

6 March 1969

Journals Submitted by David Fogg, B 1/35 68-69

From the Daily Staff Journal Report for the 1/35th Infantry, 7 March 1969.

Map Section Follows the Report

A Personal Account of that day, by Joel Mayne, Plt Ldr, Follows

Bn Location: LZ Mary YA 784917

Report: at 1430 hours 6 March 1969 B Co 2d platoon made contact with an estimated NVA platoon at grid ZA 005935 while OPCON to the 1/69 Armor. The 2d platoon B Co was conducting a cordon and search operation with the 2d platoon of A Co 2d platoon 2/8 Infantry (Mech) when contact was made. The enemy employed automatic weapons fire, AK-47 fire and Chinese Communist grenades. They attempted to fire B-40 rockets and the gunner was killed. The US units employed small arms, .50 calibre machinegun fire and Artillery. The contact was broken at 1530 hours when 2 tanks from the 1/69 Armor reinforced the activity. The enemy unit was very aggressive even while under very heavy fire. There was a confirmed body count of 14 in total. B Co 2d platoon sustained 3 WIAs (line no 6, 42, 149). Captured equipment; 3 AK-47 Rifles, 12 B-40 Rockets, 4 Chinese Communist grenades, 7.62 Ammunition.

In regards the same action, also submitted by David Fogg, the following was taken from the Daily Staff journal 1st Bn, 69th Armor, Bn Location ZA 032931, 6 March 1969.

0010 Dust off for 1 EM from A/2-8 completed.

0012 At 0001 LZ Bass had movement on NW side of perimeter; took under fire with small arms by a/2-8, movement ceased.

0145 LZ Bass received 2 rounds of possible 82mm mortar fire on South West side of perimeter.

0640 Scout Plt enroute for minesweep mission.

0810 Scts. M/S complete and elements in position at ZA0400931; ZA049928; ZA060926; ZA069924; ZA076921; ZA085914; and ZA089912.

0915 Fr Bn S3 to Scts: Move 1 tank and 1 APC to PK bridge (Vic ZA100914); marry up with 4 APC's of 2-8 Inf, proceed to LZ Thunder (vic ZA146898) Pick up D/1-35 Inf and bring to LZ Bass; Escort vehicles will return to mission upon completion.

0950 Scts have coordinated with 2-8 at bridge and are enroute to LZ Thunder.

1000 From S3, 2-8 Inf; Transport for D/1-35 is cancelled; X

Scts to return to mission.

1015 CSF Camp received 1 incoming round at 1005. Neg casualties, type unknown.

1205 1/A/1-69 located at ZA022935; 2/A/1-69 ZA015938; 3/A/1-69 & B/1-35(-) ZA021931; 2/A/2-8 & 2/B/1-35 ZA007997; A/2-8(-) & 3/B/1-35 ZA029906.

1340 A/1-69: At ZA010937 2/B/1-35 established contact with an est. platoon; red'd auto weapons; returned fire with all organics & Arty; 1st Plt A/1-69 supported with direct fire from vic 008937; 1-6 individuals were spotted, 1 mortar tube and 1 30 (?) cal MG also spotted; 1 individual had a radio on his back;

1430 reported receiving Chicom grenades. 1435 G/S (gunships) on station did not expend;

1445 1/A/1-60 moved into area and married up with Infantry; 1510, tank hit a mine at ZA010397, Neg casualties. Damage to tank, track blown, 1 road wheel blown; Crater 3'x3'. Contact broke at 1530,

1535 dust off request for 6 US, 1 serious, wounds in back and shoulder, dustoff complete 1615 for 6 US.

1645 A/1-69 found 1 NVA KIA wearing NVA uniform, Ho Chi Minh sandals & carrying 4 60mm mortar rounds.

1647 LZ Bass received 1 round incoming 122mm; neg casualties or damage.

1700 To A/1-69: Hold your elements on Hill 600; bring back Inf to Bass w/2 APC'. Be prepared to receive another Inf element at LZ Bass.

1705 A/169 found 5 NVA & numerous weapons and equipment. Details will follow.

1712 Scout closed NL (ZA045933); HQ tanks enroute to LZ Bass.

1715 From Bde: Will receive A/1-14 Inf to replace 1/35 Inf; prepare LZ at ZA008937.

1730 From Scouts; Sent 2 APC's to bridge to pick up 2 ammo trucks and escort to LZ Bass.

1825 A/1-69 1st Plt in contact at ZA010937 w/unk size enemy force; received AK-47 fire. Saw several individuals running throughout the area. Contact broken at 1840. Returned fire with S/A, 50 cal and 90mm. 2 US WHA (not serious) 3 NVA KIA.

1920 A/1-69 request dustoff for 2 US at ZA010937. 1 has broken jaw; 1 has back and side wound.

1953 Dustoff canceled; individuals seem to be improving; will wait until tomorrow AM.

2040 Scouts convoy escort closed into NL (night location)

2045 Sitrep all elements N/C

2100 Refer item 21: Equipment CIA; 2 B-40 launchers; 2 AK-47; 3 RPG III; 9 B-40 rounds; 3 60mm mortar rounds (2 fuses); 9 B-40 boosters; 6 AK mags with ammo; 1 drum 7.62 ammo; 50 rounds AK ammo; 2 poncho's NVA; 2 sets khakis; 2 pair sandals; 1 small first aid kit; 2 packs of rice; tobacco, rope, soap, toothpaste & brush, writing paper, towels and bowls.

2105 NL A/1-69(-), 3/A/2-8, 1/A/1-14 ZA007932; A/2-8(-), HQ tanks, 3/B/1-35 ZA032931; Scts ZA045932.

2130 Late entry: Air lift of 1/A/1-14 was complete at 1815.

2240 A Co has movement to the North West, fired organic, movement ceased, now to the South and South East.

(end of info – webmaster)

The following is a personal account of the above events contained in a message to David Fogg from Joel Mayne, Plt Leader, B Co 1/35th. Joel was WIA that day but kept himself and his men together to come back another day. Reprinted by permission.

Dave,

Your memory's pretty good. I think one of the APCs threw a tread is why we were stopped on that old road about 1/2 way up the hill. My tail end Charlie called me on the radio and said he saw somebody with a rifle near him. I told him if it was not an M-16 to open fire. He fired and the shit hit the fan immediately.

Glad we had those 50s. One of the drivers was wounded. We were up on the track outside the cupola reloading 50 cal and it was scary. Bullets flying by like bees as were really exposed. He got hit in the stomach and it covered me. I had to take my glasses off to clean them as I could not see after that. I know I had bullet holes in my clothes and quite a few in my flak jacket and some in me. My medic, Ponds I think, was so nervous he could not get the needle for the blood expander in my arm after the fight so I did it myself.

One of those guys in the APC was me. I died twice on the dust off and the medic brought me back, out of body experience and the whole works. Pretty weird, I'll tell you, to see yourself dead. Guess I am ready for Oprah or Jerry Springer, ha ha. We ran out of morphine so I gave all my wounded a beer if they wanted it but told the guy with stomach wound not to swallow. They had to stick a knife in my chest to drain the blood out of my chest cavity or I was going to suffocate on my own blood. Jeez, lifted up my arm, took a big knife and stuck it in my left side just below the arm pit and carved out a hole. No anesthetic or anything. Boy was that fun. Far as I know, all the wounded made it. I saw some of them at the 71st Evac in Pleiku and they were ok to there.

Yes, I was pretty proud of everyone myself and felt they did a good job. I remember 360 degrees on the incoming and a couple of B-40s went by me while I was up on the tracks loading 50s. I remember directing the tank gunner on the outside phone to blow a sniper out of the tree. I think he hit me once and got my M-60 gunner through the arm. I told Doc Ponds not to move unless I gave the order. I had already lost Doc Thornton and Doc Reiser and my experience was to save the medic to do his work after the fight. I crawled out to patch up the gunner and told Doc Ponds good medics were a hell of a lot harder to get than lieutenants. He wanted to come get me one of the times I got hit but I would not let him. That's when Aveline came out and worked on me and pulled me in.

I had pulled some intel on that area where we were that day and found the NVA had chewed up a couple of our rifle companies on two occasions by letting them attack. I had decided that morning to use air, arty and the tanks before sending my men forward. I figured Charlie would expect the same old tactics and be in a defensive posture to chew us up on the assault so my

plan was to sit and chew them up. I never assaulted if technology would accomplish close to the same end. Since we never held territory I was not going to have my men killed for it unless we had no other choice of tactics. I definitely think we did the right tactics that day. We saved most or all of our men and inflicted some pretty good smoke on the enemy. I never inflated body counts but I am sure we did kill allot more than 14. I had reported 13.

Three incidents stick out in my mind. My platoon Sgt. looking at me and saying surely I was joking about the bayonet charge (wish I had a picture of his face, it was priceless when I gave the order), I polled the men for alternatives when we ran out of ammo but no one had any. I just remember all the bayonets seemed to go on with just one big click at the same time, seemed like slow motion in the movies to me. I told them we would not surrender. I had two magazines and one grenade left when it was all over, my basic load was 48 mags and 6 grenades.

2. Another officer ran over to me and wanted to assault but I refused since still inflicting allot of heat on NVA with fire power and wanted them to come to us since they had shot up those rifle companies so bad. I felt we may need to assault eventually but that was plan z in my book. I also felt they would get us with a secondary ambush before we got back. I really wanted them to get whipped and leave, not chase us like a pack of dogs.

3. That sniper I blew out of the tree with the tank 90mm shot my M-16 completely in two just above the trigger finger. I was drawing a bead on an NVA and just squeezed the trigger and nothing happened; first time the old smoke pole had ever failed me. I lowered it and the butt stock and pistol grip was in one hand and the bolt group, barrel and such in the other hand. Knocked her completely in two!

Yep, I thought everyone there did a real fine piece of work. I was cursing Col. English pretty heavily on the radio, for not keeping his promise on the tanks (he was a good man and I am sure was worried about the bigger picture of needing those tanks to save Polei Kleng), when they finally told me they were going to court martial me if I did not ease up. I told Bn I accepted the court martial, but to come down and get me so there would be something left to court martial.

That's when I switched pushes and called Johnson in the tanks direct and explained if he did not disregard his orders we were toast. He came. He was above us on some high ground firing in direct support. Since the NVA had not done too well knocking out the APC, I knew Johnson could kick some ass with those 48s. Don't know if my assessment of situation was correct but ammo wise, and time of day wise, I felt it was getting a little thin for us. I had lost most of my blood so would not say I was in best state of mind. I know when Johnson showed up the NVA hauled ass so felt it was a good call. We killed and wounded allot more of them than they of us. I was in the IA Drang valley twice and saw some too eager commanders really get their asses kicked so I was pretty careful about falling into Charlie's classic V ambush on the assault. Never ever got caught in a kill zone all the time I was there. I did some dumb stuff but it never cost my men.

Later Joel (Mayne)

