

*7th Marine Regiment Journal*

*M Co., 3/7*

*While searching out hootches personnel came out from behind hootches. Personnel on search party shot before he recognized him as a Marine. Called and completed medevac.*

I took my first serious casualty here. Three Marines were together looking for more equipment. One of them got in front of the other two without them knowing it. He popped up in front of the two Marines and one of them, mistaking him for a gook, shot him. He was hit in the side. We stopped the bleeding and medivaced him immediately. He was conscious and talking. Hopefully, he will be all right.

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*Took fire from about 100 meters direct front from S/A's and possible M-16. Returned fire and sent platoon up to reinforce unit. Pulled medevacs back to LZ. Medevac completed. Casualties: 02 WIA.*

*While on daytime search found the following gear: 1000 lbs of rice, one NVA compass, various books and documents. Destroyed rice and forwarded documents to S-2.*

A little later in the day I did a very stupid thing. I sent two of my squad leaders, along with two other men to recon the area and look for ambush sites. The stupid part was sending the squad leaders where they could both be hit at the same time.

A short time after the fire team left, the gooks opened up on us. The bullets were going high, but I was ducking anyway. I could hear them cracking overhead. At about the same time my fire team ran into trouble. I got a frantic radio call saying they were pinned down by many gooks and that all four Marines were wounded. I quickly got my platoon together and started off in the direction of the shooting. I was ex-

pecting to get shot every time I crossed a little open ground.

We didn't end up finding any gooners and only one Marine was seriously wounded. He was the same man who had shot his friend earlier in the day. He had been hit just above the groin. As he observed while we were carrying him to the LZ, he had had a very bad day.

We stayed in the base camp for a couple of days along with the CP group and another platoon. It rained and everyone was sick including me. The place stank of rotting rice, human feces, vomit, stagnant water and garbage. On top of that, it didn't seem to me to be a very good defensive position and I was expecting the gooners to try and take their mortars back.

Throughout the night I could hear explosions as someone on watch would hear a noise, get nervous, and throw a grenade. One of those nights I could have cared less. I was so sick I literally couldn't move. I lay on the muddy ground, in the rain, in the middle of the base camp, wracked with spasms of vomiting and diarrhea. I was filthy. Fortunately, by morning I felt okay. I made use of the small stream running through the base camp to thoroughly scrub myself and my clothes.

The C.O finally told me to take my platoon back to the stream where we had bathed a few days before. By this time the dead gook that had been on the trail near the stream was quite ripe. I thought it prudent to send a squad ahead to bury him. The selected squad really sent up some moaning and wailing when I told them. It was the ultimate blow to their ego to have to bury a gook. One they hadn't even killed at that. It took some time afterward for them to regain their composure. Anyone within two hundred yards could tell that the gook did need burying.

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*Sent a fire team back to previous position to insure that all was secure. When they reached old position saw three NVA approx. 30 meters away. Opened fire with S/A's and M-79. Swept area found two NVA KIA. The following gear was captured: two AK-47's, one cartridge belt, one NVA canteen, and one watch.*

*While searching area found one NVA POW, one cartridge belt, one knife, POW has S/A wound in small of back. Bringing personnel to Co CP to be evaced.*

We stayed by the stream that night. The next morning the rest of the company moved out of the base camp and blew it up. Later, Captain Stanat told me to send someone back to the base camp to make sure it had been destroyed. I sent a fire team. They walked right up on three gooks looking through the camp. The fire team killed two of them and wounded another who later died while waiting to be medivaced.

That evening we started an arduous all night walk back to LZ Baldy for a 24 hour rest period. It was very confusing and part of the time the Company was lost. My platoon was in the rear of the column and we were constantly scrambling to keep up with the rest. I was scared to death that we would lose someone in the dark. While the other platoons stopped for rest breaks, my platoon spent the time closing up and counting off to make sure everyone was accounted for. Rumor had it that on a previous all night march, a Marine who had fallen asleep during a rest stop had been left. His mutilated body was found the next day. I wanted to make sure that didn't happen to one of us. By the time we arrived at LZ Baldy, I was exhausted. I would have much preferred to have stayed in the mountains.