

I have not had internet since Thanksgiving, so if you sent me something since then, it is not in this newsletter.

2015 REUNION

The 2015 reunion will be June 10-14, 2015 at the Shilo Inn, Killeen, TX. That is where it has been for the last several odd numbered years. Contact the Shilo Inn at 254-699-0999 for reservations, if there are any rooms left. You can also get information on the 1st Cav's webpage, www.1cda.org.

OBITUARY

Last fall, in the *Saber*, Ken White reported on the death of one of us, **Richard Thomas Carroll** had died. He had served in Nam 69-70 His name is not on our roster, and an internet inquiry got zero response. His obituary says he was with "Hotel Company, 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger". He died from ALS caused by Agent Orange.

Does anyone remember Richard Thomas Carroll?

COMMO FROM DAVID KLIMEK

Following a minor heart attack (which is milder than a stroke) then a major one that included a fall-down and a pass-out, I had surgery on November 7 to insert a stint into the upper left vein of my heart. The good news about the whole affair was that my repaired left knee, although it still hurt a bit, has gained some more mobility after it finally popped while bracing my fall. Looking back on it all I was wondering why I still felt sluggish after all my rehab and now I know it was a lack of oxygen because a major vein was partially blocked. Now I am still a little wobbly and all my muscles are weak, but they say I will be feeling better once the gunk (from smoking) is washed away from inside my veins with some medications.

I sure have been getting a lot of rest and sleep and the one thing I have done the most of is reflecting on my life for the past 65 years and what and why I have done the things I did.

I now have the chance to finally finish the story I want to tell about the war I was in and pass along the lesson I learned.

MALARIA RELAPSE

Does anyone have any problems from old malaria?? Any records from where we were treated????

I'm lying in the hospital right now with 103.8 temp... Doc says he's not sure it could survive in my body that long

Anything ya got might be of help...

thanks

Bruce Cain

Bruce, sorry to hear your sick . I was with the unit 4-69 to 4-70 and had malaria. I have been tested at the VA for what they called brain functions, such as comprehension and speed of the brain. They also told me that things can happen at any time during your life from having malaria such as dementia or Alzheimer's type symptoms. I'm not sure about the symptoms you are going through.. Hope that helps some . I was treated at Lei Khe evac .

Greg Chavez

Hi Bruce,

I was in country w/ LRRP's from '67- '68. I had malaria. Since returning I had relapses as a result of running myself down. I've learned through the years to "listen" to my body & when feeling exhausted I slow down & recuperate. I was treated in Cameron Bay (Tan Son Nhut airbase).

I contracted whooping cough 3+ yrs ago & once again endured the Sweats/Chills. Haven't had a relapse since but believe it's always possible. I was told by my Dr. that you NEVER get rid of the bug. Good luck Bruce, hope this helps clarify.

"Skeeter" Pettibone

SO, DOES ANYONE HAVE ANHTHING THEY WANT TO ADD ABOUT MALARIA?

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CHAPLAIN'S BOX

FROM Jim Regan

LOSING LOVED ONES

How do we deal with the "loss of a loved one?" From my earliest years, I experienced a great loss. At four years of age, I found that my Dad had been killed in WW II. How's a kid deal with that? I'll tell ya how, the family and friends that surround me! Relatives, friends, Nuns and Priest. They all helped with the "grieving" and I didn't even realize what they were doing.

As the years went by, there were my: Mom, aunts, uncles, cousins, and some friends, that went on to be with Jesus. Yes, I truly believed that, then and now. Some of the "losses" were expected and some unexpected. I often use the term "Date of Birth" to talk about how we get around, and what's goin' on with our bodies. I like to talk, "Light Heart-ily" about how we are doin'. We never know what's goin' on inside this ol' body. Surprises lurked there!

I'm leading up to something here. On my first tour of duty, with the LRRP/Rangers of the 1st Cavalry Division, '68-'69, I suffered some losses of "Loved Ones". I did not know a lot about our Rangers who were "KIA" killed in action. That did not diminish my grief for their "Loss". During that year, we lost fifteen (15) Rangers! Their names are inscribed on that Quiet, Somber, Black, Granite, Slab "The Wall!" in Washington, D.C.

On my second tour, with the Vietnamese Rangers, was a bit different. In that year, we lost no Rangers to the enemy that I know of. Later in my career, I'm working at the White House, Command Sergeant Major for the White House Communication Agency. My Personnel Sergeant Major dies, after a long illness. I had the honor and privilege to "escort" his body to his final resting place. Everything was exactly the way it should be.

Yes, my life continues and I lose what I call "sainted", aunts, mothers-in-law, brothers-in-law, and friends.

Now there is a pause in the "loses".

Then we get the terrible phone call, and wonder, what the heck happened! A "Child/Grand-child" has died! Oh my gosh, off to Texas we go for the : Visitation, Funeral, comforting of my daughter and family. What an outpouring of love & accolades for my grandson. In all my life, I have never, ever, witnessed/felt that much love, understanding, just plain "We're here for you!" for the family. The cards, flowers, emails, phone calls, and mostly "Prayers" have helped ease the grief for me.

How do I wrap this up? Pray for our dearly departed loved ones, and for those we who are left behind.

Jim RLTW/L&P

(Rangers Lead the Way, Love & Prayers)

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OF THE FIRST CAVALRY DIVISION
DURING THE VIETNAM WAR



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