



Presidential Unit Citations



Ia Drang Valley
23 Oct – 26 Nov 1965



Hoa Hoi
2-3 October, 1966



LZ Bird
27 December, 1966

“Boot to Boot”

The Story of Charlie Company 1st Battalion 12th Cavalry 1st Cavalry Division 1963 - 1972

Valorous Unit Awards



An Qui
31 May – 1 June, 1967



Cambodia
1 May – 29 Jun, 1970



Tay Ninh
23 Sep – 25 Oct, 1971

Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry Awards



1965 - 1969



1969 - 1970



1970 - 1971



Patch worn from 1963 to 1965



Patch worn from 1965 to 1967



Patch worn from 1967 to 1972

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Dedication

This history is dedicated to several groups of special people. First, it is dedicated to those 143 men from Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division, who gave their lives while assigned to C Company from February, 1963 to June, 1972. It's also dedicated to the men who, in the prime of their life, willingly or reluctantly, served at Ft. Benning, Georgia or in Vietnam with Charlie Company as airborne infantrymen or airmobile infantry soldiers, medics and assigned artillery soldiers. It is also dedicated to the families of the Charlie Company veterans (the wives, mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, children and grand children). For many of those family members, they have never understood why we are like we are. They have put up with our anger, marriage problems, alcohol abuse, indifference and feelings of melancholy at different times in our lives. Their lack of understanding has been our fault, for the most part. We were affected in negative ways by what we did, what we saw and what we endured and we didn't talk about it. We kept things to ourselves, the way our fathers who served in WWII did. That did not work! I hope that what is recorded here will initiate conversation with our loved ones about our experiences.

The facts of our history are that we have quite a story to tell. The original members of C Company, along with the other three companies in the 1st/12th, invented the concept of air mobility. It didn't exist before 1963. From 1963 to 1965 our guys wrote the book and the standard operating procedures for air assaults and air mobile operations. Those men and the men who replaced them through the years were at places that are still talked about today; ie., Ia Drang Valley, Plekiu, Kontum, Dak To, Bong Son, An Loa Valley, Quang Tri, A Shau Valley, Khe Sahn and Song Be. C Company fought in all four major theaters of Vietnam, I Corps, II Corps, III Corps and IV Corps, the 1st Cavalry Division being the only division in Vietnam to do so. We were at the Battle of the Saddle, Chung Pong Mountains, LZ Hereford, Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, LZ Bird, An Qui, Dak To, Tam Quan, Tet '68, Quang Tri, A Shau Valley, Khe San, Lang Vei, Song Be, Cambodia and many other famous places made so by the valor of C Company. We were the company in the battalion that could be counted on, anytime or anyplace to fix problems. Charlie Company in Vietnam is one of the most decorated companies from the Vietnam War. And, we were part of the best infantry company in Vietnam and in the following pages, I hope to prove it to you. We were and are proud to have been part of the best company to serve in Vietnam. Our experiences molded us into brothers in arms, and we are proud to stand up and say we were Charlie Company!

Doug Warden
C Company, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry
Vietnam, May 1967 – May 1968

Preface

This document has been a passion of mine. I have borrowed from articles on the internet, borrowed from articles from Vietnam Magazine written by Michael Christy, the company commander of C 1st/12th who led them into Cambodia in 1970, borrowed from my book, **Boy Sergeant**, and borrowed from the recollections of many, many members of C Company who were there from 1963 to 1972. The reader will notice that there are no footnotes at the present time, giving credit to sources that I have borrowed from and stolen from. I take no credit for anything other than I have organized the story of Charlie Company chronologically and taken from a number of sources. Some of the people who have helped me in this book are **Comar Johnson**, platoon sergeant of the 3rd platoon from July, 1966 to July, 1967, **Jerome “Doc” Bacon**, medic for A, B and C companies from May, 1966 to August, 1968 (he drew jump pay 29 months), **Michael Christy**, former company commander of Charlie Company in 1970 and retired Lieutenant Colonel, a writer, producer, director and actor, **Spencer Matteson**, from the 4th platoon, who shared his thoughts about the Battle of LZ Bird, **Thomas Crabtree and Larry Anderson**, who were on separate long range patrols on December 27, 1966 and watched from afar, in horror, as LZ Bird came under attack, **John Spranza and Bob Roeder**, two of the five survivors of the 4th platoon at the Battle of LZ Hereford, **Mike Chase**, executive officer of Charlie Company and sometimes company commander and platoon leader from 1963 to 1966, **Jim Braga**, RTO for 1LT McClellan of the 1st platoon in 1965 to 1966, **Ron Sauers**, who served in C Company from 1970 to 1971, **John Rudd**, former executive officer of Charlie Company and 3rd platoon leader who was at Hoa Hoi and 506 Valley, **John Couper**, medic, who served from 1968 to 1969, **Bill McKeown**, Rudd’s RTO who was wounded at 506 Valley so severely that he never came back to the field, **Martell Swain**, a squad leader in the 3rd platoon, who went over with the original members of C Company, **Billy “Sam” Thach**, an original member of the 2nd platoon in 1965 and 1966, **Bob Lindquist**, the first company commander of Charlie Company in Vietnam, **Bob Radcliffe**, platoon leader for the 2nd and 3rd platoons and former XO of C Company from December 1966 to September 1967, **LeRoy Burgess**, machine gunner for the 3rd platoon, who I followed into the village of An Qui on May 31, 1967, **Dennis Rasmussen**, machine gunner, squad leader and platoon sergeant in the 3rd platoon from May, 1967 to May, 1968, **Larry Joe Bingham**, who sustained 5 wounds while with C Company from May, 1968 to May, 1969, and his friend and 3rd platoon machine gunner, **Carlos Ramos**, who served at the same time, **Larry Whitman**, a survivor of the 4th platoon on LZ Bird, **Ivory Whitaker**, from the 3rd platoon who served from April, 1966 to April, 1967 who was at Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley and LZ Bird and last, but not least, **Laverna “Tweek” Van Dan**, registered nurse and wife of **Alan Van Dan** who served from April, 1968 to June, 1969. Tweek has provided me with a wealth of information about C Company from 1968 to June, 1972. She has a passion for contacting long, lost, C Company members and bringing them into contact with their old comrades-in-arms. I want each of these people to know how invaluable their stories have been in putting this document together.

This is a copy of a yearbook issued at Ft. Benning, Georgia, prior to being part of the Cav

11th Air Assault Division Company "C" 187th Airborne Battalion



CAPT. BALL, HARRY



1ST LT. WARREN, DONALD F.



1SG. E8 STATION, WILLIAM R., JR.



1ST LT. McMILLAN, DONALD F.



1ST LT. GRECCO, JOHN F.



1ST LT. DAVIS, WAYNE L.



PSG. E7 BRADLEY, RILEY A.
SSG. E6 COLBURN, CARLOS GWO
SFC. E6 COOPER, MARION
SSG. E6 FITZ, LEO L.
SFC. E6 GILBEATH, LUTHER V.
SSG. E6 GLOVER, ALBERT, JR.



SSG. E6 GREGORY, ERNEST
SSG. E6 HAMBRICK, HAROLD M.
SFC. E6 JUREK, DELMER D.
SSG. E6 MARQUEZ, GONZALEZ
SSG. E6 NORMAN, JOSEPH L.
SGT. E5 BELLANTI, KENNETH A.



SGT. E5 CLARK, RAYMOND D.
SGT. E5 CRANK, EARNEST R.
SGT. E5 DUGGER, HOWARD O.
SGT. E5 HOOD, WALLACE
SGT. E5 LEWIS, ROBERT L.
SGT. E5 LAROSE, JAMES



SGT. E5 McCALLISTER, BERNARD
SGT. E5 MCKELVY, WILLIAM B.
SGT. E5 OLIVER, ALLEN, JR.
SGT. E5 PENA, ELOY C.
SGT. E5 PEREZ-ORTEGA, WILLIAM
SGT. E5 ROBINSON, JOSEPH H.



SGT. E5 USHER, JAMES E.
SGT. E5 WILLIAMS, FRANKLIN R.
SP4 E4 ADAMS, LARRY L.
SP4 E4 ADKINS, BOBBY
SP4 E4 ALEXANDER, GEORGE C.
SP4 E4 ANDERSON, GEORGE R.

11th Air Assault Division Company "C" 187th Airborne Battalion

SP4 E4 BENOSKY, FRANCES T.
SP4 E4 BOURGEOIS, JOHN H.
SP4 E4 BURGIN, CHARLES R.
SP4 E4 CAMPOS, ROBERT
SP4 E4 CHATMAN, RICHARD W.
SP4 E4 COSMA, JULIUS R.

SP4 E4 DAVIS, GILMER W.
SP4 E4 DAVIS, ROBERT L., JR.
SP4 E4 DAVIS, THOMAS B., JR.
SP4 E4 GENNOCRO, ANTHONY A.
SP4 E4 GLENBOCKI, THADEUS
SP4 E4 GRADY, LARRY W.

SP4 E4 GREAO, JOHN A.
SP4 E4 GRANGER, JAMES R.
SP4 E4 HYATT, CLAUDIE
SP4 E4 JACKSON, HANDY
SP4 E4 JACKSON, JEROME
SP4 E4 JACKSON, WILLIAM

SP4 E4 JIMENO, LUIS
SP4 E4 JONES, ALVIN
SP4 E4 KELLY, FRED W.
SP4 E4 KIRBY, THOMAS W., JR.
SP4 E4 LAPINSKI, ANTHONY A.
SP4 E4 LARIVIERE, PAUL J.

SP4 E4 MARTIN, EDDIE L.
SP4 E4 MENEFFEE, JAMES A.
SP4 E4 REED, GRADY, JR.
SP4 E4 ROSKOWINSKI, ROMAN
SP4 E4 SIMONEAUX, POLAND
SP4 E4 SMITH, BOBBY W.

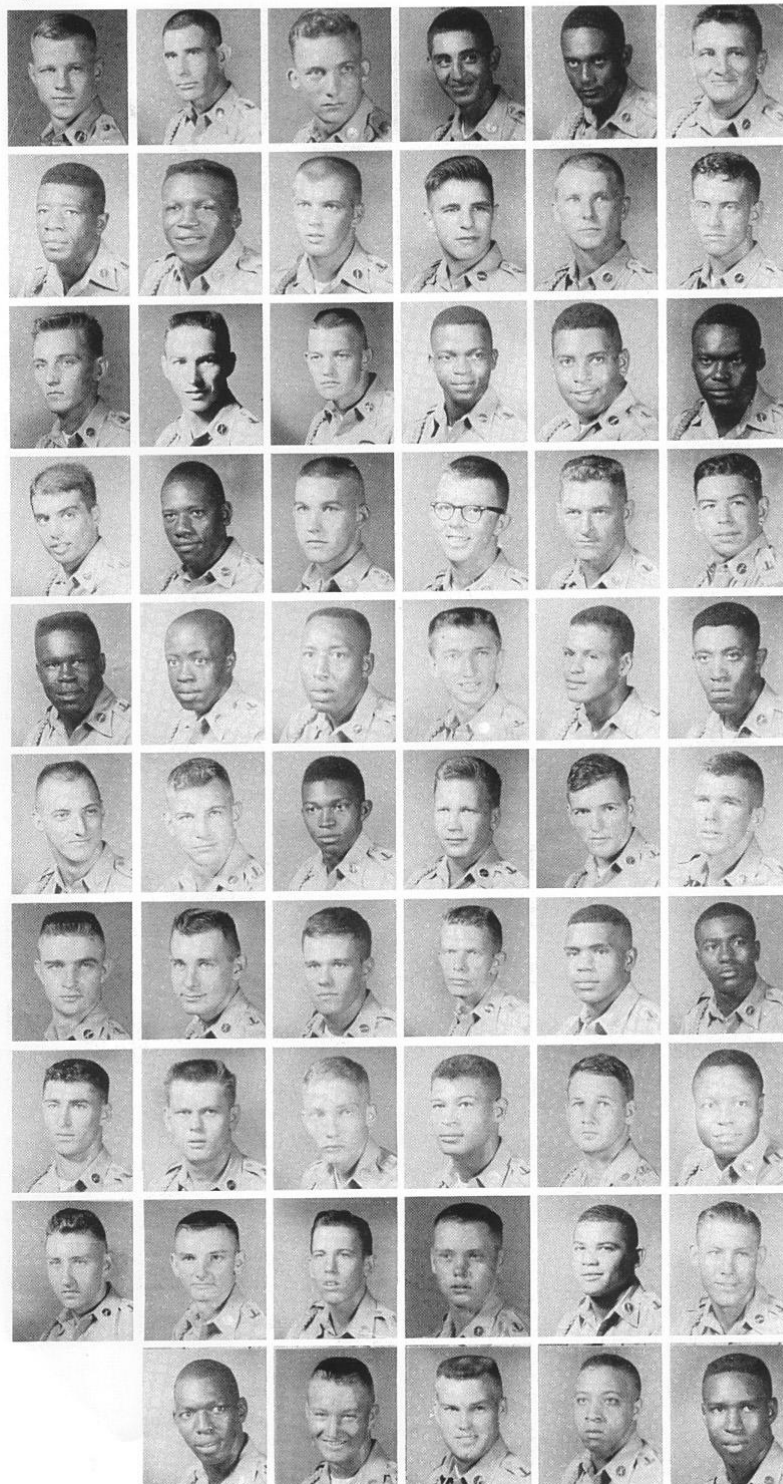
SP4 E4 SWANGER, SIDNEY E.
SP4 E4 SUTTON, ROBERT L.
SP4 E4 THOMAS, CALVIN A.
SP4 E4 THOMAS, RICHARD G.
SP4 E4 WAGAMAN, RONALD T.
SP4 E4 WALINSKI, BERNARD G.

SP4 E4 YORKE, DONALD J.
SP4 E4 ZUKOWSKI, STANLEY B.
PFC E3 ANDERSON, THOMAS S.
PFC E3 BASS, ROGER M.
PFC E3 BROOKS, ALAN S.
PFC E3 BROWN, LLOYD N.

PFC E3 BUCKALEW, CHARLES R.
PFC E3 COLEMAN, CHARLES R.
PFC E3 CROWLEY, THOMAS J.
PFC E3 CRUZ, ALFERD
PFC E3 CULBREATH, PAUL W.
PFC E3 DIGGLES, ROBERT L.

PFC E3 DIXON, DANA L.
PFC E3 GASPER, JOHN F.
PFC E3 HATTABAUGH, PAUL R.
PFC E3 JAMES, CHARLES W., JR.
PFC E3 JONES, DAVID E.
PFC E3 JONES, PERCY G.

PFC E3 JONES, THOMAS R.
PFC E3 LINZY, BRUCE R.
PFC E3 MYERS, STEPHEN
PFC E3 McINTOSH, JOHN H.
PFC E3 MYERS, ROBERT N.



11th Air Assault Division Company "C" 187th Airborne Battalion



PFC E3 ODUM, THEODIS
PFC E3 PERRY, BENJAMIN A.
PFC E3 POU, RONALDE
PFC E3 REYES-OQUENDO, ANI
PFC E3 REYNOLDS, KENNETH
PFC E3 ROSS, WILLIAM L.

PFC E3 RUMPH, EDGAR
PFC E3 SHEFFIELD, WALTER R.
PFC E3 SOLOMANOR, JOSE
PFC E3 SPARKS, HENERY, JR.
PFC E3 STRONG, CALVIN, JR.
PFC E3 STUDLEY, WILLIAM F.

PFC E3 THACH, BILLY J.
PFC E3 WALL, ROBERT J., JR.
PFC E3 WHITESIDE, BILLY G.
PVT. E1 CARROLL, ARTHUR
PVT. E1 JENKINS, CHARLES
PVT. E1 MARTIN, ADAM



Introduction

This is a series of recollections and stories about the paratroopers, non-airborne soldiers, soldiers who wore a ranger tab, guys who came from Special Forces or joined Special Forces after their tour of duty with Charlie Company, draftees and regular army guys, officers and enlisted men, all of whom I believe were and are proud of being associated with the best infantry company to serve in Vietnam.

These men from Charlie Company were all part of a grand experiment that took place beginning at Ft. Benning, Georgia, in October, 1963, to Vietnam in September, 1965 and continued through to the bringing home of the colors of Charlie Company to Ft. Hood Texas in April, 1972. The experiment involved the integration of helicopters into the order of battle for infantry troops involved in armed combat. The idea was to take infantry troops and make them extremely mobile with helicopters, like the horse did for the cavalry in the 19th century in the Civil War, as well as, the Indian Wars. In this group of extraordinary men that I have interviewed are two survivors of the Battle of LZ Hereford that occurred on 21 May 1966. John Spranza was shot five times in the space of 10 minutes, one of only five survivors of the weapons platoon, made up of 20 men on that fateful day. Bob Roeder was on LZ Hereford and was the only survivor who was not wounded that day, though he fought the enemy until all his ammo was gone. Some of the men interviewed were involved in the Battle of the Saddle, where withering rocket, mortar and rifle fire cost lives of five Charlie Company soldiers, along with over fifty wounded, on 23 February 1966. Several had been with C Company at Hoa Hoi and 506 Valley. Two veterans were survivors of the Battle of LZ Bird that started at 1:05 AM on 27 December, 1966, when a re-enforced regiment of NVA over ran 84 men from C Company who were guarding two artillery batteries. They lost fourteen men killed on LZ Bird and over twenty wounded. Two were survivors of the Battle of An Qui, 31 May - 1 June, 1967, when a platoon from C Company unknowingly rode tanks into the command post of the 22nd NVA Regiment. At An Qui they lost six men killed and over twenty five wounded. And one of the men was a survivor of the Battle of Tam Quan, 15-16 December 1967, where ten C Company men lost their lives, along with over twenty wounded. Several men were with Charlie Company for the Tet new year in January and February, 1968, where C Company was in constant contact with a NVA Regiment for twenty straight days. These were all battles that involved Charlie Company, 1st Cavalry artillerymen and other units of the 1st Cavalry and some attached armored units. C Company served 81 months in Vietnam.

The First Cavalry Division's colors returned from Korea on July 1965 to Fort Benning, Georgia, and were transferred to the 11th Air Assault becoming the first airmobile division in the military. It was a new concept. The division consisted of nine battalions of air mobile infantry which formed three brigades and one air reconnaissance unit (the 1st/9th), along with aviation support companies and artillery battalions. These were the combat elements of the division. The First Cavalry Division was the first army division deployed to Vietnam on September 11, 1965. It was the only division to have fought in all four tactical zones in Vietnam. They were the only army division awarded the Presidential Unit Citation in Vietnam in the entire war. Among

the individual awards for the 1st Cav, troopers of the division won 25 Medals of Honor, 120 Distinguished Service Crosses, 2,770 Silver Stars, 2,697 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 8,408 Bronze Stars for Valor, 2,910 Air Medals for valor and 5,328 army commendation medals for valor. During the fighting in Vietnam the division suffered 30,000 soldiers killed or wounded in action, more than half as many as the 40,055 casualties in WWII and 16,498 casualties in Korea combined.

The bulk of the First Cavalry Division departed Vietnam on April 29, 1970, leaving behind the third brigade, which included Charlie Company, 1/12th Cavalry, until June 26, 1972.

Ft. Benning, Georgia 1963-1965

Designated Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion (Airborne), 187th Infantry, 11th Air Assault Division (Test) to 1st Battalion (Airborne), 187th Infantry, 11th Air Assault Division (Test) to 1st Battalion (Airborne), 12th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division, Airmobile, May 1963 – August 1965

In February, 1963, the 11th Air Assault Division (TEST) was formed at Fort Benning, Georgia, to test the concept of moving men and equipment around the battlefield using the helicopter as a means of transportation. The Commanding General of the 11th Air Assault Division (Test) was Brigadier General Harry O. Kinnard. General Kinnard was later to become the first Commanding General of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). The 11th Air Assault Division adopted the shoulder patch of the 11th Airborne Division, substituting an airmobile tab for the airborne tab of the patch.

The first company to join the new 11th Air Assault Division (TEST) was C Company. They were transferred over from the 2nd Infantry Division in February, 1963. The first company commander of C Company was Captain Harry Ball. The first battalion (including C Company) formed in the 11th Air Assault Division (Test) was the 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry, and its first commander was Lieutenant Colonel John J. Hennessey. On October 1, 1963, the battalion was officially converted from a straight leg infantry battalion to an airborne battalion, the 3rd Battalion (Airborne), 187th Infantry, "Rakkansans". Many of the officers and men of the battalion were not airborne qualified, however, most volunteered for airborne training to remain with the unit. Special airborne training courses were held for these soldiers at Fort Benning in the summer of 1963. Key NCO and officer's vacancies that did exist in the battalion were filled by experienced jumpmaster qualified personnel, mainly from the 101st Airborne Division. Those airborne soldiers added an airborne tab over the air assault tab of the 11th. In the spring of 1964, the battalion put on a live fire demonstration at Ft. Benning for visiting dignitaries, the advanced infantry course attendees and officer candidate school attendees. Helicopter cavalry units reconnoitered the objective, pathfinders jumped in, 105mm howitzers were flown in via Chinook helicopters, artillery ammunition was lifted in by CH-54 "Flying Cranes", gunships prepared the Landing Zone with aerial rocket artillery (ARA), OV-1 airplanes fired 50 caliber machine guns, rocket and smoke onto the objective area and a company from the airborne battalion air assaulted into the area in front of the awed crowd. Sitting in that crowd observing was Captain Bob Lindquist, a student in the Advanced Infantry Course. He

immediately volunteered to join this elite unit. Captain Lindquist took command of C Company from Captain Harry Ball in August, 1964. Bob Lindquist describes the command of C Company as “the best assignment I had in my 28 years of service”.

For the next twenty months, the 3rd Battalion (Airborne), 187th Infantry trained at Fort Benning, Fort Stewart and in numerous off-post training sites. Over 40 battalion and company size tactical airborne training exercise were conducted. During this period, the 3rd Battalion was re-designated the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 187th Infantry as the 3rd Battalion colors were returned to the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. Also, command of the battalion was transferred from LTC Hennessey to LTC Harlow G. Clark, who commanded the battalion through the remaining test days of the 11th Air Assault Division (T). LTC Clark was later killed in a freak training accident in an OLH-13 helicopter that he was piloting, while touring the Division defensive perimeter in An Khe, Vietnam. He was flying with Colonel Hennessey, who escaped the accident uninjured.

The training of the battalion during the final stages of the airmobile testing was highlighted by two brigade sized mass tactical operations in the vicinity of Camden, South Carolina. The battalion was joined for these airborne operations by two battalions of the 82nd Airborne Division. The “Rakkasans” subsequently maneuvered against the troopers of the 82nd in a realistic training exercise that convinced the decision makers in the Pentagon of the viability of the airmobile concept and the potential lethality of a unit that could move rapidly, with surprise across the battlefield. Simulated combat jumps from C-130’s were made by the battalion on 14 Oct, 2 Nov and 12 Nov, 1964, two on Drop Zone 10 in Cheraw, SC and one on Luzon DZ at Ft. Bragg, NC.

In June, 1965, a momentous decision for the future of the Army was reached in the Defense Department and announced by the Secretary of Defense. The testing of the 11th Air Assault Division (Test) was concluded and authority was granted to organize the Army’s first Airmobile Division at Fort Benning. Major General Kinnard was given the mission of making the Division “combat ready” in just 8 weeks. The colors of the 2nd Infantry Division at Fort Benning were transferred to Korea and the colors of the 1st Cavalry Division were returned to the American soil for the first time in 21 years. The 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), to become known as the 1st Air Cavalry, was born and a new era in modern warfare began. As the division colors of the 11th Air Assault Division (Test) were retired, so were the colors of the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 187th Infantry. The officers and men of the battalion were now members of the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 12th Cavalry “Chargers”, part of the airborne brigade. An airborne brigade in the CAV was unique to a division that had transitioned from horse cavalry to tanks and heavy weapons, to a highly maneuverable unit to be deployed by both helicopter and parachute.

With only eight weeks to prepare for battle, the 1st BN (ABN), 12th Cavalry, then commanded by LTC Robert M. Shoemaker, launched a concentrated combat training program. The training was almost non-stop with both day and night live-fire exercises the predominant training vehicle. On July 28, 1965, President Johnson, in a televised nationwide address, announced to the world that the 1st Air Cavalry Division was to deploy to Vietnam. The entire

1st Brigade (Airborne) made a jump on August 3, 1965, the last parachute jump the men made in the USA. On August 20, 1965, the 1st Brigade of the CAV, consisting of the 1st Battalion (ABN), 12th Cavalry, the 1st BN (ABN), 8th Cavalry and the 2nd Battalion (ABN), 8th Cavalry and their direct support artillery battalion (2800 men) boarded the USNS Geiger (designed to carry 1500 men) in Savannah, Georgia for a month long voyage to Vietnam. Highlights of the deployment included passage of the Panama Canal and brief stops in Honolulu and Guam, and the extensive training program conducted by squad and platoon leaders to further prepare their soldiers for combat. The daily training regiment included a rigorous ship board physical training program complete with the daily dozen of the hatch covers and open decks of the Geiger. On September 20, 1965, the battalion with its sister units landed at Qui Nhon, Vietnam and subsequently was flown by Chinook helicopters from the 228th to the 1st Air Cavalry Division base camp at An Khe.



USS Geiger

Photo courtesy of Samuel D. Carlson

The battalion subsequently prepared for a battalion combat drop in the vicinity of Tuy Hoa, which was later cancelled by General Westmoreland. Though the operation never occurred, the airborne spirit was rekindled in the troopers, as they made their morning runs and conducted their pre-jump training, complete with hundreds of parachute landing falls (PLF's).

In September, 1966, a decision by General Westmoreland ended the airborne status of the 1st Battalion (ABN), 12th Cavalry, along with the 1st Brigade (Airborne) of the 1st Cavalry

Division. The soldiers and officers of the battalion continued to draw jump pay, until they concluded their tour in Vietnam. These officers and men are authorized to wear the airborne tab over the 1st Cavalry patch on the right shoulder of their dress uniform. There are other men who were authorized the airborne patch over their Cav patch on their right shoulder after these dates. These were men who were with the LRRP companies, 1st Brigade (ABN) LRRP's, E Company (ABN), 52nd Infantry, the 11th Pathfinder Company and H Company (ABN), 75th Rangers, though not every member of those companies were jump qualified. There were also riggers who were assigned to the 1st Cavalry who wore an airborne tab over their 1st Cavalry patch.

Beach Landing at Qui Nhon, September 20, 1965

Charlie Company boarded the USNS Geiger in Savannah, Georgia on August 20, 1965. The Geiger passed through the Panama Canal, where two soldiers from Charlie Company physically jumped ship. Dry land was extremely close to the ship, with land being only a few feet from the side of the ship. By the time the Geiger had reached the end of the Panama Canal, the soldiers had been found and returned to the ship.

When the ship pulled into Pearl Harbor, most everyone from Charlie Company was given a pass to visit downtown. Most of the men made it back to the ship by the deadline imposed on their passes, but a few had to be hauled back by the military police. The ship was moored next to a US Navy submarine. Several of the inebriated soldiers stripped down to their skivvies and attempted to hold their breath and dive under the submarine. Some made it and some didn't, but all returned on board by sailing time. The ship stopped one more time in Guam before they arrived at the Qui Nhon port on September 20th.

Charlie Company was chosen to be the first company to disembark the ship by a series of contests conducted in route to Vietnam. The contest consisted of written tests on weapons, TO&E, tactics, etc., as well as, proficiency in the breakdown and assembly of weapons. They loaded landing craft on the ship's side that did not allow them to view the beach near Qui Nhon. They imagined that they were about to conduct a beach assault when the landing craft pulled onto the beach and dropped the forward door. To their surprise, there were news people everywhere on the beach, along with General Westmoreland and several Vietnamese girls who were selling cokes and beer on the beach. They moved to a landing zone and loaded onto Chinook helicopters for transportation to An Khe, the new base camp of the 1st Cavalry. From September 21st to October 10th, they pulled guard duty on the "green line", the perimeter barrier line that encircled the entire base camp. Most of the 1st/12th pulled the same duty during this time. They conducted short recon patrols and conducted short air assault operations, also.

From October 10th to October 14th, they participated in Operation Shiny Bayonet, attached to the 3rd Brigade. They conducted search operations in Binh Dinh Province and the

Suoa La Tinh Valley. They received word that Sergeant Hambrick, a highly regarded NCO, who was transferred out of Charlie Company to A Company, had been killed in action on October 10th. He was a combat veteran of WW II and Korea. It produced a somber atmosphere upon hearing this news.

From October 15th to October 25th, C Company was transported back to Camp Radcliffe to refit. On October 26th, the first and last battalion parachute pay jump was conducted just outside base camp. Because of sniper fire aimed at the descending paratroopers, there were no more pay jumps conducted in Vietnam. The paratroopers of the 1st Brigade continued to draw jump pay for the remainder of 1965 and all of 1966 and 1967 by means of filing statements of non-availability of aircraft.

From October 27th to November 12th, they participated in Operation All the Way (the Pleiku Campaign). They conducted combat operations in Pleiku Province, north of Highway 19 and south to the Ia Drang Valley, between Plei Me and the Cambodian border. From November 13th to December 5th, they were back for a stand down at Camp Radcliffe, pulling perimeter duty around the green line, the An Khe airfield and on roads and bridges in and out of camp. They also conducted Civil Affairs operations in the village of Son Tong, four kilometers southwest of An Khe. From December 6th to December 10th, they conducted search and destroy missions eight miles west of An Khe.

From December 10th to December 31st, they were at base camp clearing the barrier line for Hong Cong Mountain and doing local patrols in their local area of operations. Most of the company attended the Bob Hope Show at Camp Radcliffe during this time.

Upon their arrival in Vietnam, the paratroopers of the battalion fully expected to conduct airborne, as well as airmobile combat tactical operations. Shortly following their arrival, the battalion conducted a parachute drop. In the rice paddies, east of the village of An Khe, a practice airborne jump was made. The jump was highlighted by the eagerness of the local children from An Khe to assist the battalion out of their parachute harnesses and riggers roll the chutes in record time. The troops were amazed at the ability of these youngsters that showed this skill and wondered where it been learned.



C Company Arrives at Qui Nhon

Vietnam

The terrain of the Area of Operations for Charlie Company had hills that were straight up and down and the level areas were covered with elephant grass higher than your head. Elephant grass would cut like razors when a trooper brushed against it. When it rained, leeches were everywhere. They would latch on under the soldiers' arms and between their legs. The only way to get them off was to burn them off with a cigarette or to squirt insect repellent directly on them. After they were removed, the spots where they had attached themselves bled and hurt like the dickens for a while. Snakes, gigantic bugs and spiders were everywhere. Triple canopy forest covered the mountains and hills of the Central Highlands. At times, the triple canopy foliage was so thick that at mid-day when the sun was at its highest, you could barely make out your hand if you held it out.

Under the Saigon government, Vietnam was divided into four Corps Tactical Zones, each commanded by a Vietnamese general for all the ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) forces within their assigned zone. From the DMZ (demilitarized zone) in the north at the 17th parallel, which was the border between North and South Vietnam, I Corps included all of Quang Ngai Province. II Corps lay just below I Corps and included most of South Vietnam's Central Highlands. This was the AO (area of operations) for the 1st Cavalry Division. III Corps lay further south and included the area to the west and north of Saigon. IV Corps is still further south and included the Mekong River Delta and Saigon.

NVA units infiltrated South Vietnam through the demilitarized zone at the 17th parallel and along the Ho Chi Minh Trail in Laos and Cambodia, a system of roads and foot trails meandering south before turning east toward the populated areas of South Vietnam. In addition to these NVA units, other Communist soldiers included the Viet Cong (VC) Main Force, District Force and Village Defense Force. This VC Main Force was made up of VC shock troops composed of well-trained and equipped men who were capable of fighting conventional battles of limited duration. The District Force and Village Defense Force were made up of local civilians



who

were part-time soldiers or guerrillas whose military operations did not take them far from home. They were farmers and merchants during the day and terrorists at night. The less well trained were guides, guards, messengers and informants for the regular military units.

The enemy, whether NVA or Viet Cong, were referred to as VC, "Victor Charlie" or just "Charlie", dinks or zips. NVA units usually wore khakis and carried packs. The local guerrilla was clad in "calico noir," the traditional black pajamas of the peasants. The arms they carried ranged from AK 47's and SKS's, to 75 mm recoilless rifles and 82 mm and 61 mm mortars to Communist and French manufactured machine and submachine guns. Most had a few potato masher grenades. They were experts at camouflage and living and moving underground. Their elaborate tunnel complexes stretched sometimes for miles. They knew how to set ingenious booby traps, poisonous punji stakes, spike boards, Malaysian gates and trip-wire crossbows. A VC soldier usually weighed no more than 100 pounds and subsisted on 2 pounds of rice a day.

His actions in battle have led some to suspect the use of narcotics before action, as reflected in this 1st Cav Operations report, 1965-1966: "... they started charging me with 10 to 15 man waves, on a regular skirmish line, hollering and screaming. I hit some of them two or three times with bullets and they would keep coming at me, stop, turn around and then I could see big blood splatches on their backs as they took two or three steps toward their rear and then fell over. When they were charging me, they were yelling and even after I hit them with gunfire, they were laughing."

Imagine getting up at daybreak day after day and humping in the jungle or the mountains all day in blistering heat with a rucksack weighing anywhere from 60 to 100 pounds. The weapons platoon guys had to carry a rucksack and carry two 81mm mortars, with base plates and ammo. You, as a soldier, would come in, have chow, wait for dark, and move out to another position to pull guard for at least four hours or go outside the perimeter on ambush. Ambush patrol came every third night with 50 percent of the men on ambush awake during the night. Then the next two nights the men would pull regular guard duty with one guy awake in each foxhole or position at all times. You never got a good night's sleep. The only time this grind was interrupted was when you were in contact with the enemy or back in the rear area for "stand down." Stand down occurred when you came into a rear area that had showers and clean fatigues. The 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry (Airborne) had Headquarters, Alpha, Bravo, Charlie and Delta companies. Headquarters Company included the cooks, supply people, truck drivers, communications personnel and medics. Most of those people were in the rear, with the exception of the medics. The company usually had five medics assigned to it. One stayed with the company CP and each of the four platoons had its own. On any given day, one company would be doing "palace guard" on an LZ somewhere securing an artillery battery or two, while the other three companies would be out in their assigned AOs searching for the enemy.

Charlie Company patrols went with this formation: The point man was always out front about 10 to 15 meters and behind him was one of the M-79 grenadiers. The M-79 guy was loaded with a HE (high explosive) round chambered, or if they were in heavy jungle, he would

have a shotgun round. Next, came the squad leader whose two men were in front of him. Behind him was the platoon leader followed by his RTO (radiotelephone operator) carrying a PRC-25 radio for radio transmission back to the Company Command Post. Right behind the RTO was the medic who was followed by the first machine gunner followed by the assistant gunner and the ammo bearer. The rest of the column followed them in no particular order until near the back came the other machine gun crew followed by the platoon sergeant and his RTO. The position of each gun allowed for the platoon leader and platoon sergeant to direct the placement of the M-60s in case of contact. After the platoon sergeant and RTO was another M-79 grenadier and the rear guard or “back door man” carrying an M-16. The only man allowed to be on full automatic was the point man. Everyone else could have a round chambered but had to have the safety on. Squad leaders were supposed to check each man’s weapon before they moved out.

Battle of the Saddle, February 23, 1966

The battle of the Saddle took place on February 23, 1966. Charlie 1/12th had been out for about two weeks. Their time out was boring, they hadn’t seen anything. On the 22nd of February, Bravo 1/12th started running into some commo wire and a lot of it. They began pushing into the brush, and before they knew it, they were in a recently vacated regimental headquarters of NVA. Battalion called out and told Charlie Company that they were moving out in the morning to this area. Battalion wanted 1LT Mike Chase, Executive Officer of Charlie Company, to take six new medics out with Charlie Company and break them in. They were all very inexperienced and were about to gain considerable experience. This combat operation was all part of Operation Masher White Wing. Mid-afternoon on the 23rd, C Company was flown into the mountains of Binh Dinh Province, north of An Khe to link up with A 1st/12th.

After disembarking from the Huey’s, they went off the saddle into a ridgeline and started up a trail with 1LT Bob McClellan and the 1st platoon in the lead. Jim Minter was the point man. To his left was thick vegetation. On the right of the trail, he could see a slope down to a ravine. Minter led the company toward the ravine for about 15 minutes, when he suddenly stopped and summoned McClellan to the front of the column. McClellan and his RTO, Jim Braga, went forward and Minter pointed to an NVA sleeping in a hammock to their front. Below the hammock sat his heavy machine gun, indicating that he was part of a unit that was more than company size. Without a word being spoken, McClellan fired a burst into the hammock and the NVA soldier looked at McClellan and started to crawl off into a nearby thicket. Another burst of fire prevented his escape. CPT McMillan came over the radio, wanting to know what was going on. McClellan responded and McMillan ordered them to position squads on their right and left flanks and to begin a sweep. In front of them was a hill, a saddle and a valley.

They continued down and ran into an estimated NVA regiment. McMillan was positioning the men and was on the radio to battalion from his position with the 1st platoon and Chase was trying to help out by radioing for helicopter support. Chase had half of the company with him, the 2nd and 3rd platoons. As McClellan and Braga continued to move forward, a wounded SSG Norman came crawling out of the ravine. To their right, they observed Bill Studley coming toward them with a wounded Jim Minter on his back. The CO called for some help and Mike sent a squad to help out. The CO radioed to Chase, wondering where the men were that Chase sent to re-enforce him. The squad that Chase sent forward returned and they were all wounded. Sgt. Stevens had been shot in the neck. The NVA were in between Chase and the CO.

While C Company was engaged with the NVA, 1LT Jay Snyder from A Company, formerly from C Company was on a Huey trying to make his way back to the field to join his company. His helicopter was shot down in a hail of gunfire and they crash landed. They were later rescued by another helicopter.

The exchange of gunfire continued and was so intense that retrieving any wounded or dead was impossible. McMillan called for an airstrike that covered their route back uphill to the saddle. The NVA began firing mortars into their position when they reached the saddle. There was a lull in the fighting and that allowed them to evacuate their wounded. Gunships came on line and gave cover fire while the company moved from the saddle to the top of the hill. Another air strike was called in on the NVA positions. The firefight lasted all day and they pulled back that evening and disengaged. Mike was with the 3rd platoon leader in the rear as they observed the survivors coming out of the ravine. 1LT Fred Simone was a platoon leader and he was carrying a machine gun. They heard a lot of noise to their rear and they called in artillery. The weapons platoon was firing 81mm mortars constantly. They moved back up to the hill that they landed on and formed a perimeter. Some guys said they could hear noise on the flank. They took a lot of casualties from a friendly fire incident that happened after their pullback. The ARA gunships came in for a run and one rocket veered off, came full circle, and wounded several guys. Chase went back and got one of the wounded guys on his back and carried him with him. Alpha Company was trying to come up from the valley to help out and they got hit badly. The company had been in firefights before that, but nothing to compare to February 23rd. The fighting went on all day and they just never had a break. That night, the company could see the glows of cigarettes that the NVA were smoking up on the mountain. The next morning, the dead of C Company were flown out. The NVA had pulled out during the night and the company linked up with A 1st/12th.

Hill 274, Chu Pong Mountains, April 2, 1966

Charlie Company moved out from their night position about 0700 hours on the morning of April 2, 1966. They had received word that Captain Don Warren's Delta Company, 1st/12th was in a bad firefight about three miles from their location. They had traveled about eight

clicks north of their night position when they came to Hill 274 that was located in on the southern side of the Chu Pong Mountains over near the Cambodian border. Captain McMillan sent the 3rd platoon up ahead to link up with Delta Company to assist in their fight. McMillan thought he would keep the rest of the company away from the fight and try to catch NVA running away from the battle.

Charlie Company had entered the area that was characterized by a series of shelves, forming plateaus at intervals along the sides of Hill 274. The 1st and 2nd platoons had crossed a hogback spur extending down from the Cambodian border that had white pebbled rock on it. As was their standard operating procedure, CPT McMillan had operational control of the 1st and 2nd platoons and the XO, Lt. Mike Chase, had control of the 3rd and 4th platoons, until the 3rd platoon was sent to link up with Delta Company.

Captain McMillan told Lt. Chase to stop where he was and establish a perimeter for helicopters to fly in with water and ammunition. What they didn't know at the time was that the NVA were dug in above their position. They let the 1st and 2nd platoons, with the company commander pass by them as they passed the pebbled rock. Then they opened up on the column.

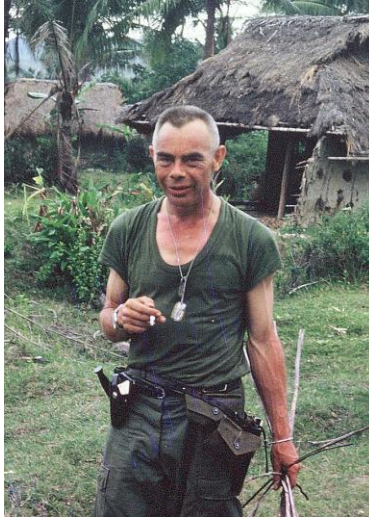
SGT David Muniz was just behind the point man in that column. SGT Maseo Oguma, Jr. was also up near the front of the column. As they approached a creek up ahead, the first squad received heavy small arms fire. McMillan heard the report of the enemy rifles and the return fire of the squad. He got on the radio and called to the platoon up front to inquire as to what was going on. He was told that the incoming fire was so intense that it was impossible to move. So, McMillan and his RTO started forward to see what the situation was like.

By the time that CPT McMillan moved forward to the front of the column, the entire company was receiving incoming fire. One of Charlie Company's machine gunners ran across a narrow flat shelf, under heavy fire, and set up his machine gun facing the heavy brush in the gully from where the creek was flowing. Lt. Chase heard a garbled transmission that came from the 2nd platoon's RTO. He got on the radio and asked for him to repeat the last transmission. This time, the RTO didn't answer, but SGT David Muniz did. He had taken the handset from the visibly upset RTO and told Lt. Chase that CPT McMillan and his RTO had come under fire and were both dead. Muniz had taken over the radio from the surviving RTO, who was traumatized by seeing his best friend, the other radioman, die. Muniz took over the column of men and began to order his men out of the gully and back down to the rest of the company. When they linked back up with the company, there were four soldiers still unaccounted for up the hill in the gully, including SGT Oguma. He had been shot in the finger, which spun him around to the ground under some cover. The firepower was so intense, that he could not move and could not raise his head. Since he had his head down, he didn't know that the rest of the platoon had pulled back down the gully.

The machine gunner who was covering the gully was hit and wounded, so the medic, SP4 Tom Foley tried to administer first aid, but found that the gunner was dead. So, he took over the machine gun and continued to pour suppressing fire in the gully until all the soldiers made it back to his position, minus the four missing personnel.

Chase made his way down the hill to where the platoons were pinned down. He gathered everyone together and told them to get out of there. They all got back up towards the shelf they had come from, minus SGT Oguma. Mike called to David Muniz who was the FO sergeant and asked if there were any survivors. Muniz told Mike that there were no more survivors and Mike called in air strikes. They were in the process of reorganizing when Captain Warren arrived with two platoons from Delta Company and Charlie Company's 3rd platoon. They had killed 11 NVA and had taken two casualties of their own. The medevacs were coming in to take out the heat casualties. The first guys out were the heat casualties, but three reporters who were with C Company tried to hop on the medevac chopper and escape. Mike Chase pulled his .45 cal pistol and pointed it at them and told them to get off the chopper. After they got off the chopper, one of the Charlie Company guys called out, "Machine gun left!!" One of the reporters held up a microphone and said, "Say that again, say that again!" The C Company guy shouted out, "F*** you!"

That night Charlie Black, a reporter from Columbus, Georgia arrived on a resupply chopper and he and Mike Chase figured out that Charlie knew his father in Branson Missouri. Black would write an article about the fight in the Columbus Ledger-Inquirer. It was published on 30 April back in the states. As soon as he arrived and found out that McMillan was dead, Captain Warren assumed command of Charlie Company. Warren was returning to C Company, a group that he had trained with as a lieutenant in the 11th Air Assault Division. Almost all the men from C Company knew him and liked him. They made use of artillery and air support the rest of the afternoon, dumping hundreds of rockets and artillery rounds on the enemy positions. While all this activity was going on, SGT Oguma left his cover and ran up the ridge to safety. All of the incoming shells and rockets had provided cover for him and kept the NVA from advancing on his position. He was wounded in the shoulder from shrapnel. He got back to the company just in time to be medevaced.



**Charlie Black, combat correspondent from the Columbus
Enquirer with C 1st/12th Cav from 1965 to 1967
Photo courtesy of John Rudd**

After the NVA abandoned their positions, the company was able to recover the bodies of the men from the hill. It was a sad day for Charlie Company. Captain McMillan was generally well liked and was a good company commander.



Captain Don McMillan

Charlie Company went further into Cambodia from there and later on in April came upon a series of bunkers, where the NVA were out in the open. There were a bunch of trails that came together in the midst of the bunker complex. C Company did a classic infantry maneuver and assaulted and killed several of the NVA. They went through the complex and found a storage unit. In it were all kinds of weapons, still coated with cosmoline. They found

some flare guns with different color flares. SGT Kirby, of the 4th platoon, put one of these flare pistols in his backpack. He would find good use for it at LZ Hereford in May.

Charlie Company was running extremely short of ammunition and was literally down to using the NVA machine guns and ammunition that they found. In a short time the bodies of NVA began to smell. Flies were everywhere. While they were in this area, CPT Warren came down with malaria, so Chase took over the company and had 65 total in the field after that day. Then, Chase got malaria and was hospitalized at the 85th Evacuation Hospital at Qui Nhon. He was released and was on his way back to the company on the morning of 21 May, 1966.

LZ Hereford, May 21, 1966

Just like all of the battles that Charlie Company participated in, knowledge of what went on before the battle helps in the understanding of the conflict. C Company was running patrols out of LZ Gold, in the division AO outside the An Khe base camp on May 16, 1966. Bill Martin, Captain Warren's RTO, had been monitoring the battalion radio to follow the actions of B Company, 2nd/8th (ABN). B Company was in heavy contact with a numerically superior NVA force on top of a mountain just east of LZ Hereford. C Company was put on alert to move with A Company 1st/12th to assist the 2nd/8th. A 1/12th was sent in first to LZ Hereford and they moved east up the hill to link up with B 2nd/8th. They linked up with B 2nd/8th about 2200 hours in the dark. Charlie Company was ordered to assemble the company and prepare for movement to LZ Hereford at about 1800 hours. They were air lifted by helicopters to LZ Hereford and arrived just as night fell. LZ Hereford was covered with 5 foot high elephant grass at the time. They set up a perimeter and remained there during the night. A stray round from one of the 105mm batteries firing support for the units farther up the hill hit one of their positions during the night and killed PFC John Booth of Bainbridge, Pennsylvania, and SP4 Martin Killilea of Roxbury, Massachusetts. Both had trained with the company at Ft. Benning, Georgia, and had gone over on the ship with the 1st Cavalry Division.

At daybreak on the 17th, they moved up the mountain to link up with B 2nd/8th and A 1st/12th. Both companies were receiving heavy fire during C Company's journey up the hilly terrain. When C Company closed on their location, the enemy's fire subsided. They found B 2nd/8th in a sad state. Both the company commander and the first sergeant for B 2nd/8th were brand new to the field. The company had not formed any kind of a perimeter and were bunched together right off the trail near the top of the mountain. B Company's brand new CO, Captain John D. Coleman, offered to link up in a perimeter with C Company, but Captain Warren told him that he would encircle all of what was left of B Company and be responsible for security. C Company then spent the rest of the day assisting with the recovery of their wounded, dead and equipment. Toward nightfall, elements of the 1st/5th Cavalry moved through their perimeter to attempt to find the enemy. B Company 2nd/8th and A Company 1st/12th lost 28 killed and 99 wounded during their engagement with the NVA. Charlie Company

lost one soldier on May 17th. He was Harold Bradley Nadeau of East Bethany, New York. No one remembers when or how he died that day.

PFC Robert Roeder, of C 1st/12th weapons platoon, remembers that when they arrived to link up with the two companies, the scene was horrific. There were NVA who had tied themselves in trees that had been shot and killed by the Cavalrymen. They were hanging upside down from the tree limbs. The American dead and wounded were lying right off the trail in the midst of the tightly grouped men on top of the mountain. C Company formed a line, as if they were going to pick up cigarette butts on police call and began walking off the trails and looking for bodies and body parts of their fellow troopers. Although they were under triple canopy trees, the jungle was not that thick. You could see in the distance for up to 100 meters. They broke out their poncho liners to form makeshift litters for carrying the dead and wounded back down the hill to Hereford. Rigor mortis had set in on the bodies and they were extremely hard to keep on the litters. It was grisly work. SGT Wallace Hood and a bunch of other soldiers started wrapping detonation cord around some trees at LZ Hereford to enlarge the landing zone for the evacuation. They turned Hereford into a two helicopter landing zone in short order. By the time the guys with the litters carrying the dead got back to Hereford, a Chinook helicopter had landed and they unloaded a net. The wounded were put on the Chinook and the dead were placed in the net. When the Chinook took off and hovered, the net was attached to the underbelly of the aircraft and it took the wounded, and the KIA's and body parts out of the area.

On May 18th and 19th, C Company spent their time sweeping along the hilltops, until they were ordered to stop when they arrived on Hill 766. Engineers from the Cav were lowered into their position from a CH47 Chinook. They assisted the engineers in blasting down trees and building a wooden landing platform for helicopters. This LZ became known as LZ Milton. On the morning of May 21st, *Look Magazine's* senior editor, 32 year-old Sam Castan arrived on LZ Milton, along with more elements of the 1st/5th Cav. Castan was being a pain in the ass, going around taking pictures of the guys and asking them about their thoughts on death and dying. He wasn't getting much of response. The guys thought he was being invasive and didn't answer his questions. He was working on an article for *Life*, but was having trouble finding a combat situation to photograph. Every time he went to a battle site, the fighting stopped. He referred to himself as the "luckiest guy in Vietnam".

They left LZ Milton to return to LZ Hereford, with Sam Castan tagging along. Almost all of the 1st Cavalry infantry units that fought in Operation Crazy Horse were carried into and out of the battle zone through either Landing Zone (LZ) Horse or LZ Hereford. LZ Horse was west and across a mountain from LZ Hereford. Hereford was a small one-or two-ship helicopter landing zone located on a saddle on a ridgeline east of and overlooking Happy Valley. The rugged ridgelines to the east and west of the valley were dense jungle and good landing zones were scarce. Hereford, on the eastern side of the valley, was one of only two places of open terrain leading into that enemy-infested sector of the Crazy Horse area of operations. So, the building of LZ Milton was a welcome addition to the available landing areas. Thus, this small

piece of terrain called LZ Hereford took on great importance to both sides. During the course of the operation, there was always a Cavalry presence on Hereford. The North Vietnamese constantly lurked in this area looking to ambush an American unit if they could achieve tactical surprise and superiority. Having been pounded by suppressing artillery and gunship fire a number of times as Cavalry units assaulted into Hereford, the LZ was a scarred, devastated wreck of a landscape partially covered by elephant grass.

They broke camp on LZ Milton about 1000 hours on the 21st to hump back to LZ Hereford to relieve A Company, 1st/12th. After A Company moved out, they were to continue in a sweep from Hereford down to the valley floor looking for NVA who might be in that area. The mortar platoon would stay at Hereford, fire its remaining rounds in support of the company's advance and then would be extracted by helicopter to the battalion command post in the valley.

Medic Don Hamilton, of Tom Bean, Texas, was on the last helicopter that left with A Company. On board were some of A Company's mortar platoon and they had some mortar rounds that made the load too heavy for the helicopter to lift off. The pilot motioned for Hamilton to get off to lighten the load, but the platoon leader for the weapons platoon decided that they would leave some of the rounds for Charlie Company, since they were in the process of coordinating a fire mission for the rest of Charlie Company as they hacked and cut their way down to the valley floor through the heavy vegetation. The rounds were unloaded and Hamilton stayed on board. If he had been forced to stay, Don Hamilton would have had a bad day.

LZ Hereford was a tricky piece of terrain to defend. It was located on a saddle which is a military terrain feature characterized by a low-lying area surrounded on two sides by higher ground on the other two sides, in this case, two prominent mountains. The key to defending a saddle is to secure the higher ground above the saddle on either side. Otherwise, an enemy force could achieve significant tactical superiority by seizing the high ground, enabling devastating fire to be brought against the soldiers below. Unfortunately with only 21 cavalrymen (counting PSG Edward Shepherd), the mortar platoon did not have enough strength to man its mortars and simultaneously hold the high ground above Hereford. Just before the 1st, 2nd and 3rd platoons moved out to hack their way through the heavy elephant grass and brush down to the valley floor, a soldier in the 3rd platoon spotted what he thought was an enemy soldier dressed in khakis. He told his squad leader, SGT Martell Swain, who told his platoon leader. But, Captain Warren told them to move out, they had specific orders from the battalion commander to get out of there. It was to prove to be a costly oversight. This undermanned platoon would pay a severe price for being left all alone on Hereford.

"After our march to relieve B Company 2/8 and A Company of the 1/12th on May 16 and 17, we spent the next several days sweeping along the hill tops around LZ Hereford," recalls SP4 Bill Martin, C Company commander Donald Warren's radiotelephone operator. "At one point engineers were lowered into our position from a CH47 Chinook. We assisted them in blowing

down trees and building a makeshift wood landing platform which the engineers named LZ Milton. On May 21st, 1966 elements of the 1/5 Cav were brought in to replace us and we began to retrace our path back to LZ Hereford. When we arrived at Hereford, we left our mortar platoon on the LZ to fire support for the rifle platoons as we began our sweep down to the valley floor. Our point man had just reached the valley floor as the mortar platoon completed their fire mission and were preparing to pack up and be air lifted to join us at the base of the mountain. Then all hell broke loose on Hereford as hundreds of North Vietnamese soldiers attacked the nineteen man mortar platoon. We reversed our line of march and with all possible speed started our climb back up the mountain to the LZ. Capt. Warren was in constant contact with our mortar platoon and an observation aircraft that was circling the LZ. The pilot reported swarms of attacking enemy soldiers intermingled with our mortar platoon and couldn't fire on the position without killing the defenders. We stayed in contact with the mortar platoon until they were no longer transmitting."

John Spanza, a native of North Carolina, was the RTO for the 4th platoon leader of Charlie Company, also known as the weapons platoon. He arrived with the rest of the company, off the USS Geiger, in September of 1965. He knew everyone well in the weapons platoon. 1LT Donald Kell was the platoon leader for the 4th platoon, but he had been in the hospital with malaria for about a week prior to the company moving into the vicinity of LZ Hereford. Spanza was the radiotelephone operator for SSG Kirby, who was acting platoon leader, in Lt. Kell's absence. Spanza, himself, had been hospitalized with malaria in April of 1966 and by the time he returned to the field, he had two weeks left in country in mid-May, 1966. One of the guys who returned from the rear area on May 20, 1966, told him "Spanza, you're on the rotation list, you'll be leaving for the world around the 1st of June."

Spanza remembers the company thinking they were going to help out some Special Forces sergeants and their Civilian Irregular Defense Group (Montagnards) soldiers, who had been in heavy contact near Hereford. But, they ended up helping retrieve bodies that belonged to Bravo Company of the 2/8th Cavalry, one of Charlie's sister companies in the 1st brigade.

Charlie Company drew mortar and sniper fire for much of the night of the 16th of May before they moved further up into the mountains. Spanza and Sgt. Kirby were at LZ Tom on the 19th and 20th. Early on the morning of the 21st, Spanza and Sgt. Kirby caught a helicopter back down to LZ Hereford to join the rest of the company that were moving back from LZ Milton. Alpha Company moved out about 1130 hours on helicopters and Charlie Company was left alone on Herford. About 1200 hours that afternoon the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd platoons of Charlie Company moved out on foot to sweep down off LZ Hereford to LZ Cobra in the valley. The weapons platoon stayed up on Hereford to provide recon mortar fire for these platoons as they searched for the enemy and be picked up later that afternoon for transport to Cobra. PSG Edward Shepherd, from the 2nd platoon, had stayed behind with Charlie Company's weapons platoon to catch a helicopter back to An Khe to attend a promotion board, since he was on the E-8 list. He became the 20th soldier on LZ Hereford.

John Spranza is one of five survivors of Charlie Company still alive to tell the tale of that horrific day. The mortar platoon was so few in number that it was unable to mount a traditional perimeter defense around the LZ. As many of the platoon's troopers were needed to fire their mortar, only a few soldiers were available to provide security. Sergeant Robert L. Kirby, the platoon leader, organized a u-shaped defense leaving a portion of the mortar platoon position completely undefended. Around 1300 hours, Specialist Spranza was talking on the platoon radio. He was communicating with the Charlie Company rifle platoons, helping adjust the mortar platoon's fire in support of the company's advance down the ridgeline toward the valley floor. Spranza recalls Charles Stuckey and Paul Harrison, located in a nearby defensive position, suddenly opening fire with their M16s. "I thought they had gone crazy," Spranza remembers. "I couldn't immediately imagine what they were firing at or why." But just as Harrison and Stuckey opened fire, the LZ was racked by AK-47 rounds fired by hundreds of North Vietnamese infantrymen charging toward Hereford from the high ground above the landing zone. Interspersed with this automatic weapons fire was a barrage of rocket-propelled grenades arching down toward the American positions.

Spranza rolled back into his foxhole and tried to reach for his radio that was the platoon's only communication with the rest of Charlie Company and any hope for reinforcement. Without help, the mortar platoon would be destroyed by the overwhelming firepower of the North Vietnamese human wave attack. "I had the long whip antenna on my radio and the gooks apparently saw it and were aiming RPGs right at me," recalls Spranza. He shot three North Vietnamese who were heading straight for his position, but was wounded by a NVA firing a machine gun. "I was able to raise the company on the radio and told them we needed gunships and artillery."

Realizing that its mortar platoon was under heavy attack, Charlie Company reversed its path and started moving as fast as possible back toward the LZ to help the beleaguered platoon. Unfortunately, the terrain, elephant grass, and "wait-a-minute" vines made movement very slow. At the same time, the battalion headquarters located in the valley below ordered A Company, 2nd Battalion (Airborne), 8th Cavalry, in reserve at the headquarters, to load on a section of Eagle Flight choppers and make an emergency combat assault into Hereford to rescue the mortar platoon. Once again the mortar platoon had no luck at all. As soon as the first lift of A Company boarded the Eagle Flight Huey's, a heavy fog rolled over Hereford making an immediate combat assault impossible.

The few remaining Americans who had not been killed in the initial North Vietnamese onslaught realized they were fighting for their lives and that the difficult terrain and the fog precluded any hope of assistance. Spranza was shot four times. One bullet hit his shoulder and three other rounds entered his leg. Though wounded, he was talking on the radio. He sensed someone behind him and he turned his head. A bullet from an AK-47 entered his face just to the right of his nose and exited out the other side of his face. If he hadn't turned, he would have been shot in the back of the head. Although seriously wounded now, Specialist Spranza was able to crawl to a small rocky area that several survivors were using as a defensive

position. Being unable to carry his radio with him, Spranza found a hand grenade and threw it back at the radio hoping to destroy it before the enemy could capture it. Thinking he would not survive much longer, he hid his classified radio codebook in his pants, hoping the North Vietnamese wouldn't look there if they searched his body. Sergeant Kirby, the platoon leader, had also made it to this improvised position, where these last few cavalrymen would make their final stand. Now out of ammunition, they grabbed for some AK-47s dropped by dead and wounded enemy. Kirby found several hand grenades that he threw at the North Vietnamese skirmishers now charging out of the elephant grass on the slopes of the LZ. When one NVA charged its position, Kirby shot him in the face with a NVA flare pistol that had been captured in Cambodia earlier that year. After surviving the initial North Vietnamese fire, Sam Castan tried to escape by running down the side of the ridgeline to safety. He ran right into an advancing group of enemy NVA where he was shot in the head and killed. His camera was taken and was recovered the next day by soldiers from the 1st Brigade who were searching for the attackers of Herford. The camera still had the film in it that Castan had taken on the morning of the 21st. The camera was turned over to Look magazine and they published the pictures made from the film in the magazine in 1966. Most of the pictures that were in Castan's camera were mistakenly identified as being taken at Hereford, but most were of Charlie Company on LZ Milton, earlier that morning.

Spranza, Kirby and a few others also tried to crawl into the tall elephant grass to escape to safety. All of the survivors except PFC Roeder had been wounded, some several times. Specialist Spranza had been shot five times including taking one round in the head that knocked out most of his teeth. Sergeant Kirby had been shot three times. Both were bleeding badly and on the verge of unconsciousness. At this point, thinking that all the platoon were dead, as there was no radio contact from the mortar platoon, artillery fire from the battery located in the valley floor began pounding the LZ. At the same time, the NVA infantrymen were searching for any remaining Americans in the tall elephant grass and executing any wounded.

Sergeant Kirby, knowing that the few remaining cavalrymen were out of ammunition and bleeding from numerous wounds, felt that their chances of survival would be better back on the LZ. He thought the NVA would have pulled out from the LZ due to the pounding of the American artillery. Spranza told Kirby to save himself if he could. Spranza was so shot up that he could no longer move. His only hope of survival was to lie down and play dead and hope the NVA were convinced of his demise. Several times, enemy soldiers rolled him over and searched his pockets but each time moved on thinking he was dead. Spranza lay as still as he could feel that he would bleed to death in the tall elephant grass. At this point, several 1st Cav gunships flew by, strafing the LZ in preparation for A Company's combat assault into Hereford. One fired its machine guns so close to Spranza that dirt kicked up by the impacting rounds hit him in the face.

Spranza then realized, as if in a dream, that he was above his body about 20 feet. He could look down on the battlefield and see everyone perfectly. He looked to his right and saw a bright, pure light. He realized that he was in the presence of his Lord, Jesus Christ. He felt

himself drifting toward the light, but he resisted, calling out to the light, "Please Lord, let me stay. My buddies need me. Let me go back!" Immediately he found himself back on the ground, fading in and out of consciousness. On the verge of blacking out, Specialist Spranza had hidden his bayonet under his body and decided he would kill the next North Vietnamese who searched him. Feeling hands probing his body, he turned and reached out with his bayonet. He looked up into the face of Jordan Brindley, one of Captain Warren's RTO's, just arriving back at the LZ. The enemy had fled and choppers bringing A Company into Hereford began to land. Spranza had survived this horrific attack but lapsed into unconsciousness. He next remembered being on a surgery table at the field hospital at the 1st Cavalry base camp at An Khe.

Specialist Jordan Brindley, one of Captain Warren's RTO's recalls, "The rifle platoons of Charlie Company started down the mountain. Our weapons platoon would remain on LZ Hereford to provide supporting fire to the company as we moved toward the valley floor. After moving only a few hundred yards down the mountain, through thick vegetation and undergrowth, we received a radio message from John Spranza, the mortar platoon radio operator. It was a desperate cry for help, "They're all over us, they're killing us!" and then his radio went dead. We could hear automatic weapons fire and RPG rounds exploding up the mountain from our position. By that time Captain Warren had turned the company around and headed back to LZ Hereford, we arrived within minutes. All but five members of our weapons platoon were killed, the sight was unbearable. Dead bodies were everywhere, weapons and bloody equipment was strewn all over the mortar platoon position. I found Spranza, he'd been shot a half a dozen times. He was barely conscious and in very critical condition. We loaded John and the other survivors on the first available "Dust Off" for medical evacuation to the rear".

When Roeder heard American voices, he crawled out of the elephant grass where he had hidden after he ran out of ammunition. He saw members of the 1st platoon, who were the first on the scene of the battle. Two soldiers sat him down on top of the hill next to where the dead had been covered with ponchos. Every time a helicopter came in to land, the wind blew the ponchos off the killed. He was asked to identify the bodies that were underneath the ponchos. He identified several of the dead, but some were so badly mutilated that he didn't recognize them. Roeder spent the night with C Company on Hereford that night. They were all extracted by helicopter at noon the next day. Roeder doesn't remember anything that happened after his horrific experience that day until the day he was notified that he was going home. The trauma of seeing his fellow troopers and friends fall that day blocked his memory for over a month.

Over the coming months, Spranza would be evacuated through a series of military hospitals finally winding up at Womack Army Hospital in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Of the 21 (including Sam Castan) Americans who were on LZ Hereford on that fateful day of May 21, 1966, only five survived: John Spranza, Sergeant Kirby, Specialists Isaac Johnson and Charles Stuckey, and PFC Bob Roeder. One member of the platoon, Sergeant Louis Buckley was listed

as missing in action for years. Some of his remains have since been found and identified by DNA. Those soldiers from C Company occupying LZ Hereford that night, heard screaming, coming from a human being, echoing down from the mountains. Everyone assumed that it was the NVA torturing SGT Buckley. Spranza recalls Sergeant Buckley, wounded in the shoulder, running across the LZ to his fighting position but never saw him again. A helicopter pilot flying an OLH-13, reported seeing Buckley running down off the LZ, without a weapon, and bleeding from a shoulder wound. It was the last time anyone saw Buckley alive.

Although the North Vietnamese may have succeeded in overrunning and virtually destroying Charlie Company's mortar platoon, they too paid a terrible price for their success. More than 60 dead NVA infantrymen littered the LZ and the area surrounding it. While they were vastly outnumbered and outgunned, the cavalrymen on LZ Hereford were not outfought. The sixteen American soldiers who died on that forsaken hill and the five survivors fought to the end and made a timeless contribution to the heroic tradition of Charlie Company. For his heroism that day, SP4 Paul J. Harrison was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. Both Spranza and Roeder agree that the focus of LZ Hereford should be on those who heroically fought to the end. Those who died were:

PFC Robert Lee Benjamin of New Orleans, Louisiana, **SP4 Daniel Gibson Post**, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, **PFC Joel Tamayo**, Houston, Texas and **PFC Henry Benton**, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida had only been in country less than a month. **PFC Clarence Ray Brame**, Henderson, North Carolina and **PFC Wade Taste**, Cerro Gordo, North Carolina had been with the platoon since November of 1965. **PFC James Francis Brooks, Jr.**, McKeesport, Pennsylvania had been in the field less than two weeks. **SGT Louis R. Buckley**, Detroit, Michigan had celebrated his 23rd birthday the day before he became Missing in Action. **SP4 David Stephen Crocker**, the platoon medic from Medford, Oregon had arrived in Vietnam in January, 1966. **SP4 Austin Leon Drummond**, Greer, South Carolina, **SP4 Paul James Harrison**, Lakewood, California, **PFC Harold Mack, Jr.**, Charleston, South Carolina, **SP4 A. V. Spikes**, Hazelhurst, Mississippi, **PFC Lonnie Clifford Williams**, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and **SGT Charles A. Gaines**, Sanford, Florida were original members of the company. **PSG Edward Shepherd**, Raleigh, North Carolina was from the 2nd platoon and was just trying to catch a ride to An Khe to attend a promotion board hearing.

Robert Roeder sent a package home to his parents before Hereford and he used the packaging that Clarence Brame had received from his parents. When Roeder's mother got the package he sent home, she saw the addresses on the box and contacted Brame's parents. They became good friends through the years and they corresponded frequently. Roeder says that Brame was called "Gomer" by most of the platoon. He talked and sounded like Gomer Pyle of the television series.

As far as is known, there was no review of the incident at LZ Hereford. It is also not known who was ultimately responsible for this costly mistake. C Company veterans are mixed in their assessment of blame on this incident, if indeed there is any blame at all. It does bring

up questions about what the higher ups knew and didn't know before and during this engagement.

It will probably never be known what was so important that day, which necessitated leaving an inadequate number of men to defend the LZ. Why didn't the weapons platoon accompany the rest of the company down the hill? What was so important that caused the battalion commander to dismiss the spotting of soldier wearing khakis just off the LZ? Why couldn't the weapons platoon have been airlifted earlier to the battalion base camp in the valley where they could have fired supporting fire for the company just as well as if they were on Hereford? There were eye witnesses to a heated confrontation between Captain Warren and LTC Beard after the battle. It is wondered what was talked about in that discussion. Why wasn't A 1st/12th left on Hereford long enough to provide security for the weapons platoon? All of these questions may never be answered.

In 2006, Charlie Company had a reunion of all the members of the company who were jump qualified in Vietnam at Ft. Benning, Georgia. John Spanza, one of the survivors of LZ Hereford, was in attendance. John looked at the entrance to the hospitality suite at the hotel and in walked Robert Roeder. John had thought for 40 years that Robert was dead. They were overjoyed to see each other. The experience was like finding your long lost brother for both of them. Though the years, they have learned that Charles Stuckey had passed away, and they looked for the other survivors. They had heard that Isaac Johnson was having problems dealing with the experience. Since that reunion, they have searched and located SGT Kirby living in Columbus, Georgia. Kirby was happy to see the guys, but he avoided talking about Hereford. Spranza and Roeder are happy to be alive today, but they both agree that every day of their lives, they pause at some moment during their day to remember their brothers lost at LZ Hereford.

Termination of Jump Status

In September, 1966, General Westmoreland announced that the 1st Brigade would cease to be an airborne unit. From that point on, with a few exceptions, all of the replacement personnel were to be "straight leg" soldiers. Personnel who were on jump status were to be allowed to draw jump pay until their tour ended. By September, 1967, all enlisted men E-4 and below who were still drawing jump pay were transferred out of the Brigade to the 173rd Airborne, the 101st Airborne or the 82nd Airborne in Vietnam. Personnel who were E-5 and above in rank were allowed to stay with their units and continue to draw jump pay until their tour ended. In some cases, men who extended their tours continued to draw jump pay until the end of 1968. It's interesting to note that the majority of those who had to transfer out to other airborne units, wished they could have stayed with Charlie Company, even though they would have had to give up jump pay. In the words of one transplant to the 101st Airborne, ***"Charlie Company was way ahead of the 101st in terms of quality of personnel, standard operating procedures, tactics, operations and discipline!"***

Hoa Hoi, October 2-3, 1966

On 13 September, 1966, the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 12th Cavalry departed Camp Radcliffe to begin Operation Thayer in Phu Cat Province, 30 miles north of Qui Nhon. For 18 days the battalion swept and leap-frogged to the east toward the coast of the South China Sea. During this period, the battalion met only light and scattered resistance. Though not a fruitful period in terms of enemy contact, this sweep and maneuver served to push the enemy force closer and closer to the coast where the 1st/12th Cavalry was to wage one of the most successful battles of the entire Vietnam War.

On the morning of 2 October, 1966, at 0930 hours, the battalion had just initiated movement to assigned blocking positions when it was diverted to engage an estimated battalion size force which A Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry had located in Hoa Hoi. Twelve assault helicopters were available to the battalion and at that moment they were airborne with the command post and two platoons of Company B, 1st/12th.

After a short reconnaissance, the battalion commander decided that as companies entered the objective area, they should be positioned to encircle the enemy force at Hoa Hoi. Company B was to land first and block from the south and east. Then Company A would assault and establish blocking positions south and west of the village. As Company C became available, it would be landed well north of the village and attack to the south on a broad front to complete the encirclement. Fire support would be provided from Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 19th Artillery, which was to displace to within supporting range simultaneous with the movement of C Company. Once the enemy was fixed, the action would be halted and appeal made for civilians to move to safe areas and for the enemy soldiers to surrender. After an hour's wait, artillery fire would be carefully applied to destroy enemy resistance. Charlie Company would then conduct the main attack through the enemy held village.

The execution of the plan, which accounted for the staggeringly successful outcome, was brilliant. The aggressive execution began with the battalion commander, who braved enemy ground fire to personally place each of his companies, and carried down to the individual rifleman who relentlessly carried the battle to the enemy and never gave him a chance to recover.

Bravo Company was the first unit to be air assaulted into the area, landing at 1005 hours, 300 meters to the east of Hoa Hoi on an open beach area. Several minutes after the landing, B Company began receiving sporadic fire from the village. As the company maneuvered to the southeast of the village to get on line for an assault, the fire increased. Two 82mm mortar rounds landed next to the company command post, wounding five men, including the company commander, Captain Frederick Mayer. Although bleeding profusely from the fragment wounds in his face and forearm, Captain Mayer remained with the company and directed the unit's drive through the well prepared enemy bunker system which criss-crossed the entire area.

The 2nd platoon of Bravo Company, advancing across an open area, came under particularly heavy fire and was immediately pinned down. The platoon re-organized quickly and came up from their positions with rifles firing and advanced through the withering fire. This sudden counter offensive took the well entrenched NVA force by surprise. One squad, spearheaded by PRC Roy Salazar, breached the enemy's heavily booby-trapped trench perimeter and cleared the way for the other squads to break through the perimeter of the enemy. Within minutes, the startled enemy force was withdrawing into the village under a barrage of fire from the 2nd platoon. PFC Salazar was mortally wounded leading the charge through the enemy stronghold. PFC Francis Royal, a member of the 3rd platoon, was killed in the same engagement when he was hit after carrying a wounded comrade 50 meters across an open field to near safety. After he was hit, PFC Royal managed to drag his comrade the last few feet to safety before losing consciousness. PFC Royal died a few moments later. The gallant and heroic efforts of Salazar and Royal set the tone of the battle, which was to rage until noon the next day.

As B Company was fighting its way to the village from the southeast, A Company air assaulted with its CP and two platoons to the southwest. Alpha Company drew heavy sniper fire upon landing and they immediately attacked northeast toward the village. After the helicopters re-fueled, the remainder of the company joined in the attack.

When A Company made their initial contact with the enemy, the 3rd platoon of Alpha encountered a common problem: that of civilian non-combatants in the battle area. As Lt. Don Grigg moved his platoon toward the village, the unit came under automatic weapons fire, when several old men, women and children walked aimlessly out into the field into the direct line of fire between the two forces. Lt. Grigg threw down his weapon, web gear and helmet and raced 150 meters through concentrated fire from the enemy to the civilians. He picked up two of the small children and carried them back to his own lines; and the other civilians followed him to safety. Lt. Grigg then put his equipment and helmet back on and led his platoon through the enemy delaying force's position.

After Companies A and B had established initial contact with the enemy, the battalion withheld its fire while a psychological operations helicopter circled the village with loudspeakers directing the civilians to move out of the village and imploring the soldiers to lay down their arms. During this moratorium, numerous civilians and soldiers did as they were directed by the message. When it became evident an hour later that no one else was coming out of the village, the two companies began moving in.

The 1st platoon of A Company made the first major breakthrough on the western front. Lt. William Prichard's point squad came under intense fire as it broke into an open rice paddy bordered by enemy trenches. Immediately the platoon leader maneuvered the other two squads around to flank the enemy while the point squad laid down a base of return fire. While this was going on, the other two squads charged through the perimeter on both flanks and came up behind the enemy force. The point squad didn't wait for the other squads to come to their aid. PSG John Sinkovits and two volunteers crawled forward into the trench with the

enemy soldiers and began an exchange of fire with the NVA, position by position. PSG Sinkovits was seriously wounded in one of the positions they took, but not before he eliminated two machine gun emplacements in the trench and drawn much of the fire away from the rest of his platoon. Sergeant Donald Beltz took over from Sinkovits and rallied his squad to break through the enemy lines at this point. When this difficult penetration had been accomplished, the platoon found itself advancing through the enemy on a three pronged axis with the three squads almost on line. The 1st platoon's breakthrough was the key which unlocked the NVA defensive posture in that area. The badly routed enemy force suffered 12 killed in action and 3 wounded in that one encounter, while Alpha suffered only 2 wounded.

The roughest encounter for Alpha lay ahead. Early that afternoon, the 2nd platoon was ambushed and pinned down while trying to cross a stream bed. Five men in the point squad were wounded in the opening volley of fire. The incoming fire was so intense that the 2nd platoon medic could not move forward from his position to treat the wounded. SP4 Donatas Banaitis, the head medic in Alpha Company, was 300 meters to the rear with the CP, when he became aware that the wounded could not be reached. He raced through two areas of withering fire from the enemy to reach the stranded point squad. With bullets spraying all around him, he crawled to the wounded men and helped PSG Robert Bowman evacuate them to the rear.

Several other wounded men were lying on the far side of the stream bed out of SP4 Banaitis' reach. PFC Franklin Donaldson, a fire team leader in the 2nd Squad, realizing the danger of leaving these men in their exposed position any longer, took matters into his own hands. With his M-16 blazing, he waded into the stream and single-handedly engaged two surprised enemy squads. In the ensuing two minutes, he was credited with killing 12 NVA soldiers and driving off the rest in a fierce point blank firefight. He then made three trips under fire into an exposed area on the far side of the stream to bring back his wounded comrades and their weapons. The platoon then pulled back 100 meters and called in ARA fire on the enemy positions. For his actions that day, PFC Donaldson was later awarded the Silver Star by MG John Norton.

While this was going on, Charlie Company 1st/12th was air assaulted into position north of the village at 1250 hours. The company began moving south with Lt. John Rudd's 3rd platoon in the lead. The company met only light resistance until about 1600 hours when it began running into an extensive enemy trench network on the northern outskirts of Hoa Hoi. At that point, Captain Darrell Houston moved the 4th platoon up on line with the 3rd platoon. The company did not have a single man killed in the battle of Hoa Hoi, but only alert and aggressive actions by PSG Paul G. Jackson and his RTO, PFC Larry Willis, kept the unit from suffering heavy casualties at one point during the afternoon. PSG Jackson was moving with the right flank of the 4th platoon when one of his men further to his right spotted an enemy ambush position in a trench. He immediately rushed the trench, without waiting for the rest of his platoon to accompany him. He breached the trench and began firing at the enemy with automatic fire. PFC Willis joined him in firing upon the enemy. Jackson was creased by an enemy bullet across his forehead and was temporarily knocked unconscious. Willis, with his radio still on his back,

scrambled over to SGT Jackson's position and pulled him back from the ditch and threw two hand grenades into the enemy position. Although wounded also, PFC Willis moved back up to the trench along with PSG Jackson (who had regained consciousness) and the two of them assaulted the trench again. Together they killed all 8 of the NVA who were trying to ambush the column of Charlie Company troopers.

While Company C continued fighting its way south into the position for the night, A and B Companies were digging in and affecting a link-up which would preclude any of the NVA force from slipping out of the village to the south during the night. B Company had taken up a position in one of the trenches used by the enemy as a defensive position earlier in the day. While the company was getting into position, SP4 Norman Jackson crawled forward of the trench through booby traps and enemy fire to a semi exposed position where he could best bring destructive fire on the enemy. He fired on the enemy for more than an hour from that position despite the enemy bullets which were falling all around him. When Jackson's M-60 machine gun jammed, SP4 Richard Schmidt, the other machine gunner in the platoon, voluntarily raced up to the key position and maintained the fire on the village until dark. The two machine gunners were credited with firing 400 rounds into the village, killing an estimated 25 NVA soldiers and keeping the enemy bottled up in the village while the company was affecting its linkup.

When the two companies were tied in, the battalion commander flew to the beach east of the village to supervise the night air assault of two companies from the 1st/5th Cavalry, which were brought under his operational control to help encircle the village for the night until a final attack could be launched the following morning. After tying in these two companies to the east of the village with his own three rifle companies, LTC James Root landed under fire with B Company where he spent the night.

With darkness came the difficult mission of keeping the enemy force surrounded until dawn. The enemy tried unsuccessfully all night to break through the encirclement, to no avail. Every attempt at a breakout was repulsed. The use of close in artillery support aided the soldiers in containing the enemy. Captain John Sutton, the Artillery Liaison Officer and two of his forward observers, Lt. Stephen Stout and Lt. Charles Campanella, repeatedly braved enemy small arms fire to get in the best possible position to call in artillery fire on the enemy. The three of them personally adjusted 885 rounds of artillery, round by round. Their skilled manipulation of illumination rounds and flare ships kept the village and the surrounding area lit all night. On one occasion when the battalion command post came under attack and two men in the immediate vicinity were wounded, Captain Sutton held his tenuous position and simultaneously adjusted artillery fire right in on the enemy while he directed flare ships overhead. At times the artillery rounds hit so close that they showered the men in the forward friendly positions with fragments. This precision artillery support, combined with a heavy volume of small arms fire, successfully repelled the main exfiltration attempt in B Company's sector.

Around midnight, Company C became heavily engaged fending off an attempted breakthrough in its sector. PFC James Pender was seriously wounded in the firefight and the call went out by radio for his immediate evacuation from the area. When the medevac helicopter arrived the pilot could not pin point the landing zone in the dark. Immediately, Lt. John Rieke, the XO of the company, grabbed a flashlight and a radio and ran from his covered position out to the proposed landing zone. When he began waving the flashlight at the pilot, the enemy fire, which had been sporadic, began concentrating on Lt. Rieke on the landing zone. Lt. Rieke remained on the LZ and directed the pilot closer to him. As the medevac helicopter was preparing to come into the LZ, a logistics ship bearing vitally needed ammunition and water began to maneuver to land at the same place. Despite the enemy fire in his area and the imminent possibility of the helicopters colliding in the dark, Lt. Rieke remained calm and guided in both helicopters safely, one at a time. When he was not directing the helicopters, he was busy organizing the evacuation and ammunition supply. The rest of the night was marked sporadically with firefights and attempted enemy exfiltrations, none of which were successful.

The enemy came closest to making a successful penetration when they attacked on a narrow front in Company A's perimeter. When he received word that the NVA force was trying to escape, CPT Harold Fields immediately moved his headquarters element into the perimeter to plug the gap. A fierce firefight ensued. At one point the enemy got within five meters of the hastily assumed position, but CPT Fields group of radio operators, medics and artillery personnel repelled the assault.

The following morning, Companies A and B braced themselves in blocking positions around the southern half of the village, while C Company began attacking south through the enemy positions. The bunkers and extensive trench systems favored the NVA defensive posture and made C Company's advance extremely difficult. Several times C Company was temporarily stopped, but each time the soldiers rallied and, by individual combat at point blank range, drove on through the village.

Lt. John Rudd's 3rd platoon came under particularly heavy fire and was momentarily pinned down on two separate occasions. The company had just initiated its dawn attack on the village when the platoon became pinned down by murderous fire for the first time. When the automatic weapons opened up on them in the rice paddy, the platoon immediately stopped and hit the dirt. Suddenly PFC David Osborne stood up in the fire swept field and began spraying the bunkers to his front with his M-60 machine gun. When PFC Osborne did this, SP4 Daniel Shubert, the other machine gunner in the platoon, stood up and began firing on the bunkers and the snipers in the tree line. For a few seconds the two machine gunners wages a deadly showdown with the dug in enemy force. Together they killed eleven NVA soldiers and led the way for the rest of the platoon who stood up with them and drove through the enemy positions.

A few minutes the later the platoon became pinned down crossing another rice paddy. The time the enemy positions were so well concealed in a trench behind a hedgerow that Lt. Rudd's men could not find them to concentrate fire on them. SP4 Gary Lusk, the platoon

leader's RTO, stood up in the face of the enemy fire and began pointing out the enemy hedgerow positions to the machine gunner on his right. With SP4 Lusk pointing and the machine gunner firing, the pair worked as a team. Bullets were cracking all around him, but SP4 Lusk remained in his exposed position, even after a bullet shattered the hand receiver he was holding. With Lusk setting the example, the rest of the platoon stood up on line and advanced through the enemy. C Company was never seriously pinned down again as it steamrolled through the village and backed the remaining forces into the blocking positions occupied by the two other companies.

When this initial assault through the village was complete, Major Robert Thomas, the battalion XO, voluntarily landed on the outskirts of the village and coordinated the sweep of Companies B and C back through the village to newly established blocking positions to the north. During the sweep, Companies B and C killed twelve NVA soldiers, with Major Thomas killing two of them as he was returning from delivering some non-combatants to an evacuation area.

The attached companies from the 1st/5th Cavalry accounted for one enemy killed, giving friendly forces a total of 141 killed in the action by actual body count during the 24 hour battle. The battalion captured 35 NVA soldiers and detained 15 suspected NVA regulars. Intelligence reports later confirmed that the enemy battalion entered the fight at approximately half strength. With estimates of the enemy casualties running close to 250 men, it is doubtful that very many of the trapped NVA force managed to escape from the near perfect execution of the battle by the 1st/12th.

Friendly forces suffered three men killed in action and 29 wounded. Personnel from A, B and C Companies were recommended for one DSC, 13 Silver Stars, 35 Bronze Stars w/ V, 6 Army Commendation Medals w/ V and 4 Air Medals w/ V. A, B, C and D Companies participated in the battle along with A and C Companies from the 1st/5th Cavalry and 13 men from the 2nd Battalion, 19th Artillery.

The Battle of Hoa Hoi has been studied by commanders at higher levels, trying to evaluate the reasons for the tremendous success. The conclusion has been that the courage and aggressiveness of the fighting men that battle led to its success. From the moment B Company landed on the beach outside the well defended village, until C Company completed its final sweep through Hoa Hoi, the men of the 1st BN (ABN), 12th Cavalry, displayed a gallant determination to carry the battle to, and then through, the well entrenched enemy, no matter how grave the risks involved. Undoubtedly the battalion was fortunate to have taken so few casualties when so many men were exposed to heavy enemy fire. Certainly, the superior fire power and rapid resupply system were instrumental in keeping the pressure on the enemy. In the final analysis, however, it was the men of the battalion, like Salazar, Donaldson and Osborne who refused to be stopped at Hoa Hoi, who deserve the credit for the success of the battle. A few days later in praising the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry's performance, MG John Norton, Commanding General of the 1st Cavalry Division, said, "This division has won big many times, but we have never won better than we did at Hoa Hoi."

Just before the Battle of Hoa Hoi that occurred October 2/3, 1966, PFC James Eugene Windham, Jr. a native of New York had been late returning from R & R. He wanted to extend his tour by six months and was told that to avoid having three days added to his tour in Vietnam, because he was late returning from R & R, he would have to pull three days of KP to even things out. He ignored the order and got on a chopper to return to the field. Everyone called him "Jew", a nickname he derived from the initials of his name. "Jew" had been a member of the 4th platoon before LZ Hereford and had been absent from that battle because he was in the hospital with malaria. He returned to the field and asked to join John Rudd's 3rd platoon. According to Rudd, Windham performed well during the battle at Hoa Hoi. On October 6, 1966, he volunteered for point, arguing that he was the best point man in the platoon. So, Lt. Rudd put him on point. Windham was the first to come upon a jungle training facility where a concrete wall had drawings on it. The drawings outlined how to shoot down a helicopter. The platoon continued their patrol and just west of LZ Bird, Windham was shot in the head by an enemy sniper. He was dead before he hit the ground. Windham began his tour in January, 1966. He came from the 82nd Airborne where he had deployed to Santa Domingo, Dominican Republic in 1965.



**3rd Platoon, Charlie Company, 1st/12th Cavalry
 October, 1966
 Photo courtesy of John Rudd**

506 Valley, December 17, 1966

On 17 December 1966, Company C, 1st BN (ABN), 8th Cavalry surprised and routed a VC squad of soldiers in the Soui Ca Valley. An infantry platoon from A Troop, 1st/9th Cavalry was air assaulted into the area to exploit the situation and they encountered heavy resistance. During their pursuit of the survivors of the VC squad, contact was made with a strong enemy force and another company from the 1st/9th, along with five infantry companies from two battalions were deployed into the area. The enemy force was found to be a reinforced battalion, with the rest of the 18th NVA regiment in reserve, in well prepared bunkers and trench lines. The primary goal of American forces on the 17th of December was to encircle the enemy while attacking with forces in contact.

There were 2,300 rounds of artillery fired with nine sorties of tactical air attacking in the target area. Active contact ceased at 1800 hours, however, on the morning of the 18th of December, light and sporadic contacts were made throughout the area. Combat losses for this action were: friendly 34 KIA, 70 WIA, 5 UH-1D and 20 OLH-13's damaged by enemy fire. For the enemy, they lost 116 NVA killed, 3 NVA became POW's, 10 small arms and 3 crew served weapons were captured.

Prior to December 17th, the leadership of the 1st Cavalry Division was determined to thoroughly clear the Kim Son Valley. Operation Rover began on December 9th. It was a five day refugee evacuation effort to clear the area of civilians. Pamphlets were dropped and helicopters bearing loudspeakers with a message to evacuate the area within five days were used to encourage the local population to leave. Over 1100 peasants heard the message and left. The valley became a "free fire zone".

When C 1/8 spotted the enemy squad traveling southeast into the valley, they called in aerial support to aid their efforts to track the enemy squad down. Several aircraft were fired upon, so A Troop, 1/9 was air assaulted in to exploit the situation. When they met heavy resistance, the 1st BN, 12th Cavalry was air assaulted in to engage and surround the enemy. As the resistance escalated, it was determined that an enemy battalion was their target. The enemy turned out to be elements of the 18th NVA Regiment who were massing to attack LZ Bird, though this was not evident until later. C 1/12 was positioned on Bird. Captain Houston had sent Lt. John Rudd's third platoon out in three teams of 10 men on ambush missions. When the call came from LTC Eggers to air assault into 506 Valley, Houston called Rudd and told him to get his troops together to be picked up by helicopters to air assault in and link up with D 1/12, who were already engaged with the enemy. Rudd's platoon drew heavy fire as they approached in the Huey UH-1D's. One helicopter carrying PFC LeRoy Burgess crash landed after taking rounds that disabled the helicopter. As they landed, Rudd took off with his RTO, Bill McKeown, toward D Company and encountered heavy fire from the enemy. A mortar round exploded next to Rudd and McKeown on the other side of a slightly elevated rice paddy dike. Though the dike shielded them from shrapnel, the concussion knocked them both down and affected their hearing. Rudd noticed two American soldiers from D company that were lying

motionless in front of where they were. He ordered McKeown and Larry “Doc” Holder to stay put and he ran forward to try to pull the soldiers to safety. An enemy machine gunner opened up on Rudd and shot off his web gear and destroyed his M-16 rifle, wounding him in the leg. McKeown ran out to help his Lt., but he too was wounded. He was shot in the backside of his anatomy, tearing into his testicles and penis. Rudd called for McKeown to throw him his M-16, which Bill did. As he lay there helpless in front of the enemy machine gunner, Doc Holder rushed to his side and threw his body over McKeown. Holder was shot twice and rendered unconscious. McKeown thought Holder was dead and used his body to shield himself against the machine gunner. He crawled back to his platoon, who put him in some bushes. Jerome “Doc” Bacon who was the chief medic of C Company that day, saw his friend and fellow medic lying motionless in front of the third platoon of C Company and ran to him. Bacon picked up Holder on his shoulders and under heavy fire carried him back to safety.

Just before the trio of Rudd, McKeown and Holder were wounded, Captain Houston arrived with the rest of C Company via helicopter. All who were part of the assault force from C Company agree that the withering fire from the enemy was the worst they had ever encountered. Houston personally directed the positioning of his troops as they attempted to close ranks around the enemy until he was wounded. As darkness approached, C Company tried to close the gap between B and D Company in the dark. During the night, someone gave Carlisle Mahto, a young Native American paratrooper from B Company, a starlight scope and he used it to spot and kill about ten enemy snipers who were in the trees overlooking the lines of the 1/12th troopers. PSG Comar Johnson had been wounded by a grenade thrown by the snipers who were strapped in the trees. PFC Ben Ortiz of B Company remembers hearing a whisper next to him in the dark, telling him that C Company had moved into position next to him. He hadn’t heard any noise to tell him that anyone was near and he nearly shot the soldier who whispered to him. He said he nearly jumped out of his skin.

LZ Bird, December 27, 1966

The Battle at LZ Bird was the first time that the artillery “beehive round” was used in a combat situation in Vietnam. There, with mist, fog and rain conditions prevailing, at 1:05 AM in the early morning hours of December 27, 1966, a re-enforced regiment from the 22nd NVA Regiment attacked LZ Bird in the Binh Dinh Province of Vietnam. If a savvy military strategist were to pick the worst place to defend in a five kilometer radius in the brushy terrain, it would have been there. In addition to Bird being the lowest point in the surrounding topography, its defenders, Charlie Company, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 12th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division, were short-handed. They were minus the 2nd platoon and two squad sized patrols that were outside the perimeter at distances greater than three kilometers when the battle began. Just over 20 of the 83 men on the perimeter were brand new to combat. They had arrived as replacements on Christmas Day and on the morning of December 26th. This mix of veterans and “newbie’s” were to defend the two artillery battery companies, manning the ten howitzers located at Bird. This set of circumstances alone made a bad situation even worse.

A prominent military historian, S.L.A. Marshall, and his team interviewed several of the participants of the Battle of LZ Bird and wrote a book entitled **Bird**, which is still viewed with skepticism today by the survivors of that battle. Numerous articles about Bird have misspelled names, misidentified the units who were there, used the wrong date and put people there that weren't there. Some Bird survivors swear to this day that they were used as pawns in a cat and mouse game. The de-briefing session held post-Bird put one of the senior ranking survivors in a "catch 22" position, so much so, that he asked to be excused. One Medal of Honor was awarded to SGT Delbert Jennings of Charlie Company, 1st/12th, two Distinguished Service Crosses were presented to men of B Battery, 2nd/19th Artillery; one to 1LT John Piper, the Executive Officer and another to SFC Carroll Crain, Chief of Firing Battery. More than twenty Silver Stars and even more Bronze Stars w/ V were presented to those who were in the thick of it. The real story of the Battle of LZ Bird remains elusive.

The story actually started days before. On the afternoon of December 17th, C Company, 1st/12th Cavalry was at LZ Bird, minus 1LT John Rudd's third platoon operating southwest off of Bird. The platoon was tasked to set up ten men ambushes on trails leading in and around the Kim Son River. Captain Darrell Houston, the CO of C Company, radioed 1LT Rudd to find a landing zone for helicopters so as to pick up his platoon and air assault them near a village next to 506 Valley, east of LZ Bird. Rudd complied and his platoon landed to help out the men of Delta Company, 1st/12th, who were facing an estimated regiment of NVA. One of the helicopters carrying Rudd's men was hit as it hovered over the LZ and crashed. The small arms and rocket propelled grenade fire was horrendous. C Company lost seven men killed and over twenty five wounded in that battle that lasted the afternoon and evening of December 17th. Alpha, Charlie and Delta companies of the 1st/12th battalion lost a total of thirty men killed that day. All of Charlie Company's medics were either killed or wounded.

Later intelligence identified the force they faced at 506 Valley as the 18th NVA Regiment, which was under orders to attack LZ Bird and LZ Pony on the 23rd of December, using the start of the Christmas truce to safely withdraw after the truce went into effect. But, the 18th was so decimated by the 506 Valley battle that the task for attacking Bird and LZ Pony fell to the 22nd NVA Regiment which was operating out of the An Loa Valley to the north of LZ Bird and the northwest of Bong Son in Binh Dinh Province. Upon receiving this new assignment, the commander of the 22nd NVA Regiment, Major Phuong, left immediately on the evening of December 17th to make his way alone to a staging area just east of LZ Bird. It took him over three days to reach his destination. He arrived the night of December 21st. The 22nd was unfamiliar with the area southwest of Bong Son, so they had to use guides from the 18th NVA Regiment and the local Viet Cong to get them in place for the attack. The 8th Battalion of the 22nd marched southwest along a trail that wound through the Song Trang Valley. They took along 33 women, some with children, to do the cooking and to help carry the provisions. They ran into some treacherous terrain and it slowed them down considerably. But, they still arrived on the 23rd in time for the scheduled attack. The 9th Battalion also arrived in time for an attack, but the 7th Battalion was delayed. Flooding along the Song Nuoc Luong River hampered their progress and the plan changed to attack at 2300 hours on Christmas Day. But when the 7th

didn't show up until nightfall on the 25th, the plan changed again to the early morning hours of December 27th, one hour after the Christmas truce would end.

The men of C Company arrived back on LZ Bird to relieve Alpha Company, 1st/12th after humping from 506 Valley and returned to perimeter duty like they did before being called out to battle on the 17th. Five medics who had already put their time in the field had joined them on the way back to Bird. C Company was guarding the six 105mm howitzers of B Battery, 2nd BN (Airborne), 19th Artillery and the four 155mm howitzers of C Battery, 6th BN, 16th Artillery. One of the 155mm's from the 6th/16th had cracked a barrel that happened during a fire mission earlier in the month, resulting in the death of one of the guys in the battery, and it was inoperable. Neither the infantry nor the artillery guys liked being on Bird. It was the lowest spot of topography within eyesight in any direction.

There were only three officers with C Company on Bird, after the Battle of 506 Valley. They were 1LT John Reike, the Executive Officer and acting Commanding Officer, 1LT Gerald Wallace, the 4th platoon leader and 1LT Charles Campanella, the forward observer attached to C Company from 2nd BN (ABN) 19th Artillery. Captain Darrell Houston and 1LT Rudd of the 3rd platoon were in the hospital from their wounds sustained on December 17th, so SFC Comar Johnson was the acting platoon leader of the 3rd platoon. The 1st platoon leader was in the hospital with malaria, so SFC James Latham took his place as platoon leader and the 2nd platoon was led by SFC Alberto Biaza.

The company did all the right things with their limited resources and manpower. They sent out patrols to look for any sign of the enemy. Each and every day, there were sightings of NVA soldiers around the perimeter. PFC Thomas Crabtree, SP4 Don Wood and PFC Kinborne Lo, all from the 4th platoon, went west of Bird on a LP (listening post) the first night that C Company reoccupied Bird. They reported movement back to the company Command Post during the night. On December 22nd, Crabtree observed PFC Alfred Davis, weaponless, standing in front of their position at the north end of Bird, staring at something to his side. Crabtree could tell from the look on Davis' face that something was wrong. He grabbed his weapon and rushed to Davis' side and knocked him down with a body block, in time to shoot and kill three NVA soldiers who were hiding low to the ground around Davis. Crabtree grabbed a fourth NVA who was near to Davis. SGT Delbert O. Jennings, a squad leader from the 4th platoon, shot and killed the NVA in Crabtree's grasp.

On the 23rd of December, the 2nd platoon went southwest of the perimeter at Bird to patrol across the Kim Song River. It was in flood stage and two of the men were swept away and were drowned. The bodies of SSG Brownie Hall and PFC Ulysses White were recovered the next day. SP4 Terry Foote was almost swept away with them, but his friend, six foot plus SP4 Paul Harrington, took hold of the 5' 6" Foote and pulled him to safety. The 2nd platoon returned to Bird on the morning of December 25th. Prior to that, on the 23rd, SGT Jennings from the 4th platoon and SGT Daniel Rozelle, from the 3rd platoon, along with Lt. Campanella approached Crabtree, PFC Orlando Salazar, SP4 John Sartora, SP4 John Shively and SGT Tim Sambrano from the 4th platoon and SSG Fanning, from the 2nd platoon, to volunteer them for a

three or four day patrol to begin on the 24th. They moved north and east. Each and every day of the patrol the six man team called back to report groups of NVA soldiers moving toward Bird. Jennings also sent out another six man patrol, which included SP4 Larry Anderson of the 4th platoon. They went about three kilometers north of Bird and were not to return until the 29th.

Christmas day, several of the soldiers from C Company were allowed to return to the 1st Cavalry's base camp at An Khe to either attend a session with the evangelist Billy Graham or to see the Bob Hope Show. All who attended returned on the morning of the 26th. Also on the 26th, about twenty five new replacements arrived on LZ Bird and they were assigned out to the platoons by Lt. Reike, who was acting CO. SFC Biaza took his 2nd platoon out on patrol on the 26th, minus one squad that was on LZ Hammond as part of the perimeter guard there. Biaza's mission was to patrol toward LZ Pony, northeast of Bird. So, with an entire platoon gone and two six man patrols out, the perimeter strength at Bird was severely understaffed.

There was also a soldier from A Company, 1st/12th with Charlie Company the night of December 26th and the morning of December 27th on LZ Bird. PFC Mike McCoy was on his way back to the field to Alpha Company on a helicopter. He had a molar pulled earlier in the day at Camp Radcliffe. He was hurting and spitting blood from the tooth extraction. As he was returning to the field from An Khe, he was told that Alpha Company was at LZ Bird. When he arrived at Bird, he soon found out that A Company had moved on. He saw and recognized SGT Jennings, because Jennings had originally been with A Company. Jennings and 1SG Hillis from A Company did not get along at all, so Jennings was transferred to C Company. Hillis was responsible for Jennings losing a stripe because of his drinking problem. It was getting dark quickly, so McCoy found a hole near a burn pit in the 105mm area. Jennings offered to let McCoy stay with his squad on the perimeter, but, he didn't want to pull guard duty, so he wrapped up in his poncho and went to sleep in the hole.

There was another soldier on Bird, who was not supposed to be there. PFC Ben Ortiz of B Company had been humping the boonies with his company south of LZ Bird across the Kim Song River. He had developed trench foot from standing and patrolling in so much water. He could barely walk and his feet looked so bad that his platoon sergeant ordered him on a chopper to LZ Bird to seek medical care for his feet. He arrived late in the afternoon on December 26th. He hobbled to the aid station bunker where a couple of medics were located. The medic took a razor and lanced two of the sores on the bottom of his feet. Ortiz remembers blood shooting out from the bottom of his feet onto the medic's clothes. Ben was given some pain pills and antibiotics to take and was told to make his bed in the aid station bunker for the night.



Enemy Dead at LZ Bird

On the afternoon of December 26th, the 229th Aviation had used a Huey helicopter to drop off a bladder of JP4 fuel that was placed out on the sandbar on the northwest side of Bird. Two men from the 229th, SP4 Robert Joe Hardesty and PFC Luis Ortiz-Rivera were brought out to keep an eye on the bladder. These two men were planning to camp dangerously close to the outside perimeter, out on the sandbar, despite being warned of the dangers. They chose to stay there because they were afraid that the local villagers would pillage their equipment and the fuel during the night.

The perimeter at Bird looked like a warped egg from an aerial view, with the 4th platoon in positions from 10 o'clock to 2 o'clock, the 1st platoon in positions from 2 o'clock to 6 o'clock and the 3rd platoon taking positions at 6 o'clock to 10 o'clock. There were 17 manned, sandbagged bunkers on the perimeter and the soldiers pitched poncho tents behind and to the sides of the positions with their air mattress beds inside, along with all their Christmas goodies. There was no barrier wire outside of the positions, but each position had several claymore mines pointed outward in front of each position. In addition to the six crew-served M-60 machine guns that were with the infantry company at all times, enough M-60's had been transported to Bird to assure that each bunker had at least one M-60. The four 155mm's were positioned inside the northern half of the perimeter and the 105 battery of six 105mm's was located in the southern half of the perimeter.

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As night fell on the 26th, unknown to the infantrymen on the perimeter, the NVA had taken positions surrounding Charlie Company to within 10 meters of the unsuspecting soldiers. They had crawled silently up to the claymore mines in front of the perimeter and disconnected them from the wires leading back to each position. Two 82mm mortars were placed on the foothills to the northeast, about 400 meters from Bird. They had 5 rounds for each mortar. Each NVA battalion had two 57mm DKZ's, two 61mm mortars, two heavy machine guns and one light machine gun. Two 75-DKZ recoilless rifles were set up about 300 meters north of Bird. The 9th Battalion was poised to push through the 4th platoon position at a 1 o'clock position from the northeast, the 8th Battalion was in position to charge through the 1st platoon at a 3 o'clock position. Part of the 7th Battalion was assigned to police up weapons and ammunition, and the rest of the 7th took positions to the west to capture anyone who ran. In total it was over 750 armed NVA against 84 infantrymen, including 3 officers from C 1st/12th and 112 artillerymen, including 5 officers from the artillery. No one had any idea that the enemy was so close.

SP4 Jim Abram, of the 4th platoon was positioned with several new guys in a bunker next to SGT Jennings, on the northeast side of the perimeter. When the opening salvo of fire was directed at LZ Bird, Abram was standing his watch. Abram was not even an infantryman, though he had been with Charlie Company since the previous month. His MOS was 55D20 (ammo storage specialist) and he had been stationed at Qui Nhon, working, handling large ammo. He had the misfortune to be at An Khe with a convoy, just when SGT Jennings went looking for rear echelon workers to convert to infantrymen. Jennings gave a sales pitch to Abram and he agreed to join the infantry. Jennings had drafted Abram, and that was that. Jennings had always kept Abram close to him in order to train him and watch his progress toward infantryman status. So on this night, he was in the bunker next to Jennings.



SP4 James Abram

The battle began with rockets, mortars and heavy machine gun fire incoming to the perimeter at 1:05 AM. Abram observed several of the soldiers in the other bunkers running for better cover toward some ammo boxes in front of the 155mm guns back to the east. He screamed to the new guys to get out of the bunker. Four were all killed moments later in their blankets. They had not even completed 24 hours in the field. As Abram ran toward the boxes, he felt someone lift and push him over the sandbags and boxes. It was Lt. Charles Campanella, the artillery forward observer. As Abram looked back, he saw his platoon leader, 1LT Jerald D. Wallace being stabbed in the stomach by a NVA soldier, wielding a bayonet. Lt. Campanella had saved his life by pushing him out of the way of the charging NVA soldier. Lt. Wallace who was described as a "John Wayne" type, had trouble deciding whether he wanted to be friend to the platoon or a leader. It appeared that Lt. Wallace was doing his best to be a leader this night, though he was out of his bunker without a weapon.

At the beginning of the attack, a NVA Senior Lieutenant, who was a communications officer, led an attack on the bunkers outside of the Bird perimeter where the fuel bladders were stored. The NVA officer said later, after he was captured, that the 9th BN of the NVA 22nd Regiment had attacked and overrun a bunker containing one Caucasian (SP4 Robert Joe Hardesty) and one "Negro". The "Negro" (PFC Ortiz-Rivera from Puerto Rico) was sleeping when the NVA burst into the bunker. The NVA officer ordered the two to accompany them. The Caucasian (SP4 Hardesty) refused and was shot and killed. Ortiz-Rivera dressed quickly and was moved back to the Regimental CP, where he was turned over to the Enemy Proselytizing officer. Hardesty's body was unearthed in a shallow grave just outside the perimeter the next day. Ortiz-Rivera became the only MIA from the battle for LZ Bird. He was held for 13 months and released in January, 1968.

The main penetration force of the NVA had now broken through the perimeter from the north and had run toward the gun emplacements in the center of LZ Bird. Behind the NVA who were running for the big guns was a group of NVA that were throwing stick grenades and firing their rifles about 10 yards in front of them. They were stopping at bunkers and throwing in grenades and going inside with their rifles firing on full automatic. A number of the new men with the 4th platoon were killed by them at the onset of the battle. Both platoon radios were captured, leaving the 4th platoon without communications.

At the company command post position, 1LT John L. Rieke had been shot in the neck and the bullet traveled down through one of his lungs and all the radios in the CP rendered useless. 1LT Jerald D. Wallace, the 4th platoon leader had been killed. Now there were no officers from the infantry in the fight except for Lt. Campanella, the artillery forward observer for Charlie Company.

SP4 Ivory Whitaker, Jr., from the 3rd platoon, had been on guard duty on the southern end of Bird and had heard distant sounds of a firefight south, across the Kim Son River. The sounds of gunfire came from Bravo Company, 1st/12th, who was being probed sometime around midnight. Whitaker had just finished his shift on guard duty and had lain down on his air

mattress, when the attack on LZ Bird began. After he got up and looked, he was amazed that none of the advancing horde of NVA was shooting at the 3rd platoon.

The patrol that Crabtree was on lost contact with LZ Bird shortly after the first mortars fell on LZ Bird, just after 0105 hours on the morning of the 27th. The last radio transmission came from Lt. Rieke, saying that they were under attack and to please send help. When they lost contact and could see the flashes, noise and tracers from the battle, they contacted LZ Pony to ask for fire support for LZ Bird. They were told to contact LZ Hammond. They contacted LZ Hammond and were directed to call back to LZ Pony. They were finally able to make contact with 1LT Dave Borgenson and his flying partner, WO Long, chopper pilots from the 229th Aviation, who came up on their frequency on their radio. They were flying reconnaissance at the time and were flying toward LZ Bird. They asked Crabtree about making an ARA run into Bird. They were concerned that they could not discern where the lines were. Crabtree's group told them that they should make a run anyway. Borgenson and Long fired their ARA rockets and were hit with small arms fire and had to return to LZ Hammond for fuel. Crabtree believes that none of higher ups took the reports that he called in seriously until Borgenson landed back at LZ Hammond and showed the powers that be the bullet holes in his chopper made by several types of weapons while over Bird. Crabtree believes that this was when the 1st/12th Battalion commander began to send in more fire support for Bird. After Borgenson and Long returned to LZ Pony, artillery fire was observed to be dropping on Bird from some other LZ's in the area. Crabtree and others, still to this day, believe that Marshall's account in his book is an effort to cover up the lack of an immediate, overwhelming response to the situation at Bird.

The major reason for the lack of responding aircraft was at first not apparent. Michael Zimmerman and Larry J. "Buck" Buczinski were with HHC, 11th Aviation Group that night on LZ Hammond. Though remote to LZ Bird, their unit was to play an important role in the response to the attack on Bird. A guy from their unit, Peter Houtin, had placed an aircraft radar non-directional beacon on LZ Bird on the afternoon of December 26th. The unit looked like a large satellite dish with a receiver. This beacon's signal was to be used by all aircraft flying in and out of Bird during inclement weather or darkness. The beacon would be preprogrammed to alert incoming aircraft by a signal of the location of the LZ and the flying corridor in and out of the LZ. In a normal, cloudy, night time situation, the helicopter pilots flying toward Bird would have a receiver on their instrument panel tuned to the frequency of the non-directional beacon. While the needle in the gauge was centered on the transmitting signal, they knew they were flying in the right direction. When the needle did a 180 degree reversal, it let them know that they had over-flown the objective and they would turn the helicopter around to begin vectoring the signal, so they could tell where the center of the LZ was located. On this night, the beacon was one of the first things damaged or destroyed when the attack started. The response to Bird was delayed while personnel from the 11th came up with an alternate solution to flying blind into Bird. Zimmerman recounted what was done to overcome this loss of the radar beacon after it was disabled. He said that members of the 11th sat in a tent on Hammond with a flashlight and map to manually come up with flight plans for any aircraft that would be dispatched to Bird. It was a long and painstaking task. They had to pinpoint terrain features

and the altitude of those features for the responding aircraft. No aircraft could approach and land at LZ Bird in the night without this information. He said it took almost 45 minutes to complete their task. While they were preparing the flight plans, this lack of information would limit the type and number of aircraft that could be dispatched to Bird. Finally, they completed their task and the information was relayed to all aircraft that were responding to the attack.

On the afternoon of December 26th, Bravo 1st/12th, commanded by Captain Roy Benson, received orders via a radio transmission from the acting 1st/12th S3 Operations Officer, Captain Tom Fields, to set up a blocking position in the valley across the Kim Son River, about 3000 to 4000 meters south of Bird, at the base of the Crow's Foot Mountains. Benson positioned 3 of his 4 platoons looking in the direction of Bird and kept one platoon behind them for security. In the evening, they experienced a series of probes from enemy personnel moving from the mountains to the north. The scattered probes persisted until about 0100 hours on the morning of the 27th. That's when all hell broke loose to their north. They heard and saw blasts from heavy artillery, rockets and small arms fire coming from the vicinity of Bird. At first, the officers and NCO's in B Company thought the probes had to do with NVA elements trying to link up with the 22nd NVA Regiment to join the attack on LZ Bird. Later, captured documents alluded to the fact that the decimated 18th NVA Regiment may well have been trying to launch a coordinated attack against LZ Pony at the same time as the attack on Bird. There were more artillery batteries and the headquarters element of the 1st/12th at Pony. If B Company had not been in their blocking position and if SFC Biaza's 2nd platoon from C Company had not been patrolling, Pony might have experienced the same fate as LZ Bird.

According to S. L. A. Marshall in his book, *Bird*, when the attack started, a brief call from battery commander, CPT Shlenker, to LZ Pony had been received at 0107 hours. Shlenker had only been able to say, "Execute Bird quick fire! We are under mortar and ground attack!" (This account is dubious, at best, because Shlenker didn't have access to a radio until he borrowed the 3rd platoon's radio from SFC Comar Johnson). Marshall also writes that Colonel James F. Culp, the 19th Field Artillery Commander of four days put the support plan in motion. SFC Comar Johnson of the 3rd platoon remembers that the battle had been going on for about 30 minutes when Shlenker asked to borrow his 3rd platoon radio to make the call that Marshall cites. Since it appears that there was no call from Shlenker, the response that is cited from Colonel Culp probably occurred later, also.

In reality, the main obstacles to a response were the weather, as well as the loss of the homing beacon signal and no communications. It had rained off and on all day on December 26th and continued to do so on into the morning of the 27th. There was cloud cover over LZ Bird. Again, Marshall asserts that Culp didn't know if the attack on Bird was just a mortar attack or an out and out full ground attack. No one could raise Bird on their radios. He had to have confirmation on the situation. So, according to Marshall, Culp dispatched his intelligence officer, Captain James J. Weber, and a pilot, CPT Elmo Roberts, in an OLH-13 "bubble" to get to Bird and give their assessment. After they were in the air, he put into action the artillery plan for Bird. The plan called for illumination rounds and high explosive rounds to be launched to predetermined grid coordinates surrounding Bird. Then, he called LZ Hammond to have them

launch ARA support to Bird. That's when Borgenson and Long were contacted while they were on patrol. Weber and Roberts were directly over Bird at 0117 hours, according to Marshall. The fight had been underway for about 12 minutes. Marshall writes that even before they arrived, there was a tactical operations ship overhead, with CPT Jack Sutton aboard. Sutton was the liaison officer for the 2nd Battalion, 19th Artillery. After Sutton was made aware of the situation, he couldn't do anything about it because of the poor visibility. The real story appears to be that none of the activity written about by Marshall occurred until Borgenson and Long's helicopter returned with bullet holes in it. Whatever the case, the artillerymen and Charlie Company fighting below were on their own for a while..

The weather may have been the main problem for getting support to Bird, but the problems for the infantrymen and artillerymen on the ground was no communications and a number of weapons that would not fire. It appears that all the extra M-60 machine guns that were flown out to Bird to use in each bunker had the gas cylinder plugs placed in backwards. So, each machine gun fired one round and jammed. The radios were either shot through and wouldn't work, were unmanned or they were captured at the onset of the attack. A number of NVA had infiltrated in between the bunkers and through the ditch on the east side of the LZ. It was both an advantage and a curse to the NVA who came through first. They had completely surprised the infantrymen in the 4th and 1st platoons because of the poor visibility. They also exposed themselves to the mortar and rocket fire from their own attack force. The men manning the 155mm's were overwhelmed almost immediately. The NVA ran to the gun emplacements, jumped over the sandbags that circled the guns and then turned outward, waiting on their men carrying the satchel charges. The infantry soldiers in the 4th and 1st platoons on the north and east sides of the LZ either tried to stay in their bunkers and fight or they ran back to toward the center of the LZ where there were stacked sandbags that would give them cover.

Among those who tried to stand and fight were PFC's Dennis R. Hooks, 20, and Larry L. Register, 19, in the 1st platoon on the east side of the perimeter. They were to the right of Jennings' bunker and fired until they ran out of ammunition. They observed two squads of NVA that approached from their front, but the NVA broke ranks and ran around them. They never returned the fire that Hooks and Register were pouring out at them. When they ran out of ammo, they agreed that they better get out of their bunker, so they threw their remaining grenades and retreated back to their rear to the next bunker. When they threw those grenades, the NVA now focused their attention on them and started moving straight toward them. There were about 15 NVA in this group. Register whispered to Hooks, "We better play dead!" They lay on their stomachs and waited for the NVA. Two of the enemy rolled over Hooks and got his billfold. Another two rolled Register over and procured everything in his pockets but his billfold. The NVA did not pay close attention to either of the soldiers. They began kicking both of them and jumping up and down on them. One of the NVA sat down on Register and lit a cigarette. He sat there in the darkness, silently smoking, while Register tried to the best of his ability to keep from moving. Hooks' tent was behind the bunker and when the NVA began to tear the hooch apart, they discovered Christmas treats that Hooks had hidden beneath his bedroll. They all started eating the treats and even cracked a few walnuts

and pecans. Much later, Hooks and Register witnessed the dead and wounded being dragged to the north by soldiers and women, some with babies, by means of hooks that were embedded into the clothing of the dead. Both Hooks and Register survived the ordeal to report that they had seen at least 20 bodies carried away in this fashion.

Another soldier that played dead was SP4 John J. McGinn, Jr., also from the 1st platoon. His bunker was overwhelmed and the NVA took his billfold and watch. He waited to be shot in the head. About that time, illumination rounds began going off over the LZ and the NVA ran back to the north. McGinn's life was spared. PSG James Latham of the 1st platoon was found shortly after the NVA withdrew with a gruesome wound. He looked like Zorro had hacked a "Z" on his torso. He was either hit by shrapnel or had been bayoneted. PSG Comar Johnson of the 3rd platoon said his intestines were visible and he didn't see how Latham could survive. He was medevaced and did survive. He and Johnson attended the Sergeants Major Academy together at Ft. Bliss, Texas in later years.

PFC Larry Whitman was back in his hooch at the extreme left of the 4th platoon's part of the perimeter, when the attack started. By the time that Whitman got up to put his boots on, a mortar round wounded him in the back, head and legs. He took off running to the bunker position in front of the fuel bladders and began looking for targets. He was unable to see any of the enemy. Though he was less than 30 meters from where the NVA were pouring through the 4th platoon's position, he only saw one NVA the whole night. The other soldier in his bunker was completely unresponsive. He would neither respond to anyone's voice, nor would he speak. He remained that way the rest of the night.

A medic assigned to the 6th/16th artillery battery, Charles S. Tournage, 18, had flown in from Pony on the 26th to help out, because the regular medic, Douglas Brown, had a severe ear infection. There was not enough room on the returning helicopters, so Brown had to stay another night before he could return to An Khe for antibiotics and rest. Tournage had just finished his turn at watch, when the mortars came pouring in. A mortar round exploded in an ammo dump containing white phosphorous rounds and they ignited. Tournage soon discovered his clothes were on fire from the white phosphorous rounds. He left the tent and dove into a ditch filled with water. He came up, dove into another muddy ditch and stripped naked to make sure that he didn't get burned any more than he was. He was now naked and muddy. He could hardly be recognized as an American soldier. He saw what he thought were several GI's making their way toward a gun emplacement. He started their way and fell headlong into a trench. There he discovered Lt. John Rieke, who had been shot in the throat and the chest. He had no medical bag, so he rummaged around close to them and found a charge bag of aluminum foil. He tore off a piece and stuck it over Rieke's wound to stop the air from going into Rieke's lungs from a sucking chest wound. Tournage stopped a nearby soldier and took his tee shirt and tore it into strips and bandaged Rieke. He also poked mud into Rieke's chest for the sucking chest wound. Tournage was finally able to get back to Brown's tent and procure the medical bag. When he saw Brown, he saw that he had been shot six times and had four fragmentation wounds on his left side. He was able to patch Brown up and did it

in about 45 seconds. He spent the rest of the night patching up anyone he could find that needed him.

SGT Delbert O. Jennings had come to Charlie Company from Alpha Company. He had been busted from SSG to SGT by the first sergeant for drinking on duty. Opinions of Jennings differed among the men. You either loved Jennings or hated him. Some thought him a professional soldier who was a good mentor, others thought him a useless drunk. On this early morning, Jennings had a couple of brand new soldiers with him at his position, and at the position to his left, SP4 Gary W. Peasley, assisted by SP4 Donald Woods, was pouring out fire from their M-60 machine gun. SGT John Skipper, the NCOIC of Company A's rear area, had come out the day before to ensure that all of A Company's equipment had been loaded and flown out. It was not his lucky day. He missed the return chopper and was stuck with Charlie Company for the fight. Skipper was with Jennings when the melee began. When Jennings popped out of his bunker, he found PFC Donald R. Potter, SP4 Thomas M. Geduldick, SP4 Spencer Matteson and SGT Skipper taking cover. Jennings handed Skipper his own M-16 and took up an M-60 from his bunker. He tried it and it would not fire. Neither would any of the M-16's that were nearby. Everywhere Jennings looked there were NVA swarming into the LZ through his 4th platoon's part of the perimeter.

SP4 Brian R. Akers, 20, was the 4th platoon's medic. When the battle started, he was pulling radio watch four bunkers to the right of Jennings. So, he was 30 meters to the right of Jennings and 20 feet to the right of Peasley. He threw the PRC-25 radio he had to SP4 Larry Joe Willis, who was the regular RTO. Something exploded outside and then an NVA came into the bunker with his AK-47, shooting from the hip. Akers dived to the back of the bunker and got behind some sandbags. Willis grabbed the radio, intending to take it with him outside. The NVA soldier disappeared from view, but another took his place and drew a bead on Akers. Willis shot the NVA and he dropped to the floor. Willis went on outside to join Peasley, who was still pouring fire on the NVA. Willis did not take his weapon because it jammed. He left it behind. Akers decided it was time for him to get out the bunker, also. He went outside and ran into SFC Paul G. Jackson, the platoon sergeant of the 4st platoon. Jackson was kneeling in a patch of brush about halfway between their bunker and number 4 bunker with an M-16. They began taking tracers from the platoon's farthest bunker on the right. They figured that the NVA had control of that bunker. They were right. The next morning, they found four bodies. It was the bunker that James Abram had left. Inside were four of the newly arrived replacements. PFC's Erwin and Schmeltz had been killed by bullets as they slept in their OD blankets. PFC's Goldberg and Graham had died reaching for their weapons. Two other men with them were badly wounded and had stayed put.

From the rear of hooch about 15 meters from Jennings, SP4 Freddie Burnette, who had just returned from R&R, was busy shooting his M-16 between two bunkers. With him was CPL Mike Laigco, a pathfinder from the 11th Pathfinder Detachment. Jennings yelled at them to keep firing and cover him and his ragtag group while they retreated to the west and south. Burnette yelled OK and Jennings and the others started moving south. Within a short time, Burnette and Laigco were dead. Each had a bullet in the head.



SP4 Freddy Burnette

Photo Courtesy of Larry Whitman

Jennings led his group to a stack of rations, water and ammo that had been left the previous day by a Chinook. The men started to tear at the ammo stack. Without tools they could not uncase the white phosphorous grenades at all. Skipper was working feverously to open the cases, when Jennings looked up to see a NVA coming straight for them with a fixed bayonet. Jennings threw two large rocks at the NVA. The second one hit the charging soldier in the chest. It threw him off balance just enough for Jennings to swing his M-16 at him. His swing hit the NVA on the chin and Jennings heard a sharp crack, and he fell backward. By then, Skipper had successfully opened the case of grenades and started passing them out. Suddenly, Skipper faltered and he pitched forward. He had been shot in the temple and the heart and died without saying a word.

SFC Jackson and Akers started to move. Jackson was in front, since Akers was unarmed. Suddenly, Akers heard a voice pleading for help. Akers recognized the voice. It was Willis, who had just saved his life. Willis lay in a hole about 15 feet from him and had a bullet in his leg and abdomen. Several grenades from the enemy landed around Akers and Willis as he advanced toward him. Akers dove to avoid one and one landed directly in Willis' foxhole. Willis was now dead. Jackson had stayed put while Akers tried to help Willis. Six NVA charged Jackson and he killed them all. Away from Jackson's line of sight, another lone NVA had come at him from his flank and shot Jackson in the ear. He was now dead.



SFC Paul G. Jackson

Photo Courtesy of Larry Whitman

According to Marshall, Jennings now observed the NVA moving south from the 155mm's toward the 105mm howitzers. Without men or weapons, he was powerless to counter-attack. So, according to Marshall, he started taking stock of the resources available to him. He ran to a 1st platoon bunker in front of him, having assumed since it was quiet that all in it were dead. He stuck his head inside and discovered six GI's, two were wounded and the other four were doing nothing. They followed him out of the bunker. He moved west and south with his group, toward 3rd platoon's bunkers. He found PFC Larry Whitman and the other man in the westernmost bunker and ordered them to come with him. Whitman was ready to respond, but the other man would not stand up. They finally grabbed him by his hands and drug him with them back toward the southern end of the perimeter. No sooner than Willis had been killed, Akers heard another voice calling for help. It was SP4 Greg Fischer, another one of the 4th platoon's RTOs and he was wounded. Akers started for him when a white phosphorous grenade landed directly on Fischer, who was lying prone. It exploded and Akers heard a cry and Fischer was dead.

Marshall asserts that Jennings group moved to the southern end of the LZ, around the 105mm gun emplacements and the 3rd platoon bunkers. Now, the pre-plan for LZ Bird kicked in and illumination rounds began arriving overhead. They could now hear high explosive rounds hitting to the west and the north. Jennings and his men were now silhouetted against the dark sky as they moved. But, the NVA were focused on trying to destroy the four guns in the northern half of the LZ that they controlled.

In the 3rd platoon locations at the southern end of the LZ, PSG Comar A. Johnson, the 3rd platoon sergeant and acting platoon leader, had gone to bed fully clothed and with an M-60 machine gun, an M-79 grenade launcher and an M-16 inside his hooch. SGT Daniel Rozelle hit him on the side and awakened him when the battle started. "We're being hit!" Rozelle yelled. They split up to take care of business. Johnson forgot to take any of his weapons with him. The platoon medic, SP4 Murray A. Jenkins, who had been with the 1st/12th Battalion since it arrived in September, 1965, followed him. A mortar round landed near Johnson and shrapnel tore through Jenkins finger and Johnson's right shoulder. Letting his shoulder bleed, Johnson returned to his hooch to get his weapons. His right arm wouldn't work correctly, so he yelled to Rozelle to help him out. Johnson then got on the platoon radio to try to reach the company CP. He could raise no one. He now knew he was on his own. Johnson spotted a silhouette of a NVA on top of a bunker who was heaving grenades toward his position. The guy looked like a giant. It took a matter of moments to shoot him off the bunker.

The 3rd platoon's SP4 Robert S. Brattis, 20, had just come off guard duty and was unlacing his boots when he first heard the mortars coming in. He grabbed his weapon and jumped outside in his stocking feet. He saw a lot of khaki figures streaming toward him. Brattis joined PFC's James MacDonald and Charles Westfall and together they opened fire on the NVA. Brattis's M-16 quit on him after he had fired three magazines. MacDonald and Westfall had been wounded by bullets. They decided to go south to join Johnson. They had been gone from their position only moments when a mortar round exploded exactly where they had been lying.

PSG Johnson could not get his machine gunner, SP4 Robert O. Smith, to fire his weapon. SP4 Ivory J. Whitaker, Jr., 18, was working his M-79 continuously. He would move his position every time he fired. He thought it would confuse the enemy as to his location. Johnson went to Smith and told him to fire up his M-60. Smith told him that was crazy. He said it would draw fire towards them if he did. Johnson thought about that for a moment and decided that Smith was right. At that moment, Johnson spotted a group of a dozen or so NVA around # 5 105mm gun about 20 meters away. He yelled for everyone to throw grenades. They did so and Whitaker fired around 10 rounds and PFC Thomas D. Cusick, 19, fired his M-16 directly into the group. Everyone heard a machine gun firing behind them and over them. It was SP4 David W. Osborne firing "John Wayne" style, firing from the hip, while standing on top of a bunker. After that, not one NVA was left standing. Now, soldiers began showing up in groups of two's or three's. Whitaker informed Johnson that he heard lots of Vietnamese talk to the west. It was then that Johnson realized that there were more NVA to the west.

Johnson remembers two things about the artillery soldiers who were further inside the perimeter than his 3rd platoon. He observed Piper, the XO, running from position to position wearing nothing but his white underwear and the CO of the artillery battery trying to borrow his platoon radio. Later he ordered Piper off three medevac helicopters that were carrying seriously wounded soldiers. He had a hard time later believing that either officer did all the heroic things attributed to them in Marshall's book.

According to Marshall, Jennings group joined Johnson's group at precisely the same moment that Lt. Piper was loading the 105mm number #2 gun. (Marshall also has Johnson meeting up with Jennings' group and proceeding to the gun pit where the beehive round was fired. Johnson says he did not see Jennings that night.) Marshall writes that Piper yelled to one of the artillerymen, "Get me a Bee Hive round!" The infantrymen had never heard that term before, thinking that he was crazy. Piper loaded the round into the breach and since he had no green flare, yelled as loudly as he could, "Bee Hive! Bee Hive!" An artilleryman in front of #2 gun heard Piper and he cried out, "Good God, fire that son-of-a-bitch!" He pulled the lanyard and 8,500 flechettes, or small metal arrows launched toward the swarming enemy at near supersonic speed. He had aimed at a large group of NVA that were massing near the number #1 gun pit of the 155mm's. The NVA were yelling, "GI, you die now!" and "Yankee, go home!" all the while they were trying to destroy number 1 gun. At this point, the fight had been going on about 30 minutes.

The tent near # 1 gun disintegrated from the flechettes from the beehive round. There arose an agonized chattering and screaming. Piper yelled, "Get me another Bee Hive!" He loaded it and moved the barrel of the 105mm a little to the left to aim at another 155mm gun. When he pulled the lanyard, the attack from the north was halted.

Brattis gave his PRC-25 to CPT Shlenker, the battery commander, and he immediately got on the radio and ordered up fire missions. He wrapped the impact area around the perimeter of Bird. The PRC-25 with its short antenna could not reach the battalion batteries on Pony, but as luck would have it, CPL Richard A. Abbot, who was on a LRRP team positioned on a

hilltop 2,500 meters away with the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry, heard Shlenker trying to reach the battalion batteries and he set up a relay.

It occurred to Campanella that all the officers of the infantry company were either dead or severely wounded. Campanella had spent his time getting soldiers on the perimeter to stand their ground. He personally killed NVA in hand to hand fighting during the fight. He now took command. As everyone who could moved to the south to meet up with Jennings and Johnson, the first ARA run commenced. The first rounds landed right in the middle of the beleaguered group. Fortunately no one was hit. Now the situation had reversed and the artillery and the ARA began raining destruction of the retreating NVA. They looked to the west to see eight helicopters carrying re-enforcements from the 1st of the 5th Cavalry. It was the beginning of the end. The infantrymen and artillerymen started moving out to take back all of their gun positions. It was then that PSG Johnson started overseeing putting wounded on the helicopters that had delivered the 1st of the 5th. He observed the XO of the 2nd/19th Artillery trying to climb on board the helicopters, claiming he had a wound. Johnson saw it was but a scratch. He ordered him off not one, but three helicopters.

It was over within fifteen minutes. Akers, the medic who kept losing friend after friend during the fight, started treating the wounded. One of the first he treated was the artillery medic, Brown. He bandaged him up and confiscated all of his medical supplies to treat over a dozen other wounded. The engineers flew in a small bulldozer around mid-morning and the operator began digging a huge grave to the western side of LZ Bird. The bulldozer moved the bodies of about 25 to 30 NVA into the huge grave and covered it up. By now, the dead and wounded American GI's had been removed from Bird. But, everyone who was still there could still smell the stench of the dead.

With the benefit of hindsight, the 22nd NVA made three mistakes. First, they thought that the infantrymen and artillerymen on Bird would bolt and run toward the west, where they placed the 7th Battalion to wait in ambush on them. Secondly, if they had used the 7th Battalion as an attacking force from the west, it would have been devastating to the defenders of LZ Bird. And, thirdly, they failed to deny the infantry the use of the ditch that ran inside the perimeter. The infantry used it for cover and movement. Using the ditch, the infantry was able to avoid complete destruction.

There have been many conversations through the years brought up by the survivors of LZ Bird that could be described as conspiracy theory discussions. Many think that the CIA was behind a plan to use LZ Bird as bait for either the 22nd or the 18th to commit to an attack. There is some merit to this thinking. Marshall asserts in his book that the infantry had been on full alert that night. Yet, not one of the survivors remembers such an order being given. When an order comes from the CO to "stand to", normally, all of the platoon sergeants and squad leaders will monitor all under their command to carry out such an alert order. The question is, why would so many be asleep when there was an outstanding order for 100% to be awake and alert? Based on all the sightings that occurred in the days before and the night of the attack, when the truce ended, it merited a tactic called a "mad minute", preferably using grenades.

Every position could have thrown one or two grenades out in front of their bunker or foxhole and it would have had a devastating effect on the NVA's plan, without giving away exactly where the grenades were coming from. A little offensive action would have taken away the element of surprise. But, the question remains, what happened to all the sighting reports and why wasn't something put in place, based on that information?

It is unconceivable that two artillery batteries would have been placed in such a vulnerable position as LZ Bird. And, with placing them there, that commanders would have depended on a skeleton force of infantry to protect 10 guns. Whoever was responsible for this sad state of affairs should have had his actions called into question. The excuse that there were limited resources to put in the field indicates that someone overextended their capabilities and 29 men paid the ultimate price for that decision. The fact that the NVA lost over 266 men killed does not turn this battle into a victory.

Kelley's *Where We Were in Vietnam* incorrectly places the battle on Christmas Day, and has Charlie 2nd/12th Cav as the rifle company securing the base. It actually took place on the morning of December 27th and the rifle company was Charlie 1st/12th Cav. He further reports that 58 Americans were killed in the battle, with 77 more wounded, at a cost to the North Vietnamese of 266 dead. To Marshall's credit he did get most of it right in his book, since he and his people did first hand interviews with the survivors. But, to the survivors of Bird, it appeared the book rationalized the lackluster response by rescue forces. And, it neglected the individual heroic actions of the lower ranking soldiers. The actual American casualty list was bad enough - 29 men killed in action - but it is half that reported by Kelley.

A North Vietnamese publication, stated that *"the 13 minute assault on Xuan Son hill alone, the L.A.F. killed or wounded 600 GI's, completely wiped out two battalions and a sapper platoon, destroyed 4 helicopters, eleven 105mm and 155mm cannons, two 81mm mortars, captured more than 50 guns, many radio transmitters and other military equipment."* In reality, only one gun was out of commission and it was the 155mm gun that had the cracked barrel. Two of the 105mm guns were flown back to An Khe the next morning and were back in service the next day. The biased article fails to mention that there were 29 Cavalrymen killed instead of the 600 that the article claims. The article also fails to mention that less than 85 infantrymen were on the perimeter, which was less than a company of infantry. They did capture weapons and radios that night, but none of the guns were destroyed. In fact, none of the jeeps or mules were destroyed. Some of them had their tires slashed, but they were intact and could be driven. To give some credit to the enemy's truthfulness, Major Phuong was called by a demolitions expert shortly after the battle and told that 8 of the guns had been destroyed. The 22nd NVA Regiment abandoned 8 satchel charges, 7 Bangalore torpedoes, 250 hand grenades, 25 81mm mortar rounds, 30 60mm mortar rounds and 20 B-40 rockets on the battlefield.

It appears that retired general, S. L. A. Marshall cast the deciding vote on who got the Medal of Honor. LTC David Hackworth, who was accompanying Marshall on his Vietnam tour of battlefield sites, gives this account of what happened in his book, ***About Face: An Odyssey of an American Warrior***. On page 568 of his book, he says, "So we folded up our tent at the

Screaming Eagles (101st Airborne) nest and headed back to the 1st Air Cav, where SLAM got all he needed for his book. He also made sure that the 1st Cav CO on the ground at LZ Bird, a captain who'd led his men courageously in the hand to hand battle, was put in for the Medal of Honor." He continues, "I was beginning to see that SLAM was less a military analyst than a military ambulance chaser." He saw Marshall doing a book about the battle as a sequel to his book, **Pork Chop Hill**. Hackworth was wrong about the rank of the man put in for the MOH which was not a Captain, but really SGT Delbert Jennings. But, it is clear that Hackworth thought that Marshall was the driving force behind who got the citation.

In the debriefing that took place with retired general, S.L.A. Marshall and David Hackworth, Jennings recounted his involvement first. Jennings failed to state that he had help in uncasing the grenades earlier. Then the XO and CO of the 2nd/19th Artillery began recounting their involvement. They made it sound like that what one had not done, the other had and vice versa. After hearing the story about uncasing the grenades and throwing them toward the enemy and the two officers from the artillery recount heroic actions on their part, SFC Comar Johnson realized that if he told what he had seen, he would be in direct contradiction with the two officers. He asked to be excused. He saw no future to his career calling two white officers liars. In fact, Jennings had a group of men with him who all shared the workload of getting the grenades out of their packing to throw. One soldier from Jennings group was later shocked to read the *Army Times* back at Ft. Bragg and discover that Jennings had been awarded the Medal of Honor. Survivors of Bird say there were at least four men, besides Jennings, who deserved to be put in for the Medal of Honor that was later given to him. They were SFC Paul Gray Jackson who was killed after eliminating 6 enemy soldiers, SP4 Larry Willis who was found with 5 dead NVA surrounding him, SFC Comar Johnson who was responsible for keeping the 3rd platoon alive while eliminating a significant enemy force that was attempting to capture the 105 howitzers and 1LT Charles Campanella, the artillery FO who fought hand to hand with the NVA and took charge of the company after all the officers were killed or wounded. Though everyone agreed that Jennings did one whale of job that night, they just feel that there were others that deserved consideration for their involvement.

It's interesting to note that Jennings put SP4 Geduldick in for a Silver Star, but neglected to do so for SP4 Matteson, though the two men performed equally well and were with Jennings through the whole ordeal. The fact was that he didn't care for Matteson and he liked Geduldick. The real facts do not diminish the fact that most of these Cavalry men, both artillerymen, infantrymen, aviation and pathfinders were put in a dangerous situation and they performed superbly in the face of overwhelming odds. The three units there were all awarded the Presidential Unit Citation.

Charlie Company, 1/12th Cav lost 14 men:

- SGT John Skipper – shot in the head and heart while helping SGT Jennings
- SP4 Freddie L. Burnette – shot in the head while covering Jennings' retreat
- PFC Alfred L. Davis
- PFC Hubert Erwin – shot in his bedroll

- SP4 Gregory Fischer – wounded, then killed by a white phosphorus grenade
- PFC Howard Goldberg – shot reaching for his rifle, getting out of his bedroll
- PFC Armand Graham – shot reaching for his rifle, getting out of his bedroll
- PFC Randall L. Hixson
- SFC Paul G. Jackson – shot in the head, next to 6 NVA that he killed
- SP4 James E. Nunley
- SP4 Gary W. Peasley – killed by a mortar round while manning a machine gun
- PFC Jerry E. Schmeltz – shot in his bedroll
- SP4 Ronald J. Sheehy –
- 1LT Jerald D. Wallace – bayoneted in the stomach
- SP4 Larry Joe Willis – shot and found dead next to two NVA that he killed
- Charlie 6/16th Arty lost 4 men:
 - Ronnie E. Norris,
 - Roger D. White
 - Roscoe Wright
 - Ronald J. Zitielo
- Supporting helicopter units (the 229th) lost 2 men:
 - Robert Joe Hardesty (229th Aviation) – shot and buried in a shallow grave
 - Robert Dennis Lajko (11th Pathfinders) – shot in the head helping SP4 Burnette
- B Battery, 2/19th Arty, lost 7 men:
 - SSG Rodney D. Staton, Guyan, WV
 - SGT Daniel L. Miracle, Williamstown, WV
 - CPL Ronald R. Conn, Tyler, TX
 - PFC Samuel Q. Asher, Milford, OH
 - PFC Anthony C. Coffaro, New Brunswick, NJ
 - PFC Richard A. Knaus, Cheektowaga, NY
 - PFC Donald H. Lederhaus, Milwaukee, WI
- Supporting helicopter units (the 229th) lost 1 man who was Missing In Action:
 - PFC Luis Ortiz-Rivera, Puerto Rico

This a copy of the original document published by C Company after the battle. Anybody I have added has notations by their names)

Company C
1st Battalion (Airborne), 12th Cavalry

Subject: The following personnel were on LZ Bird the morning of 27 December 1966

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>SN</u>	<u>PLT-SQ</u>	<u>JOB</u>
1. John L. Rieke	O-2	05018951	CO HQS	XO, Acting CO - WIA
2. Charles R. Campanella	O-2	05419431	2 nd /19 th	Arty FO – WIA
3. Dennis F. Hogan	E-5	US55810983	2 nd /19 th	Recon Sgt. - WIA
4. Warren R. Calbiano	E-4	RA18662590	CO HQS	Commo Chief
5. Ricky D. Walker	E-4	US56387963	CO HQS	RTO - WIA
6. James E. Ennis	E-4	RA16830599	CO HQS	Chief Medic
7. John C. Clifton	E-3	US52641726	CO HQS	RTO
8. Lawrence G. McLeany	E-3	RA17732626	CO HQS	RTO
9. James W. Latham	E-7	RA14512455	1 st HQSPSGT	WIA
10. Randall L. Hixson	E-3	US53415566	1 st HQSRTO	KIA
11. Enos V. Garvin	E-3	US53417678	1 st HQSRTO	WIA
12. Eugenio Jaimez	E-3	US54717223	1 st HQSMedic	WIA
13. Edward J. Dehnert	E-6	RA27902864	1 st 1 st	Sq Ldr .- WIA
14. Dennis R. Hooks	E-3	US55869954	1 st 1 st	M79 Gnr.
15. James E. Seery	E-3	US55848438	1 st 1 st	Rifleman
16. James E. Nunley	E-4	US55836091	1 st 1 st	M-79 Gnr. - KIA
17. Louis F. Frizzette	E-4	RA19740813	1 st 1 st	Rifleman - WIA
18. Milo O. Alba	E-4	RA15743208	1 st 2 nd	Rifleman - WIA
19. Kinborne Lo	E-3	US50012582	1 st 2 nd	M-79 Gnr .- WIA
20. Jerry L. Walling	E-3	US52684541	1 st 2 nd	Rifleman - WIA
21. Ronald S. Renfroe	E-3	RA10852035	1 st 2 nd	Rifleman - WIA
22. Richard R. Salazar	E-4	US55808739	1 st 2 nd	Rifleman - WIA
23. John J. Rodgers	E-3	RA17700599	1 st 2 nd	Rifleman
24. Manual Judah	E-4	US50010426	1 st 2 nd	M-79 Gnr.
25. Thomas R. Davis	E-5	RA24654804	1 st 3 rd	Sq Ldr. - WIA
26. Raymond L. Darnell	E-3	US55814433	1 st 3 rd	Rifleman
27. Larry P. Goff	E-3	US54378753	1 st 3 rd	Rifleman
28. Larry L. Register	E-3	US53428545	1 st 3 rd	Rifleman
29. Ronald M. Jones	E-3	US53421017	1 st 3 rd	M-79 Gnr.
30. Ronald L. Sheehy	E-3	US5159384	1 st 3 rd	Rifleman - KIA
31. Jerry R. Schmeltz	E-3	US55885625	1 st 3 rd	Rifleman - KIA
32. Jerry A. Whelchel	E-4	RA17732446	1 st 3 rd	M-79 Gnr. - WIA
33. Mario A. Ibanez	E-4	US51561541	1 st 4 th	MG - WIA

34. John J. McGinn, Jr. ¹	E-3	US55888656	1 st 4 th	AMG
35. Thomas J. Schnackenburg	E-3	US51601217	1 st 4 th	Rifleman
36. Comar A. Johnson	E-6	RA53188678	3 rd HQS	PSGT - WIA
37. Daniel E. Rozzelle	E-5	RA14539947	3 rd HQS	APSGT
38. Murray A. Jenkins	E-4	RA13786843	3 rd HQS	Medic
39. Robert J. Baysinger	E-5	RA23778888	3 rd 1 st	Sq Ldr.
40. Ivory J. Whitaker, Jr.	E-4	RA14904729	3 rd 1 st	M-79 Grn.
41. Kenneth H. Serr	E-3	US55839781	3 rd 1 st	Rifleman
42. Richard K. Barry	E-3	US52680525	3 rd 1 st	Rifleman
43. Henry Coleman, Jr.	E-4	RA18222869	3 rd 1 st	Team Leader
44. Patrick Schlagenhaft	E-3	US51601507	3 rd 1 st	Rifleman
45. William W. Money	E-4	RA12739502	3 rd 1 st	Rifleman
46. Richard H. Merritt	E-6	RA13722670	3 rd 2 nd	Squad Leader
47. Harry E. Westfall	E-3	US55839301	3 rd 2 nd	Rifleman – WIA
48. Thomas D. Cusick	E-3	US55841978	3 rd , 2 nd	Rifleman
49. Bruce F. MacCartney	E-3	RA14931248	3 rd 2 nd	Rifleman
50. James C. Kelly	E-4	RA15731351	3 rd 2 nd	Rifleman
51. Ralph W. Schneider	E-4	US55883717	3 rd 2 nd	Rifleman
52. Robert S. Brattis	E-4	US54368205	3 rd 3 rd	Team Leader/RTO
53. James H. McAndrew	E-3	US55839301	3 rd 3 rd	Rifleman - WIA
54. William E. Dowd	E-3	RA11472229	3 rd 3 rd	M-79 Grenadier
55. William J. Moder	E-3	US55872817	3 rd 3 rd	M-79 Grenadier
56. Elmer J. Powell	E-3	US56686179	3 rd 3 rd	Rifleman
57. David W. Osborne	E-4	RA23313341	3 rd , 4 th	Squad Leader – MG
58. Robert O. Smith	E-4	US53399951	3 rd , 4 th	Machine Gunner
59. Leroy Burgess, Jr.	E-3	RA16858159	3 rd 4 th	Asst Machine Gunner
60. Norman E. Dale	E-3	US51601506	3 rd 4 th	Rifleman
61. Jerald D. Wallace	O-2	05326822	4 th HQS	Platoon Leader – KIA
62. Paul G. Jackson	E-7	RA14282159	4 th HQS	Platoon SGT – KIA
63. Larry J. Willis	E-4	US55814947	4 th HQS	RTO – KIA
64. Gregory J. Fisher	E-4	RA19878668	4 th HQS	RTO – KIA
65. Hugh G. Skipper	E-5	RA14757716	C Co. Rear	Supply SGT – KIA
66. Brian R. Akers	E-4	RA19848792	4 th HQS	Medic
67. Delbert O. Jennings	E-5	RA19554616	4 th 1 st	Squad Leader
68. James E. Abram ²	E-4		4 th 1 st	Rifleman
69. Freddie L. Burnette	E-4	RA14942234	4 th 2 nd	Rifleman – KIA
70. Hubert A. Erwin	E-3	US54379589	4 th 2 nd	Rifleman - KIA

¹ In the original roster, John McGinn is listed as John J. McQuinn, Jr. It should have been John J. McGinn, Jr.

² Jim Abram was left off the roster written by Charlie Company after Bird for some unknown reason. It could have been that he had just recently joined Charlie Company and his MOS was not infantry. Charles Campanella vouches that he did indeed push Abram out of the way of a charging NVA when the fight started.

71. Alfred L. Davis	E-3	RA19876845	4 th 2 nd	Rifleman – KIA
72. Howard S. Goldbert	E-3	US51601432	4 th 2 nd	Rifleman – KIA
73. Armand R. Graham	E-3	US51586951	4 th 2 nd	Rifleman – KIA
74. Thomas R. Geduldick	E-4	RA13892025	4 th 2 nd	Team Leader – M-79
75. Jerald A. Vokish	E-3	RA15760005	4 th 2 nd	Rifleman
76. Donald R. Potter	E-3	US54951671	4 th 2 nd	Rifleman
77. Thomas E. Keating	E-3	US55830177	4 th 2 nd	M-79 Grenadier
78. Donald Woods	E-4	RA12754054	4 th 4 th	Squad Leader – WIA
79. Spencer J. Matteson	E-4	RA16840988	4 th 4 th	Machine Gunner
80. Gary W. Peasley	E-4	US55829448	4 th 4 th	Machine Gunner-KIA
81. Joseph L. Shelton	E-3	US51662743	4 th 4 th	Rifleman – WIA
82. Archie Shufford	E-3	US53428643	4 th 4 th	Rifleman - WIA
83. Larry D. Whitman	E-4	US53384241	4 th , 4 th	Rifleman – WIA
84. Michael J. Deets	E-3	US51601534	4 th 4 th	Rifleman - WIA
85. William Dunbar ³	E-4		2 nd ?	

In addition to those personnel on Bird, there was a six man recon team east of Bird consisting of SSG Fanning from the 2nd platoon, PFC Thomas Crabtree, PFC Orlando Salazar, SP4 John Sartora, SP4 John Shively and SGT Tim Sambrano from the 4th platoon. There was another six man team north of Bird consisting of SP4 Larry Anderson and five others.

PFC Luis Ortiz-Rivera, captured at LZ Bird, was kept in wooden tiger cages by the NVA and Viet Cong. He belonged to the 229th aviation company and was in charge of the fuel bladders. He was listed as missing in action and was released by the NVA after 13 months.

The following is an excerpt taken from the book "Code-Name Bright Light"

In a 1970 interrogation report, CMIC IIR 6 029 0004 70, a defecting NVA officer who was present at Ortiz-Rivera's capture, relates how the source, a Sr. Lt. in charge of the telephone communications section of the NVA 22nd Regiment, described the incident: The NVA officer said that the 9th BN of the NVA 22nd Regiment had attacked and overrun a bunker containing one Caucasian (SP4 Hardesty) and one "Negro". The "Negro" (PFC Ortiz-Rivera) was sleeping when the NVA burst into the bunker. The NVA ordered them to follow the enemy back toward base camp. The Caucasian (SP4 Robert J. Hardesty) refused and was shot and killed. Ortiz-Rivera dressed quickly and was moved back to the Regimental CP, where he was turned over to the Enemy Proselytizing officer. By the day of the raid, January 2, he was already at the NVA 3rd Division Hqs. Eventually, he was sent to the MR-5 U.S. POW camp, where he was held with Garwood and others.

³ William Dunbar is listed in an article written by Al Hemingway, a Marine Vietnam Veteran, in an article for the VFW magazine. Dunbar supposedly came from LZ Pony to LZ Bird on the afternoon of 26 December, 1966. It is possible that he came from the 2nd platoon.

On January 23, 1968 two American prisoners were released. (They were) Marine Lance Corporal Jose' Agosto-Santos and Army PFC Luis Ortiz-Rivera. They were released fifteen kilometers west of Tam KY in Quang Ngai Province. They walked out of the woods and up to a US patrol, this was 13 months and a distance of less than 15 kilometers from LZ Bird.

As a side note, these were first two American prisoners to be released that had been heavily indoctrinated. Both men lied concerning the location of their POW camp and as to whether they had seen any other American prisoners. They had claimed to have walked for eight days and know nothing of the location or other Americans. Two days later under increasingly "detailed" examination Agosto-Santos changed his story and admitted to walking only four days and stated ten other POW's were in the camp. When confronted, Ortiz-Rivera also changed his story. He produced a written list naming ten U.S. POW's alive in the camp, and confirmed the death of another, and also gave information which may lead to the identity of a Caucasian living with the VC guards.

This was not the end of the LZ Bird story. On May 27, 1967, the author, Doug Warden, while serving with the 3rd platoon of Charlie Company, shot and killed a Viet Cong soldier in a mountainous region, several thousand meters north of Bong Son. The soldier was attempting to shoot SP4 David Rowe, a survivor of LZ Bird. The VC was found to have an Army identification card from one of Charlie Company's soldiers, who was killed on LZ Bird. Rowe, SP4 Tom Cusick and SGT LeRoy Burgess, all survivors of LZ Bird were in the platoon to witness this find.



2nd Platoon, Charlie Company, February, 1967
Photo Courtesy of Bob Radcliffe

An Qui, May 31 - June 1, 1967

On the afternoon of May 30, the Charlie Company platoons that were out patrolling in the mountains just west of the Bong Son Plain, got a call from Captain Roland Parr to return to his position as quickly as they could. The NVA had ambushed a squad from one of their sister battalions down in the Bong Son Plain. The company was about to make a night combat air assault into the Bong Son valley.

The company boarded the helicopters in the dark. They could only load one chopper at a time, so the loaded choppers circled overhead until two platoons were loaded. Then, it was off to the Bong Son Plain near the village of An Qui 1. The helicopters flew at an altitude of about 2,000 feet. As the two platoons approached the landing zone, they could see green-colored tracers directed their way. They knew every sixth round was a tracer for night firing. They curved away from the choppers and passed harmlessly behind them.

The two platoons hit the ground and formed a 360-degree perimeter to wait for the rest of the company. After they arrived, the company moved out about 1,500 meters to join up with a platoon of tanks. They moved east and south to establish a blocking position east of the village of Thanh Son 1.

The next morning the 3rd platoon loaded up on two tanks from A Company, 1st/69th Armor to begin a fishhook maneuver toward a village nearby. They had been north of An Qui (1) the night before, so they moved south to east to north and crossed the bridge to An Qui (2) from the south.

It appeared to the soldiers in the front tank, as they looked back, that their guys jumping off the tanks. But after they had jumped, they weren't getting up and running. Then there was a cry from someone, "Incoming rounds! Get off the tanks!" The 3rd platoon was in the middle of a dry rice paddy, 100 meters from the village of An Qui (2) and taking heavy fire from every direction. There were 27 men from the platoon facing an estimated 200 NVA that were the rear guard for the command post of the 22nd NVA Regiment. The 3rd platoon's medic was SP4 Jack Morris, Jr. SP4 Walter Gutzan from New Jersey was among those who had been shot off the tanks. They had two other wounded up in front, one of which was SP/4 David W. Osborne, a survivor of LZ Bird.

While they were lying there, exposed, in the rice paddy, SGT Bill Money, a survivor of LZ Bird was shot. His eyes rolled back in his head and he dropped face first, into the sand. One of the members of the platoon crawled to him and rolled him over. He felt his neck artery and looked at his lifeless eyes. He was dead. Later, some of the guys suggested that the rounds he took were meant for the RTO lying beside him.

1LT Bob Radcliffe got on the radio to contact CPT Roland Parr and apprise him of the situation. He got off the radio and asked the guys around him if they were hit. Several cried out that they couldn't walk or run. He turned to those who weren't hit and told them to spread out.

It was fortunate that day that the 3rd platoon had Staff Sgt. Chuck Hazelip of A Company, 1st Battalion, 69th Armor along with them.

Hazelip, a native of Kentucky, opened the hatch of his tank and told the platoon that he was going to attack the positions in front of him. Hazelip was shirtless, since it was very hot inside the tank. Those who could walk got on line with his tank and moved forward, firing as they walked and ran. Hazelip was firing every few seconds into the bunkers in front of them. Suddenly two RPG (rocket propelled grenade) rounds passed through them, meant for his tank. One round hit a mound with trees over to the left of his tank and the shrapnel hit SSG Jesus Sablin and SGT Richard Barry of the 1st Squad.

Sablin got up and kept on going toward a hole underneath a palm tree. Every so often, an NVA soldier would pop up from that hole and spray the platoon with automatic rifle fire. Radcliffe's RTO started toward the hole to drop a grenade in it, when the NVA soldier threw a grenade between his legs. It was a ChiCom grenade, a tin can filled with explosives attached to a wooden handle. The blast carried the RTO a good three feet in the air, but he rolled over and continued on in the assault.

Sablin had crawled forward and dropped a grenade down the hole. It came right back out and those nearby scrambled for cover. Hazelip drove forward, barely missed by another RPG round. He buried the muzzle of his cannon in the hole of the pesky NVA and blew dirt 30 feet in the air. There was no other rifle fire that came from that position. Captain Parr told Lt. Radcliffe to pull back from the village; that an ARA ship was going to strafe the village. While Radcliffe was talking to the captain, he went down suddenly. He was shot in the neck. But, just as quickly as he went down, Radcliffe stood back up and resumed talking with Cpt. Parr on the radio.

Radcliffe gathered about six of the platoon including LeRoy Burgess, machine gunner, Bill Moder, assistant gunner, Tom Cusick, machine gunner, Rick Boeshart, assistant gunner, Charley Waskey, ammo bearer, Doug Warden, his RTO and David Wilkowski, an M-79 grenadier, to make an assault on the right side of the village in an attempt to take the withering fire off of their comrades. They assaulted about 100 meters into the village and found themselves in the middle of an NVA force of about 30 soldiers. They were dug in and manning slit trenches and firing at the soldiers from the entrances of several bunkers. One of the soldiers was hit and they dragged him out with them, back to other wounded in the middle of the sandy rice paddy. Radcliffe desperately wanted to reverse the fire superiority of the enemy. He ordered his RTO to get as many grenades as he could from the wounded and to follow him.

Lt. Radcliffe was 6 feet 5 inches tall and weighed around 190. His RTO, PFC Doug Warden, was 6 feet 3 inches tall, weighing less than 150 pounds. They made big targets as they ran toward the center of the village and lay down next to the bunker complex. Warden took out a grenade while Radcliffe covered his back. A face appeared in the doorway. Warden hit him in the center of the forehead with the butt of the grenade and knocked him back. Then he tossed in the grenade.

They got to the next bunker and Warden tossed his grenade in and it came right back out. They scrambled to get away from it. They crawled back up to the bunker. Lt. Radcliffe threw one in and it came back out, but Warden heaved his in and it stayed in the hole. The guy inside couldn't handle two at once. They probably spent 20 to 30 minutes in there by themselves. When they ran out of grenades, they retreated back out to their wounded. Their little excursion had worked, though, the enemy rounds directed their way diminished considerably.

A call on the radio reported that artillery was on the way and to pull the survivors back as soon as they could. The tanks rolled over to them, they loaded the wounded on top, and walked back to the bridge they had crossed coming in. Then they took cover in a dry creek bed. They watched as perhaps 200 or 300 artillery rounds began pounding the village in front of them.

Meanwhile, the rest of the company had tried to link up with the 3rd platoon all morning. The 2nd platoon led by 1LT Norm Mordue ran into withering rocket and small arms fire. The soldiers walking point for him were cut down by automatic weapons fire. He ran to rescue them and was shot in the leg. It hit an artery and he was losing blood at an alarming rate. He refused to be medevaced and stayed with his men until they assaulted the NVA from the west to the east and were able to make progress toward the 3rd platoon. Only then, did he allow himself to be airlifted out. He lost two KIA's and four WIA's. The 1st platoon, led by 1LT Denis A. Lentsch, ran into a similar blocking force. His platoon assaulted and was able to cause the NVA to pull back and retreat. A little while later, other tanks and the other three platoons joined the 3rd platoon in the dry streambed. The company had been in heavy contact with the enemy for about eight hours. Later intelligence stated that the 3rd platoon's fish-hook maneuver had bypassed the main force and driven up to the command post of the 22nd NVA Regiment. The 3rd platoon had destroyed their command post that afternoon, though at an alarming loss.

Medevac helicopters began transporting the wounded and their dead out. The rest of the company had taken some time to get to the 3rd platoon because they didn't have tanks to transport or support them. The company spent the night as part of a containment force with the trapped enemy force. That night many of the soldiers saw Snoopy fire on the enemy for the first time. Snoopy was an old C-47 (DC-3) armed with mini-guns and Gatling guns. Every sixth round was a tracer and it looked like a steady stream of red fire beneath the fuselage going toward the enemy forces below. It was said that Snoopy could fire for a minute and put one round in every square foot of an area the size of a football field.

The next morning witnessed the assault by the 1st, 2nd and 4th platoons into An Qui village. The 3rd platoon didn't participate because they had only seven troopers left, including Lt. Radcliffe. The rest of the company got on line, stood up and walked forward firing as they went. Two more Charlie Company soldiers were wounded. In all, Charlie Company lost six men and had over 30 men wounded. The enemy left 98 dead behind when it was all over.

Up front in the assault line, Charles Fletcher and John Spencer were with the weapons platoon. Fletcher related that one of the platoon sergeants, trying to get in some field time to get a promotion, was behind them. Spencer advanced to a well that had a large, round board covering the top of it. He took his M-16 barrel and raised the lid to look under it for anyone who might be hiding inside. After he was satisfied there was no one in the well, he let the board drop back with a bang. The platoon sergeant was spooked and fired his M-16 on full automatic toward Spencer. Though he emptied the magazine in his M-16, he missed hitting Spencer. He was gone that afternoon, never to return to the field. The common wisdom was that he was too old for combat anyway. He was 38 or 39 years old.

In all, the morning assault lasted about an hour. Charlie Company kicked a numerically superior force right in the teeth over the course of two days. All during that time, not one soldier ran or refused to follow an order. The company spent the rest of the morning recovering some of their dead that had remained in the village overnight.

The support they got from the artillery and gunships had been superb. One thing about the Cav, they supplied and supported their fighting men in the best way. Every day about 3 o'clock, they got a hot meal and re-supply, unless they were in heavy jungle or in contact. When they were in a battle, the choppers would come in, hover over them and kick out ammunition and water on top of them while drawing heavy fire.

1LT Norm Mordue and SSG Charles Hazelip were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for their actions that day. Eleven more soldiers received the Silver Star, most of them from the 3rd platoon. Charlie Company received the Valorous Unit Award for their actions on May 31st-June 1, 1967.

In June, C Company moved to the Kontum area and moved west to operate around the Polei Kleng Special Forces Camp. In early July, they established an LZ in the mountains between Kontum and Dak To and it was called LZ Arbuckle. Troopers from C Company rappelled down from UH1D helicopters, armed with machetes. They cut enough of the vegetation away on top of the mountain slope to land a small bulldozer. It immediately began to clear the trees and heavy foliage off the top of the mountain. After the mountain was cleared, B Battery, 2nd Battalion, 19th Artillery was flown in and 105 mm howitzers were placed in a circle around the top of the hill. On the 3rd of July, a CH-46 "Flying Crane" helicopter carrying a 155 howitzer approached the southern perimeter, flying too low. The howitzer slammed into the side of the perimeter as the 3 man crew in the helicopter was attempting to place the howitzer on top of the LZ. Someone had forgotten to lock the wheels of the gun before it was transported and it began rolling down the steep embankment. As it rolled toward the bottom of the hill, it took the helicopter down with it. The gun and the helicopter rolled down to a foxhole manned by medic, SP4 Jack Morris, and RTO, SP4 Doug Warden. The helicopter began burning and Warden was able to pull the crew members out of the burning wreckage before they burned alive.

Shotguns were issued to the various platoons for their perspective point men to use them while walking point. Though the 1st platoon leader, Denis A. Lentsch was very much against having the shotguns, one of his pointmen, Scott Smith used one every time he walked

point for the platoon. On the evening of October 25th, Smith was walking point for the company when it was moving at night. He observed two enemy squatting down, right off the trail he was on. He immediately rushed their position and killed one VC, while the other escaped. They were setting up claymore mines to use in an ambush against the company. The next morning, Smith was cleaning his shotgun and accidentally shot and killed his friend, Stan Tunall, the RTO for the 1st platoon. Tunall was well liked and most of the company was shocked by his death. Smith and Tunall were planning on getting out of the army and rooming together so they could attend college after Vietnam. Smith was so distraught that he had to be sent to the rear for awhile.

Two days later, as the company bivouacked around a solitary mountain that rose above the South China Sea, two soldiers, PFC Naile and PFC Baker were swept off the air mattresses that they were using as flotation devices. The undertow was too much for them and they both drowned.

Tam Quan, December 15-16, 1967

During the month of November, C Company was operating in the mountains around Dak To. The 173rd Airborne lost over 200 men killed on Hill 875 in the vicinity of Dak To. The 1st/12th battalion was conducting operations in the mountains to try to find and engage the NVA division that was suspected to be nearby.

In the Bong Son Plain during the months of November and December, 1967, there were many indications that the 22nd NVA Regiment was building up forces in preparation for an attack on Bong Son City. Though it was not known at that time, they were building up to attack every major city in Vietnam during the Tet holiday that was approaching. There were several indicators that enemy presence was increasing. Intelligence picked up an enormous amount of traffic from the area of the Bong Son Plain to a Russian ship that was offshore and on the 6th day of December, a reconnaissance helicopter from the 1st/9th Cavalry spotted a radio antenna sticking out of a hooch in the vicinity of the village of Dai Dong (2). Troop A, 1st/9th sent a platoon of blues (infantry) to investigate. At 1630 hours, while approaching the area where the antenna was located, the blue platoon came under intense automatic weapons and small arms fire and were unable to move. The weapons platoon was sent in to help out and they, also, were pinned down. They had stumbled upon a large enemy force. The two platoons were in danger of being overrun. B 1st/8th and a company of the 1st/50th Mechanized Infantry were dispatched to help them out. The two platoons were extracted and B 1st/8th and the 1st/50th set up their perimeter for the night. This was the start of the Battle of Tam Quan, which lasted from December 6th to December 20th.

C Company landed in the area by the coast of the South China Sea, east of Tam Quan, on December 14, 1967. They had just returned from Dak To. They set up their perimeter for the night and each platoon sent out ambush squads. On the morning of the 15th, the company

began a sweep of the village of My Ann (5), with the 4th platoon on the left flank and the 3rd platoon on the right flank. The 1st and 2nd platoons were in the center of the line formation. The 4th platoon walked right up to a trench line of NVA soldiers. The NVA waited until the platoon walked right into their positions and they opened up. A six man squad from the 4th platoon lost two men killed, two wounded and the other two men who could have withdrawn, chose to stay with their dead and wounded. The fighting that occurred the remainder of the day centered around the attempt to rescue these men.

SP4 Perry Benally, a member of the Navajo Nation of New Mexico, was one of the wounded men from the 4th platoon. He was out front of the rest and was wounded by shrapnel in his chest and leg, then, he was shot in the head. The bullet grazed his temple. With blurred vision, he shot at and killed a machine gun squad that was shooting at the medic who was tending to his wounded comrades that he couldn't see. His platoon tried again and again to reach Benally. When the third assault with Armored Personnel Carriers was halted by withering enemy firepower and recoilless rifle fire, they stopped further rescue efforts on Benally's behalf. His platoon thought him dead. Benally kept firing his weapon at the enemy and throwing grenades at their positions. He soon ran out of ammunition. Rather than surrender, he decided to hold out until help could arrive. He retreated to a graveyard, just outside of the village, where he discovered two NVA soldiers in a bunker who were firing at him. Though out of ammunition, he closed the distance between him and the NVA. He engaged and beat both NVA soldiers to death with his empty M-16 rifle in hand-to-hand fighting. Then he crawled into the graveyard and spent the night all alone with no means to defend himself.

The 3rd platoon began receiving heavy fire from trench lines in front of them on the company's right flank. D 1st/12th was moving up to C Company's rear and started firing on C Company's rear. They soon learned their mistake and moved off to the right flank of the 3rd platoon. It was here that SP4 Alan Lynch, a RTO for D 1st/12th ran across an open field of fire to rescue 6 men in his platoon, who were severely wounded. He was to receive the Medal of Honor for that day's efforts. The 3rd platoon lost their machine gunner to the heavy fire. Tom Jensen, 3rd platoon medic, worked on SGT Rick Boeshart, the mortally wounded machine gun squad leader for the 3rd platoon, giving him mouth to mouth recitation. Jensen was shot three times as he attempted to save Boeshart. The 3rd platoon began running out of ammo and a Huey from the 227th flew in and hovered over the platoon. They kicked out M-16 ammo and machine gun ammo right on top of the platoon.

C Company's CO, CPT Pete Bentson, was medevaced, as was 1LT Frank Estrada, the 3rd platoon leader and PSG Tom Campbell, platoon sergeant of the 3rd platoon. Losses were so bad that new troops were flown in on the morning of December 16th from the rear, even before they had a chance to go the orientation course and zero their weapons. These new troopers had been assigned to C Company less than 24 hours and they were already in combat. On December 16th, C Company got on line and assaulted the enemy positions at about 9AM. Snipers slowed the progress as they advanced, but with additional air support, the troopers carried the day. During the assault, SP4 Benally was recovered. He had been MIA for over 24 hours. Benally was written up for a Silver Star for his actions, but the paperwork was evidently

lost. 44 years later, eyewitnesses re-submitted the paperwork and he was awarded a long, overdue Silver Star in Gallup, New Mexico, by Senator Tom Udall.

C Company, along with seven other American companies and two ARVN battalions had been fighting the 8th and 9th Battalions of the 22nd NVA Regiment, the regimental command post of the 22nd, the 132nd Signal Battalion and the 135th Recoilless Rifle Company. The enemy strength was over 900 soldiers. C Company was withdrawn from the field on the morning of the 17th because their company strength was less than 50 men.

Tet, January 31 – February 20, 1968

The entire 1st/12th Battalion was flown by C-130 aircraft from An Khe to Quang Tri province in the northernmost province of South Vietnam in mid January. They landed at Hue-Phu Bai and immediately air assaulted to the west and landed in the middle of a great plain of grassland where they began building Camp Evans. On January 30, 1968, Charlie Company was patrolling near the Cambodian-Laos border. The next morning, January 31, they received a call to prepare for a company sized air assault back to the east, near the coastline.

The entire company slung their backpacks together into a net sling suspended underneath Chinooks that were taken to some LZ back in the rear. It would be several days before they would see their packs again. The operations order stated that they would be going to Quang Tri and swinging south along Highway 1 to begin a sweep south of the city. The first Huey in the air assault formation held most of the 1st squad of the 3rd platoon of C Company, led by SSG Doug Warden. Warden had a radio, carried by SP4 Bill Cabaniss, but no machine gun. Warden looked out of the helicopter to see south along Highway 1 and could see a column of soldiers on either side of the highway. As they approached, the soldiers began hitting the ditches and lying down, along the side of the road. They were North Vietnamese regulars out in the open in broad daylight hauling artillery on their way into Quang Tri from the south. The lead helicopter hovered about 15 feet off the highway when the Plexiglas windshield shattered from heavy small arms fire. One of the pilots looked back and motioned for Warden and his squad to get out of the helicopter. They jumped out onto Highway 1 and immediately took off for the rice paddy dike that ran alongside the highway.

The rest of the company was not in sight. The remainder of the air assault had been aborted and the helicopters flew away and left the 1st squad of the 3rd platoon stranded. The ARA helicopters that had accompanied the main force began to fire on the soldiers in front of the seven men. They watched on their backs as one of the ARA helicopters was shot down. It crashed and burned about 500 meters from them. There was no evidence of any survivors. There was nothing the squad could do. It would have been suicide to cover 500 meters in the withering fire they were drawing. SP4 Buster Morgan had been shot in the thumb and was bleeding pretty bad. He had wrapped a bandage around it and was continuing to function.

Every once in a while, one of the squad would put their rifle over the dike and spray bullets out in front them, just to let the NVA know they were still alive and capable of fighting.

The squad was stranded for over 5 hours. They watched as gunships with ARA and mini-guns made run after run over the enemy positions in front of them. Then they heard jets and F-4's, as begin to drop napalm bombs on the enemy out to their front. Warden called in naval gun fire from the Battleship New Jersey off the coast of Vietnam. Over two hundred 16 inch shells were fired into the NVA positions. The fire finally abated enough for Lt. Col. French, the battalion commander, to land his helicopter near them. Four of the group scrambled aboard and began the flight to an LZ near Quang Tri and out of harm's way. Col. French returned and picked up the last three men and flew them back to LZ Sharon. This battle was the start of Tet for Charlie Company. The Tet Offensive of 1968 caught the US leadership unaware of the massive NVA troop buildup around the major cities in South Vietnam.

The rest of the company was engaged in a fight about four kilometers from where they had left the stranded squad. They lost two men killed, SP4 Harold Cashman, Jr. and PFC Damon Ritchie. One of the wounded that day was SP4 Tom Corey. His wounds made him a paraplegic.

All in all, C Company was in contact with the enemy for 16 straight days after Tet began. The company got into one heck of a firefight on one of those days. They were spread out as a company, sweeping through the terrain around a village when they received heavy small arms fire and mortar fire. The company lost three guys in this battle. They were SP4 Larry Clark, PFC John Dashnaw and PFC John Kuiper. SSG John Madison was killed on 19 Feb 1968. He had just graduated from the newly organized Leadership Academy at An Khe.

SSG Doug Warden led a six man killer team outside the company perimeter one moonless night to look for and engage the enemy. The idea of a killer team was to send a small force to recon out about 1000 meters. Their orders were to find the enemy's location and call for help from the company. On this particular February night, Warden's killer team had not moved more than 200 meters to the front of the company perimeter, when they encountered six NVA soldiers coming straight for their position. The six were the lead element for a company sized NVA unit. When the NVA walked to within 10 meters of the troopers' position, the killer team opened up, killing three of the NVA immediately. The main column of the NVA opened up on the team with heavy small arms fire. The heavy fire stopped as the NVA withdrew from the area. The team called for illumination rounds and moved out to find the other three NVA. They found and killed all three and suffered no casualties.

Khe Sahn and Lang Vei – April – May, 1968

On April 1, 1968, the 1st Brigade was air assaulted into the area around Khe Sahn. C Company was inserted north of Khe Sahn and they patrolled off a hill and made contact quickly. They worked their way toward the Loatian border. They found a NVA graveyard and were over-sprayed by C-130's spraying Agent Orange. About the third day into their patrol, they started drawing artillery fire from Laos, with an NVA observer spotting and adjusting fire. They drew artillery fire for two days and it hampered their movement substantially. They made a hasty

retreat back down the trails they had come down in days previous. They had numerous heat casualties and helicopter came for them, not to extract them to a safe area, but into the Lang Vei Special Forces camps. Twenty four Special Forces soldiers and 500 CIDG (Civilian Irregular Defense Groups) had defended the camps on February 6th and 7th, 1968. With supporting artillery from Laos and twelve PT-76 tanks supplied by the Soviets, the camps were overrun. The CIDG forces had 309 KIA's and the SF troopers had 7 KIA's and 3 MIA's who became POW's. Both B and C Companies were sent in. The main hill, on which the camp was located, was split into by a road that went into Laos. The CO of B Company put a Huey lift of C Company guys into a live mine field on the perimeter of the camp. Lt. Dave Carmody and his FO probed the mine field and found a safe way to extract the dead and wounded. While there, they recovered the bodies of some of the Americans. One body was still in the jeep with a mounted 106mm recoilless rifle. They used the 106mm to fire at the artillery positions in Laos.

On April 30th, they air assaulted into the A Shau Valley carrying 80 to 90 pound rucksacks. They flew at over 10,000 feet to get over the mountains that surrounded the valley. The NVA used 37mm anti-aircraft guns equipped with radar to shoot down several helicopters carrying other companies into the valley. They found an abandoned NVA tank, a baby blue 1967 Ford pickup truck and a Russian truck loaded with brand new SKS rifles. They also found a D-8 bulldozer and a lot of ammunition. After successfully avoiding an ambush by recon by fire, they went up a mountain and found a NVA underground hospital. They found surgical equipment and tons of medical equipment and supplies.

Thon Gia Dang, May 28, 1968

The last week of May, they were air assaulted into a sandy area west of the coast. C Company moved into a village and encountered an NVA battalion. They had dug in around the village of Thon Gia Dang on the coast of Vietnam. Inside the village were NVA troops in well fortified positions. They gathered a group of villagers to use as shields and marched them toward C Company.

"It was around midnight", Lt. David Carmody said, "and we had constant illumination. They lined up about 50 or 60 people from the village and as soon as the illumination stopped for a second, they rushed us."

SP4 William W. Griffin was in a wet, sandy foxhole with another man when the NVA charged. "I picked up my rifle and fired eight rounds," Griffin said. "That's all she fired." The wet sand had caused it to jam. The other man's weapon also jammed, so they started throwing grenades. "One of the NVA ran around the side of my bunker. I looked up and thought he had a weapon, so I grabbed him and pulled him in with us," said Griffin. "Then I told my buddy to go over to the next bunker to get a weapon. The NVA had none. I had this guy in a headlock, when another one came running toward the bunker. I guess he didn't see it, because he stepped on my head and fell in. He made a movement, like he was going for a weapon, a knife or something. I pulled a pen from the shirt pocket of the one I had in the headlock. It was the first thing my hand touched. Then I backed the other one up against the wall and held the pen

against his throat. In the moonlight, it must have glinted like a knife.” The NVA soldiers kept still until help came for Griffin. Both Griffin and Lt. Carmody were awarded the Silver Star for their actions that day.

Vietnamesation

In May, 1968, the mission changed for all the infantry units in Vietnam. Instead of aggressively pursuing the enemy, units were directed to pass that task to the ARVN Army. The role of the US units was to be that of a defensive posture.

Song Be, Lam Dong Province, December 11, 1968

Charlie Company made a combat assault near the Cambodian border on the morning of December 11, 1968. It was a rare offensive operation that occurred, even though Vietnamesation was in place. The LZ was prepped with the usual ARA rocket fire and mini-guns. It took three sorties and an hour to get all of Charlie Company on the ground. The second platoon had point that day. The platoon leader of the second platoon was 1LT Alexander Posemann, of Cincinnati. He had been a platoon leader less than a month. His RTO was PFC Don Vadakin, also of Cincinnati.

Two riflemen and a grenadier from the first squad led the column, followed by the platoon leader and his RTO. Behind the RTO was Roy Shabram, the machine gunner, carrying a Browning .30 caliber, water cooled machine gun. The rest of the platoon followed with the other machine gunner, Carlos Ramos, behind the platoon sergeant. The vegetation was very dense that day. The usual vines and grass was murder getting through. Suddenly, the point man broke through the vegetation onto a trail. The trail was very unique. It was large enough to let a truck pass through and it was paved with interwoven bamboo. The rest of the platoon joined the point man on the bamboo covered trail. Every 50 meters or so, there were bunkers along the trail. Pozemann ordered the point man to move out. They hadn't gone a hundred meters, when the point man saw movement off to his right. He asked for permission to recon by fire. Pozemann said no. Almost all of the troopers to the front and behind Pozemann moved the selector switch on their weapons to full automatic. Again, the point man saw movement and for a second time he pleaded for a recon by fire. Pozemann again said no. His order was to keep moving. The point man hadn't gone over ten steps when he again saw movement and this time he saw the color of a NVA uniform. He immediately emptied his M-16 at the moving figure. All hell broke loose then. They began receiving heavy AK-47 small arms fire. All the guys up front got down and began returning fire. The point squad called out for the machine gunner to move forward. Roy Shabram and his assistant, Arnie Ohnstad, moved forward to a log and set the machine gun up and snapped the ammo together to begin firing. Just behind them, they could hear Lt. Pozemann direct one his squads to move to an area and then he would change his mind and tell them to move somewhere else. Two rounds caught him in the chest and he fell, dying. His RTO, Don Vadakin, seeing his lieutenant fall, ran forward to help. He, too, was shot in the chest and fell dying. The soldiers detected rounds coming from behind a mound directly to their front. Rifle fire was ineffective against the mound, so

they asked the grenadier to fire. The brush was so thick that he couldn't fire his weapon. Ammunition soon ran low. Helicopters arrived with boxes of ammo and they kicked it out right over the platoon's position.

The other machine gunner, Carlos Ramos, and his assistant gunner, Chuck Ehlers, ran forward and began firing at the mound. One of the riflemen from the 1st squad, Ken Gauthier, crept up to the log that shielded them and rolled over to assault the enemy position. He was shot in his femur bone of his leg and his leg split open like a taco. Chuck Ehlers started treating Gauthier, while Carlos Ramos stood up and assaulted the mound. When he reached the top of the mound, the enemy gunner stood up and raised his hands. Ramos dispatched him in a matter of seconds. The firefight was over. Medevacs came in and took out the dead and wounded.

At this point, everyone began eating their noon meal. Third platoon was ordered to take point for the rest of the afternoon. After patrolling for about three thousand meters, they stopped for the night near a small clearing. The company's forward observer, who also carried demolition charges, used C-4 plastic explosives to blow down a couple of trees to make a Landing Zone big enough for one chopper to land. All the other troopers began digging their foxholes for the night. Second platoon was given the west side of the perimeter. As they began their preparation for the night perimeter, the first and third platoons began receiving heavy small arms fire. Someone called out, "Sniper in the trees!" Carlos Ramos again stood up and racked the trees with his M-60 machine gun. Casualties were mounting, so the FO called for Blue Max to make a run with ARA. He popped smoke and threw it just in front of the CP position. The first chopper to make his run fired his rockets right into the middle of a mortar pit. The rockets killed the FO and his RTO. Now, the only contact with the gunships was knocked out when the FO's radio was destroyed. The second gun ship made his run with mini guns blazing. The rounds started where the mortar pit had been and they continued up until they chewed up the CP and the first platoon. Finally, one of the RTO's in the CP found the radio frequency for the gunships and he got them to adjust their fire into the enemy positions. The enemy fire finally died down enough for medevac ships to come in and remove the dead and wounded.

Now there were no longer enough soldiers to man the original positions of the company for the night. They could only man seven foxholes with two men each in them. The night passed with no more enemy attacks.

Northeast of Bien Hoa, March 6, 1969

A 1st/12th met heavy resistance from the enemy in a bunker complex northeast of Bien Hoa on March 6, 1969. The battalion commander notified C Company to conduct an air assault into the area to assist A Company. Three transport helicopters carried 18 soldiers into a small clearing near the bunker complex. Two Cobra gunships prepped the clearing before touchdown by the infantrymen. Two more helicopters delivered 12 more C Company troopers into the clearing. As another helicopter approached the clearing, the pilot encountered intense direct

and indirect fire, including rocket propelled grenade rounds and small arms fire. He aborted the insertion, leaving the 30 men on the ground stranded for the time being. The enemy was located in heavily fortified bunker positions with three to four feet of overhead cover. Two of the bunkers had .50 caliber machine guns firing at the Cavalry troopers.

In the firefight that lasted until after dark, SP4 George Avgerinos, PFC Eugene Eleder and SGT Bob Leamen were killed. SP4 Billy Thomas was killed sometime after midnight during the fight. Over forty aircraft had flown in support of the operation and seven of the helicopters were extensively damaged. Two of the helicopters had to be returned to the states to be rebuilt. Over 1300 aerial rockets and 38,600 rounds of mini-gun ammunition had been fired.

Cambodia, May 2 – June 28, 1970

(This narrative is taken, with permission, from an article written by Michael Christy, former CO C 1/12th, for Vietnam Magazine. Copyright 2011)

Captain Michael Christy took command of Charlie Company in January, 1970. He was on his second tour in Vietnam, having served with the 5th Special Forces Group previously. Charlie Company spent four months operating along the Cambodian border in Phouc Long Province, a sparsely populated, heavy wooded area 75 miles northeast of Saigon. Enemy contact was infrequent for them. The company had spent between 25 to 30 days at a time in the jungle conducting search and destroy missions, returning only to the 1st/12th battalion fire base to pull security for seven days. Then it was back to the jungle.

On April 29th, the company had been back in that area for three days in a deserted region called Bu Dop. So far, the “search and destroy” mission had resulted in finding nothing but thick, empty jungle. Christy had the men on a 15-minute break when a radio call came in from the battalion commander, Lt. Col. Ric Ordway. Ordway asked Christy to go to the “green box,” the military euphemism for secure voice communications. SP4 Merle “Denny” Dentino, his RTO, slid a KY-38 encryption device computer card into his PRC-77 radio allowing Christy and Ordway to talk in the clear with their voices encrypted and indistinguishable to potential enemy eavesdroppers.

“The company is to be picked up tomorrow morning at 0800 hours,” Ordway instructed Christy. He then gave the coordinates for the company to be picked up, the PZ (pickup zone). Christy was curious about the reason for this return to base. But even with secure voice transmission, Ordway was secretive. “I’ll brief you when you get back to Fire Support Base Buttons tomorrow,” he responded to Christy before singing off.

It was nearly 4 PM and the area where Christy received the guarded call from Ordway was perfect for a NDP (night defensive position). The captain had the men unsaddle their equipment and prepare to bed down for the night. The mysterious call from battalion spread like wildfire among the troops, giving rise to wild speculation. They wondered if the war was over or maybe Charlie Company was being sent as reinforcements into a major battle already in

progress somewhere in Vietnam. Speculation was high as they went to sleep that night with the uncertainty of what lay ahead.

The company was up at sunrise and they wolfed-down some C-rations, packed their gear and were humping by 6 AM, through the jungle to the designated PZ some two miles to the west. It was hard going. The heat was unbearable and the humidity was stifling even at this time in the morning. They pushed harder and miraculously arrived 30 minutes before the scheduled extraction and waited. And waited! It wasn't until nearly 10 AM when the sound of helicopters broke through the quiet. It took 10 minutes to fly back to Song Be but long before they landed, they could see red dust hovering above FSB Buttons. As they got closer they saw countless CH-47's and Huey helicopters loaded with men and equipment flying in and out, forming dust clouds everywhere. There was now no doubt that they were embarking on a massive operation, but just didn't know what or where.

Waiting for them as they jumped out of the helicopters in the swirling red dust was the executive officer of C Company, 1st Lt. Dwight Taylor. He cupped his hands and yelled over the roar of the departing helicopters, "You are the last company to come in, Six. I will take the men back to the company area. You are to go immediately to the battalion TOC (tactical operations center) and wait for a briefing." "Do you know what's going on?" Christy shouted. With a shrug, he hollered back, "Not a clue!"

The TOC was already filled when Christy arrived. The tension in the room was palpable. It seemed everyone had concerns about what was going on. Within 15 minutes Ordway came into the TOC and stood before his anxious audience. He looked at his watch, took a dramatic pause before saying, "Gentlemen, approximately four hours ago a massive South Vietnamese force crossed over the border into Cambodia to find and destroy NVA sanctuaries. We leave tomorrow on the same mission." A faint murmur rose in the small space, silenced only by the operations officer stepping in and laying out the operational plan and the sequence in which they were to carry out the mission. C company was scheduled for a mid-morning lift the next day on May 1st. Ordway finished the briefing by warning each of the company commanders that enemy resistance would be strong and for them to expect heavy casualties. Again the TOC grew into stunned silent as they all rose to get back to their troops to brief them on the new mission.

The company platoon leaders and platoon sergeants took the news of the mission with some apprehension, mixed with a spark of excitement. Finding the enemy in Vietnam had become more and more difficult but in Cambodia, they would be meeting the enemy head on. The men were taken to newly arrived CONEX containers where they exchanged worn equipment and corroded ammo and dirty ammo magazines for new. All the medics replaced the contents of their medical bags with fresh medicines and bandages. The weapons were recalibrated and test fired for accuracy and reliability.

The first leg on their journey into Cambodia began the next morning. Shortly after 11 AM, a single Air Force C-130 cargo plane landed, loaded the troops from Delta Company and

took off. A second landed with the routine continuing until all of Delta Company was on its way to FSB Snuffy near Bu Gia Map. It was then C Company's turn.

Christy got aboard the 1st Platoon aircraft along with Dentino, SGT Rand "Al" Wall the acting artillery forward observer (FO) and his RTO. As soon as the C-130 lifted off the oil slicked runway, it shot straight up at a 45 degree angle to avoid enemy ground fire.

The company was only in the air for maybe six minutes when FSB Snuffy's airfield near Bu Gia Map came into sight. Within another couple of minutes, the C-130 dropped precipitously, basically reversing the technique used when it took off. But with wheels inches from the ground, the pilot reacted to a single shot fired on the ground in the troop staging area. He quickly pulled back on the yoke, sending the aircraft straight up at a 60 degree angle. It appeared that it would stall. It didn't but it came within feet of hitting the trees at the end of the runway. One careless shot and a nervous flight crew nearly got a plane load of infantrymen killed—before they even set foot in Cambodia.

Later that afternoon, Delta Company was taken by Huey helicopters into Cambodia. C Company was to follow within an hour but that didn't happen. Their insertion was delayed because the "system" was overburdened and no helicopters were available until the next day, May 2nd.

The unexpected stay overnight at FSB Snuffy created more tension among the men of the company. They had been prepared mentally and emotionally to already be in Cambodia. Now they had to wait one more day before jumping into what they all believed were the jaws of hell.

Early the next morning the fully loaded company assembled along a tree line bordering the airstrip. In the distance a 105 Artillery barrage and F4 fighter jets were pounding the Landing Zone in Cambodia. Within minutes 20 helicopters swooped in with absolute precision, just the right distance between each bird. Moving quickly from the tree line, the entire company jumped aboard the aircraft. Once aboard, the command from the flight leader was given and like a slow motion dance, all the helicopters drifted off the ground in unison, hovered for a few seconds, then headed straight ahead toward the LZ just five kilometers inside Cambodia. Charlie Company was now part of the biggest air assault on record. The helicopters flew low level, maneuvering around and above irregular growths. Tensions were mounting and became more heightened when they spotted two very surprised NVA soldiers scattering for cover as they flew over. One second they were there, the next they were gone. No shots were fired.

Moments after the 105 artillery barrage was lifted, Cobra gunships peppered the LZ with rocket fire and machine gun fire then remained in the area as the helicopters landed in a large field surrounded by what could be called a tree line but unlike any that the men had seen in Vietnam. These trees were skinny and tall, widely separated from each other. They moved off the LZ into the skimpy tree line and set up security. Everyone was on the ground safely and uncontested. Once the company was assembled and prepared to move, they headed north.

Within an hour, the point element spotted five enemy soldiers coming out of a wooded area. Everyone took cover in the tall grass. They waited for them to get closer. But before they did, one of the men must have got nervous and opened fire with his M-16 Rifle. Others followed. The enemy soldiers instantly turned tail, running back in the direction they had come. Not one of the company's bullets had found its mark. They moved through the open spaces of Cambodia for the rest of their first day without running into any more enemy soldiers.

Around 4:30 PM, they found a grove of trees ideal for a NDP. Two squads went out a couple hundred meters looking for any trails coming into their area on which they could set up automatic ambushes. The automatic ambush was a reasonable simple, but extremely lethal device. The soldiers would take commo wire and connect claymore mines positioned at foot level to fragmentation grenades hanging in trees at head level. The wire was then connected to a radio battery that connected to trip wire that they would place across the trail. If one person or half a dozen hit the trip wire, they would all be blown away. The automatic ambush turned out to be the best night defensive weapon in the company's arsenal.

As the guys prepared some coffee, a loud explosion broke the relative silence of a camp in "Indian country" coming awake. An automatic ambush had gone off. The squad responsible for the ambush site went out to investigate. Maybe four minutes went by before SP4 Rodney Young, the RTO called Christy, saying "You guys have got to see this to believe it." When Christy got there, he understood what Young meant. Lying on the trail was a dead NVA still on his bicycle, both hands on the handlebars, one foot on a pedal caught in mid-stride and a small transistor radio blaring out Vietnamese music. One of the riflemen said, "It's like the TV show 'Laugh-In' where the guy rides a tricycle around and just falls over.

The following day Christy received another encrypted radio call from Ordway. He said there was to be an 'arc light' (B52s bombing strike) at 0800 hours the next day. "The target is a suspected enemy battalion," he said. "I want you to conduct a BDA (bomb damage assessment) immediately after the strike." Christy confirmed the mission, ending the call.

Christy briefed the platoon leaders on the changed mission. They would stay in the NDP until the 35 tons of bombs had dropped, then they would pack up, arriving at the bombed area around noon. He also ordered increased security measures for the night. Nobody got a whole lot of sleep that night thinking about the possibility there might be 300 enemy soldiers camped in their backyard.

Finally the morning came and at 7:45 AM everyone took a prone position, placing whatever they could find between them and ground zero. At precisely 8 AM they heard a steady whistling of bombs dropping from an empty sky. Within seconds ears were deafened by the loudest explosion they had ever heard. The violent shaking of the ground and the massive strength of the concussion blast hit them like a tidal wave. They were all dazed by the experience. But with no time to waste thinking about it, the company got up and moving as quickly as they could.

It was another hot and sticky day and the fast hump to the bomb zone was hard on all of them. But by 11:30 AM, they began seeing the destruction. A few trees were down, some fresh dirt clumped in small mounds. The closer they got to ground zero the greater the devastation. Trees were shattered at their base and large bomb craters 20 to 30 feet deep were in every direction. It looked like a hurricane, a tornado and an earthquake had combined their brutal and deadly force to render a thick jungle into a lunar-like landscape. Yet among all this destruction they found no evidence of the enemy. Not one body or piece of equipment, not even a single blood trail was found. Either the intelligence was wrong or the enemy had left the area, tipped off by enemy agents known to be scattered throughout the South Vietnamese command. It was a most memorable event for these guys. They had been in close proximity to one of the most destructive events they had ever witnessed.

Over the next five days they discovered numerous bunker complexes and five enemy caches. They also had several enemy contacts during those five days. They killed six NVA without suffering casualties. It was also at this time that Lt. Colonel Norman Moffett took over command of the battalion.

Every four days the company would get resupplied with water, food, ammunition, radio batteries and other essentials. It was called "log" day and the routine was almost always the same. 1SGT Martinez would come out in the resupply helicopter carrying mail and replacements. When they finished logging, he left with letters to be mailed and those leaving the field for R&R, medical call or a job in the rear. Then they would saddle up and head out of the area as quickly as possible before any enemy came to see what was going on. This log day on May 10th, however, turned out to yield much more than the usual fare. Coming in for his final run, the helicopter pilot radioed me and said in his 'no big deal' voice so common among pilots, "Maybe 300 hundred meters to the east we just spotted beaucoup trucks the bad guy's parked in some thick undergrowth. Y'all might want to check it out, over." Christy wrote down the map coordinates and told the pilot that he would get right on it.

They loaded up their gear and quickly headed out in the direction the pilot said they would find the NVA motor pool. The designated lead element for the day was the 2nd Platoon under the command of 1LT Bill E. Shine. Within a couple of hours Lt. Shine radioed Christy that he had found the mother lode of caches. Spread over a quarter-acre area were cargo trucks, small pickups and several Land Rovers, one brand new with only 730 kilometers reading on its speedometer. Some of the vehicles came from China, Russia and Czechoslovakia but mostly the trucks were made in the United States, the majority being Fords. In all there were 33 vehicles. A parts department rivaling the finest found back home was scattered throughout the area. There were bearings, brake shoes, axles, transmissions, batteries, pistons and everything else to rebuild entire trucks. There was a large generator, barrels of gasoline and cases of engine oil.

Throughout the complex were underground sleeping quarters with electricity, a mess hall with live chickens and pigs, a first aid facility and a recreation area with a ping-pong table. Personal belongings were scattered everywhere. They also found a huge amount of bagged

rice, maybe 50 tons. They guessed that the trucks may have brought the rice down from North Vietnam along the Ho Chi Ming trail for further distribution.

All of this was reported to Battalion. Before long CH-47's Chinook Helicopters were hauling out the tons of rice. Lt. Col. Moffitt also came out to check out the find. He found it almost as exciting as the company did. He wanted any serviceable vehicles brought to FSB Evans, some four kilometer away. The company found 12 good trucks and Land Rovers but sent only ten. Two were kept for the company's personal use, with plans to carry the company's backpacks.

Getting the vehicles running was no problem. SP4 Tom Hirst, the medic from 3rd Platoon, had worked for a car dealership in Baltimore and with the precision of a car thief, hotwired the vehicles. Within a couple of hours members of the 3rd Platoon mounted the vehicles and headed down the road toward Evans. At the head of column was the new Land Rover, with Hirst at the wheel and a squad leader riding shotgun. Overhead flew a 'pink team.' A light observation helicopter (OH-58 Kiowa) would circle low level watching for signs of an ambush while a gunship (AH-1 Cobra) circled a little higher ready to come in if called. The pink team also provided the convoy with directions to FSB Evans. Reaching Evans with no problem, the troops were immediately flown back to the site of the NVA motor pool.

It took them two days to get all the rice out and to blow up or burn everything they felt was valuable. On the day they were to move their position, it was too late to travel and too far to go, so they set up the NDP in a thick clump of trees and underbrush about 300 meters from the now destroyed NVA motor pool. A perimeter was set up and several automatic ambushes were put in place on trails leading into the area. The men settled in for the night, completely satisfied with their two day's work.

Somewhere around 8 PM, CPT Christy was alerted that the 3rd Platoon sector had seen several flashlights moving their way followed by movement and muffled Vietnamese voices. Within a few minutes a huge explosion went off. It was one of the automatic ambushes. A few troops threw fragmentation grenades and M-79 grenades at the sounds. Everything suddenly went silent until maybe an hour later when another automatic ambush and a trip flare went off. That's when they began to hear the terrible moaning of a badly injured enemy. For hours he cried in pain when suddenly about midnight, they heard a single shot. For the rest of the night all they heard was silence. Nobody slept much that night.

At first light Christy took a group out to check out the area. No more than 100 meters from their perimeter they began seeing the torn and bloody bodies of nine enemy soldiers scattered over the area. One had an SKS rifle in his mouth, a toe wrapped around the trigger. He had found, in his mind, the only way out of what must have been excruciating pain and agony.

They continued to scour the area for any more enemy dead but instead found hidden in some tall grass a tenth enemy soldier still alive. He was scared to death and offered no

resistance. The medics treated his wounds that did not appear too severe. Shortly a helicopter came in to take him back for treatment and an intelligence debriefing.

Every morning the company would load their heavy backpacks on the two trucks that they had saved for themselves and headed out “light” as they searched for the enemy. But two days later they ran out of the open terrain that they had been operating in. Ahead of them was heavy jungle. So, they poured gasoline over the trucks, threw a torch at them and watched as they quickly ignited into roaring flames. As the trucks smoldered into charred remains the company slipped on their backpacks and moved off into the silent jungle.

A few days later they were following a river to see where it might lead when they came upon a large waterfall cascading down a mammoth rock formation. Here was a beautiful wonder of nature right in the middle of one of the world’s most dangerous places. But the closer they got, they realized it was hiding something. Hidden behind the waterfall was a deserted cave housing an NVA hospital complete with surgical tables, oxygen tanks, a respirator, and all the instruments needed for serious surgery. They surmised that the enemy had departed a few days earlier. Finding it impractical to completely destroy some of the equipment, they threw canisters of CS into the cave hoping to make it uninhabitable for a little while at least.

In the same area they found cottages, shower stalls, enclosed latrines and a large covered dining hall. They burned everything to the ground. For the next few days with the aid of several ‘pink teams’ they carefully searched the area but found only empty bunkers.

The company had their next enemy contact two days later. Around 2 PM, the point man motioned Captain Christy forward. As they talked, he slowly raised his finger toward a hammock stretched between two small trees. Clearly there was someone lying in it. Whoever it was, they appeared to be alone. Silently, the point man quietly crept up and looked down in the hammock at the pale, sunken face of a very sick NVA. He blinked his eyes open and recoiled in fear. Through the interpreter they assured him they meant no harm to him, only help. Christy learned he had a severe case of malaria and had been left by his squad size unit to die alone. The soldiers fed him, gave him water, and the medics gave him some kind of medicine. When asked about other enemy in the area, he told them he didn’t know exactly where but a small camp was a short distance away.

The wooded area where they found the ailing NVA was a perfect place to set up a patrol base and NDP. Christy assigned the 2nd platoon security of the camp. 1st Platoon and 3rd Platoon moved out in opposite directions looking for the enemy camp. About an hour after they had been out, Christy received a radio call from the 3rd platoon leader, 1st Lt. Richard “Rick” Friedrich. In a barely audible whisper, he said, “We are in a good size bunker complex and it looks like it may be occupied and...”, but before he could he continue, Christy heard an angry voice in broken English off in the background yell ‘Americans, Americans.’ “We got company,” yelled Friedrich. Christy could hear the far off explosion of the M79 round Friedrich had ordered fired in the direction of the enemy soldier, immediately followed by the sounds of a fierce fire fight. “We’re taking heavy fire, over,” said Friedrich. Christy left him alone to fight

his battle, which raged for five minutes. When it went silent, Friedrich radioed back to say the enemy had withdrawn and he had several men wounded, to include his point man SP4 Danny Long. Both were walking wounded, he added. Christy ordered him to return to base. The first platoon also returned to base having found no sign of the enemy.

Early the next morning Christy accompanied the 3rd platoon back to the enemy complex. It was quite big and rather orderly with above ground roofed huts and bomb shelter bunkers scattered throughout. The company spread out, poking around to see what they could find. Next to where Christy was standing was a T-shaped bunker open at three ends so he decided to check it out. Inside no light filtered in from one direction like it should have. He jumped back out, declaring, "I think there is something in there...maybe an enemy soldier" SP4 Glenn Potts volunteered to go back in. He took out his Zippo cigarette lighter, crouched down and crawled back in. In an instant he jumped out, grabbed his rifle, got behind a bunker and said, "Oh my god, there's a gook in there."

Through the interpreter they tried coaxing him out but he didn't budge. Someone threw in a smoke grenade but still he wouldn't come out. They warned him they would throw in a fragmentation grenade. No response. The grenade was thrown in, exploding with a muffled blast. The body they pulled out was a NVA soldier who looked to be no more than a young teenage boy. Maybe he was too scared to come out.

A few days later 1st platoon was in the lead and SP4 Tom "the Black Prince" Johnson was walking point when they stumbled onto yet another bunker complex that had only recently been vacated. They were still checking the place out when they heard a dog barking. He soon appeared from around a bunker, his tail between his legs but with a little coaxing—and some C-ration meat—he scurried up to the men. They named him 'Bunker' and took him with them.

For another week they moved through the jungle in the Patriot's Peak region finding more complexes and some more impressive caches. In one they found enough ammunition to supply an NVA battalion and over 400 brand new SKS Carbines still wrapped in oil cloth. In another they found two tons of rice, mortar tubes, machine guns and boxes of AK47s. In yet another they found outboard boat motors that they decided were on their way to the Mekong Delta region. They also engaged and killed six more NVA soldiers and again, suffered no casualties. At the end of May they were sent to Quan Loi in Vietnam to help provide security. During the couple of days they stayed in Quan Loi the place was rocketed a few times. On one occasion a rocket hit the ammo dump. The place lit up like a giant roman candle. They didn't know if anyone had been killed or not.

Early in the morning on June 7th they set out through a jungle extremely thick with vegetation. Movement was slow and cautious. About mid-day, the very last rifleman in the formation saw something suspicious barely visible from the trail. Christy took a squad with him to check it out. Almost instantly they saw what the rifleman had seen. It was about a hundred 55 gallon barrels of gasoline on pallets separated into four stacks, many marked with the name 'Dutch Shell Oil.' Christy reported the find to battalion and requested enough blocks of C4, blasting caps, detonation cord, and fuse igniters to blow it all up. In less than an hour a Huey

was overhead, lowering down several bags of explosives. Battalion put out an urgent air advisory warning aviators not to fly anywhere near the blast area. The squad already providing security at the fuel dump continued in place while the rest of the company moved a safe distance away. With the security squad watching their backs, 1LT Troup, Danny Long, SP4 Jim Wilson and Christy each rigged a stack of gasoline barrels and on count, ignited the fuses simultaneously. The four men and the security squad then ran like hell toward the company. They were nearly there when the charges went off. The earth shook and the mammoth explosion knocked them down. We could even feel the heat of the blaze at their backs. Somehow the brigade commander, Colonel Ross Franklin, was flying near enough to see the explosion. He said it looked like an atom bomb had gone off.

On June 14th, day 40 in Cambodia, Battalion ordered the company to check out a hard packed, fairly large trail spotted the day before by a helicopter pilot. They found the heavily used trail about mid morning. They moved ahead cautiously with 1st Platoon in the lead. SP4 Tony Harper was on point with Tom Johnson, who was considered to be the best point man in the company, teaching him the ropes. It was Johnson who saw them first. Seconds later, Harper saw them too—NVA preparing to ambush the company. Together, Harper and Johnson sprayed the place they had spotted the enemy. Instantly they received heavy AK-47, machine fire and B40 rockets from three sides. Johnson and Harper crouched down, inserted fresh magazines and continue raking the jungle with their M16s switched to fully automatic. Within seconds, SP4 Lester “Uno” Langley brought up his M60 machine gun and cut loose. The 1st Platoon stayed in place and continued firing at the center of the enemy ambush. The 3rd platoon moved to cover the enemy’s left flank. The 2nd Platoon at the rear attacked the enemy’s right perimeter. Bullets were flying in all directions. Christy was behind a tree trying to reach battalion for artillery and gunship support but because the jungle was so thick, he weren’t getting through. Langley yelled out that his M60 barrel burned out. At that moment a B40 rocket hit a tree by the CP, temporarily blinding the men with tree bark. SP4 Tom Thom, one of the company RTO’s, placed his radio as high above his head as possible and stood up. It worked and they reached battalion. Al Wall requested immediate artillery support and Cobra gunships. He switched to the fire support frequency and began requesting the fire mission.

While Wall was on the radio, Christy received a radio call on the company net from Lt. Friedrich. His platoon was meeting heavy resistance and SGT Mickey Wright had been killed charging a bunker. At the same time, Johnson yelled that he was hit. Immediately several men called out “Medic, Medic!” Sensing a man down, the enemy concentrated on trying to take Johnson out. In spite of the danger, SP4 Larry “Doc” Stansberry ran out into the open, flopped down beside Johnson and quickly applied the emergency medical measures. But the two were in a precarious place, much in need of some help. Without hesitation, “Nat” Green, Rodney Young, Robert Delaney and Steve “Doc” Willey exposed themselves to heavy enemy fire and helped bring Johnson behind some trees. Since artillery was on the way, Christy had the troops withdraw into the center of the perimeter.

The 105 artillery barrage was on time, whistling right in on targets some hundred meters behind the enemy positions. For five minutes the barrage went on and only lifted when Cobra gunships arrived on station. One run after the other, they fired min-guns and rockets directly in front of the company perimeter. Finally it was over. The jungle was once again silent. They carefully moved on the enemy positions. The artillery and gunships had ripped the jungle and enemy bunkers apart but they did not find any enemy casualties, just a few blood trails.

Because the jungle was so thick with triple canopy trees, the medevac helicopter used a jungle-penetrator to lift Johnson out. Because division policy dictates that only wounded can be carried out aboard a medevac, SGT Wright's body would be carried out by a non-medevac helicopter. They left the area and began looking for a suitable LZ. They found one just before dark. They set up an NDP and waited until morning. The next day was also log day so they stayed at the LZ for resupply. The automatic ambush site was still set up from the night before along the same trail they were on when they got ambushed. The resupply helicopter was about to land in the LZ with its second run when the automatic ambush went off. Instead of landing the pilot took off, telling Christy he would circle the area until the company knew what was happening.

Christy grabbed a RTO, a machine gunner, his assistant gunner and four or five riflemen and headed for the ambush site. Within a few minutes they could see the smoke from the white smoke grenade drifting through the trees. Bent over in the crouched position, weapons at the ready they inched closer to what now looked like bodies lying in the trail. We found three dead NVA, two carrying AK47s and the other a B40 rocket launcher. Each was heavily loaded with extra ammunition and Chicom hand grenades. Clearly their intent was to cause harm during the log. The next day they headed out in the same direction they were going the day of the ambush and not too far from the site, they found ten fresh graves.

Christy received a secure radio call from Lt. Colonel Moffett early on June 27th informing him that President Richard Nixon had gone to the airwaves, announcing all U.S. troops would be out of Cambodia a day earlier. That meant they were pulling out the next day, June 28th. Moffett also mentioned Charlie Company was designated the last company to return to Vietnam. To chronicle the historical event a group of journalists and TV reporters would accompany us out.

They broke camp early the next morning to reach the LZ where the journalists would fly in. The LZ was only a kilometer away but they were again in the more spacious, open area of Cambodia so it took us less than an hour. A call came in that they were on the way and as soon as they heard their two helicopters, they threw out purple smoke to mark the place they were to land. One by one they landed in the LZ, discharged their raring to go passengers and took off.

There were over a dozen journalists, photo-journalists and TV reporters, each energized by being with what had been billed as the "last American fighting unit out of Cambodia." A few were even feeling giddy by the idea that they would be documenting a piece of history. But as

they trudged through the heat and humidity toward the river separating the border between Cambodia and Vietnam, their enthusiasm slowly ebbed away. And at each break, the journalists and TV crews interviewed the men looking for personal stories about the experience and their feelings in general about the war. Most of the guys were delighted to tell them whatever they wanted to hear.

Somewhere around 3 PM, they found a large tree that had fallen across the river, providing them with an unusual bridge. But after a few troops crossed, a thick coat of mud from their boots made it a perilous trip for the rest. A few lost their balance, falling into the leach infested river but in a relatively short time, the entire company had crossed the river. A sense of relief swept over the company. They were leaving behind a much more dangerous place than what they would find in Vietnam, where the enemy was hiding more than seeking.

They moved away from the river to FSB Thor, the battalion's headquarters, located three hundred meters away from the river's edge in a large open field surrounded by endless trees. The journalists jumped at the invite of coming into the fire base where they could get a cold drink and the chance to probe the minds of fresh troops. The tired company set up their NDP right in the shadows of the fire base. Alpha and Bravo companies were already camped out in other quadrants of the same area. The company CP was set up in the center of the perimeter in the 1st Platoon's area.

Since they felt reasonably secure, noise discipline was dropped and they laid back to enjoy their first evening back in Vietnam with most going into jungle hooch's where they hoped to get a quiet night's sleep. Periodic firing of illumination rounds from the camp and the occasional high explosive (HE) rounds fired over their heads in the direction of where the enemy might be gathering kept them from getting much sleep.

Around midnight Captain Christ got up to have a cigarette and noticed how a heavy fog had covered the area, making it so dark he could no longer see the hooch next to me where Dentino and Al Wall were sleeping. Sometime around 5 AM he heard the thumping of three mortar rounds being fired. Moments later he heard the spinning of the rounds coming closer and closer. He knew instantly the horror that was about to strike his unsuspecting men quietly sleeping in what they all believed was a reasonably safe environment. One mortal round was a dud but the other two mortar rounds exploded with an intense fury, sending hot pieces of jagged shrapnel everywhere. One piece slapped through Christy's mosquito net. With the echo of the explosions still hanging in the air, the screaming began. Men were saying they were hit, some called for medics. Through the dim fog hovering over the camp, he could see silhouettes moving in and out of the shadows—some in panic, other calmly trying to help the wounded.

The first casualty Christy stumbled upon was Lt. Troup. He was trying to hold his nearly amputated foot together as he, amazingly calmly looked up at Christy, saying quietly, "Six, my foot is hit." No sooner had the words come from his mouth, that Doc Stansberry rushed to his side. A few feet away, the company medic, Bruce Johnson was flailing on the ground, trying to stop his own chest wound. Doc Willey hurried to his aid, slapping a compress to stop the sucking and bleeding. Through his effort to breath and his cries of agony, Johnson gasped, "Tell

my wife I love her.” He was certain he was going to die. It looked that way to everyone as well. Christy found the 1st Platoon’s RTO and had him turn the platoon frequency to the battalion’s net. He called back to the fire base asking for their medics to come out to help.

Before long a jeep load of medics drove up, jumped out and began moving through the area trying to find the injured. It wasn’t hard! They were scattered everywhere. A few minutes after their arrival, Battalion called saying a medevac helicopter was on its way.

Christy ordered all wounded brought to the end of a large clearing so they could set up a triage to determine who was the most seriously injured. They would be the first ones out once the medevac arrived. The wounded were still being brought out when they heard the sounds of the medevac hovering just above the fog. Christy told the pilot that he would set out a ground flare for him to vector in on. He did not expect his response. He said he was not going to land until he had gunship support. Christy explained this was a ‘friendly fire’ incident, that no enemy was involved. He stuck to his guns: no gunships, no landing. Christy pleaded and begged. But he still refused. With Lt. Col. Moffett at his side, he threatened the pilot. “Look I have your tail number. I know who you are and if you don’t start down immediately, I swear to God I will find you and put a bullet in your head.” Maybe the pilot thought he was serious because he said he was coming in and to light the flare.

As soon as the medevac landed they placed the most serious wounded into the hands of the waiting medics. They had room for six. Doc Johnson was one. So too was Lt. Troup. Christy also had Mike Waters put on as well yet he was certain he was never going to make it. He didn’t. He died moments after the medevac lifted off. Later the medevac pilot, a major, put Christy on report—not for threatening him but for putting a dead man on his helicopter.

With all the wounded out they took a head count. Only one man was missing, Merle Dentino. They checked his hooch and that is where they found him. The same piece of shrapnel that passed through Christy’s hooch had killed him instantly.

The root cause for the so called “friendly-fire” incident was determined to be erratic mortar rounds that should never have been fired over C Company’s position. In less than 60 seconds, one deadly mistake killed and wounded more of the company’s brave men than scores of enemy combatants were able to during their two months in Cambodia.

Attack on the NVA Sub Region 5 Headquarters in War Zone 5, October 29 – October 30, 1971

On 24 October, 1971, an NVA colonel walked into Fire Base Gibraltar which was guarded by elements of the 1st/12th Cavalry. He walked into the front gate and into the center of the compound where he stopped a soldier and asked in broken English to see the officer in charge. It took everyone by surprise that an armed NVA colonel could come into a military installation in broad daylight without being challenged. He was immediately turned over to military intelligence for questioning. He was a high ranking officer who came from the NVA’s Sub Region 5 Military and Political Headquarters. His commander had handed him some

punishment for his failure in some manner that included the indignity of residing in a wooden cage on food and water for a week, while the troops in his command were ordered to hurl insults at him. He endured his punishment and vowed to get even. He got even by defecting to the US troops at the nearest firebase where the 1st/12th, attached to the 3rd Brigade, was located.

The Stars and Stripes article from 1971 that described the whole operation, called the defection of the NVA colonel a “strong intelligence source”, though the article did not mention who the intelligence source was. The information they got from the colonel sparked an operation that included a combat air assault conducted by A and C Companies on October 29, 1971 into heavy jungle. The battalion got the location wrong based on the description provided by the NVA colonel. Part of the preparation of the assault location included the dropping of a huge bomb by a Chinook helicopter that was supposed to flatten heavy jungle and foliage for several hundred meters. After the artillery prep and the dropping of the 15,000 lb. bomb, Alpha and C Companies arrived in the center of the recently cleared jungle and went off in search of trails leading in and out of the area.

Since the bombing missed the primary location of the NVA compound, it is doubtful that very few enemy troops were killed or injured. It did alert the NVA that the 1st Cavalry was coming. Initially, the men from Charlie had a tough time finding their way in the heavy elephant grass. The visibility factor was less than 2 to 3 meters to either side and front of each soldier. It was in this environment, that heavy fighting broke out between the two companies of Americans and the NVA.

In this fighting, two squads from the 3rd platoon walked into an L shaped ambush and PFC Victor Williams was killed by small arms fire. Tom Strempek, Rick Dyers, and Paul Hoban were all wounded.

Charlie Company List of Men Killed In Action

Rank	First Name	Last Name	Date of Casualty	Company	
SSG	Jack	Johnson	January 31, 1966	C Co	1
SGT	John Michzel	Quinn	January 31, 1966	C Co	2
SGT	Richard George	Thomas	February 12, 1966	C Co	3
SFC	Dalmer Dolan	Jurek	February 23, 1966	C Co	4
PFC	Isaiah Jr.	Mulwee	February 23, 1966	C Co	5
PFC	Tommy L.	Nicholas	February 23, 1966	C Co	6
PFC	Kenneth Alderson	Reynolds	February 23, 1966	C Co	7
PFC	Marvin James	Wilson	February 23, 1966	C Co	8
SGT	Paul Russel	Hattabaugh	April 2, 1966	C Co	9
CPT	Donald Franklin	McMillan	April 2, 1966	C Co	10
PFC	James Jr.	Moore	April 2, 1966	C Co	11
PFC	Larry Emmett	Rose	April 2, 1966	C Co	12
PFC	Bernard	Barrios	April 6, 1966	C Co	13
PFC	John Robert	Booth	May 16, 1966	C Co	14
SP4	Martin Francis	Killilea	May 16, 1966	C Co	15
PVT	Harold Bradley	Nadeau	May 17, 1966	C Co	16
PFC	Robert Lee	Benjamin	May 21, 1966	C Co	17
PFC	Henry	Benton	May 21, 1966	C Co	18
PFC	Clarence Ray	Brame	May 21, 1966	C Co	19
PFC	James Francis Jr.	Brooks	May 21, 1966	C Co	20
SGT	Louis R.	Buckley	May 21, 1966	C Co	21
SP4	David S.	Crocker	May 21, 1966	C Co	22
SP4	Austin Leon	Drummond	May 21, 1966	C Co	23
SGT	Charles A.	Gaines	May 21, 1966	C Co	24
SP4	Paul James	Harrison	May 21, 1966	C Co	25
PFC	Harold Jr.	Mack	May 21, 1966	C Co	26
SP4	Daniel Gibson	Post	May 21, 1966	C Co	27
PSGT	Edward	Shepherd	May 21, 1966	C Co	28
SP4	A. V.	Spikes	May 21, 1966	C Co	29
PFC	Joel	Tamayo	May 21, 1966	C Co	30
PFC	Wade	Taste	May 21, 1966	C Co	31
PFC	Lonnie Clifford	Williams	May 21, 1966	C Co	32
SP4	James Eugene	Windham, Jr.	October 6, 1966	C Co	33
PFC	Ulisés	Ortiz-Colon	October 29, 1966	C Co	34
PFC	Richard Lee	Carothers	December 17, 1966	C Co	35
PFC	Michael Earl	Dent	December 17, 1966	C Co	36
SGT	Jessie Yutze	Gomez	December 17, 1966	C Co	37
SSG	Julius Jr.	Greathouse	December 17, 1966	C Co	38

PFC	Alton R.	Kennedy	December 17, 1966	C Co	39
PFC	John Gilbert	Larson	December 17, 1966	C Co	40
PFC	Jerry W.	Norris	December 17, 1966	C Co	41
PFC	Harry Turner	Poland	December 17, 1966	C Co	42
PFC	George William	Stinson, Jr.	December 17, 1966	C Co	43
PFC	Reginald Michael	Thomas	December 17, 1966	C Co	44
SSG	Brownie	Hall	December 23, 1966	C Co	45
PFC	Ulysses	White	December 23, 1966	C Co	46
SP4	Freddie Lee	Burnette	December 27, 1966	C Co	47
PFC	Alfred Lee	Davis	December 27, 1966	C Co	48
PFC	Hubert Aaron	Erwin	December 27, 1966	C Co	49
SP4	Gregory James	Fischer	December 27, 1966	C Co	50
PFC	Howard Stanley	Goldberg	December 27, 1966	C Co	51
PFC	Armand Roy	Graham	December 27, 1966	C Co	52
PFC	Randall Lee	Hixson	December 27, 1966	C Co	53
SFC	Paul Gray	Jackson	December 27, 1966	C Co	54
SP4	James E.	Nunley	December 27, 1966	C Co	55
SP4	Gary Wayne	Peasley	December 27, 1966	C Co	56
PFC	Jerry E.	Schmeltz	December 27, 1966	C Co	57
SP4	Ronald J.	Sheehy	December 27, 1966	C Co	58
SGT	Hugh G.	Skipper	December 27, 1966	C Co	59
1LT	Jerald D.	Wallace	December 27, 1966	C Co	60
SP4	Larry Joe	Willis	December 27, 1966	C Co	61
1LT	James C.	Ulrich	February 13, 1967	C Co	62
SP4	Lawrence Christian	Clausen	February 15, 1967	C Co	63
SSG	John James	Raymond	February 15, 1967	C Co	64
SP4	Joseph, Jr.	Bailey	March 20, 1967	C Co	65
PFC	Dennis Raye	Hooks	May 16, 1967	C Co	66
PFC	Hervey Harris	Allen	May 31, 1967	C Co	67
SGT	Teddy Rex	Dunn	May 31, 1967	C Co	68
SGT	William Wallace	Money	May 31, 1967	C Co	69
SGT	Dennie	Neace	May 31, 1967	C Co	70
PFC	James Edward	Rickerson	May 31, 1967	C Co	71
PFC	Jerald Anthony	Vokish	May 31, 1967	C Co	72
SP4	Samuel Ray	Durham	June 9, 1967	C Co	73
PFC	James Louis	Johnson	June 9, 1967	C Co	74
PFC	Rufus	Ray	June 9, 1967	C Co	75
SGT	Stanley William	Tunall	October 26, 1967	C Co	76
PFC	David	Baker	October 28, 1967	C Co	77
PFC	Thomas Glen	Naile	October 28, 1967	C Co	78
SGT	Richard Joseph	Boeshart	December 15, 1967	C Co	79
CPL	Richard Anthony	Choppa	December 15, 1967	C Co	80

SSG	David Preston	Jewell	December 15, 1967	C Co	81
PFC	James Joseph	Koprivnikar	December 15, 1967	C Co	82
SFC	Robert	Levine	December 15, 1967	C Co	83
SFC	James E.	Lynn	December 15, 1967	C Co	84
CPL	Steven	Matarazzo	December 15, 1967	C Co	85
SFC	John Donald	Roche	December 15, 1967	C Co	86
SP4	Wayne David	Ryza	December 15, 1967	C Co	87
CPL	Michael Dennis	Sander	December 15, 1967	C Co	88
SP4	Harold Edward	Cashman, Jr.	January 31, 1968	C Co	89
CPL	Damon Ligouri	Ritchie	January 31, 1968	C Co	90
SP4	Larry Monroe	Clark	February 2, 1968	C Co	91
PFC	John Myron	Dashnaw	February 2, 1968	C Co	92
PFC	John Frederick	Kuiper	February 2, 1968	C Co	93
SGT	John B.	Madison	February 19, 1968	C Co	94
SP4	Tommy Dale	Walker	April 9, 1968	C Co	95
SGT	Jerry Thomas	Evans	May 4, 1968	C Co	96
SGT	Garry Ronald	Ellerman	May 11, 1968	C Co	97
CPL	Samuel Harrison	Easley, II	May 28, 1968	C Co	98
SP4	Thomas Arthur	Stevens, Jr.	May 28, 1968	C Co	99
CPL	James	Holt	June 6, 1968	C Co	100
SGT	Terry Hugh	Smith	June 12, 1968	C Co	101
SGT	David	Wilson	June 12, 1968	C Co	102
PFC	Boyd James	Youngblood	June 21, 1968	C Co	103
SGT	Le Roy Fredric	Arellano	June 22, 1968	C Co	103
SP4	Freddy	Greene	June 22, 1968	C Co	105
SSG	Tate Talmage	Hackney, III	June 22, 1968	C Co	106
SP4	Ronald	Saunders	June 22, 1968	C Co	107
PFC	Daryel Joe	Young	June 22, 1968	C Co	108
PFC	James Robert	Rone	October 1, 1968	C Co	109
SP4	Robert Lee	Brownlee	November 20, 1968	C Co	110
SGT	Jake Edward	Hurst	December 11, 1968	C Co	111
SP4	Elijah Jr.	Miles	December 11, 1968	C Co	112
1LT	Alexander	Pozmann, Jr.	December 11, 1968	C Co	113
SGT	Ralph Edward	Roach	December 11, 1968	C Co	114
SP4	Ronald M.	Romero	December 11, 1968	C Co	115
SP4	Donald Keith	Vadakin	December 11, 1968	C Co	116
SGT	Eugene	Walters	December 11, 1968	C Co	117
SGT	Edward Lee	Vanderpool	December 24, 1968	C Co	118
SP4	Vaughn Ormon	Doty	January 13, 1969	C Co	119
SP4	Willie Junior	Marshall	January 13, 1969	C Co	120
SP4	Benjamin	Maldonado-Aguilar	February 5, 1969	C Co	121
SP4	George Richard	Avgerinos	March 6, 1969	C Co	122

CPL	Eugene	Eleder	March 6, 1969	C Co	123
SGT	Robert Edward	Leamen	March 6, 1969	C Co	124
SP4	Billy Dean	Thomas	March 7, 1969	C Co	125
SP4	Bruce Michael	Barnes	August 12, 1969	C Co	126
CPL	James Patrick	Eckles	August 12, 1969	C Co	127
SGT	Thomas Lee	Fowler	August 14, 1969	C Co	128
SP4	Laurance Richard	Mohn, Jr.	August 14, 1969	C Co	129
PFC	Stanley Wayne	Doak	September 28, 1969	C Co	130
SP4	Jimmie Dale	Still	January 1, 1970	C Co	131
PFC	Paul Laroy	Binder	January 16, 1970	C Co	132
CPL	Wilbert	Reed	January 29, 1970	C Co	133
PFC	James Larry	Downs	March 7, 1970	C Co	134
SGT	Kenneth James	Garski	March 28, 1970	C Co	135
SGT	Garvin Wayne	Dill	May 25, 1970	C Co	136
SGT	Michael Lee	Wright	June 14, 1970	C Co	137
PFC	Ronald Eugene	Underwood	June 20, 1970	C Co	138
SGT	Merle Allen	Dentino	June 30, 1970	C Co	139
SGT	Michael Roy	Waters	June 30, 1970	C Co	140
SSG	David William	Osborne	August 23, 1970	C Co	141
PFC	Victor Demott	Williams	October 29, 1971	C Co	142
SGT	Mark Frederick	Biagini	June 13, 1972	C Co	143

Awards for Charlie Company Personnel (partial list)

C Company	SP4	Erroll W. Miller	Silver Star	23 Feb 1966
C Company	SP4	Murray A. "Doc" Jenkins	Silver Star	23 Feb 1966
C Company	CPT	Donald F. Warren	Silver Star	1966
C Company	SP4	Paul J. Harrison*	Distinguished Service Cross	21 May 1966
C Company	SGT	Robert L. Kirby	Silver Star	21 May 1966
C Company	CPT	Darrell G. Houston	Silver Star	2/3 Oct 1966
C Company	SFC	Paul G. Jackson	Silver Star	2/3 Oct 1966
C Company	PSG	Comar Johnson	Silver Star	2/3 Oct 1966
C Company	PFC	Robert O. Smith	Soldiers Medal	29 Oct 1966
C Company	PFC	Lawrence R. Holder	Soldiers Medal	29 Oct 1966
C Company	PFC	Ulysses White	Soldiers Medal	29 Oct 1966
C Company	PFC	Alton R. "Doc" Kennedy*	Distinguished Service Cross	17 Dec 1966
C Company	PFC	John G. "Doc" Larson*	Silver Star	17 Dec 1966
C Company	SP4	James "Doc" Ennis	Silver Star	17 Dec 1966
C Company	PFC	Lawrence "Doc" Holder	Silver Star	17 Dec 1966
C Company	SP5	Jerome "Doc" Bacon	Silver Star	17 Dec 1966
C Company	PFC	George W. Stinson*	Silver Star	17 Dec 1966
C Company	PSG	Comar Johnson	Silver Star w/ 1 st OLC	17 Dec 1966
C Company	CPT	Darrell G. Houston	Silver Star w/ 1 st OLC	17 Dec 1966
C Company	SGT	Delbert O. Jennings	Medal of Honor	27 Dec 1966
C Company	SP4	Murray "Doc" Jenkins	Silver Star w/ 1 st OLC	27 Dec 1966
C Company	PSG	Comar Johnson	Silver Star w/ 2 nd OLC	27 Dec 1966
B, 2 nd , 19 th	1LT	Charles Campanella	Silver Star	27 Dec 1966
C Company	SP4	David W. Osborne	Silver Star	27 Dec 1966
C Company	SP4	Gary Peasley*	Silver Star	27 Dec 1966
C Company	PFC	Donald R. Potter	Silver Star	27 Dec 1966
C Company	1LT	Jerald D. Wallace*	Silver Star	27 Dec 1966
C Company	SFC	Paul G. Jackson*	Silver Star w/ 1 st OLC	27 Dec 1966
C Company	SP4	Thomas Geduldick	Silver Star	27 Dec 1966
C Company	PFC	Donald Potter	Silver Star	27 Dec 1966
C Company	CPT	Roland R. Parr	Soldiers Medal	3 Mar 1967
C Company	1LT	Robert F. Radcliffe	Soldiers Medal	3 Mar 1967
C Company	2LT	Ralph Hagler, Jr.	Soldiers Medal	3 Mar 1967
C Company	1LT	Ralph Hagler, Jr.	Silver Star	2 May 1967
C Company	SFC	William Horton	Silver Star	2 May 1967
C Company	SP4	David W. Osborne	Silver Star w/ 1 st OLC	2 May 1967
C Company	CPT	Roland R. Parr	Silver Star	2 May 1967
C Company	SP4	John J. McGinn, Jr.	Silver Star	2 May 1967
C Company	1LT	Norm Mordue	Distinguished Service Cross	31 May 1967
A, 1 st /69 th	SSG	Charles Hazelip	Distinguished Service Cross	31 May 1967
C Company	1LT	Robert F. Radcliffe	Silver Star	31 May 1967
C Company	CPT	Roland Parr	Silver Star w/ 1 st OLC	31 May 1967

C Company	PFC	Richard J. Boeshart	Silver Star	31 May 1967
C Company	SP4	Walter F. Gutzan	Silver Star	31 May 1967
C Company	PFC	Charlie Waskey	Silver Star	31 May 1967
C Company	PFC	Douglas J. Warden	Silver Star	31 May 1967
C Company	1LT	Denis A. Lentsch	Silver Star	31 May 1967
C Company	SP4	Thomas D. Cusick	Silver Star	31 May 1967
C Company	SP4	LeRoy Burgess, Jr.	Silver Star	31 May 1967
C Company	SP4	Michael "Doc" Leroy	Silver Star	31 May 1967
C Company	SP4	Jack "Doc" Morris	Silver Star	31 May 1967
C Company	SGT	Teddy R. Dunn*	Silver Star	31 May 1967
C Company	SGT	Dennie Neace*	Silver Star	31 May 1967
C Company	PFC	Jerald A. Vokish*	Silver Star	31 May 1967
C Company	SP4	Donald Garvin	Silver Star	31 May 1967
C Company	SGT	Richard J. Merritt	Silver Star	31 May 1967
C Company	SSG	Jesus E. Sablan	Silver Star	31 May 1967
C Company	SGT	Richard E. Pfeifer	Silver Star	31 May 1967
C Company	SP4	Larry Register	Silver Star	31 May 1967
C Company	SFC	Alberto Biaza	Silver Star	31 May 1967
C Company	PFC	William J. Murphy	Silver Star	31 May 1967
C Company	SP4	Douglas J. Warden	Soldiers Medal	3 July 1967
C Company	1LT	Robert F. Radcliffe	Soldiers Medal w/ 1 st OLC	3 July 1967
C Company	1LT	Frank Estrada	Silver Star	15 Dec 1967
C Company	SSG	Douglas J. Warden	Silver Star w/ 1 st OLC	15 Dec 1967
C Company	SP4	David Wilkowski	Silver Star	15 Dec 1967
C Company	SP4	Perry V. Benally	Silver Star	15 Dec 1967
C Company	SP4	Johnny Bateman	Silver Star	15 Dec 1967
C Company	PFC	Richard "Doc" Choppa*	Silver Star	15 Dec 1967
C Company	SSG	David Jewell	Silver Star	15 Dec 1967
C Company	SSG	Felix Salas	Silver Star	15 Dec 1967
C Company	SP4	Johnny Bateman	Silver Star	15 Dec 1967
C Company	SFC	Lewis Rodgers	Silver Star	15 Dec 1967
C Company	1LT	Denis A. Lentsch	Silver Star	15 Dec 1967
C Company	CPT	Peter M. Bentson	Silver Star	15 Dec 1967
C Company	SP4	Charlie Waskey	Silver Star w/ 1 st OLC	15 Dec 1967
C Company	SP4	John Madison	Silver Star	15 Dec 1967
C Company	PSG	Thomas Campbell	Silver Star	15 Dec 1967
C Company	SP4	Richard Valles	Silver Star	31 Jan 1968
C Company	CPT	James E. Bryan	Silver Star	31 Jan 1968
C Company	SP4	William J. Murphy	Silver Star w/ 1 st OLC	31 Jan 1968
C Company	SP4	William W. Griffin	Silver Star	28 May 1968
C Company	1LT	David Carmody	Silver Star	28 May 1968
C Company	SP4	Joseph DiMartino	Silver Star	12 Jun 1968
C Company	SGT	Joe Samaneigo	Silver Star	12 Jun 1968
C Company	SGT	Terry Hugh Smith*	Silver Star	12 Jun 1968
C Company	SP4	Carlos Ramos	Silver Star	11 Dec 1968
C Company	1LT	Norman Everston	Silver Star	11 Dec 1968

C Company	CPT	John Hartman	Silver Star	11 Dec 1968
C Company	SP4	Thomas O. Williams	Silver Star	?
C Company	SP4	John M. Couper	Silver Star	6 Mar 1969
C Company	SP4	Grover J. Johnson	Silver Star	?
C Company	CPT	Michael B. Christy	Silver Star	21-24 Jun 1970
C Company	SSG	David W. Osborne*	Silver Star 2 nd OLC	23 Aug 1970

***Posthumous Award**

DSC Posthumous Citation for SP/4 Paul J. Harrison

(May 21, 1966)



Reason: For extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam:

Specialist Four Harrison distinguished himself on 21 May 1966 while serving as a rifleman during a combat mission. On this date, the mortar platoon of Specialist Four Harrison's company was scheduled to be the last element to be extracted from the operational area. As the last rifle platoon was extracted, the mortar platoon suddenly received intense hostile fire from an estimated Viet Cong company which began attacking in full force. Observing that the platoon's single mortar weapon was destroyed during the initial attack, Specialist Four Harrison immediately rushed through the intense hostile fire and began delivering suppressive fire onto the advancing Viet Cong. Inspired by his aggressiveness, Specialist Four Harrison's comrades held their ground as long as possible. When the ammunition supply became critically low and position after position succumbed to the overwhelming insurgent force, the remaining members of the mortar platoon were forced to withdraw. Recognizing that many of the withdrawing troops were hit by Viet Cong fire, Specialist Four Harrison decided to hold his ground alone and provided as much fire cover as possible for his comrades. With complete disregard his safety, Specialist Four Harrison advanced forward to a vantage point to draw the hostile fire away from his comrades and to more efficiently provide fire cover for the withdrawing survivors. When his ammunition was expended and the insurgent force was advancing toward his position, Specialist Four Harrison fearlessly jumped from his foxhole, charged the Viet Cong and engaged them in hand to hand combat. He continued to inflict casualties until he was finally overcome by the surmountable odds. Through his courage, he undoubtedly saved the remainder of his unit. Specialist Four Harrison's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty, at the cost of his life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

General Orders: Headquarters, U.S. Army, Vietnam, General Orders No. 6409 (November 18, 1966)

DSC Posthumous Citation for PFC Alton R. Kennedy

(December 17, 1966)



Reason: For extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 12th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile). Private First Class Kennedy distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 17 December 1966 while serving as a medic with elements of the 1st Cavalry Division during a combat assault in the Highway 506 Valley. Maneuvering against an entrenched North Vietnamese Army force, his platoon and another company became pinned down by intense hostile fire. Private Kennedy quickly raced forward and began treating his stricken comrades. Dauntlessly exposing himself to the devastating fire, he was wounded in the leg as he aided a fellow soldier. Unmindful of the pain, Private Kennedy crawled to the side of another man and bandaged his wounds. He then called for men to help in the evacuation and made several trips back through the hail of bullets to carry more injured soldiers to safety. Oblivious to the extreme dangers, Private Kennedy left his covered position to retrieve another casualty, who was lying within ten meters of an insurgent bunker. Inching his way through the rounds that were kicking up dirt all around him, he succeeded in dragging the man back to the company perimeter. Pausing only to retard his own bleeding, Private Kennedy ignored requests to await further treatment and courageously reentered the ravaged battlefield. He crawled forward yet another time, but was fatally wounded a few meters from a hostile machine gun position. His unimpeachable valor and selfless concern for the welfare of others, inspired his entrapped comrades and saved the lives of others, inspired his entrapped comrades and saved the lives of many fellow soldiers. Private First Class Kennedy's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty, at the cost of his life, were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

General Orders: Headquarters, U.S. Army, Vietnam, General Orders No. 1059 (March 11, 1967)

Medal of Honor Citation for SSG Delbert O. Jennings

(December 27, 1966)



For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty. Part of Company C was defending an artillery position when attacked by a North Vietnamese Army regiment supported by mortar, recoilless-rifle, and machine gun fire. At the outset, SSG Jennings sprang to his bunker, astride the main attack route, and slowed the on-coming enemy wave with highly effective machine gun fire. Despite a tenacious defense in which he killed at least 12 of the enemy, his squad was forced to the rear. After covering the withdrawal of the squad, he rejoined his men, destroyed an enemy demolition crew about to blow up a nearby howitzer, and killed 3 enemy soldiers at his initial bunker position. Ordering his men back into a secondary position, he again covered their withdrawal, killing 1 enemy with the butt of his weapon. Observing that some of the defenders were unaware of an enemy force in their rear, he raced through a fire-swept area to warn the men, turn their fire on the enemy, and lead them into the secondary perimeter. Assisting in the defense of the new position, he aided the air-landing of reinforcements by throwing white phosphorous grenades on the landing zone despite dangerously silhouetting himself with the light. After helping to repulse the final enemy assaults, he led a group of volunteers well beyond friendly lines to an area where 8 seriously wounded men lay. Braving enemy sniper fire and ignoring the presence of booby traps in the area, they recovered the 8 men who would have probably perished without early medical treatment. S/Sgt. Jennings extraordinary heroism and inspirational leadership saved the lives of many of his comrades and contributed greatly to the defeat of a superior enemy force. His actions stand with the highest traditions of the military profession and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the U.S. Army.

General Orders: Department of the Army, General Orders No. 60 (October 22, 1968)

DSC Citation for 1st Lt. Norman A. Mordue

(May 31, 1967)



Reason: For extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam:

First Lieutenant Mordue distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 31 May 1967 while serving as platoon leader of an Airmobile platoon on a search and clear operation in the village of An Qui. When another platoon was pinned down by heavy machine gun and grenade fire from a numerically superior and well entrenched insurgent force, Lieutenant Mordue immediately led his platoon on a fierce attack to relieve the pressure on the engaged unit. Seeing two of his men wounded and pinned down, he grabbed a machine gun and braved withering enemy fire to rescue them. He then moved to the front of his platoon, completely ignoring his own safety, and personally destroyed two enemy bunkers and killed five hostile soldiers in the ensuing offensive. Severely wounded and unable to walk, Lieutenant Mordue refused medical aid and directed the withdrawal of his men as deadly artillery strikes were called in on the Viet Cong positions. His bravery and gallant leadership contributed greatly to the defeat of the enemy. First Lieutenant Mordue extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

General Orders: Headquarters, U.S. Army, Vietnam, General Orders No. 4667 (September 14, 1967)

DSC Citation for SSG Charles R. Hazelip

(May 31 – June 1, 1967)



The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross to Charles R. Hazelip (RA15530898), Staff Sergeant, U.S. Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Company A, 12st Battalion, 69th Armor, 4th Infantry Division. Staff Sergeant Hazelip distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 31 May 1967 while serving as Platoon Sergeant of an armor platoon on a cordon and search mission at An Qui. Upon entering the village, Sergeant Hazelip's unit came under heavy attack from a well-entrenched North Vietnamese battalion. During the decisive first minutes of the battle, he exposed himself to the withering fire to direct the fire of his tanks on the enemy positions. When the platoon leader's radio was damaged, Sergeant Hazelip took command of the entire platoon and laid down a heavy barrage of fire to enable the infantrymen to evacuate their wounded. He positioned the combined team for an assault and destroyed many enemy bunkers with his tank and grenades. While organizing a second assault, Sergeant Hazelip exposed himself to a direct hostile fire to aid a wounded comrade. Then, with little ammunition left, he valiantly led a second attack which overwhelmed the enemy and defeated them. His dauntless courage and quick reactions in the early fighting prevented the enemy from seizing control of the situation. Staff Sergeant Hazelip's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty where in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army

General Orders: Headquarters, U.S. Army, Vietnam, General Orders No. 4456 (September 1, 1967)

Name and Rank	Years	Casualty Dates	Major Engagements
Abram, James E. "Pointman" - SP4	66-67		506 Valley, LZ Bird, An Qui
Adams, Ben J. - SP4	66-67		Hoa Hoi
Adams, Edward J. - SP4	67-68		
Adams, Larry L. - SP4	64-65		
Adams, Victor "Doc"	68-69		
Adkins, Bobby - SP4	64-66		
Agustin, Jim	70		
Akers, Brian R. - SP4	66	KIA 27 Dec 1966	On LZ Bird
Alba, Milo O. - SP4	66-67		Hoa Hoi, LZ Bird
Albee, Michael N.	65-66		
Alexander, George C., Jr. - SP4	64-66		
Alexander, William H.	68-69	WIA 11 Dec 1968	
Allen, Hervey H. - PFC	67-	KIA 31 May 1967	An Qui
Allen, Jerome	69-70		
Ambling, Richard - PSG	67		
Ammons, Hal N. - 1LT	67-68		
Anderson, George R. - SP4	64-66		
Anderson, Larry E. - SGT	66-67		Hoa Hoi, LZ Bird
Anderson, Michael O.	68-69		
Anderson, Ronald T. - SSG	65-66		
Anderson, Thomas S., Jr. - SP4	64-66		
Andrig, Ronald - SP4	68		
Anscue, Carl - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Anyaki, Albert N., Jr. - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Arellano, LeRoy F. - SGT	67-68	KIA 22 Jun 1968	
Armstrong, Chauncey F., Jr. - PVT2	65-66		
Arrowo, Gerald L. - SP4	67-68		
Arroyo, Adalberto			
Arroyo, Luis - SGT	67-68		
Ashley, Larry R. - PFC	67	WIA 9 Jun 1967	
Authior, Kenneth G. - SP4	68-69	WIA 11 Dec 1968	
Avgerinos, George R. "Georgy Greek" - SP4	68-69	KIA 6 Mar 1969	
Ayscue, Gary B. - SP4	66-67		
Bacon, Jerome "Doc", Jr. - SSG	66-67	WIA 17 Dec 66	506 Valley
Bagley, Clark A. - SP4	68-69		
Bagley, David S. - SP4	68-69		
Bailey, Joseph, Jr.	66-67	KIA 20 Mar 1967	
Bailey, Raymond G. - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi

Baiza, Alberto O. -SFC	66-67		Hoa Hoi
Baker, David - PFC	Aug 67-Oct 67	Died 28 Oct 1967	
Baker, Roger - 1LT	66		
Bakey, Thomas J.	68		
Ball, Harry - CPT	63-64		
Balsley, Robert E. - SGT	68		
Bancroft, Glenn I. - SP4	67-68		
Banger, Earnest - SP4	68-69		
Barcello, Donald R. - PFC	67		
Barfield, Jerry G. - SGT	Aug67-Aug68		Tam Quan, Tet 68
Barlow, Jessie L. - SGT	67-68		
Barnes, Bruce M. - SP4	69	KIA 12 Aug 1969	
Barnes, Johnny F., Jr.	65-66		
Barnes, Michael - SGT	68		
Barnes, Terrance - SGT	66		Hoa Hoi
Barnes, Turner - PFC	66		
Barrase, James E. - SP4	66		
Barrett, James - PFC	68		
Barrios, Benard - PFC	65-66	KIA 6 Apr 1966	
Barry, David J. - SP4	70 - 71		
Barry, Richard J. - SP4	66-67	WIA 31 May 1967	Hoa Hoi, 506 ValleyLZ Bird, An Qui
Basham, Robert M. - SGT	Nov 67-Sep 68		
Bass, Roger M. - PFC	64-66		
Batchman, Virgil - SSG	66		Hoa Hoi
Bateman, Johnny - SP4	67		Tam Quan
Baty, James L. - SGT	65-66		
Bauer, Harold - SGT	67-68		Tam Quan, Tet 68
Baughman, Virgil - SSG	66		Hoa Hoi
Baumgartner, Barry C. - SP4	65-66		
Baxter, Jimmie N. - PFC	66	WIA 17 Dec 66	Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley
Baysinger, Robert J. - SGT	66-67		Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, LZ Bird
Bazinaw, Carl A. - SP4	65-66		
Bearden, John D. - SP4	Apr 66-Apr 67		Hoa Hoi
Beaumont, Richard G. - PFC	68-69		
Becker, Allan R. - 1LT	66-67		
Beldbres, George A. - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Bellanti, Kenneth A. - SGT	64		
Bemer, Gregg A. - SGT	66-67		
Benally, Perry V. - SP4	67	WIA 15 Dec 1967	An Qui, Tam Quan
Benard, James L. - PFC	65-66		
Benjamin, Robert Lee- PFC	66	KIA 21 May 1966	LZ Hereford
Bennington, William "Donald" - SP4	68-69		

Benosky, Frances T. - SP4	64		
Bento, Richard S. - SGT	Nov 67-Sep 68		
Benton, Henry - PFC	65-66	KIA 21 May 1966	LZ Hereford
Bentson, Peter M. - CPT	Nov 67-Dec 67		Tam Quan
Bertram, Garry W. - SP4	68		
Best, Raymond			
Biagini, Mark F. - SGT	72	KIA 13 Jun 1972	
Biaza, Alberto - PSG	66-67		
Bicknell, Burnis - SSG	65		
Bildodeau, Larry			
Binder, Paul L. - PFC	69-70	KIA 16 Jan 1970	
Bingham, Larry Joe - SGT	May 68-May 69		
Bissett, Richard E. - PFC	65-66		
Black, David A.	66-67		Hoa Hoi
Black, Wayne E. - PFC	67-68		
Blackman, Marc			
Blackmon, Chuck - PFC	68		
Blevins, Arthur L. - PVT2	65-66		
Blount, John - SP4	68-69		
Boal, George L. - SP4	66-67		
Boaz, Jimmy A. - PFC	67-68		
Bobbit, James "Champ" - SP4	68	WIA 22 Oct 1968	
Boeshart, Richard J. "Bo" - SGT	Feb 67-Dec 67	KIA 15 Dec 1967	An Qui, Tam Quan
Bolte, Gary	70		
Bonetti, Joseph F. - SGT	Dec 67-Dec 68		Tam Quan, Tet 68
Bonica, Thomas - 1LT	68		
Bonner, Franklin D. - SGT	Feb 68-Sep 68		
Booth, John R. - PFC	65-66	KIA 16 Apr 1966	
Bormann, Wayne T. - PVT2	65-66		
Bosley,	68		
Bostrom, William J.	68-69		
Bourgeois, John H. - SP4	64-66		
Bowers, James - PFC	67-68		
Boxer, Joel M. - 1LT	68		
Boyd, Darrell			
Boysun, Edward J. - SGT	68-69	WIA 22 Oct 1968	
Bradix, Ben E.			
Bradley, Riley A. - PSG	64-65		
Braga, James L. - PFC	65-66		
Brame, Clarence - PFC	65-66	KIA 21 May 1966	LZ Hereford
Brand, Joel D. - PFC	67		
Brattis, Robert S. - SP4	66-67		Hoa Hoi, LZ Bird

Brewer, Richard H.	69-70		
Brindley, Jordan, Jr. "Scooter" - SGT	66		Hereford
Brinker, Mickey J. "Doc"	68		
Brockington, Joe			
Bronson, Leon B. - SGT	Nov 65-Nov 66		Hoa Hoi
Brooks, Alan S. - PFC	64		
Brooks, James - PFC	66	KIA 21 May 1966	LZ Hereford
Brophy, Richard G. - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Browder, William			
Brown, Gerald E. - SP4	May 66-May 67		Hoa Hoi
Brown, John M.	66		
Brown, Lloyd N. - PFC	64		
Brown, Marvin - SGT	68		
Brown, Norman "Dale"			
Brown, Ralph "Charlie"			
Brownlee, Robert Leon - SP4	68	KIA 20 Nov 1968	
Bryan, James Edward - CPT	67-68		
Bryon, James	67-68		
Buckalew, Charles R. - SP4	64-66		
Buckley, Louis R. - SGT *	65-66	MIA 21 May 1966	LZ Hereford - *Declared dead
Buehler, John - SP4	67-68		Tam Quan, Tet 68
Buggage, James A. - SP4	67-68		
Bukata, Benjamin J. - SP4	66		Hoa Hoi
Burgess, LeRoy Jr. - SGT	66-67	WIA 31 May 1967	Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, LZ Bird, An Qui
Burgin, Charles R. - SP4	64		
Burk, Vincent L. - SSG	66		Hoa Hoi
Burkett, James F. - SP4	68		
Burnette, Freddie Lee - SP4	66	KIA 27 Dec 1966	Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, LZ Bird
Burrell, Welton - SGT	70 - 71		
Burrus, John S. - SP4	70 - 71		
Burtrum, Larry L. - 1LT			
Butcher, Billy J. - PFC	66		
Butler, Frank L.			
Butler, Jerry L. - SP4	68-69		
Butler, William J. - SP4	67-68		
Cabaniss, Billy J. - SP4	67-68		Tam Quan, Tet 68
Calhoun, Karl E. - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Calohkey, Henry W.	67-68		
Caltabiano, Warren R. - SP4	66-67		Hoa Hoi, LZ Bird
Calvert, Morris			
Campanella, Charles R. - 1LT	66-67		On LZ Bird
Campbell, Thomas A. - PSG	May 67-May 68		Tam Quan, Tet 68

Campos, Robert - SP4	64		
Campos-Rodriguez, Ruben - SP4	67-68		
Cano, Fredrick J. - SGT	66	WIA 17 Dec 66	506 Valley
Cantrell, Gary L. - CPT	71-72		
Capaldi, Frank - SP4	67-68		
Caples, Raymond L. - SP4	70 - 71		
Caravello, Joseph S. - PVT2	65-66		
Carlson, Lyle G. "Cpt. Kangaroo" - SP4	May 68-Sep 68		
Carmody, David V. - 1LT	Feb 68-Aug 68		
Carothers, Richard L. - PFC	66	KIA 17 Dec 1966	506 Valley
Carrion, Luis T. - SGT	65-66		
Carroll, Arthur - PVT	64		
Carter, Eugene			
Carter, Melvin	67-68		
Carter, Moses	69		
Carver, Billy - SP4	68-69		
Casey, Daniel F. - SP4	66-67		Hoa Hoi
Casey, John - SGT	68		
Cashman, Harold E. - PFC`	67-68	KIA 31 Jan 1968	
Casker, Edward			
Castor, Stephen E. "Doc" - PFC	65-66		
Cathgart, Frederick - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Cazier, Stanley W. - SGT			
Cercely, Dezso - PFC	66		
Chandler, Jimmie L. - PRC	67-68		
Chaparro-Torres, Benjamin - SP4	67-68		
Chase, Michael T. - 1LT	63-66		
Chatman, Richard W. - SP4	64-66		Hoa Hoi
Chesnut, James W. - SGT	65-66		
Choppa, Richard A. - CPL	67	KIA 15 Dec 1967	Tam Quan
Christy, Michael B. - CPT	69 - 70		
Church, Charles - SP4	67-68		
Clark, Larry M. - SP4	67-68	KIA 2 Feb 1968	Tet 68
Clark, Michael E.	66-67		Hoa Hoi
Clark, Raymond D. - SGT	64		
Clausen, Lawrence C. - SP4	66-67	KIA 15 Feb 1967	Hoa Hoi
Clay, Ronald L.	68-69		
Clifton, John C. - SP4	66-67		Hoa Hoi, LZ Bird
Colburn, Carlos - SSG	64		
Coleman, Charles R. - PFC	64		
Coleman, Henry, Jr. - SP4	66-67		On LZ Bird
Collins, Leroy - PFC	67-68		

Colon, Modosto - SP4	66		
Colvin, Steve "Doc" - SP4	67-68		
Combs, Clyde S. - PFC	67-68		
Combs, James - SGT	68-69		
Cominsky, Leon J. - SP4	66-67		Hoa Hoi
Conery, Walter G. - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Conner, Haley			
Cooper, Marion - PSG	63-65		
Corby, David H. - PFC	67-68		
Coreno, Richard H.	68		
Corey, Thomas H. - SP4	67-68	WIA 31 Jan 1968	Tam Quan, Tet 68
Cortez-Rosa, Ramon - PFC	67-68		
Cosma, Julius R. - SGT	64-66		
Couper, John M. "Doc"	68-69	WIA 11 Dec 1968	LZ Cindy
Covington, Merrill			
Cowan, Ronnie E. - SGT	68		
Crabtree, Thomas L. - SP4	Aug 66-Jun 67		Hao Hoi, 506 Valley, LZ Bird, An Qui
Craft, Edwin T. - SGT	70-71		
Craigen, Jack	71		
Crank, Earnest R. - SGT	64-66		
Crawford, Howard W. - PFC	66		
Crider, Giles F.	69-70		
Crocker, David S. - SP4	66	KIA 21 May 1966	LZ Hereford
Cronen, Jerald L. - SGT	67-68		
Crow, Carl E. - PFC	67-68		
Crow, James L.			
Crowder, Marshall - PFC	67=68		
Crowley, Thomas J., III - SP4	64-66		
Crowthers, Bruce A. - PFC	66	WIA 17 Dec 66	
Cruz, Alferd - PFC	64		
Cruz, Carlos M. - PVT2	65-66		
Cruz, Rafael - SP4	68		
Culbreath, Paul W. - PFC	64		
Cusick, Thomas D. - SP4	Sep 66-Sep 67		Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, LZ Bird, An Qui
Czerniakowski, David - SGT	69		
Dale, Norman E., Jr. - SGT	Oct 66-Aug 67	WIA 18 Aug 1967	On LZ Bird
Danger, Robert L.			
Darby, Gerald H. - PFC	66		
Dargel, John C. - SP4	67	WIA 31 May 1967	An Qui
Darnell, Raymond L. - SP4	66- 67		Hoa Hoi, LZ Bird
Dashnaw, John M. - PFC	67-68	KIA 2 Feb 1968	Tet 68
David, George			

Davidson, Marion - CPT	69		
Davis, Alfred L. - PFC	66	KIA 27 Dec 1966	Hoa Hoi, LZ Bird
Davis, Brian - SGT	68-69		
Davis, Clarence R. - PFC	67-68		
Davis, Dennis W.	Jun 70-Apr 71		
Davis, Elmer A. - PFC	68-69		
Davis, Gilmer W. - SP4	64-66		
Davis, Paul			
Davis, Robert L., Jr. - SGT	64-66		
Davis, Thomas B., Jr. - SP4	64		
Davis, Thomas R. - SGT	66-67		On LZ Bird
Davis, Wayne L. - 1LT	64-66		
Davis, William A. - PFC	67-68		
Davis, William H. - SSG	67		
Deamer, Dana A. - PFC	67-68		
Dean, Thomas J., Jr. - SGT	Aug 67-Sep 68		
Decourcy, Dean			
Deets, Michael J. - SGT	Dec 66-Dec 68		On LZ Bird
Degma, Harold - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Dehnert, Edward J. - SSG	66-67		On LZ Bird
Delaney, Patrick J. - SP4	68-69		
Delaney, Robert J. - PFC	70		
Delgado, Angel - SGT	67-68		
Demby, William L. - PFC	67		
Denis, Clifford W. "Pineapple"	68-69		
Dent, Michael E. - PFC	66	KIA 17 Dec 1966	Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley
Dentino, Merle A. - SGT	69-70	KIA 30 Jun 1970	
Devane, Demetris R. - SGT	66	WIA 17 Dec 66	506 Valley
Devon, David - SP4	71		
Diaz, Alberto	69-71		
Diemer, John F. - PFC	67		
Dierking, Roger	70		
Diggles, Robert L. - SP4	64-66		
Dill, Garvin W. - SGT	69-70	KIA 25 May 1970	
Dill, Michael O. - PFC	67		
Dilliard, Ivano - PFC	65-66		Hoa Hoi
DiMartino, Joseph - SGT	67-68		
Dixon, Dana L. - PFC	64		
Doak, Stanley W. - PFC	69	KIA 28 Sep 1969	
Dobson, Wayne E. - SP4	68		
Doss, Lorenzo M. - CPT	66		
Dotson, Linwood R. - PFC	66		Hoi Hoa

Doty, Vaughn O. - SP4	68-69	KIA 13 Jan 1969	
Dovie, Anthony F.	1969		
Dowd, William E. - SP4	66-67		On LZ Bird
Dowling, Chester C. - SP5	66-67		
Downs, James L. - PFC	70	KIA 7 Mar 1970	
Dreamer, Dana A. - PFC	67-68		
Dreste, Mark - SP4	68		
Dreyer, William M. "Doc" - SGT	68	WIA 11 Dec 1968	
Driggers, Robert J. - PVT2	65-66		
Drummond, Austin L. - SP4	65-66	KIA 21 May 1966	LZ Hereford
DuBose, Benjamin W., Jr. - PFC	65-66		Hoa Hoi
Dugger, Howard O. - SGT	64		
Dunbar, William - SP4	66-67		On LZ Bird
Dunckley, Richard -	67-68		
Dunn, Teddy R. - SGT	67	KIA 31 May 1967	An Qui
Dunn, William F.	69		
Dunning, Edgar L. - PFC	67		
Durborow, Jim	70		
Durham, Samuel R. - SP4	67	KIA 9 Jun 1967	
Durkot, Michael L. - PSG	67-68	WIA 16 Dec 67	
Dycus, Loyd - SP4	70		
Dyer, Richard A. "The Lion"	71	WIA 29 Oct 1971	
Easley, Samuel H., II	67-68	KIA 28 May 1968	
Eckles, James P. - CPL	69	KIA 12 Aug 1969	
Edens, John P. - SP4	67		
Edge, Ron "Doc" - SP4	68-69		
Edison, Henry R. , Jr.			
Edmison, William R. - 1LT	66		
Edwards, James W. - SSG	65-66		
Egan, Greg - SP4	70		
Ehlers, Charles	May 68-May 69		
Ehrlich, Ted	69		
Elder, Eugene - CPL	68-69	KIA 6 Mar 1969	
Ellerman, Gary R. - SGT	67-68	KIA 11 May 1968	
Elliot, Julius			
Elliot, Peter J. - SGT	70 - 71		
Emenhiser, Edward C.	70-71		
Ennis, James E. "Doc" - SP4	66-67		On LZ Bird
Enyeart, Robert - SGT	68-69		
Erwin, Hubert A. - PFC	66	KIA 27 Dec 1966	On LZ Bird
Esposito, John B. - PFC	68-69	WIA 11 Dec 1968	
Esquivel, Gilbert	71-72		

Estrada, Frank W. - 1LT	Jun 68- Jun 69		
Eubanks, Nolan R.	66		
Evans, Jerry T. - SGT	67-68	KIA 4 May 1968	
Evering, Fritz L. - SGT	May 68-Sep 68		
Everston, Norman - 1LT	68-69		
Fain, Edward W. - SP4	66-67		Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley
Fanning - SSG	66-67		On LZ Bird
Farnsworth, David			
Fatla, Casimer J. - SGT	70 - 71		
Faulk, Gary L. - SP4	69-70		
Faulk, Samuel			
Faust, Reginald - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Fawcett, James S. - SGT			
Ferebee, John			
Fickling, James G.	66		
Finney, Roy	70		
Fischer, Gregory James - SP4	66	KIA 27 Dec 1966	Hoa Hoi, LZ Bird
Fitz, Leo L. - SSG	64		
Fleming, Russell W. - SGT	67-68		
Fletcher, Charles - SGT	May 67-May 68		An Qui, Tam Quan, Tet 68
Flint	71-72		
Florey, Robert A. - PFC	67		
Foley, Thomas "Doc" - SP4	66		
Fontanez-Marcado , Angel	68	WIA 11 Dec 1968	
Foote, Terry L. - SP4	66-67		Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, Bird, An Qui
Ford, David - 1LT	68		
Ford, James E., Jr. - PFC	70		
Forrest, Charles			
Forrest, Darrell - SP4	68		
Forry, Keith A., SP4	Feb 70 - Dec 70		
Fort, William T. - PFC	67-68		
Forte, Willie			
Foster, Aaron - SGT	67-68		Tam Quan, Tet 68
Fowler, Thomas L. - SGT	69	KIA 14 Aug 1969	
Fox, Thommy L. - SP4	70 - 71		
Franklin, Alvin	66		
Fredrick, Servert - SP4	66		Hoa Hoi
Freeman, Collie "Heavy"	70		
Freitas, Anthony W. - PFC	66-67		
Friedrich, Richard - 1LT	70		
Frizzette, Louis F. - SP4	66-67		Hoa Hoi, LZ Bird
Fuentes, Martin A.	67-68		

Gaertner, Harold J. - SGT	69-70		
Gaines, Charles A. - SGT	65-66	KIA 21 May 1966	LZ Hereford
Galloway, Dennis M. - PFC	68	WIA 22 Oct 1968	
Gamble, Charles			
Gancoe, Ross M. - PFC	67-68		
Garacz, Robert - SGT	69-70		
Garcia	71-72		
Garcia, Gerald - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Garrett, Albert - SGT	66		Hoa Hoi
Garski, Kenneth J. - SGT	69-70	KIA 28 Mar 1970	
Garvin, Donald	66-67	WIA 17 Dec 66	Hoa Hoi, LZ Bird, An Qui
Garvin, Enos V. - SP4	66-67		Hoa Hoi, LZ Bird
Gary, Richard - SP4	66	WIA 17 Dec 66	506 Valley
Garza, Henry "Doc"	68		
Gasper, John F. - PFC	64		
Gassman, Walter R. - SP4	65-66		
Gauthier, Kenneth - SP4	68-69	WIA 11 Dec 1968	
Geduldick, Thomas M. - SGT	66-67		Hoa Hoi, LZ Bird
Geiger, Garry R. - SP4	70 - 71		
Gennocro, Anthony A. - SP4	64		
Gerding, Michael	Feb 69-Dec 69		
Gergely, Dezso "Frank" - SGT	65-66		
Gestes, Johnny W. - SGT	70 - 71		
Gilbreath, Luther V. - SSG	64		
Gillian, Clayton - SP4	68-69	WIA 11 Dec 1968	
Gilliespie, John R.			
Glembocki, Thadeus - SP4	64		
Glenn, Michael C. - PFC	Oct 66-Aug 67	WIA 18 Aug 1967	
Glover, Albert, Jr. - SSG	64-66		
Goff, Larry P. - SP4	66-67		On LZ Bird
Goldberg, Howard Stanley - PFC	66	KIA 27 Dec 1966	On LZ Bird
Gomez, Jessie Y. - SGT	66	KIA 17 Dec 1966	506 Valley
Goode	67		
Gordish, John			
Gouley, Calvin, - SP4	May 67-May 68		Tam Quan, Tet 68
Grady, Larry W. - SP4	64		
Graham, Armand Roy - PFC	66	KIA 27 Dec 1966	On LZ Bird
Grainger, James Richard - SP4	64-66		
Grandstaff, Wesley			
Grant, Andy - PFC	69		
Grant, Ezelle - SGT	66		Hoa Hoi
Graves, Garry A. - PFC	67-68		

Graves, Harvey L. - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Greao, John A. - SP4	64-66		
Greathouse, Julius, Jr. - SSG	66	KIA 17 Dec 1966	Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley
Grecco, John F. - 1LT	64-65		
Green, Anthony C.	68		
Green, Nat	70		
Greene, Freddie - SP4	68	KIA 22 Jun 1968	
Greene, Richard D. - PFC	65-66		
Greenwell, Ralphael "Bugs"	68		
Gregory, Ernest R. - SSG	64-66		
Gregory, James	65-66		
Griffin, William W. - SP4	68-69		
Grigg, Donald E. - CPT	66-67		
Grizzard, William E.			
Gross, James - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Guillen, Joseph J. - PFC	65-66		
Guillen, Salvadore - SP4	68-69		
Guitierrez, Theodore	66		Hoa Hoi
Gully, Sherman - SSG	65-66		
Gutzan, Walter F. - SGT	66-67	WIA 31 May 1967	An Qui
Hackney, Tate Talmage - SSG	67-68	KIA 22 Jun 1968	
Hager, John - SP4	68-69		
Hagler, Ralph L., Jr. - 1LT	67		
Halderead, Donavon - SP4	69		
Hall, Brownie - SSG	66	Died 23 Dec 1966	Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley
Hall, Douglas - SP4	66		Hoa Hoi
Hall, Earl - SP4	65-66		
Hall, Steven - SP4	68		
Halverson, James H. - SP4	67		
Hambrick, Harold M. - SSG	64	KIA 10 Oct 1965	
Hamilton, Norman			
Hamrick, David - PFC	65-66		
Hansen, Larry W. - SSG	70 - 71		
Harder, Edward J. - SP4	67-68		
Harding, William P.			
Harper, Anthony "Tony" - SP4	70		
Harrell, James - PFC	70		
Harrington, Paul L. - SP4	66-67		
Harrington, Robert A. - SGT	68-69		
Harris, Bobby R. - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Harris, Eddie - SP4	66-67		
Harris, Terry - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi

Harrison, John T. - PFC	Oct 65-Oct 66		
Harrison, Paul J. - SP4	66	KIA 21 May 1966	LZ Hereford
Hartman - CPT	68		
Harwell, Randy W. - SP4	67-68	WIA 12 Jul 68	
Harwood, Richard T.	66-68		
Hattabaugh, Paul R. - SGT	64-66	KIA 2 Apr 1966	
Hayes, Prentice - SP4	May 67-May 68		An Qui, Tam Quan
Hayes, Prentice - SP4	67		
Heal, Gerald E. - SGT	67-68	WIA 16 Dec 67	Tam Quan
Heard, Billy - SP4	Feb 67-Feb 68		
Heath, Larry E. - SGT	Aug 67-Aug 68	Tam Quan, Tet 68	
Hedrick, Billy - SP4	May 67-May 68		
Hellams, Roger H.	67-68		
Henley, Daniel J. - 1LT	68		
Henley, Gary L.			
Hennen, Peter R. - SGT	68-69		
Hernandez, Emil G. - SP4	65-66		
Heyward, Bergall - SP4	66		Hoa Hoi
Higby, Donald J. - SSG	Apr 68-Sep 68		
Higgins, Michael	69-70		
Hilliard, Terry L. - PFC	65-66		
Hillis, Charles R. - 1SGT	67		
Hine, Gary R. - SGT	70 - 71		
Hinkle, Richard W. - SP4	65-66		
Hirst, Tom - SP4	1970		
Hixon, Randall Lee - PFC	66	KIA 27 Dec 1966	On LZ Bird
Hoban, Paul E.	71		
Hodges, Richard C. - 2LT	67-68		
Hogan, Dennis F. - SGT	66-67		On LZ Bird
Holder, Lawrence "Doc"	66		
Holderread, Donavon "Ski" - SGT	Feb 69-Feb 70		
Holees, Geredith - PFC	65-66		
Holleman, Rupert, Jr. - SP4	Feb 68-72		
Holmes, John M. L.	65-66		
Holt, James - CPL	68	KIA 6 Jun 1968	
Hood, James R. - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Hood, Wallace W. - SGT	64-66		
Hooks, Dennis R. - SP4	66-67	KIA 16 May 1967	Hoa Hoi
Hoover, Charles V. - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Hoover, Clyde A. - PFC	70		
Hopkins, David	Dec 65-Dec 66		
Hopkins, John J. - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi

Horin, Dennis R. - SP4	May 67-May 68		
Horton, Willard D. - PSG	67		Hoa Hoi
Houston, Darrel G. - CPT	66	WIA 17 Dec 66	Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley
Houston, R. C. "Clint"	67		
Hoyt, Larry - SGT	66		Hoa Hoi
Hubbard, Carl - 1LT	66		
Hubbs, Michael - SSG	68		
Huffman, Richard L. - PFC	67		
Hugelier, Gordon V. - PFC	67		
Huger, Richard L. - SP4	65-66		
Hundley, Bill L., Jr. - SP4	66-67		
Hunt, John E.			
Hurley, Glynn - PFC	65-66		
Hurst, Jake E. - SGT	68	KIA 11 Dec 1968	
Husarsky, Morris - PFC	70		
Hutsell, John R. - SP4	67-68		
Hutting, Michael T. - PFC	67	WIA 31 May 1967	An Qui
Hyatt, Claudie L. - SGT	64-66		
Ibanez, Mario A. - SP4	66-67		Hoa Hoi, LZ Bird
Infanzon-Colon, Ramiro			
Jackson, Cornelius - SGT	66-67		Hoa Hoi
Jackson, Handy - SP4	64-66		
Jackson, Jerome - SP4	64		
Jackson, Oliver S.	63-65		
Jackson, Paul Gray - PSG	66	KIA 27 Dec 1966	Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, On LZ Bird
Jackson, William "Bojack" - SP4	64-66		
Jaimez, Eugenio "Doc" - PFC	66-67		On LZ Bird
james, Ivan			
James, James	68		
Jarrell, Gary W.	68-69		
Jasmin, Craig A. - SP4	66		Hoa Hoi
Jenkins, Bobby R. - PFC	66	WIA 17 Dec 66	506 Valley
Jenkins, Charles W., Jr. - PFC	64-66		
Jenkins, Gary T. - PVT2	65-66		
Jenkins, Murry A. "Doc" - SP5	65-67		Saddle, On LZ Bird
Jennings, Delbert O. - SSG	Jun 66-Jun 67		Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, On LZ Bird
Jensen, Thomas R. "Doc"	Jun 67-68	WIA 15 Dec 1967	Tam Quan
Jernigan, Ken	70		
Jewell, David P. - SSG	May 66-Dec 67	KIA 15 Dec 1967	Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, An Qui, Tam Quan
Jimeno, Luis - SP4	64		
Johansen, Donald G.	65-66		
Johanson, Richard - SGT	Jan 67-Jan 68		

Johnson, Bruce "Doc"	70		
Johnson, Comar A. - PSG	66-67		Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, LZ Bird
Johnson, Daniel, Jr., - SGT	66		Hoa Hoi
Johnson, Earl J. - SP4	67-68		
Johnson, Grover J. "Chief" - SGT	68-69		
Johnson, Isaac - SP5	65-66	WIA 21 May 1966	LZ Hereford
Johnson, Jack - SSG	65-66	KIA 31 Jan 1966	
Johnson, James L. - PFC	67	KIA 9 Jun 1967	
Johnson, John W.			
Johnson, Kenneth	68-69		
Johnson, Roosevelt - SP4	68-69		
Johnson, Thomas J. , Jr.	69-70		
Johnson, Thomas L - SP4	66		Hoa Hoi
Jones, Alvin - SP4	64		
Jones, Brian	68		
Jones, David E. - SP4	64-66		
Jones, Kenneth - SP4	68-69		
Jones, Percy G. - PFC	64		
Jones, Ronald M. - PFC	66-67		On LZ Bird
Jones, Roy - SP4	67-68		
Jones, Thomas G. "Poet" - SGT	68-69		
Jones, Thomas R. - SGT	64-66		
Jordan, William H. - SSG	Apr 68-Sep 68		
Joseph, Henry			
Judah, Manuel - SP4	66-67		On LZ Bird
Jurek, Dalmer D. - PSG	65-66	KIA 23 Feb 1966	Saddle
Karnis, Thomas - SGT	68		
Keating, Thomas E. - PFC	66-67		Hoa Hoi, LZ Bird
Keen, Charles E. - SP4	66-67		Hoa Hoi
Keilly, John P. - SP4	67		
Kell, Donald L. - 1LT	66		
Kelly, Fred W. - SP4	64		
Kelly, James C., Jr. - SP4	66-67		Hoa Hoi, LZ Bird
Kelly, Kenneth W. - SGT	May 68-Sep 68		
Kemph, William T. - Pvt E-2	66		Hoa Hoi
Kent, Roger T.			
Kepler, Samuel Reid - SP4	67-68		An Qui, Tam Quan, Tet 68
Killilea, Martin F. - SP4	65-66	KIA 16 Apr 1966	
Kimble, Joe A. - SP4	67-68		
Kinch, David	68		
Kines, Wade	66		Hoa Hoi
Kipfinger, David W. "Papasan" - SGT	Dec 67-Dec 68		

Kirby, Robert - PFC	66			
Kirby, Robert L. - SGT	65-66	WIA 21 May 1966	Saddle, LZ Hereford	
Kirby, Thomas W., Jr. - SP4	64			
Kirkpatrick, Ronald I. - PFC	65-66			
Knapp, William F., Jr. - SP4	65-66		Hoa Hoi	
Knight, Erv - SGT	70-71			
Kootsher, Marc H. - 2LT				
Koprivnikar, James J. - PFC	67	KIA 15 Dec 1967	Tam Quan	
Koreny, Paul				
Kosarko, Dennis	68	WIA 24 Dec 1968		
Krone, Charles V.				
Kuehn, Dale M. - PVT2	65-66			
Kuiper, John F. - PFC	67-68	KIA 2 Feb 1968	Tet 68	
Kuipher, John P. - PFC	67-68			
Lama, Anthony F. "Tony Baloney"	69			
Lamb, SSG	66			
Lane, George "Doc"	68	WIA 11 Dec 1968		
Langer, Michael F.	68-69			
Langley, Lester E. "Gene" - SP4	70-71			
Lapinski, Anthony A. - SP4	64			
Lariviere, Paul J. - SP4	64			
Larose, James - SGT	64			
Larsen, Bill L. - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi	
Larson, John G. - PFC	65-66	KIA 17 Dec 1966		Hoa Hoi, 506 Valle
Latham, James W. - PSG	66-67	WIA 27 Dec 1966	Hoa Hoi, LZ Bird	
Lathay, SFC	66			
Leach, Thomas				
Leaman, Robert E. - SP4	68-69	KIA 6 Mar 1969		
Leavitt, Peter J. - PFC	67			
LeFlore, Roosevelt - SSG	67			
Lentsch, Dennis A. - 1LT	67-68			
Leroy, Micheal - SP5	Sep 66-Sep 67			
Levine, Robert - PSG	67	KIA 15 Dec 1967	Tam Quan	
Lewis, Melvin R. - PFC	65-66			
Lewis, Owen L. , Sr. - SP4	65-66			
Lewis, Robert L. - SGT	64			
Lewis, Roger H.				
Lindquist, Robert E. - CPT	64-66			
Linkovic, Emery J. - PSG	67-68			
Linzy, Bruce R. - PFC	64-66			
Little, Richard J.				
Lloyd, Alexander				

Lloyd, George G. - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Lo, Kinborne - PFC	66-67		Hoa Hoi, On LZ Bird
Logan, Robert			
Long, Daniel - SP4	69-70		
Long, Lonnie A. - PFC	66-67		Hoa Hoi
Lopez, Frank A., Jr. - SP4	66-67		
Lord, Bill - CPT	65-66		
Lotwick, John R. "Jack"			
Love, Major	68		
Love, William D. - PFC	65-66		
Lowe, Earnest	67-68	KIA 15 Oct 1968	
Lowenstein, Jerry L.	67		
Lusk, Gary S. - SP4	66		Hoa Hoi
Lybarger, Scott A. - PFC	66	WIA 17 Dec 66	Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley
Lynn, James E. - PSG	67	KIA 15 Dec 1967	Tam Quan
MacCartney, Bruce F. - SP4	66-67		Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, LZ Bird
MacLennan, Fred E. - SGT	70 - 71		
Mack, Harold, Jr. - PFC	65-66	KIA 21 May 1966	LZ Hereford
Madison, John B. - SSG	67-68	KIA 19 Feb 1968	Tet 68
Maldonado-Aguilar, Benjamin - SP4	68-69	KIA 5 Feb 1969	
Mallory, Phillip H. - CPT	67-68		
Mancum, Joe R. - SSG	67-68		
Maness, Arward L.	66-67		
Manous, Harvey W. - 1SG	66-67		
Mariano, Dave	66-67		
Marks, Ira "Doc"	68		
Marquez-Gonzalez, Alajandro - PSG	64-66		
Marsala, Christopher	67-68		
Marshall, Willie J. - SP4	68-69	KIA 13 Jan 1969	
Martin, Adam - PVT	64		
Martin, Donald - SGT	66	WIA 17 Dec 66	Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley
Martin, Eddie L. - SP4	64		
Martin, Elwood L. - PFC			
Martin, Michael A. - PFC	Jun 65 - Jul 66		
Martin, Robert O.	Jun 65 - May 66		
Martin, William R. - SP4	Dec 65-Nov 66		Saddle, Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley
Mason, Charles E. - PFC	67-68		
Mason, Jimmy C. - PFC	70		
Massey, Charles D. - SSG	66		Hoa Hoi
Mast, Rick	69		
Mata, Mario G. - PFC	65		
Matarazzo, Steven - CPL	67	KIA 15 Dec 1967	Tam Quan

Matson, David E.			
Matte, Phillip - SGT	67-68		
Matteson, Spencer - SP4	May 66 - May 67		Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, LZ Bird
Matthews, Larry L. - SP4	70 - 71		
Mauiga-Ortiz, William - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
May, Brian Franco			
Maynard, Jesse			
Mazzamuto, Antony - SP4	70 - 71		
McAndrew, James H. - SP4	66-67	WIA 27 Dec 1966	Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, LZ Bird
McAndrews, Duane E. - SP4	67-68		
McAteer, Kenneth - SP4	70-71		
McCain, Gerry W. - PFC	65-66		
McCall, Donald R. - SGT	70 - 71		
McCallister, Benard A. - SSG	64-66		
McCardy, Donald L. - PFC	67		
McCarthy, Gary L.- SP4	67-68		
McCarthy, Mark			
McCarthy, William J.			
McClellan, Robert	68		
McClellan, Robert - 1LT	65-66		
McClemore, Robert	69		
McClung, Ronald G. - SGT	68-69		
McCray, Charles L. - PSG	65		
McDaniel, Richard H. - PFC	63-65		
McDonald, Sylvester D. - PFC	67-68		
McDowell, Henry			
McDowell, Robert - SP4	68-70		
McGinn, John J., Jr. - SP4	Sep 66-Sep 67		Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, LZ Bird
McIntosh, John H. - PFC	65 -66		
McKelvey, William B. - SGT	64-66		
McKeown, William G. - SP4	Aug 66-Dec 66	WIA 17 Dec 66	Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley
McLeany, Lawrence G. - PFC	66-67		On LZ Bird
McMillan, Donald F. - CPT	64-66	KIA 2 Apr 1966	
McMurren, William - PVT	66		Hoa Hoi
McMurray, Levaniel	Aug 66-Aug 67		
McQuinn, John J. - PFC	66-67		On LZ Bird
Means, Dwight L. - SP4	66		Hoa Hoi
Meirsch, Van	70		
Mekrut, Joseph A. - PFC	65-66		
Meloy, Guy S. - LTC	71		
Mendietta, Jose E.	68-69		
Menefee, James A. - SP4	64		

Menzel, William R. - SP4	Nov 65-Nov 66		
Merritt, Edward J. - SGT	65-66		
Merritt, Richard H. - SSG	66-67		On LZ Bird, An Qui
Mers, Joe	69		
Metz, Clifford T. - SGT	May 67 - May 68		An Qui, Tet 68
Mielke, Ronald E. - SP4	67-68		
Miles, Donald E. - PFC	66		
Miles, Elijah, Jr. - SP4	68	KIA 11 Dec 1968	
Millard, Elton	68		
Miller, Clifford L. - SGT	Dec 65 - May 67		Saddle, Hoa Hoi
Miller, Errol W. - SP4	65-66		Saddle, Hoa Hoi
Miller, James "Doc" - SP4	66		
Miller, Leroy - SSG	66		Hoa Hoi
Miller, Michael L.			
Miller, Rex E. - SP4	67-68		
Miller, Ted - SGT	70		
Miller, Thomas B. - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Minter, James E. - SP4	65-66		
Mitchell, Arthur O. - SGT	70 - 71		
Mitchell, Chuck "Water Buffalo"	70-71		
Mitchell, Patrick J.	70		
Moder, William J. - PFC	66-67	WIA 31 May 1967	On LZ Bird, An Qui
Mohn, Laurance R., Jr. - SP4	69	KIA 14 Aug 1969	
Money, William W. - SGT	66-67	KIA 31 May 1967	On LZ Bird, An Qui
Monsson, George N. - 1LT	70-71		
Moore, Denver S. - SP4	65-66		Hoa Hoi
Moore, James, Jr. - PFC	65-66	KIA 2 Apr 1966	
Moore, Simon D. - PFC	70		
Moran, Michael J. - SGT	May 68-May 69		
Mordue, Norman A. - 1LT	Jan 67-Jun 67	WIA 31 May 1967	An Qui
Morgan, - PFC	65-66		
Morgan, Willie "Buster" - SGT	67-68	WIA 31 Jan 1968	Tam Quan, Tet 68
Morkle	71-72		
Morphy, John K.			
Morris, Jack, Jr. - SP4	66-67		An Qui
Morris, Jerry W.	66		506 Valley
Mortenson, William J.	Dec 67- Dec 68		
Muller, Clifford L. - SP4	65-66		Hoa Hoi
Mulwee, Isaiah, Jr. - PFC	66	KIA 23 Feb 1966	Saddle
Muniz, David - 1LT	65 -66		
Murnieks, Peter - SP4	67-68		
Murphy, Charles - SFC	Apr 68-Sep 69		

Murphy, Edward L. - PFC	67-68		
Murphy, William - SGT	Jul 67-Sep 68		
Murphy, William J.	May 67-Jun 69		
Murray, Thomas B. - SP4	Jul 66-		
Musgrove, Donald B. - SP4	65-66		
Myers, John H. - PFC	64		
Myers, Robert N. - PFC	64-66		
Nadeau, Harold B. - PVT	66	KIA 17 May 1966	LZ Hereford, Hoa Hoi
Naile, Thomas G. - PFC	67	Died 28 Oct 1967	
Nalley, Paul W. - SSG	65-66		
Nata, Mario G. - SP4	66		
Neace, Dennis - SGT	67	KIA 31 May 1967	An Qui
Nelson, Darwyn N. - SP4	67-68		
Nelson, William T. - SP4	May 67-May 68	WIA 31 May 1967	An Qui
Netzke, Surray - SP4	Feb 67-Feb 68		
Newsome, L. S., Jr. - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Nibbelink, Alvin - SP4	Feb 67-Feb 68		An Qui
Nicholas, Tommy L. - PFC	66	KIA 23 Feb 1966	Saddle
Nielson, Carl - SP4	68		
Nienhuis, John P. - SP4	67		
Norman, Joseph L. - SSG	64-66		
Norris, Jerry W. - SP4	66	KIA 17 Dec 66	Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley
Nunley, James E. - SP4	66	KIA 27 Dec 1966	Hoa Hoi, LZ Bird
O'Connor, Joseph P.	Aug 70-		
Odefey, Gerald D. "Gerry" - SSG	68-69		LZ Cindy
Odum, Theodis - PFC	64		
Oguma, Masao Jr. - SSG	65-66		Hoa Hoi
Ohnstad, Arnold - SP4	68-69		
O'Keefe, Joseph "Doc"	67-68		Tam Quan, Tet 68
Oliver, Allen, Jr. - SGT	64		
Oliver, Eddie Jr. - PFC	67	WIA 31 May 1967	An Qui
Olsen, Deane - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Ortiz, Nelson - PFC	65-66		
Ortiz-Colon, Ulises - PFC	65-66	KIA 29 Oct 1966	Hoa Hoi
Osborne, David William - SSG	66-67 & 69-70	KIA 23 Aug 1970	Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, LZ Bird, An Qui
Osborne, Earl H.- SP4	Nov 67-Nov 68		Tam Quan, Tet 68
Otter, Frank - SFC	65-66		
Owen, Thomas L. - PFC	66		
Paczkowski, Ronald			
Padovan, Terry - SP4	Sep 70-		
Pana, Lewis A. - SSG	67	WIA 31 May 1967	An Qui
Pangborn, Frank - 1LT	Dec 69 - 70		

Parr, Roland R. - CPT	Jan 67-Jun 67		
Patterson, Donald L. - SP4	67		
Paulson, Clifford D. - PFC	66-67	WIA 31 May 1967	Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, An Qui
Peace, Donnie - SP4	66-67	WIA 31 May 1967	Hoa Hoi, An Qui
Peasley, Gary Wayne - SP4	66	KIA 27 Dec 1966	Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, LZ Bird
Pelkey, Edmund C. - PFC	65-66		
Pena, Elroy C. - SGT	Aug 65-Nov 65		
Pender, James T. - PFC	66	WIA 2 Oct 1966	Hoa Hoi
Perez-Ortega, William - SGT	64-66		
Perry, Benjamin A. - SP4	64-66		
Person, Alphonso L. - PFC	65-66		
Pesmer, Daniel R. - PFC	66		
Peters, Wallace H. "Wally" - SGT	Jun 68-Jun 69		
Petrovich, Walter D. - SGT	65-66		Saddle, Hoa Hoi
Pezzuti, Gary W. - SP4	67-68		
Pfeifer, Richard E. - SGT	66-67		
Phillips, John			
Pierce, Cecil E. - PFC	65-66		
Pierce, Robert V. - 1LT	Jan 68-Sep 68		
Pierce, William V.	68		
Pilling, Vernon C. "Chowdy"	Nov 68-69		
Plowden, Carroll A. - PFC	67-68		
Polaczyniec, Gerald - PFC	67-68		
Poland, Harry T. - PFC	66	KIA 17 Dec 1966	506 Valley
Pollard, Gerald R., Jr.	70	KIA 1 Apr 1970	
Poolaw, Pascal Cleatus, Jr.	66-67	WIA 15 Feb 1967	Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley
Post, Daniel G. - SP4	66	KIA 21 May 1966	LZ Hereford
Postema, Thomas D. - 1LT	Aug 69-Dec 69		
Potter, Donald R. - PFC	66-67		On LZ Bird
Potts, Glen L. - SP4	70 - 71		
Pou, Ronald E. - SP4	64-66		
Powell, Elmer J. - PFC	66-67		On LZ Bird
Powell, Larry E. - SP4	68-69		
Powers, Archie B. - PFC	65-66		
Powers, Kevin	69-70		
Pozman, Alexander, Jr. - 1LT	68	KIA 11 Dec 1968	
Pratt, John J. - PFC	67-68		
Prevette, Ralph J. - SSG	66		
Pritchard, Richard G.	70		
Proehl, Paul A. - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Proulx, Thomas L.	65-66		Hoa Hoi
Provost, Vincent A. - 1SG	66		

Quinn, John M. - SGT	65-66	KIA 31 Jan 1966	
Radcliffe, Robert F. - 1LT	Jan 67-Jan 68		An Qui
Ramirez, - SGT	67-68		An Qui, Tam Quan
Ramirez, Jose G. - SGT	65-66		Hoa Hoi
Ramirez, Lorenzo	67-68	KIA 28 Jun 1968	
Ramos, Carlos G. "Showboat"	May 68-May 69		
Ranch, James - SGT	65-66		Hoa Hoi
Randes, James - SP4	70		
Rasmussen, Dennis J. "Torch" - SGT	May 67-May 68		Tam Quan, Tet 68
Ray, John L. - SP4	66-67		
Ray, Rufus - PFC	67	KIA 9 Jun 1967	
Raymond, John J. - SSG	66-67	KIA 15 Feb 1967	
Redmond, Steven L.	68		
Reed, Grady, Jr. - SP4	64-66		
Reed, Jack "Tex"	68		
Reed, Wilbert - CPL	69-70	KIA 29 Jan 1970	
Regalado, Rafael - SGT	65 - 67		Hoa Hoi
Register, Larry L. - SSG	66-67		On LZ Bird, An Qui
Reid, Anseimo F. - PFC	67-68		
Rembert, Henry - PFC	65-66		
Remer, Gregg A. - SP4	66-67		Hoa Hoi
Renfro, Ronald S. - PFC	66-67		506 Valley, LZ Bird
Reyes-Oquendo, Aniral - PFC	64-66		
Reynolds, Kenneth A. - PFC	64-66	KIA 23 Feb 1966	Saddle
Rhiddlehoover, Loyd P. - LTC	66-67		
Rhodes, Gary L. - SP4	63-66		
Richards, Jerry R.- SGT	Dec 67-Oct 68		Tam Quan, Tet 68
Richardson, James G. - PFC	66		
Richardson, Sidney - SGT	66		Hoa Hoi
Rickerson, James E. - PFC	67	KIA 31 May 1967	An Qui
Rickgauer, Blair E.			
Rieke, John L. - 1LT	66	WIA 27 Dec 1966	On LZ Bird
Riffle, Phillip	70-71		
Riley, George G. - PSG			
Ringrose, David E. - CPT	Jun 68-Aug 68		
Ritchie, Damon L.	67-68	KIA 31 Jan 1968	
Rivas, John H. - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Roach, Ralph E. - SP4	68	KIA 11 Dec 1968	
Robb, Albert J., Jr. - PFC	Jul 65-Dec 65		
Roberts, Jerry L. - SGT	65-66		
Roberts, Raymond E. - PFC	66-67		Hoi Hoa
Robertson, Glenn R. - PFC	67		

Robinson, Freddie L	66		Hoi Hoa
Robinson, Grover C. - 1LT	67		
Robinson, Herman - PFC	67-68		
Robinson, Joseph H. - SGT	64-66		
Roche, John D. - PSG	67	KIA 15 Dec 1967	Tam Quan
Rock, Richard S.	24289		
Rodgers, John J. - PFC	66-67		On LZ Bird
Roeder, Robert R. - PFC	65-66	WIA 21 May 1966	LZ Hereford
Rogers, Alan D. - PFC	67-68		
Roland, Wilson W. - PFC	65-66		
Romero, Ronald M. - SP4	68	KIA 11 Dec 1968	
Rone, James Robert Jr.- PFC	68	Died 1 Oct 1968	
Rosario	66		
Rose, Larry E. - PFC	66	KIA 2 Apr 1966	
Rosen, Phillip J. - SGT	66		
Roskowinski, Roman - SP4	64		
Ross, William L. - PFC	64		
Rossman, Harvey L. - SGT	67-68		
Rousseau, Richard J. - PFC	64 - 65		
Rowe, David R. - SP4	66-67	WIA 17 Dec 66	Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, LZ Bird, An Qui
Rozzelle, Daniel E. - SSG	66-67		Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, LZ Bird
Rubio - SP4	66-67		
Rudd, John M. - 1LT	66-67	WIA 17 Dec 66	Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley
Rudy, Carroll G. - SGT	65-66		
Ruhman, Dale			
Rumph, Edgar R. - PFC	64-66		
Ryza, Wayne D. - SP4	67	KIA 15 Dec 1967	Tam Quan
Sabine, Henry	67-68		
Sablan, Jesus E. - SSG	66-67	WIA 31 May 1967	An Qui
Salas, Felix - SSG	67-68		
Salazar, Orlando - SP4	66-67		On LZ Bird
Salazar, Richard R. - SGT	66-67		Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, LZ Bird
Samaniego, Daniel J.			
Samaniego, Jose L. - SGT	67-68		
Sambrano, Timoteo P. - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Samuel, Ronald F. - SGT	Aug 67-Aug 68	WIA 28 May 68	
Samuels, Victor - 1LT			
Sanchez, Frank - PFC	67-68		
Sanchez, Washington - 1LT	66		
Sander, Michael D. - CPL	67	KIA 15 Dec 1967	Tam Quan
Sanders, Ronald - SP4	68	KIA 22 Jun 1968	
Sandoval, James - PFC	65-66		Hoa Hoi

Sandretto, Michael J. - PFC	Aug 67-Jan 68		
Sato, Robert T. - PFC	67		
Sauers, Ron, Jr. "Shakey"	70-71		
Saunders, Ronald	68	25011	
Scallon, Robert - SP4	May 67-May 68		
Schlagenhaft, Patrick - PFC	66-67		On LZ Bird
Schlanaser, John T. - PFC	67-68		
Schmeltz, Jerry E. - PFC	66	KIA 27 Dec 1966	On LZ Bird
Schnackenburg, Thomas J.	66-67		On LZ Bird
Schneider, Ralph W. - SP4	66-67		On LZ Bird
Schroeder, Stephen P. - SGT	70-71		
Schwaninger, Joseph R.	Nov 68-Nov 69		
Schwebach, James - 1LT	67		
Schweicer, Lionel H. - SP4	67-68		
Scott, James - SP4	66-67		
Scott, Phillip B. "Scotty" - SGT	May 68-May 69		
Seal, Sidney S. - PVT2	65-66		
Seery, James E.	66-67		On LZ Bird
Seki, Edwin T. "Pineapple"	68-69		
Serr, Kenneth H. - PFC	66-67		Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, LZ Bird
Shabram, LeRoy "Roy the Boy"	68-69		
Shedrick, George J., Jr. - SP4	66-67		Hoa Hoi, An Qui
Sheehy, Ronald J. - PFC	66	KIA 27 Dec 1966	On LZ Bird
Sheffield, Walter L., Jr.	64-Aug 66		
Shelton, Joseph L. - SGT	Oct 66-Oct 67	WIA 27 Dec 1966	On LZ Bird
Shepherd, Edward - PSG	65-66	KIA 21 May 1966	LZ Hereford
Sherlock, James E. - SGT	May 67-May 68		
Sherrill, Billy R. - SP4	67-68		
Shine, Billy E. - 1LT	1970		
Shively John S. - SP4	66-67		Hoa Hoi
Shoemaker, Robert M. - COL	Jul 65-Dec 65		
Shropshire, Melvin - SSG	66		Hoa Hoi
Shubert, Daniel L. - SP4	66-67		Hoa Hoi
Shufford, Archie - PFC	66-67	WIA 27 Dec 1966	On LZ Bird
Signore, Max -	66-67		
Simmons, Alvin			
Simmons, Stephen K. - SP4	68-69		
Simon, Fred H. - 1LT	65-66		
Simoneaux, Roland - SGT	64-Jul 65		
Simpkins, Rick			
Sims, Clifford	68-69		
Sinkovits, Mike	66		

Skelly, Thomas D.	Jan 69-Jan 70		
Skipper, Hugh G.	66	KIA 27 Dec 1966	Hoa Hoi, LZ Bird
Skovran, William M. - PFC	67		
Smart, Marvin - SGT	Aug 67-Aug 68		Tam Quan, Tet 68
Smazniuk, Joseph F. - SGT	Nov 65-Nov 66		Hoa Hoi
Smith, Bobby W. - SP4	64		
Smith, Clifford			
Smith, David L. - PFC	65-66		
Smith, George P. - SP4	65-66		
Smith, Nathaniel - PFC	65-66		
Smith, Robert O., Jr. - SGT	66-67		Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, LZBird
Smith, Scott - SP4	67-68		
Smith, Terry H. - SGT	67-68	KIA 12 Jun 1968	
Smith, William H.	68		
Snyder, Joseph A.	Jul 65-Sep 66		
Snyder, Joseph H. "Jay" - 1LT	65-66		
Soale, Jerry - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Solomanor, Jose - PFC	64		
Sorell, Cleon H. - PFC	65-66		
Spalding, Charles			
Sparks, Henry, Jr. - PFC	64-66		
Spencer, Gerry - PFC	65-66		
Spencer, John - SP4	67-68		An Qui, Tam Quan, Tet 68
Spikes, A. V. - SP4	65 -66	KIA 21 May 1966	LZ Hereford
Spranza, John S., Jr. - SP4	65-66	WIA 21 May 1966	LZ Hereford
Spratt, Jeffery A. - SP4	Apr 68-Jun 69		
Springwater - SGT	70		
Stahley, David V. - SGT	May 68-Sep 68		
Stamey, Ronald			
Stanberry, Larry "Doc" -	70		
Staton, William R., Jr. - 1SG	63-66		
Steele, Minor T. - SGT	65-66		Hoa Hoi
Stenske, Robert E. - SP4	66		
Stephens, Jessie L. - SSG	65-66		
Stevens, Thomas A., Jr.	67-68	KIA 28 May 1968	Tam Quan, Tet 68
Stever, Michael J. "Mickey" - PFC	65-66		
Stewart, Allan M. - 1LT	68	WIA 22 Oct 1968	
Still, Jimmie D. - SP4	69-70	KIA 1 Jan 1970	
Stinson, George W. Jr. - PFC	66	KIA 17 Dec 1966	Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley
Stoffel, Lawrence G. "Larry"	Jun 68-Mar 69	WIA 6 Mar 1969	
Stone, Glenn F. - SGT	66		Hoa Hoi
Stotser, George R. - LTC			

Stotts, Richard - PFC	68		
Stout, H. William "Bill"	68-69		
Stout, Ronda R.			
Stovall, Elex - SP4	65-66		Hoa Hoi
Stremka, Tom	71-72	WIA 29 Oct 1971	
Strong, Calvin, Jr. - PFC	64		
Strovas, Louis - 1LT	66		
Stryker, Carl R. - SP4	66-67		Hoa Hoi
Stuckey, Charles - SP4	65-66	WIA 21 May 1966	Saddle, LZ Hereford
Studley, William F. - SP4	64-66		
Sucher, Thomas - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Suchy, William J. - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Sullivan, Eugene - PVT2	65-66		
Suor, David C.	67-68		
Sutherland, Dennis R. "Suds"	Apr 68-Apr 69		
Sutton, Robert L. - SP4	64		
Sveum, Monty			
Swain, Martell Jr. - SGT	Aug 65-Nov 66		
Swanger, Sidney E. - SP4	64		
Sweeney, Charles M. - PFC	65-66		Hoa Hoi
Szpakowski, Henri M. - SGT	65-66		
Talbott, Morton S.			
Tamayo, Joel - PFC	66	KIA 21 May 1966	LZ Hereford
Taste, Wade - PFC	66	KIA 21 May 1966	LZ Hereford
Taylor, Dwight D. - 1LT	1970		
Taylor, Marvin W. - SP4	68	WIA 11 Dec 1968	
Terry - SP4	66		
Terry, Charles G. "Reno"	70		
Thach, Billy J. - PFC	63-66		Saddle
Thom, Tom - SP4	70		
Thomas, Billy D. - SP4	68-69	KIA 7 Mar 1969	
Thomas, Billy L.	69	KIA 25 May 1969	
Thomas, Calvin A. - SP4	64		
Thomas, Edgar R. - PFC	65-66		
Thomas, Reginald M. - PFC	66	KIA 17 Dec 1966	506 Valley
Thomas, Richard G. - SP4	64-66	KIA 12 Feb 1966	
Thomas, William E. - PFC	66		
Thompson, Lawrence - PFC	66		
Thoms, Charles - PFC	67		
Thoms, William - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Tibbets, Robert J. - SSG	May 68-May 69	WIA 11 Dec 1968	
Tiernan, Michael			

Timlet, Alton - PFC	63-66		
Tokash, Thomas E. - SSG	65-66		
Tomlinson, Gordon "Gordy"	72		
Tostenson, Michael E. - PFC	67-68		
Totten, Larry D. - PFC	65-66		
Townsend, Benard J. III - SSG	66		
Tracey, Fred O. - SP4	70 - 71		
Trask, Harland - PFC	66	WIA 17 Dec 66	Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley
Travagliente, Michael - PFC	66	WIA 17 Dec 66	506 Valley
Travis, Charles V.	Feb 72-Jun 72		
Trotty, Henry H. - SSG	May 66-May 67		Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley
Troup, Craig - 1LT	70		
Truett, John R.	68-69		
Tuchner, Raymond R. - PFC	67	WIA 31 May 1967	An Qui
Tunnall, Stanley W. - SGT	Feb 67-Oct 67	Died 26 Oct 1967	An Qui
Turner, Larry A. - PFC	65-66		
Turner, William - SP4	66		Hoa Hoi
Tyree, Anthony H. - SP4	65-66		Hoa Hoi
Tyson, Wallace S. - LTC	Sep 71-Jun 72		
Uliano, Gary Lee - CPT	Feb 69-Aug 69		
Ulrich, James C. - 1LT	67	KIA 13 Feb 1967	
Underwood, Larry - SP4	66		Hoa Hoi
Underwood, Ronald E. - PFC	70	KIA 20 Jun 1970	
Uranga, Juan, Jr. - SP4	67-68		
Usher, James A. - CPL	65-66		
Usher, James E. - SGT	64		
Utt, Kurtis	Jul 71-Nov 71		
Vadakin, Donald K. - SP4	67-68	KIA 11 Dec 1968	
Vaitkus, Douglas - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Valles, Richard - SP4	Jun 67-Jun 68		Tam Quan, Tet 68
VanDan, Alan "Dad" SP4	Apr 68-Dec 68		
Vanderpool, Edward L. - SGT	68	KIA 24 Dec 1968	
VanDusen, Robert J. - PFC	65-66		
Vankirk, Michael - SGT	66		
Vann, James C. - SP4	66		Hoa Hoi
Vann, John H. - SP4	66-67		
Vanzandt, Roger E. - SP4	65-66		
Veilleux, Irving - SP4	66		Hoa Hoi
Vincente, Luis - SP4	May 67-May 68		
Vokish, Jerold A. - PFC	66-67	KIA 31 May 1967	On LZ Bird, An Qui
Volyes, James	70-70		
Wachter, Paul D. - SP4	Dec 67-Dec 68		Tam Quan, Tet 68

Wagaman, Ronald T. - SP4	64		
Walinski, Bernard G. - SP4	64		
Walker, Charles G. - PFC	65-66		
Walker, James W., Jr. - PFC	65-66		
Walker, Kenneth - SGT	68-69		
Walker, Kenneth A. - SP4	May 66-May 67		Hoa Hoi
Walker, Ricky D. - SGT	Jun 66-Jun 67		Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, LZ Bird
Walker, Tommy D. - SP4	67-68	KIA 9 Apr 1968	
Walker, Willie J. - SP4	68		
Wall, Al	70		
Wall, Robert J., Jr. - PFC	64-66		Hoa Hoi
Wallace, Ben F - SP4	67-68		
Wallace, Billy R.			
Wallace, Gregory C. - PFC	66		
Wallace, Jerald D. - 1LT	66	KIA 27 Dec 1966	On LZ Bird
Walling, Jerry L. - PFC	66-67		On LZ Bird
Walters, Eugene - SP4	68-69		
Ward, Jonah R. - PFC	66		Hoa Hoi
Warden, Douglas J. "Doug" - SSG	May 67-May 68		An Qui, Tam Quan, Tet 68
Warren, Donald F. - CPT	64-66		
Washburn, Ronald G. -	67-68		
Waskey, Charley - SGT	May 67-May 68		An Qui, Tam Quan, Tet 68
Water, Homer J. - PSG	67	WIA 31 May 1967	An Qui
Waters, Michael R. - SGT	69-70	KIA 30 Jun 1970	
Watson, Henry L. - SP4	67-68		
Watts, Alexander	68	WIA 11 Dec 1968	
Webster, George K.	70		
Webster, Gregory	70		
Webster, Richard W.	68-69		
Wells, Michael O. - PFC			
Wenzel, David F. - SP5	Jul 65-Jan 66		
West, Francis W. - SSG	Jan 67-Jan 68		
West, Jerome E. - PFC	65-66		
West, Willie	Jan 67-Jan 68		
West, Willie	68-69		
Westfall, Harry E. - SP4	66-67	WIA 27 Dec 1966	On LZ Bird
Whaley, Pat	71-72		
Whelchel, Jerry A. - SP4	66-67		Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, LZ Bird
Whitaker, Ivory J. - SP4	May 66-May 67		Hereford, Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, LZ Bird
White, Bobby C. - PFC	67-68		
White, Johnny			
White, Ulysses - PFC	66	Died 23 Dec 1966	Near LZ Bird

Whiteside, Billy J. - SP4	64-66		
Whitman, Larry D. - SGT	66-67	WIA 27 Dec 1966	Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, LZ Bird
Whitmore, William "Bill" - SP4	67-68		
Wilkos, Richard J. - PFC	67-68		
Wilkowski, David - SP4	Feb 67-Feb 68	WIA 15 Dec 1967	An Qui, Tam Quan
Willey, Steve "Doc"	70-71		
Williams, Cecil E. - PFC	65-66		
Williams, Clattius - SGT	65-66		
Williams, Franklin R. - SGT	64-66		
Williams, Harry A. - PVT2	65-66		
Williams, Jimmy - PFC	65-66		
Williams, Lonnie C. - PFC	65-66	KIA 21 May 1966	LZ Hereford
Williams, Randall			
Williams, Thomas O. "JunkWagon"	68		
Williams, Victor D. - PFC	71	KIA 29 Oct 1971	
Williams, Walter III - PFC	65-66		
Williams, Walter L. - PFC	65-66		
Willis, Billy J. - PFC	66		
Willis, Larry Joe - SP4	66	KIA 27 Dec 1966	Hoa Hoi, 506 Valley, LZ Bird
Wilson, David - SGT	68	KIA 12 Jun 1968	
Wilson, James - SP4	70		
Wilson, Marvin J. - PFC	65-66	KIA 23 Feb 1966	Saddle
Windham, James E., Jr. - SP4	65-66	KIA 6 Oct 1966	Hoa Hoi
Wizner, Peter			
Wizner, Robert			
Womack, Ronald L. - SGT	67-68		
Woodrow, Willie L. - SP4	67-68		
Woods, Donald - SP4	66-67	WIA 27 Dec 1966	On LZ Bird
Woods, Ray			
Word, "Doc"	67		
Wright, Michael L. - SGT	69-70	KIA 14 Jun 1970	
Yazzie, Joe L.	66-67		
Yorke, Donald J. - SP4	64		
Young, Daryel J. - PFC	68	KIA 22 Jun 1968	
Young, Darriel Rodney - SGT	Jan 70-Dec 70		
Youngblood, Boyd J. - PFC	68	KIA 21 Jun 1968	
Zander, Richard L. "Rick" - SP4	68-69		
Zawacki, Robert J. "Yamaha"	Feb 67 - Feb 68		
Zelle, Daniel E. - SSG	66		
Zeller, Albert F.			
Zukowski, Stanley B. - SP4	64		

Appendix A

The North Vietnamese newspaper, **Vietnam Courier**, published the Communist perspective about LZ Bird. It states the following:

South Vietnam, February 20, 1967 – Xuan Son Battle, A Position of U.S. First Air Cavalry Division Overrun in Record Time by the L.A.F. (Two U.S. Battalions and 1 Engineer Platoon Wiped Out, 11 105mm and 155mm Cannons Destroyed in 13 Minutes)

Xuan Son is located 22 kilometers southwest of Bon Son town. The 198 meter high Xuan Son hill lies close to the foot of Go Cong mountain. The hill stands alone and measures about 500 meters by each side. On the hill is only elephant grass. To the northeast of it is Go Cong mountain and in the three other directions there are the Luong and Kim Son rivers. One of the hillsides sloped off down to a river bank. There lay the field encampment of two battalions of the 2nd Air Mobile Cavalry Brigade freshly helilifted from the High Plateau. Their task was to conduct “search and destroy” operations to defend the outer perimeter for the puppet and Pak Jung Hi mercenaries to carry out “pacification” sweeps along Highway 1 from Bong Son southward to (the) Phu Cat district.

This brigade was one of the two air mobile cavalry brigades which had been sent from Binh Dinh to Pleiku in November 1966 to rescue the American troops who were getting battered along (the) On December 17, 1966 the L.A.F. wiped out another battalion and two companies composed of more than 700 G.I.’s of the First Air Mobile Cavalry Division during an ambush at Loc Giang about 10 kilometers east of Kim Son valley. The 2nd Cavalry Brigade was again flown from the Western High Plateau to Kim Son valley and stations on Xuan Son Hill.

The U.S. commanders disposed their forces on the hill in a circular defensive line which, added to the favorable terrain bristling with many natural obstacles, made the access difficult for the L.A. F. They posted their infantry on the outer perimeter and their artillery and C.P. in the center of the hill. To the southwest was the C.P. of the artillery battalion composed of a 2 gun battery with a total of 11 105mm and 155mm cannons planted in the north. The C.P. of the infantry battalion was in the east. In the northwest outside the infantry positions and close to the Luong river bank was a helicopter landing ground. The fortifications and sandbagged shelters were constructed in the pattern of a temporary field encampment.

The Xuan Son positions moreover received direct support from two artillery positions in Tan Thanh and Kim Son, respectfully, four and six kilometers away.

In such a vantage position protected on all sides by mountains and rivers, the U.S. commanders thought they were immune from any adverse surprise attack.

However, in a short while after the American troops had been helilifted to Xuan Son, all preparations of the L.A.F. were completed and on December 26 night they left their regroupment base Xuan Son.

Every Liberation fighter was stirred by the same iron determination to wipe out the aggressors although they knew that the enemy was encamped in a well-defended position. At 0019 hour on December 27 the shock units came close to the outer defense lines of the enemy and gradually set up an invisible noose. After the commanders had inspected all the units for the last time, from the C.P. installed right behind the shock forces came the order for attack. It was 1 AM.

It was pitch dark and the rain beat an incessant staccato on the tree foliage. Suddenly there came the thunderous roar of cannons and the flare-up of shell explosions illuminated a whole region around Xuan Son hill. Volley after volley of whizzing cannon shells burst on the camp of the aggressors.

A sea of fire suddenly descended upon the American troops huddled in their tents. No reaction was possible. Many units were cut to pieces right in the first boom of canons. Others ducked low to avoid the torrents of fire. The first shells hit the C.P. of the infantry and artillery battalions in the center; at the third minute of the shelling, they were completely paralyzed. The radio transmitter was blown up before it could call for help. The U.S. commanders were killed in their prefabricated concrete foxholes before they could give any order. Many U.S. artillerymen lay writhing right under their cannons and were quickly charred by the flaming tents.

Immediately after the guns ceased roaring, the shock units of the L.A.F. made their appearance, firing their submachine guns and hurling grenades at the enemy troops who were screaming. They it was the job of the bayonet fighters to finish off the remnants. Like three sharp knives, the three prongs of shock units quickly wiped out the enemy in three key defense positions and held the battleground under their control. The flags of the N.F.L. flutter here and there. It was now the 8th minute of the attack.

Meanwhile, the L.A.F. units charged with neutralizing the enemy infantry in the outer perimeter continued to close in and wiped out one group of the enemy after another. The enemy's resistance proved hopeless. A detachment of Battalion X made a thrust into the helicopter strip. The U.S. troops fell back and taking shelter behind sandbagged fortifications fired back with their machine guns. But immediately the L.A.F. battalion commander ordered a gunner to silence it with a direct hit. The L.A.F. infantrymen then rushed forward and occupied the helicopter strip, destroyed three craft and engaged in a hand-to-hand combat with the last pocket of resistance of the enemy infantry sheltering nearby. After 5 minutes, all the most stubborn GI's were wiped out. By then the other shock units had also accomplished their tasks.

At 0113 hours, the L.A.F. had gained complete control of the battleground. The bodies of American troops littered the ground at the feet of L.A.F. shock fighters. The tents continued to

burn. In the glow lay the crumpled mass of wrecked cannons and trucks. The acrid smell of blazing petrol filled the damp air.

Thus ended with 13 minutes one of the most successful surprise attacks. Only then did a few L.19 fighters and dragon ships turn up, dropping flares and firing wantonly because they had long lost all contact with the commanders on the ground.

Not until the L.A.F. had withdrawn after having captured a lot of weapons, did the commanders of the Air Mobile Cavalry Division learn of the disaster. They immediately ordered their pilots to shower bombs on the center of the hill to destroy any vestige of their bloody defeat, including the dead or wounded GI's on the ground.

Next morning, to save face, the commanders of the 1st Brigade of Cavalrymen headquartered in Tan Thanh landed a detachment in Gia Duc and Phu Thuan 10 or 12 kilometers northeast of Xuan Son allegedly to "pursue the Viet Cong."

But they found the Viet Cong main force nowhere, instead (they) fell into a battleground prepared by the regional L.A.F. and guerillas. No sooner had they landed from the helicopters and regrouped into combat formations than they were fired upon and lost 100 men on the spot. One helicopter was shot down. Many arms were seized, including two machine guns. Frightened, the Cavalrymen rushed back to their choppers and took to flight.

Not counting the enemy losses during this attack, in the 13 minute assault on Xuan Son hill alone, the L.A.F. killed or wounded 600 GI's, completely wiped out two battalions and a sapper platoon, destroyed 4 helicopters, eleven 105mm and 155mm cannons, two 81mm mortars, captured more than 50 guns, many radio transmitters and other military equipment.

The Xuan Son victory constituted a record of the L.A.F. tactics of swift attack and quick annihilation of enemy forces. It was also a clear indication of the inevitable failure of the U.S. and puppets' plan of bulking "enclaves" to carry out their "pacification" program."