

All Gave Some, Some Gave ALL!

By Paul Alfaro

10 April 1969 Tay Ninh area III corps Viet Nam
Dwight M. Durham, Team Leader (Awarded the Silver Star)
Paul I. Alfaro, ATL (Awarded the Silver Star)
Jim Nelson, RTO (Awarded the Bronze Star)
White, Front scout (Awarded the Bronze Star)
Bill Jolin, extra man (Awarded the Silver Star)
Loel Largent, Rear scout (Awarded the Silver Star)

I was assigned to team Three six as the ATL. The TL's name was Bull. There was Loel, Whitey from my old team and two cherries. Both Bull and Larry were short with just 24 and 25 days left in country. It was strange that they were still in the field, but I guess the CO had his favorites in the company. The TL did not say a lot. It might have been because he was short, and did not want to take the time to know me. Maybe he felt he was getting the short end of the stick from the CO. In fact he did not speak to me until the next day before our mission.

"I heard good things about you from Spanky. I think everything will work out okay." "I feel the same way, Bull." "Larry's my point man, he has been for twelve months. I hope you do not mind. " "Mind? Bull, you are the TL, not me. It's whatever you want." Tay Ninh was our next mission and because of all the action that was coming out of there I was a little apprehensive. "How do you want to work this?" "Well," as I spread out the map, "I thought if we landed over here we could work our way in towards this trail." "Let's not waste time. Let's just land next to the trail and go into the jungle right here" as he pointed with his finger on the map. I did not say a word. It was his team and he knew what he was doing. That night we spent at base camp I did not sleep much. In the morning we were inserted. As we ran into the tree line we saw the trail, it had not been used. Going in an additional 25 feet, we stopped. As we sat, out of the corner of my eye I saw movement. We then picked up after about ten minutes and moved farther into the woodline.

It was there, we found the real trail. As we moved down the trail we found foxholes with food and water next to them. The enemy had seen us come in and had moved back. I turned to look at the cherry. The weight of the pack was already making him fall behind. I then motioned for Bull to stop.

We continued to move slowly down the trail. As we came to a bend, they were waiting for us. Two of them were standing and not in position yet. I opened up on them with my M-16, placing my fire directly in their midsections. The initial return fire hit our radioman in the head. The bullet tore the left side of his skull exposing his brains. He fell forward. The rest of us had already hit the ground and were returning fire. Luckily we were in a small depression, so it was hard for the enemy to get a clear shot at us, even though we were only twenty feet from them. As I saw them move trying to get to a better position to fire at us, I put a round in them. We were fighting forty men, but they must have been raw recruits, because all of their rounds were going over our heads. At that moment the radio man started to moan. Bull stopped firing to help the radio man. He placed a bandage around his head, not to stop the bleeding but to keep dirt from getting into the wound. I didn't think it was possible for him to still be alive.

As he moaned the enemy increased the tempo of their fire and direction. We were helpless as we watched him and could not give him anything for the pain. We tried to talk to him. We screamed at him. We did everything but hit him to keep him alive.

I turned around and somehow Loel was behind me laying on the ground. The cherry was in the rear and dazed. He was not firing because we were in the front. Just then an RPG slammed into our position. "Cover our rear and get that man up." He looked at me not knowing what to do. I yelled at him to turn around to protect our rear in case the enemy tried to out flank us. I looked at Loel and saw a bullet hole in the right side of his head, just above his ear. I turned and saw that Bull also had a bullet hole above his ear. I yelled at the cherry to look for a sniper in the trees, and a red line appeared across his cheek.

He turned his head, "I see him. I see him. He is in the trees". "Well, shoot him, you asshole." He picked up the M-79 and shot just above the sniper. The explosion tore his head off and the body hung there. "I got him! I got him!" "Good. Now cover our rear!" Whitey was on the radio calling for an extraction team. Then the enemy decided to rush us. There were about ten of them and I think they wanted to take us alive. That was their mistake. I was shooting on instinct as I fired my rifle left to right they fell back, As if they hit an invisible wall. In that instance I realized, I was surrounded in total darkness. I was aware but had the strange sensation of floating without substance, moving towards a light. My first thoughts were of my parents, my brothers and sister. What is going to happen to them? Who is going to take care of them? The closer I floated towards the light, the brighter it became. I realized that this

was death. Any thoughts of my family did not matter anymore. My life was over and I was dead.

Death did not want me at that moment and I returned. It seemed like hours but it had only been a fraction on a second. I was still fighting. I reached down and turned the URC-10 on. (The URC-10 is a beacon or locator if left on for five minutes this was a code for the whole area to be bombed.) Whitey saw a woman in black reaching for him and was shooting at her. "I see death! I see death!" he yelled. "Whitey, get down you asshole! You are going to get hit." Then the enemy stopped firing and he sat down. "She is gone, Chief. She is gone." I knew they were going to attack us again, but from which direction? Whitey and I were the only ones fighting and had expended nearly all of our ammo. "Whitey, get Bull's ammo. You take the right side." I then stripped Loel of his ammo and got ready. "Talon three six, Talon three six, Blue Max two eight Lima." "Chief, Blue Max is on station." It had been 45 minutes of fighting and finally help had arrived. "Two eight Lima, I am sending up a star cluster to mark our location." "Three six, roger. Got star cluster, be there in a minute."

The enemy decided to attack us again. We were lucky that they did not change the direction and were still to our front. A B-40 RPG slammed into the trees behind us and two grenades landed five feet from me. The explosion was close, but Bull's body was in front of me and absorbed most of the concussion. "Those fucking gooks are throwing grenades at them. This is two eight Lima, where do you want me to fire?" "Lima this is three six, fire 360 degrees all around us." "Three six, how close?" "Lima, ten feet." "Three six, that's too close." "Lima, do not worry about us. Just get them off our back." "Three six, mark your position... OK, three six stand by." The helicopter began to dive and opened up with his mini-gun. The jungle cowered as the deadly rain bent the vegetation. Deliberately he began to encircle us with his fire. "How is that, three six?" "Closer, Lima, closer." The circle became smaller until the ground churned in front of us and the cries of the enemy echoed in the jungle as the mini-gun ran over them. "Three six, I see thirty gooks leaving the area, I am going after them." "Lima let them go and cover our ass." "Sorry three six, but I see them in an open field and I am not going to let them get away." "Sonofabitch!" We are alone again. "Talon three six, this is dust off five five, over." "Five five this is three six." "Will be at your location in about four minutes, over." "Whitey, you and the cherry get Nelson on the dust off. I will cover for you." I looked to see how many rounds I had left, there were only three.

The radio man was placed on the med-evac helicopter and left. The extraction helicopter came to pick us up, but we were not going to leave Bull and Larry's

bodies. "Come with me," I said to the door gunner. He looked at me as if I was insane. "OK, give me your M-60." He did and I ran back to where the bodies were to wait for Whitey and the cherry. About a minute later they came and one of the pilots was with them. This beautiful sonofabitch came out of his helicopter and was helping us carry the bodies back. I could not believe it.

I heard the moans of the enemy that were still alive. I walked into the bushes and could see the pile of bodies as they lay there, the M-60 had a mind of its own as it opened up on the wounded soldiers. "Come on Chief, come on. They're dead, let's get out of here." I looked and the cherry was standing next to me. As we lifted off, an air strike started to hit the area we had just left. With my hand I reached down and turned off the URC-10. Flying back to Tay Ninh, I looked at the bodies thrown in a corner as if they were garbage. The tears began to drop from my eyes. Both Bull and Larry had less than a month left before they were to return home. It seemed a waste for them to die with so little time left. If I am going to die, I hope it's soon. I do not want to suffer anymore.

Submitted by Eric James Nelson who got the story from Bull Durham's daughter, Stephania, who in turn got it from Paul Alfaro.

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