

Carp's War

On Sunday morning, April 23, 1967 LRRP Team 1 came under heavy fire from enemy soldiers. It was the first mission for **William "Bill" Carpenter** and **David Ives**. The four other members of the team on this ill-fated mission were Team Leader, **John Simones**; **Doug Fletcher**; **Art Guerrero**; and **Geoff Koper**. The fierce and grueling battle of this six man LRRP team is depicted in chapter 18 of Kregg P.J. Jorgenson's book, [The Ghosts of the Highlands](#).

On this mission the LRRP company suffered its first casualties. **David Allen Ives** became the unit's first LRRP killed in action. **Guerrero**, **Koper** and **Carpenter** were all seriously wounded. Heroes are made in times like these and the members of this team on this mission qualify without exception. Courage under fire is a trademark of LRRP/Rangers and it started with Team 1 on April 23, 1967 for the 1st Cav LRRPs and continued throughout the Vietnam War. The following account of the mission is from Bill Carpenter's perspective and the actual documents are his irreplaceable and treasured mementos. Thank you for sharing your story with us, Bill.

Bill Carpenter is a loving family member, a devoted son and all-around good guy--and a liar! Let me explain. It seems that Bill's parents had contacts back home with folks who knew quite a bit about military operations and Bill did not want them to be aware that he had joined the LRRPs. So, to keep them from worrying he fabricated a tale that could be feasible and help explain his return address. The story that he told them was that he had a very safe job interpreting maps and doing a little aerial map work.

That well intentioned fib must have added to the shock that Bill's mother felt when she was on jury duty in Denver, Colorado and was told that she was needed at home right away. No reason was given--just that she must return home. On the bus trip home from the court room she felt that it must be about Bill. Upon her arrival she was given [this telegram from the Adjutant General](#).

The trouble with telling small lies is you have to tell more to cover your tracks. On April 25, just two days after the mission Bill was in the 67th Evacuation Hospital and could not write because he had been shot in the left hand (Bill's a south paw). Wanting to communicate with his folks and not realizing that the army had already sent the telegram describing the seriousness of his wounds, Bill persuaded a Donut Dollie to write [this letter](#) for him. In a crazy sort of way I imagine that receiving the letter eased the concern that his family must have felt to some degree. At least he was conscious and thinking of them. But before the family could have actually received this letter, the army sent another [telegram on April 27](#), advising them that Bill had been moved to the 249th General Hospital and [another on April 28](#), advising them that he had been taken off of the seriously ill list. Isn't it amazing that they don't even tell you where the hospital is located!

On April 30, one week after the mission, Bill decided to come clean and wrote [this letter](#) using his wounded left hand. It's a little difficult to read so a [typed version](#) of it is available.

Bill and the army weren't the only ones doing the writing. Shortly after the mission Team Leader, John Simones wrote [this letter](#) to Bill. Many times in war, the wounded are gone and never heard from others in their unit. Bill has treasured this letter for years and the comments proclaiming him a "professional soldier" have always meant more to Bill than John could have realized when he wrote the letter. Also, John's wish for Bill to successfully pursue his dreams did in fact come true. After recovering from his wounds Bill returned to college and became a successful veterinarian.

On May 11 Bill wrote [this long letter home](#) from Japan. It says it all.

Bill also received this letter from [Lt. Ron Hall, the XO of the LRRPs](#) and this letter from [Captain James D. James, the company commander](#). The copy didn't come out very clear. So you can read [this type written version of Captain James's letter](#). These written communications from men involved in combat are so highly valued

because of the intense conditions under which they were living. To take time to write to a wounded soldier, who they may never hear from again shows the love and respect that these LRRPs had for one another.

Not only did Bill hear from LRRPs, friends, and family back home, but he also heard from members of his former state side unit, "The Old Guard" in Washington, DC. One friend in particular, Jack Lawn, wrote for the whole company and sent Bill [this very encouraging letter](#) with a card signed by all the members of his old unit.

Bill and Art Guerrero, both from Denver, received medals at ceremonies held at Fitzsimons Army Hospital in Denver and their pictures and a small part of their huge stories were told in the Denver Post. [Bill's ceremony](#) and [Art's ceremony](#). Although the awards are nice they never are enough. That fateful mission affected those involved dramatically. It changed those involved forever. In spite of the damage done, the pain, the hurt and the loss, some very wonderful things came from it. Courage and caring were the bywords that day and long afterwards.

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