

1971/01/30

Unit: 8/4 and 5th Mech

Source: Reunion 2000 Book (part)

Location: RT-9/Khe Sanh

Event: Op Dewey Canyon II

1st BRIGADE/5th Inf Dv, Khe Sanh, ends 2-7; Description: This was the American operation to support the ARVN LAM SON 719 effort. The preliminary phase was designed to open Route 9 through Khe Sanh to the Laotian border and to reestablish Khe Sanh as a major combat support base. In January of 1971 the 1st BRIGADE, 5th MECH, parent unit of 1/61, began its mission as part of Lam Son 719. The BRIGADE operation was called DEWEY CANYON II. The 1st BN 61st INF was detached from the BRIGADE and remained as the only US ground combat unit along the DMZ while the operation was being conducted. 8/4 was to provide support by fire to allied elements operation in western Quang Tri Province and the Laotian Border. The batteries were to be responsive to calls for fire from XXIV Corps Artillery and 108th Artillery Group directly and indirectly through liaison teams with the 1st ARVN Division, the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division, 5th Bn, 4th Artillery and the 1st ARVN Ranger Group. The operation began for the battalion on the early morning of 31 January with moves to the vicinity of FSB Vandergrift by all firing Batteries. This maneuver was a diversionary tactic and was executed in the same manner as previous artillery raids. On the following morning, all elements departed for the Khe Sanh plains and occupied a position northwest of the airstrip.

1971/01/31

Unit: BN

Source: Bill Prichard

Location: Vandegrift

Event: A Tale of Derring Do or (Chew) - Lam Son 719

On that first eerie night at Vandegrift, in the ominous shadow of the infamous Rockpile, the Battalion forces were anxious and inwardly apprehensive about the final and most ambitious leg of the move toward Khe Sanh. It was on to Laos for the ARVN and our sturdy troops were ready to do the necessary in support of our allies planned encroachment into the land of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Our mission was touted by the brass as critical, and there was no doubt that the importance of our role was understood if not overestimated by each and every member of the battalion. We had been this far before, and maybe even a little farther, but never had the big "uglies" planned a brazen movement that deep nor one that rapid into Indian Country to provide the thunder and firepower that only a 175mm/8inch group of "bad medicine" heavy artillery pieces can provide. Tales of the ambushes and enemy harassment along QL 9 coursed through the unit like wildfire and all through the night, although comforted by the presence of the dusters of the 1/44th that ringed the elephant grass- covered staging area, the murmured whispers of "what will happen tomorrow" were persistent

and only mildly subdued. Each man wondered to himself if he would do his part and the natural fear that accompanies the movement into the unknown was everywhere. Will I be a hero or a coward? The question camped on each man's lips like the bad after-taste from cheap warm beer. Who would have ever guessed the scope of the heroic deeds that this the most unlikely group of troops would have performed the following day enroute Khe Sanh, the enemy , and the unknown. My purpose here today is to focus on one such deed, or perhaps I should say succession of deeds that no doubt will be forever recorded in the annals of the unit as one of the most heroic and epic series of events ever to take place during the battalions long and honorable stay on the DMZ. It seems that our equipment was in bad shape, not because the maintenance folks were not doing their job, but more because our issued stuff was old, worn out, shot up, broken down and just plain unfit. We were angry when we saw the spiffy ARVN battalions move past in rapid succession with all new trucks, cosmolened weapons, and even rookie green new uniforms. They looked good, but in the words of that famous ersatz movie general, Don Sutherland, could they fight? Enough foolishness. At first light the order was given and the battalion mounted up. The snakelike formation slowly uncoiled and the convoy was underway. One of the more mundane pieces of equipment in this living sinuous beast was a $\frac{3}{4}$ ton truck bearing the battalion' s AM SSB (Single side band) long distance radio unit. As everyone knew, the common FM radios had limited capabilities due to the mountainous terrain that would separate Khe Sanh and the home base of Dong Ha. FM bounces off ridges were not uncommon but they were unreliable, particularly with the distances involved, so the AM capability was critical for the unit's coordination and control. As the driver of this essential piece of equipment followed nose to tail click after click He noticed that the gas gauge was slipping to the left much faster than it should. Concerned, he pulled off to the side as far as he could and the problem was soon diagnosed. The gas tank had been punctured and vital fuel was pouring from the tank on to the narrow rocky road. At that point in the portage, the road was too narrow to permit the simultaneous passage of all but the smallest of vehicles and it was obvious that either the truck keep up, or be doomed to a unceremonious shove over the side of the road into the ravine below. They may not have had great rolling stock but they did have plenty of fuel, and more importantly, plenty of C rations and Red Cross care packages. The foundering truck's occupants and all of the men in the deuce and half behind were quickly galvanized into action. Packages of chewing and bubble gum were distributed and soap collected. In the finest Army tradition each man did his part above and beyond the call of duty. Cheeks bulged like chipmunks as pack after pack of gum was masticated and then passed up. The gum, properly moistened and softened was used along with carved slivers of soap to plug the spurting hole in the gas tank and 5 gallon fuel cans were used to replenish the lost petrol every click or so all the way to Khe Sanh. Perhaps these men did not garner the medals and accolades they deserved, but in my mind they were heroes one and all and when the radio was used to relay critical info to and fro we all smiled that inner smile and finally understood the meaning of a "Job Well Done."

1971/01/31

Unit: A, B

Source: 8/4 Op Rpt

Location: FSB Vandergrift (XD9948)

Event: Artillery Raid to Vandy

On 18 January 1971, a second heavy artillery raid was conducted at FSB Vandergrift (XD9948) to attack targets in the Laotian border area and along Highway 616. This raid was in support of 1/77th armor, an element of 1st brigade, 5th Infantry Division (M). A composite site battery consisting of two 175MM gun sections from B Battery and two sections from A Battery, under A Battery control, participated in this raid which terminated on 20 January. A total of 478 rounds were expended on preplanned targets and targets of opportunity. Total BDA for the raid was as follows: 33 bunkers destroyed, 2 bunkers damaged, 15 bunkers uncovered, 23 fighting positions destroyed, one .51 caliber machine gun position destroyed and 20 feet of trench line destroyed.

1971/01/31

Unit: BN

Source: 8/4 Op Rpt

Location: FSB Vandergrift

Event: Op Dewey Canyon II and Lam Son 719.

On 31 January 1971 the 8th Battalion 4th Artillery vacated fixed fire support bases, indicated in paragraph 1a, and moved as a battalion to FSB Vandergrift to support maneuver elements of the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (M) and Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces operating in Western Quang Tri Province and Eastern Laos on operations Dewey Canyon II and Lam Son 719. Total BDA for January including the two raids was one enemy KIA, 16 possible KIA's, 108 bunkers destroyed, 2 bunkers damaged, 15 bunkers uncovered, 23 fighting positions destroyed, seven huts destroyed, one tower destroyed, 20 feet of trench line destroyed, one boat dock destroyed, one .51 cal machine gun position destroyed, one 12.7 machine gun and position destroyed, three secondary explosions, and one POL dump destroyed and numerous secondary explosions.

1971/02/01

Unit: B

Location: XD 8442

Event: B Btry at XD 8442

1971/02/01

Unit: BN

Source: 8/4 Op Rpt

Location: Khe Sanh Plains

Event: Op Dewey Canyon II and Lam Son 719.

d. On 1 February 1971 the battalion occupied positions on the Khe Sanh Plains at XD8441 and XD8244.

1971/02/01

Unit: C

Location: XD 8442

Event: C Btry at XD 8442

1971/02/03

Unit: B

Location: Khe Sanh

Event: B Btry at Khe Sanh

1971/02/03

Unit: A

Location: XD 8442

Event: A Btry at XD 8442

1971/02/03

Unit: C

Location: Khe Sanh

Event: C Btry at Khe Sanh

1971/02/03

Unit: H, S

Location: Khe Sanh

Event: H, S Btry at Khe Sanh

1971/02/05

Unit: A

Location: Khe Sanh

Event: A Btry at Khe Sanh

1971/02/07

Unit: BN

Source: 8/4 Op Rpt

Location: Lang Vei, Tabet, Halfway House

Event: Op Dewey Canyon II and Lam Son 719.

This was followed by 7-10 February 1971 displacements further west along Rt-9 into position areas from which fires could be provided deep into Laos. Positions occupied included Lang Vei (XD7936), Tabet (XD7137) and Halfway Point (XD7335). These positions were forward of the majority of US maneuver elements and subject to frequent indirect and occasional direct fire attacks by the enemy.

1971/02/08

Unit: H

Source: Al Fulton

Location: Laotian Border

Event: Maj Tom Sydes Shot Down

I do not know how much of that is true and I think that bird was DOA. They were on a mission to find the NVA arty that was attacking. Supposedly, they found it and he ordered the pilot to roll in on it so he could get better pics for his silver star when a 51 Cal opened up and shot off his tail boom. I was told that the pilot was hit by a round that deflected off of the main rotor. Who knows? Uncle_AI Yes, that is true. I was told that he got shot down, not shot up. When the bird hit he hightailed it for the friendlies. Further, that when he got to Highway 1, he ran into a CBS news truck and his interview showed up on national news a few nights later. Only to Tom could that have happened. You would have had to have been there. Uncle_AL

1971/02/09

Unit: C

Location: XD 7138

Event: C Btry at XD 7138

1971/02/09

Unit: C

Source: Ghio, Gene Gopher

Location: Laotian Border

Event: Lam Son 719

I can remember being on Highway 9 at the Laotian boarder. We were combined with four 8 inch guns of the 2/94 to make an eight 8 inch gun battery. Their guns had new tubes new paint and pretty. They were from Da Nang and had never seen "action." The 8 gun battery was under their FDC. we were in a fire mission and began receiving incoming. We were told by their FDC to not return fire as was our MOS but to take cover. As the sergeant of B/8/4 on page 290 did, we shut off the radio got enough MEN together to complete the fire mission with 2 8/4 guns. Two of our 8/4 brothers were KIA that day but I firmly believe that if we had not done what we did the NVA would have walked artillery rounds all over us and a lot more of us would not be here! I don't remember much after that day but I do not think we moved back to Lang Vei before the 2/94. See E-Groups Message#2713 for full text

1971/02/09

Unit: C

Location: Laotian Border

Event: KIA Felton, SGT Melvin James

1971/02/09

Unit: C Btry

Source: Emme, Sgt. Gun #2 Chief of Section

Location: Laotian Boarder

Event: The day I lost 2 good men

A sad day for gun #2. I will never forget looking down from the gun seeing two of my men, lifeless in the dirt and 3 more in shock and in pain. What can one say now. Blake and Melvin gave everything, too much. ?

1971/02/09

Unit: C

Source: John McComb

Location: Laotian Border

Event: The Battlefield Memorial Service

There were two people in C battery who were killed during Lam Son 719 and two wounded, all from the same incoming round. I didn't know them, but according to what someone else posted earlier their names were Whitney and Felton. Was one of them Rocky? Even though I didn't know them, I went to the memorial service which I remember fairly clearly. I remember a table with two pairs of boots and two helmets. One of the helmets had "FTA" written on the cover (along with lots of other stuff). There were two chaplains officiating, one Catholic and one Protestant. I remember the two of them standing around with cups of coffee, laughing and talking with some others before the start of the service and this made me angry. This wasn't just another church service, but a memorial for two people who had just recently been killed and I could have been one of them. I remember lying in a hole listening to the round go off and hearing someone calling for a medic. I took their deaths very personally and I wish that the chaplains would have been more somber and respectful. I expect that I am over reacting, but that is the way I felt then and still feel. In the 30 years since that incident, this is the first time that I mentioned it to anyone.

1971/02/09

Unit: C

Location: Laotian Border

Event: KIA Whitney, E2 Blake Dominic

1971/02/09

Unit: C

Source: Charles Kelly 2/94

Location: Laotian Border

Event: Heavy Incoming

On 9 February 1971 at 0931 hours Battalion fired second prep. On 9 February 1971 at 1255 hours A Battery receiving heavy incoming. Battery C of 8/4 Artillery

co-located with Battery A and OPCON to the 2/94th reports 5 US wounded, one serious and 1 KIA. All wounded personnel were flown to HQ 2/94th Arty XD82/37 for treatment by our Battalion Surgeon due to non-availability of Medivac. All wounded were Medivac'd to Quang Tri at 1516 hours. At 1625 hours 108th notified 5 US WIA and 2 KIA. Reports coming in that incoming is a 122mm Field Gun. At 1530 hours Battalion lost control of C/8/4. The two C Battery 8/4th men that were lost that day were E2 Blake D. Whitney from Chicago, Illinois and E4 Melvin J. Felton from Spokane, Washington. Four of the five wounded in action from C Battery 8/4th were Harold Page from West Virginia; Wyrbkowski (spelling?) from the Detroit area in Michigan; David Holtkamp from Centralia, Illinois; and a battalion maintenance tech CWO Fisher who was working on one of the C Battery Guns. CWO Fisher's HOR is not known at this time. Holtkamp at one time was given up for KIA, however someone noticed he was still moving. It is unclear if there was any additional wounded in action on that date from C/8/4 a companion 175/8-inch battalion to the 2/94th. Both men lost that day in that combined operation were on or near Gun 2 ("SOUNDS OF SILENCE") when an enemy 122mm artillery round hit. MAY THEY REST IN PEACE. They are not forgotten by their brothers of the 8/4th. On 9 February 1971 at 1625 hours A/2/94 Battery given march orders to new location at (XD779358). At 2100 hours A Battery departs (XD715376 enroute to (XD785379)? At 2340 hours A Battery laid safe at (XD785379).

1971/02/10

Unit: ARVN

Location: Aloui

Event: ARVN Advance Stalls

ARVN reaches Aloui, Laos approximately 13 miles from border and stalls.

1971/02/10

Unit: B

Location: XD 7535

Event: B Btry at XD 7535

1971/02/10

Unit: S

Source: Kenny Slaydon

Location: Laotian Border

Event: VTR Crew At Work

I had one of the best crews in the world on my VTR. A lot of times we had to go out in the middle of the night to make a recovery. Sometimes we had a Duster with us but most of the time we were right by ourselves. No matter, we still did our jobs. We recovered the ammo and materials that C Btry left on the Laotian border when they left after taking their KIA's. Myself and D. Garrison took a shovel and buried parts of skulls that were blown off people while we were

there. We also cleared a crossing of a stream that was blocked by a blown up 5 ton. We did that while under fire from a recoilless rifle. Everyone was able to move through the crossing after we did that. All of that was during Lam Son 719. I can also remember having to cut barb wire from my tracks in the middle of the night while recovering a gun because some ARVN did not clear the bridge as we got there, usually at full speed.

1971/02/10

Unit: A

Location: XD7535

Event: A Btry at XD7535

1971/02/10

Unit: H, S

Location: Lang Vei

Event: H, S Btry at Lang Vei

1971/02/12

Unit: ARVN

Location: All ARVN Positions

Event: ARVN Attacked

All ARVN positions under attack.

1971/02/14

Unit: C

Source: 8/4 Op Rpt

Location: N of Khe Sanh (XD8244)

Event: Op Dewey Canyon II and Lam Son 719.

C Battery returned to a position north of Khe Sanh (XD8244) on 14 February 1971. The two 175MM gun batteries of the battalion remained in forward positions along QL-9 throughout the remainder of February.

1971/02/18

Unit: H

Source: Ken Zahn

Location: Lang Vei

Event: Driving the Ambulance Into a Fire Fight at Night

I recall the time that I was told by the battalion surgeon, Doc SWAY, to drive him in the ambulance into a firefight at night. I think it was around Lang Vei to pick up wounded. Luckily I followed a Quad 50 in and the firefight immediately ended when Charlie saw the Quad. It still was a stupid move by us, with that big red cross on the ambulance as a target, but we didn't know any better. Doc Sway really got chewed out for that move though. The incident took place during

Operation Lam Son 719 when we took the guns out toward Laos. Most likely the firebase was further down Rt 9 to the west. I think Doc Sway just took it upon himself to help our men at the firebase. They were getting hit pretty hard with ground fire and one of the men hit was the Duster medic that we were really friendly with. I am assuming that medivac choppers would not be called in during a ground attack. The duster medic might have been the only medic at the firebase at that time or Doc Sway just didn't know if the medic hit was our firebase medic or the Duster medic, so a replacement may have been needed, we may have taken another medic with us also -- don't know for sure. The Doc might have thought that his expertise was the best thing at the time. As it turned out we couldn't save anyone. The badly wounded were already gone. I think the above tries to explain why the Doc wanted to go in that way and why a chopper wasn't deployed. He made have heard on the radio that the medic was hit and just wanted to try and save him or replace him. I was only following his orders. The "higher ups" probably thought that the Doc was too important to risk his life the way he did after all he was our only battalion surgeon. So, instead of a medal he was chewed out for his actions.

1971/02/18

Unit: B

Location: Laotian Border

Event: KIA Gibler, SP4 Donald Gene

1971/02/21

Unit: BN

Source: 8/4 Op Rpt

Location: Laotian Border

Event: Ltc. M. Max Love Assumes Command

j. Battalion commanders during the reporting period were LTC. M. Max Love (21 Feb 71 - Present) and LTC. Paul R. Buckley (25 Jul 70 - 21 Feb 71).

1971/02/21

Unit: ARVN

Location: Ranger North

Event: Ranger North Overrun

Fleeing, panic stricken ARVN soldiers swamp US helicopters.

1971/02/25

Unit: 108th Group Sundowner

Source: Tom Murray

Location: Laotian Border

Event: Shot Down

I was Sundowner Mike. I was shot down in a bird dog twice and once in a Huey. The one bird dog event was not very exciting. We simply limped to a safe place and got on the ground. The other bird dog event was getting hit by a 23 mm, I think. It spun us around but didn't knock us straight down. We safely got on the ground but the adrenalin flowed for quite a long time. The Huey event was terrifying. We were Command and Control for a Cobra Gun ship Air Cav unit. I was lent to them by the Sundowners. We called in an air strike on tanks over running an ARVN base camp in Laos. One of the fighters was shot down. We were trying to rescue the pilots as their parachutes hit the ground but we flew into more uniform NVA than I had ever seen in one place at one time. We were hit hundreds of times. We were able to get a few miles away before we hit the ground hard. We hit hard enough that the rotor severed the tail boom. We got the 60's carried the dead and wounded and set up a perimeter far enough from the helicopter to avoid a potential explosion. One of the cobras touched down and the front seat got out and we put what we thought was our worst wounded into the front seat. He ended up being dead on arrival at Khe Sanh. Another Cobra touched down and we put our next worst in and he lived. We got Medivaced about 10 or 15 minutes later. It was Feb 25, 1971, a day I always celebrated as the birth of my new life dedicated to helping others because God chose to give me a little more time.

1971/02/25

Unit: 108th Group Sundowner

Source: Tom Murray

Location: Laotian Border

Event: Shot Down In Laos

**In early 1971 the ARVN made a major effort to interdict the trail west of Khe Sanh. US ground troops kept out of Laos but the air support was massive. I lived in bunkers along the air strip for 6 weeks. It was the most vicious 6 weeks I spent in the war. I was shot down in Laos in a Huey. Both pilots were badly hit. One door gunner died the other was really chopped up. The Sundowners loaned me to a Air Cav unit that was brought up from III Corps. They had no idea how to handle the enemy activity and lost most of their OH6A in the first week. The Cobras worked without them from that point on. We got shot down trying to rescue to Air Force Pilots who were shot down making a run on NVA tanks, if you can believe that. The NVA artillery and rockets were very heavy all night while we slept at Khe Sanh. I was shot down three times but Feb 25, 1971 was a day that is still very vivid in my mind. Thank God the medivac got their before the NVA. The Major in charge of the Sundowners at the time was difficult to deal with. He didn't always have our lives at the top of the list of priorities. I didn't mind risking my life but I was real happy when someone else volunteered my life.
Tom Murray**

1971/02/25

Unit: 108th Group Sundowner

Source: Tom Murray, Sundowner Mike
Location: Laotian Border
Event: We Had Ways

The last attempt to interdict the Ho Chi Minh Trail out of Khe Sanh in February 1971 was a different war than my first 16 months in Vietnam. Most of the time in Vietnam we so easily out manned and out powered the enemy. The last campaign in Khe Sanh we fought against heavily armed NVA troops. They shot down helicopters in bunches. We lived at Khe Sanh in bunkers we dug right along the airstrip. The NVA hammered us with artillery that was hidden in the mountainside west of Khe Sanh. As soon as the sun went down you could get ready for the pounding. I remember being knocked off the shitter once and another time I was running and diving down the steps as I heard the whistle of the next round coming in our direction. Everyone in the bunker was laughing uncontrollably as I rolled down the steps of the bunker and out of harms way. The unit I was lent to was not ready for this effort at all. They took way to many chances, especially with my life, trying to understand the search techniques etc. with this more formidable enemy. I remember physically challenging an HQ Captain who was trying to get his hours that day and took us back for a third time to mark a 23 mm position. He marked it by playing clay pigeon for the gooks. The tracers seemed to be on both sides of the Huey. When we got down I was screaming at him about the use of marking rocket rounds as an alternative. He was arrogant and smug. I bumped chests with him and told him he wouldn't live through the next time he foolishly risked his crews lives. I reminded him that we had ways to deal with idiots like him. I was back with the Sundowners before nightfall. I guess the threats were a good idea.

1971/02/25
Unit: ARVN
Location: Ranger South and Hill 30
Event: Ranger South and Hill 30 Abandoned

Ranger South and Hill 30 Abandoned, effectively closing down northern arm of Lam Son 719.

1971/02/25
Unit: ARVN
Location: Hill 31
Event: Hill 31 Attacked

Hill 31 attacked by 2000 NVA using tanks. Relief fails.

1971/02/28
Unit: B
Source: 8/4 Op Rpt

Location: N of Khe Sanh, vic (XD9244)
Event: B Btry at Khe Sanh

On 28 February 1971, B Battery moved north of Khe Sanh, vicinity of (XD9244); followed on 1 March 1971, by Headquarters and Service batteries. Finally, on 5 March 1971, A Battery returned to the same general Location:.

1971/03/03
Unit: ARVN
Location: LZ Lolo
Event: LZ's Lolo Established

LZ Lolo established beginning a series of leapfrog moves by ARVN towards Tchepone. Fierce fighting ensues as 500 ARVN delivered by helo. 7 helos destroyed and 35 damaged.

1971/03/04
Unit: ARVN
Location: LZ Liz
Event: LZ Liz Established

LZ Liz established in a series of leapfrog moves by ARVN towards Tchepone.

1971/03/05
Unit: ARVN
Location: LZ Sophia II
Event: LZ Sophia II Established

LZ Sophia II established in a series of leapfrog moves by ARVN towards Tchepone.

1971/03/06
Unit: ARVN
Location: Tchepone, Laos
Event: NVA Base Destroyed

Weyand pointed out that air calvary had been in the Tchepone area for ten days or more before ARVN got there on the ground, and that this had been useful in acquiring targeting data later used by B-52s, including strikes on stores that ground forces had not been able to extract or destroy in place. This intelligence had been supplemented by what long-range reconnaissance patrols acquired, and by reports from ARVN unit commanders. As a result, concluded Weyand, "there's been massive destruction far beyond, I would guess, what was done in Cambodia." p256 A Better War by Lewis Sorley.

1971/03/06

Unit: H, S

Location: Khe Sanh

Event: H, S Btry at Khe Sanh

1971/03/06

Unit: ARVN

Location: LZ Hope/Tchepone

Event: LZ Hope Established

LZ Hope established by ARVN to the northeast of Tchepone (48 miles from border). Entire 2nd ARVN Infantry Regiment inserted.

1971/03/07

Unit: A

Source: Fred James

Location: Tabet (Lao Bao)

Event: A Btry at Tabet (Lao Bao)

I believe Tabet was a code name for a base at Lao Bao during Lam Son 719. It should not be confused with a base camp in the Ashau Valley.

1971/03/07

Unit: A

Source: 8/4 Op Rpt

Location: Tabet

Event: A Btry at Tabet

This consolidation of the battalion north of Khe Sanh was short lived, for on 7 March 1971, A Battery returned to the Tabet area. A Battery remained in forward areas near the Laotian border until 18 March 1971; at which time, it returned to a position north of Khe Sanh.

1971/03/09

Unit: B

Source: Reunion 2000 Book

Location: Ranger Ridge

Event: Traversing "Red Devil Road"

B Btry made an almost impossible move up muddy 50 degree inclined hills to the most northwestern position occupied by any American unit during the operation. To reach their position at Ranger Ridge, they traveled over "Red Devil Road", so named because it was constructed by the Engineers of the 1st Brigade, 5th Mech Infantry Division, the "Red Devils". To overcome the obstacles present, it was often necessary to have two bulldozers connected in

tandem to pull the 175mm guns up the mountainous hills. These two batteries remained in their forward positions near the Laotian border

1971/03/09

Unit: BN

Source: Gary Green

Location: Ranger Ridge

Event: Lam Son 719

I was with B Btry, 1st gun section. If you recall, B Btry went on an arty raid on Ranger Ridge. My gun had thrown track so we fired from where we were all night, non-stop, for our other three guns and the ARVN troops on Ranger Ridge. This was during Jan 71. The operation was Lam Son 719. I recall C Btry taking a lot of KIA, WIA on the Laotian border. My gun was also hit. We had 1 KIA and 2 WIA. Lots of stories to tell that I have never told.

1971/03/09

Unit: B

Source: 8/4 Op Rpt

Location: Ranger Ridge or Phu Loc, (XD6845)

Event: B Btry at Phu Loc

9 March 1971, B Battery moved along Red Devil Drive to a position area near the 1st Ranger Group Camp, Phu Loc, (XD6845). B Battery remained in forward areas near the Laotian border until 20 March 1971; at which time, it returned to a position north of Khe Sanh.

1971/03/11

Unit: ARVN

Location: LZ Hope/Tchepone

Event: LZ Hope Abandoned

LZ Hope abandoned after one week in the area.

1971/03/12

Unit: ARVN

Location: LZ Sophia II

Event: LZ Sophia II Abandoned

LZ Sophia II abandoned.

1971/03/14

Location: Laotian Border

Event: KIA Foster, SGT James Byrd

1971/03/14

Unit: A, B

Source: Gary Green

Location: Laotian Border

Event: Fire Fight- Medic KIA

Yes, there was a fire fight in Mar; there was a medic killed during the fight. I was in B. Btry at the time remember it very well. The only thing I don't know if the medic was in our Bn. 8-4. We were next to a river just off the border when we were hit. My section was set up next to a Duster. Our guns were on a small hill behind where we were. The NVA came across the river and got the shit kicked out of them. They shot RPG at our guns but none hit that I can remember. I can say for sure none of B Btry's guns were hit. A Btry was also there I can't speak for them.

1971/03/15

Unit: A

Source: SP 5 Jack L. Gibson

Location: Laotian Border

Event: NVA Tanks

I volunteered along with Ray Welch by request of one of the Lt's to take a deuce and half up the side of the mountain with a mortar team to take out these tanks that had us pinned down. Our 175's were wasted and we were little help to the ARVN unit that was only a few hundred meters north of our Location:. I would like to find this Lt. He had recommended me for a purple heart and bronze star for taking that mortar team up the mountain. When we returned to the base camp Ray and I were told we would not get the bronze star because this mission never happened. Apparently we were not suppose to be there. SP 5 Jack L. Gibson, A Bray Jeep Driver (Alpha 5), Sept 70/ July 71

1971/03/15

Unit: A

Source: Mike White

Location: Khe Sanh Area

Event: Retrieving A 3/4T Truck

I was a SGT. at the time, all broken in from all the weird noises and smells. We were leaving a place somewhere between Nam and Laos, Just a big hill to me. We were leaving in a big hurry, fast. Left all the ammo there. I was asked if I would drive the 3/4-ton, sure I replied! Only if someone would ride shotgun with me. As we were going down the two track, we were following real close to each other, bumper to bumper. We must of been going at least 30 mph. That's pretty fast for GI. As we passed all the shooting on both sides of the two track, I felt the truck dip into hole. All I can remember is the engine racing, and we were going nowhere. I told the person riding shotgun to get on the next truck. I was all

alone. At this time, I had one thing on my mind, get me out of here! I said to myself. All I could hear was shooting around me. I felt helpless as the trucks were going by. The next thing I remember was someone yelling "You better get on this truck. It's the last one." I jumped out of the 3/4, with my M-16 and started running. As I was running towards the 5-ton, I noticed there was a jeep in the back of it. I was yelling at the driver and the others who were riding in the back, to slow down. Still running, they were yelling "No brakes!" The truck began to slow down and the guy's lifted me up into the 5-ton. We then began slowly down the two-track. The truck stopped, and the few got out, as I did. I remember as if were yesterday ! Someone, higher-up came up to me and asked where the truck was, I said, it was back where all the shooting is going on. At this time, CPT'S, LT's and the First-SGT asked me where the truck was! I didn't know that all their personal things were in the back of that truck. They asked me if I would go back and get the truck. I thought a minute and said, sure if you had a tank and a big chain. Then someone came up to me and said, "Would a Duster do with a chain?" "Yes!" I said. I don't know who these people were but they didn't want to take me. They did. Back we go. The Duster guy's and me. As we got close to the truck, I said "I need some tools." The SSG. said "Make it fast, I don't want to be here." I took the tools and went to work. I took the drive-shaft off the 3/4, shooting all around me! and hooked up the tow chain. Jumped in the truck and said to the people on the Duster, "Let's GO!" . Not a pleasant trip back, but all the people who had there foot-lockers in the back of that 3/4, they were very Happy ! you are welcome ! CPT. McCaffery, LT. SKI, First SGT. Weston.

1971/03/16

Unit: ARVN

Location: LZ Lolo

Event: LZ Lolo Abandoned

LZ Lolo abandoned. As 3 battalions leave on foot, the fourth is attacked by NVA. Helos are mobbed by panic stricken ARVN. Worldwide press waiting at Khe Sanh.

1971/03/18

Unit: A

Location: Khe Sanh

Event: A Btry at Khe Sanh

1971/03/19

Unit: ARVN

Location: 4 mi East of Aloui

Event: ARVN Ambushed

Retreating ARVN column ambushed 4 miles east of Aloui (9 miles from border). NVA infiltrates along RT-9 in front of retreating ARVN troops. US fire bases at border threatened. They retreat along "Ambush Alley"

1971/03/31

Unit: B

Source: Reunion 2000 Book

Location: Camp Carroll

Event: B Btry at Camp Carroll

As the ARVN began their withdrawal, the need for artillery support along the route of egress became vital, causing B Btry to depart to a field position near Camp Carroll on 31 March 1971.

1971/03/31

Unit: B

Source: 8/4 Op Rpt

Location: Vicinity of Camp Carroll

Event: B Btry at near Camp Carroll

As RVNAF began their withdrawal from Laos, a battalion intermediate position area was prepared in the vicinity of Fire Support Base J. J. Carroll (YD0355). On 31 Mar 1971, B Battery displaced to prepared field positions vicinity of Fire Support Base Carroll.

1971/04/03

Unit: A

Source: Reunion 2000 Book

Location: FSB Gunner

Event: A Btry at FSB Gunner

As the ARVN began their withdrawal, the need for artillery support along the route of egress became vital, causing A Btry to depart to a field position at FSB Gunner on 3 April 1971.

1971/04/03

Unit: BN

Source: 8/4 Op Rpt

Event: 8/4 Departed the Khe Sanh plains

On 3 April 1971, remaining elements of the battalion departed the Khe Sanh plains.

1971/04/04

Unit: H, S

Source: Reunion 2000 Book

Location: FSB Gunner

Event: H, S Btry at FSB Gunner

As the ARVN began their withdrawal, the need for artillery support along the route of egress became vital, causing H, S Btry's to depart to a field position at FSB Gunner on 3 April 1971.

1971/04/06

Unit: A

Source: 8/4 Op Rpt

Location: vic (YD0949)

Event: A Btry OPCON to 2/94

On 6 April 1971, A Battery moved from FSB Gunner (YD0355) to a field position vicinity of (YD0949) OPCON to 2nd Battalion 94th Artillery.

1971/04/06

Unit: A

Source: Reunion 2000 Book

Location: Mai Loc

Event: A Btry at Mai Loc

On the 11 of April, A Btry was put under the Operational Control of the 2nd Bn, 94th Arty (a sister heavy artillery battalion) and moved to a position near Mai Loc, to support operation Lam Son 720 in the A Shau Valley. A Btry operated there without incident and upon completion, returned to Fire Support Base C-2.

1971/04/06

Unit: US/ARVN

Source: See Details

Location: Laos

Event: Lam Son 719 BDA

<http://doanket.tripod.com/lamso719/vsc-lamson7.html> (P131) Total enemy combat strength thus committed in the LAM SON 719 area of operation was estimated at 30,000, not to include reserve elements. In addition, the enemy logistic structure in the general area of operations also had from 10 to 20,000 men. Out of this total, the enemy lost an estimated 20,000 men or about one half. But while his losses caused by actual combat engagements could be generally verified, his casualties inflicted by artillery and aerial bombings could only be estimated. Bomb damage assessments could only be obtained on approximately 10% of all B-52 missions. Even in those areas where search and bomb damage assessments were conducted an accurate body count was not always possible, partly due to the immensity and ruggedness of the terrain and partly due to the unbearable stench produced by masses of badly decomposed human bodies.

1971/04/06

Unit: BN

Source: Reunion 2000 Book

Location: Khe Sanh Plains

Event: Lam Son 719 Terminated

In April 1971 all remaining elements of the 8th battalion departed the Khe Sanh Plains. The 8th Battalion 4th Artillery was the first heavy artillery battalion into the Khe Sanh area and the last heavy unit to return from it. In the 63 days that the battalion was involved with the Khe Sanh/Lam Son 719 Operation it suffered losses of 4 persons killed and 41 wounded with 17 vehicles destroyed. They were credited with costing the enemy 1238 killed, unknown numbers wounded, 26 field guns destroyed, 3 tanks destroyed, 5 fighting positions destroyed, 16 wheeled vehicles destroyed and 2644 secondary explosions.