

Memory Lane

By David Shows

I was wounded mid tour on a mission out of Quang Tri. We were supposed to be watching for rocket launches on relatively open hillsides, the plan being to get back into heavy cover before daylight. On that morning, our watch had fallen asleep, and we awoke to full daylight with no real cover, and with AK rounds all over us. I was the only one hit, which still amazes me, a whole lot of shooting for just one hit.

I had been back to country only a few days and unassigned to a team, the CO sent me and another guy whose name I cannot recall to a very small primitive LZ on a mountain top to act as radio relay for a team. After a few days of very boring duty I was replaced and ordered back to Evans.

The CO then told me about Tebbits and put me in charge of a team. My teams were largely made up from new arrivals including "sudden Sgts" as I recall from the NCO academy that was a new thing at that time. For years I have wondered how Mike T. made out. As I recall we were told that he was hit in the neck with a piece of rocket. The CO told us that he was expected to make full recovery, I never knew he was hit in the head. I sure hope he is all right, I remember him as one hell of a man.

He and Mac were older than the rest of our group (lifers we called them), and had served together in Germany before meeting up in LRRP. I always remembered Mike as being a magician with just about any weapon he picked up. Not to mention a real comedian.

He was the first guy I saw when I got shot. The bullet that went through my leg passed directly over his head. Mike was hit directly in the face with all the junk from my leg. I remember looking at him and wondering how he was still moving, I thought he had been hit in the face, did not know it was me on his face.

I was sorry to hear about Mac, he was my first team leader. I have always remembered him and Tibbets drinking and trying to remember the words to "Frankie and Johnny" over and over all night long.

Larry Pappert, I well remember the mission when he was shot (I was there but didn't remember who the team leader had been, my apologies to Don Glover) We were all soaking wet and cold hiding under poncho halves and trying to sleep when we heard the single shot at the crack of dawn.

It turned out to be an accidental discharge, but we had several anxious moments thinking we were under attack, and trying to find where the shot had come from, we knew it was close.

I met up with Larry in the hospital on Okinawa. The round went through his ankle long ways. Larry was a good guy. When I last saw him, he was facing several more surgeries and his prognosis for walking without a cane or crutch was not good. Larry and I were still together when we learned of Bob Whitten's death.

Bob Whitten - unfortunately, Bob's body was sent home without any of his personal effects. By some error, a lot of my personal stuff (I was in the hospital) had been sent home with his body. This caused his mother to struggle for some time believing that the Army had misidentified him and that he might still be alive. I think she finally accepted it when we met in Fla.

For me too, on a quiet evening when I close my eyes and start to drift off, I am back in the jungle of 40 years ago, and it is not a troubled or fearful feeling, it is more like being back where I belong. I remain immensely proud of having been a "1st Cav LRRP", and it is something that never leaves you. After all these years I still tend to think of myself as a LRRP, despite the ravages of age, and the effects of way too much good food, and a life full of experiences since that time. I am still amazed that I was ever capable of participating in some of the things we did as 18 and 19 year old kids, and it is something you just can't explain to folks who were not there.

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