



The Official Newsletter of the
Seventh United States Cavalry Association

2017 Issue 3

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"Troopers of the 7th Cavalry "

"GarryOwen"

I penned this tome and posted it on my Facebook Page on 26 Apr 2017. Then out of the nether land called the Internet came a jolt from one of Captain Boyev's sons – Kestutis. That led to an exchange of e-mails between us.

Since a 7th Cav Scribe has yet to step forward, I asked Dara if I could submit this and she readily agreed. It is filled with a lot of "I" that when I was your scribe I would edit out but to do so now would take away from the exchange with the Family. I hope you do not mind! A look back to 47 years ago today: The 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry was operating near FSB Frances, generally in company size elements. I was the 3/6 in Charlie Company and my Platoon was left behind in the NDP from the 24th / 25th to hopefully catch a few NVA that tended to visit abandoned NDP's to scrounge anything of value left behind by US Soldiers. The evening of the 25th was uneventful with no visitors heard or seen. Meanwhile the company minus had moved about 1500 meters and their evening was likewise uneventful. The 1st Platoon was sent out on a cloverleaf patrol to scout the area generally in our anticipated line of march after 3/6 closed on their position. About 1/3 or so of the way into their patrol their point man engaged and killed an NVA soldier that was identified by his gear as a medic. A few minutes later they were ambushed by a group of NVA fring from dug in fighting positions. The Company Commander radioed me to close on them as rapidly as possible and we were hustling right along the company back trail as the din of outgoing M-16 and M-60 fre from 1/6 was answered with AK-47, RPG and RPD machine gun fre from this determined entrenched enemy was clearly audible to us.

As we approached the NDP, I exchanged a few words with the Company Commander, who along with the 2nd Platoon was on their way to hopefully link up with 1/6. 1/6 had been radio silent for about 10 minutes now and I feared the worst for my friends. We had about 8 minutes to get organized when the din of incoming fre increased and the Company Commander radioed me to join the fight. As we were getting organized to do so an errant RPG round hit close by one of my squads knocking them down and hitting me in the right inside thigh.

My Platoon Sergeant (Terry Lacko) and I gathered our wits and with about 12 or so remaining warriors headed out to see what we would find. As it turned out much of the fighting was within 200 meters or so of the NDP. We worked our way toward the contact area as the fring had somewhat slowed down. The first person I came across was our Forward Observer (George Durham) a big man, whom we called Bull. He told me to get down as the fring had been hot and heavy but was not right then. To my immediate left was a huge termite mound protecting a few Soldiers from enemy fire. The Battalion RTO was talking very excitedly to Colonel Yon and giving information that he could not possibly have known because the Company Commander was not at that position.

I took the radio mic from him and spoke for a minute or two to Colonel Yon. He was full of questions to which I at that time had no answers. He did ask if he should bounce the Blue Platoon from the 1/9 and I told him not until, I have developed the situation. While this was going on one of the 1/6 RTO's had been brought to the vicinity of the termite mound and I watched absentmindedly as the medics worked furiously to save his life. They kept telling him "you'll be fine and to hang in there." Sadly, Manny Torres didn't survive. There was still no communication with the 1st Platoon and now nothing from the 2nd Platoon. Honestly, Custer's demise floated through my mind. I had placed one of my gun teams (Bobby Guthrie) on the other side of the medics but because I had no idea where any other Charlie Company Soldiers were, I instructed them not to fire unless they could positively identify an enemy soldier.

I felt that I should leave the relative safety of the termite mound to further develop the situation and got about 30 or 40 feet when the enemy fring again began in earnest. The bullets were literally breaking pieces of bamboo directly over my head from an unseen RPD machine gun. I was expecting that gunner to put about a ½ inch of forward lean into his weapon, which would have brought a quick and bloody end to yours truly. God however did not allow that to happen. Then the 2nd Platoon Leader came crawling by me stating that the Captain Boyev had been killed. I asked him how he knew that and his reply was "he's dead." I then decided that the best place to continue this particular fight was back at the termite mound and I somehow got turned around all the while expecting a stream of RPD rounds to hit me at any moment from behind.

I got back to the termite mound and reported back to Colonel Yon that I thought the CO was dead and he had more questions with no answers. Then the Brigade Commander came up on our net and told Colonel Yon to quit asking me questions and to let me fight the battle. That helped.

My right flank machine gun team yelled out to me that he could see what he thought were enemy soldiers vacating the area but because he was not 100%, sure he did not fire. Then from the left came the 1st platoon and parts of the 2nd. I asked 1/6 if he could account for all his men and he said yes. I then released my gun team to light up the area to their front. I then asked 1/6 if he had seen the CO and he said no. I then said we could not just leave him out there so my Platoon Sergeant and I moved forward through a now mostly silent battleground. He and I found the CO dead from a gunshot wound and was thinking where are his glasses? We carried him back past the termite mound, I took the M-60 from my gunner and he, and his Assistant Gunner and the Platoon Sergeant carried Captain Boyev back to the Medevac Collection Point while I covered the withdrawal by firing the machine gun. The enemy, having fed the immediate battleground was firing at the hovering Medevac Huey while 18 Charlie Company Warriors were hoisted up into that magnificent aircraft. The only one that remains fixed in my mind is John Tinti, who looked like he had been shot with 25 Number 8 birdshot. Each hole oozing blood. A few days later on Fire Base Frances, we (1/6 (Phil Zook) and I) were told that we were going to receive Impact Awards of the Silver Star for that day. Phil finally got his back in the states after being medevac'd from Cambodia just 4 weeks later. I guess mine got lost in the planning for the Cambodian Incursion just a few days later. Therefore, this date has now rolled around 47 additional

times since 1970 and the memories, smells, and trigger points remain clear and fresh to this very day! Infantry Combat is almost always Up Close And Personal. On April 28th, I received the following in my e-mail Inbox, which quite frankly was a shock.

Dear Mr. Anderson, A couple of days ago it was the anniversary of my dad's death in Vietnam and I ran across your name in a google search as the scribe of the Veterans' Association. Your writing has given me insight into what the day-to-day must have been like for my dad, who died when I was four and my brother Vytas was 10 months old. My dad has two grandchildren, both of them my kids: Tony, who is 22 years old, and Ian, who is four (big spread, I know!) I work as a surgeon and Vytas works for Microsoft flying around the country doing God knows what. He and our mom still live around the Chicagoland area but I headed south to the Sunshine State. Just thought I would check in. I hope you are doing well and I am grateful for your service to the United States of America.

This was my response to Captain Boyev's son: Kestutis: Your Dad is never far from my thoughts as I was there the day he was killed and in fact, Sergeant Terry Lacko and I carried him off the battlefield 47 years ago Wednesday. I was the 3rd Platoon Leader at that time and like many days it was hot and muggy early mid-morning. 20+ years ago, I exchanged a brief e-mail with your brother regarding your Dad but never heard anything back. I no longer write for the Saber but I did post a few things about that fateful day Wednesday and a follow-up piece yesterday. Your dad never suffered as his wound caused instantaneous passing. I have more on that but; will wait to hear back from you. I have attached what I wrote on Wednesday. I hope your Mom is well and please tell her that Pete did not suffer. Here is his response:

Thank you for that account. It is written in very plain factual language and conveys a lot of the fog of war that we non-combatants always read about. As I got older and understood these things better, I had always assumed my dad got hit in the head as his was a closed casket wake and funeral. In high school, I started the process of getting into the Naval Academy but stopped right before meeting with my congressman, as I realized I was terribly conflicted about carrying on the Family martial tradition. I figured there were other ways to fight communists. My brother, however, did enter the airborne reserves for a spell during the peaceful end of the cold war.

I did do some positive things for Veterans, putting in every other Friday at Tampa's James A. Haley VA Hospital, where I was the founder of their first cochlear implant program in 2000. I did that for 14 years until the needs of our Department determined I was needed elsewhere. But I value what you guys did and what the new people who are your successors are doing, and despite all the bad press about the VA it is simply amazing how much better battlefield medicine has become since Vietnam. A sad journey that began 47 years ago was completed at least for me with this exchange, if only to tell the Family that Captain Boyev did not suffer in his death. 20+ years ago, Ron (Shortround) Migut forwarded me an e-mail from Vytas Boyev, the youngest son. I responded to him that I was there and if he (Family) wanted the full account to let me know. I never heard back.

This type of accounting is important for those Families who knew nothing other than the impersonal telegram changing their lives in an instant – forever. The 7th Cav News STILL needs a Scribe to report these and other types of stories! Bob Anderson