

IN Country Day one

I arrived in Country June 10th, 1969 at the 90th replacement center Cam Ron Bay South Vietnam. I was immediately taken to a C-130 cargo plane and strapped to the floor with cargo straps and in the air within thirty minutes headed for the main base in Phat Lu for the 4th infantry division.

Now mind you I was barely 18 yrs old and a little scared of the dark and keep in mind I did not no there was such a thing as a fire fly.

I was sitting on my bunk still reeling from the plane ride wondering what's next when a 2nd lieutenant walks into the barracks and points at myself and several other kids and told us we had bunker duty that night. I tried to tell the lieutenant that we had just arrived in Country and didn't no what we was doing yet; he told me to shut the hell up and do what I was told and that I would be fine. Well I wasn't; I was very worried and my worries came true, when the 2nd lieutenant assigned me to a bunker all by myself.

When I stepped inside this bunker I noticed on the ledge of the bunker was some thirty clackers hooked up to thirty clay-more mines; this is a land mine that has seven hundred and fifty $5\frac{1}{2}$ steel balls inside with a pound of C-4 explosive behind it. This mine can be armed in

a particular direction to cut down an enemy. I also had a 50 caliber machine gun with at least fifty thousand rounds of ammo for back up. What a combination for an 18 yr old kid.

Now when it started getting dark I happened to look out in front of my position and about five hundred yards out I could barely make out what I thought was enemy movement signalling each other with pen light flashlights; Not knowing what to do I got on the radio and called the officer of the day; I told the 2nd Lieutenant what I had observed and he told me to be cool and handle it. Well he should not have told a jittery 18 yr old kid to handle it.

I was already scared and not sure what I should do when I looked out into the dark and I could see that the enemy had moved up through the brush maybe forty yards in front of my position signalling one another with there pen light flash lights. I knew I had to act; after all the Lieutenant said to handle it well I started hitting those thirty clackers in front of me and all hell broke loose when the entire bunker line opened fire into the dark of night, not knowing there was nothing out there by the time all was said and done and all had come down I had killed four water buffalo and several thousand fire fly's. I took out at least one hundred

yards wide and at least a thousand yards of Consintenney wire out in front of my position. The 2nd Lieutenant was beside himself with anger and had me thrown into the stockade that night after I had taken a stand against the enemy I couldnt believe it; as I thought I had done the right thing.

The next morning the bengade Commander came to the Stockade to interview me. I explained to the base commander that I hadn't been in country more than five hrs when the lieutenant assigned me bunker duty and I tried to explain to the officer of the day that I was new in country a bit scared of the dark and didn't have any idea what to do, and he put me in a bunker all by myself and latter that night when I called and told him what was going on out there and he told me to handle it so I did.

The short of it was the lieutenant was charged with incompetence and made to pay for the four water buffalo and put together a detail to restore all the barbed wire that was destroyed, and I was transferred to onto to the 1st and the 8th 4th Infantry division A Company.

by Robert Alan Counts
May 15, 2011.