

Boot to Boot

COMPANY D
1ST BATTALION
12TH CAVALRY
VIETNAM, 1965-1972



FOR HE TODAY THAT SHEDS HIS BLOOD WITH ME SHALL BE MY BROTHER FROM THIS DAY TO THE ENDING OF THE WORLD

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2020

May 1970: The Cavalry Rides Into Cambodia Fiftieth Anniversary of the Incursion to be Remembered in Louisville

By the spring of 1970, US ground forces in Vietnam totaled 385,000, but many units were preparing to depart. Vietnamization was turning the war over to the South Vietnamese. To protect US troops and exert pressure on North Vietnam in negotiations, bombing of the Cambodia sanctuaries had begun in 1969. Following the overthrow of Prince Sihanouk in March, President Nixon approved an attack into Cambodia to destroy the major enemy bases and the NVA they harbored. Officially named "Operation Rockcrusher," it is better known as the Cambodia Incursion.



Elements of the ARVN III and IV Corps totaling 48,000 troops attacked across the Cambodian border into the Parrot's Beak on 29 April. Two days later, Task Force Shoemaker, comprised of elements of the 1st Cavalry Division, the 1st ARVN Airborne Division, and the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment entered the Fish Hook. The American units attacked from the east, west and south while the Vietnamese paratroopers air assaulted into landing zones further north, blocking NVA/VC escape. The assault began at dawn with B52, tactical airstrikes, and artillery. Helicopter gunships pounded the NVA fleeing the allied armored

FSB Evans XU485166 established 4 May 1970

**1st Cavalry
Division
73rd Reunion
June 10-14, 2020
Louisville,
Kentucky**
*Find Your Friends at
Delta Company's
Hospitality Suite!*

On May 2, aerial scouts of 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry spotted a supply depot of the NVA 7th Division. Dubbed "The City," it contained nearly 200 tons of enemy supplies: 1,282 individual and 202 crew-served weapons, 2.2 million rounds of ammunition, and 300 vehicles, including a Porsche. Following a morning C130 flight from LZ Buttons to Loc Ninh, the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry combat assaulted into Cambodia the early afternoon of May 4.

(Continued on page 3)

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2020 1st Cavalry Division Reunion, Louisville



Crowne Plaza Airport Expo Center (Headquarters Hotel)



Included Parking, Airport Shuttle, On-site and nearby
Restaurants, Churchill Downs. Room block
rate: **SOLD OUT** Book: (502) 367-2251 or
<https://book.passkey.com/et/49951844>

Alternate Lodging (Near Crowne Plaza/Airport)

Hampton Inn (502) 366-8100, Spring Hill Suites (502) 361-9009, Tru by Hilton (502) 792-8800,
Howard Johnson (502) 363-9952, Courtyard by Marriott (502) 368-5678,
Residence Inn (502) 363-8800 (La Quinta is closed permanently)

Delta Company Hospitality Suite



We have booked the 1165 sq. ft. *Crowne Plaza Presidential Suite* for Friday and Saturday so D Company veterans have a place to meet and share. (actual photo)

MAJOR EVENTS

Thursday, 11 June Check into hotel and register. Welcome Reception at Churchill Downs.

Friday, 12 June 50th Anniversary Cambodian IncurSION Luncheon. Ladies Tea *Belle of Louisville*

Saturday, 13 June Unit Luncheons, Reception, and Association Banquet.

Sunday, 14 June Memorial Service. Check out and depart.

1 ST CAVALRY DIVISION REUNION REGISTRATION FORM ATTACHED

OTHER CAVALRY REUNIONS

The 12th Cavalry Regiment Association Reunion, 13-17 October 2020 at the Welk Resort in Branson, Missouri. Details Tom Crabtree at email mmctlc3@aol.com or call 432-853-4851

Delta's 2021 Reunion is tentatively planned for Las Vegas, Nevada. Dates & Details TBA.

FIDDLER'S GREEN

We remember those we have lost since our last issue of *Bnt to Bnt*.

SAM WATSON

*If we have listed someone in error, please contact Delta's webmaster at delta@cattrack6india.com
Do the same if you know of a Delta Veteran who has gone on to Fiddler's Green.*



First Commander's Corner

This year we will sponsor our very own Delta hospitality at the 1st Cavalry's Louisville Reunion, a special event for the Brothers who are veterans of the Cambodia Incursion now 50 years past.

Our Brother Sam Watson planned to make Columbus his first Delta Reunion, but was taken ill. It was his last opportunity. It reminds us that the next Delta Reunion may be the last we are able to attend. Seemingly each week we learn that one of our Brothers is fighting the medical ravages of

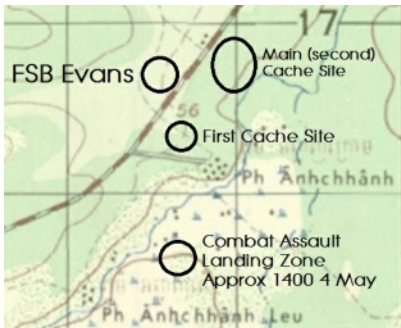
time; that yet another beloved Brother has been called home to Fiddlers Green. I've had my own struggles recently, and thankfully am on the road back to health, thanks to the modern miracle of minimally-invasive heart surgery and a bovine friend I never met. (I've already heard more than enough "moo" jokes!)

In all seriousness, please join your Brothers at Louisville. We really do want to see you again!

THE GREATEST CASUALTY IS BEING FORGOTTEN
© Wounded Warrior Project

Blessings & "Bnt to Bnt"

Johnny Sergulis



(Continued from page 1) D Company's landing zone was in an open area at XU486157, from which it moved west, into a treeline, through a stream, and up a bank to Cambodian National Highway 7. From there, with the 1st platoon on point, Delta followed the highway toward the northeast. As they did, a Troop of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment motored through headed toward Snoul, where the NVA was making a stand. They apparently had come from a banana farm; the Sheridans and M113's were covered with the fruit.

On Hwy 7, Delta encountered a 1/9th OH6 crew poaching an enemy weapons cache seen on an aerial recon. That cache and another nearby were major finds. The company continued to XU485166, where the battalion opened FSB Evans; a bulldozer driver was killed when a tree he was pushing fell on him. Securing the larger part of the cache in the vicinity of XU490168, Delta was probed at about 11 PM; the enemy rebounded toward the perimeter at Evans, where they were again engaged, costing the NVA one killed. D Company spent the next day counting and cleaning up the cache, which included 618 SKS rifles, nearly 400 British Enfield rifles, numerous assorted machine guns and mortars, a PA set, an eclectic welder, and a metal lathe. (Continued on page 5)



Colonel Samuel J Watson III passed away on December 23, 2019. Delta's Executive Officer 65-66 served three Vietnam tours. White House Deputy National Security Adviser, Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT II) staff, Reagan-Bush Transition Team Chief of Staff at CIA, Department of State, Department of Health and Human Services, and Associate Professor, University of Pittsburgh.

Web Site Update

You're going to think this is a little crazy, but stick with me. Today, as I write this, is Martin Luther King Day, celebrating the great man whose "I Have a Dream" speech was a milestone of American history. Well, I must have been thinking about that last night, because I had a dream, too. It was about the resurrection; yes THE resurrection, where we all come back to life. (No, this is not so I can qualify for PTSD payments, if that's what you're thinking.)

When I rose from the dead, at same moment so did everyone else. (Time is just plain weird in the after life.) SGT Lute, SP4's Baylor and Bailey were there. They were surprised to find out I had lived long after the day they were KIA. After all, we all appeared to arrive in the after-life at the same time. Even Dieter Arnold was there. He assured me he was "just kidding" when he announced "I am an asshole." We knew that, Dieter.

We all wanted to know what happened after we died. The most common questions among my Delta Brothers were "Did anyone remember me after I left"? And "Did anyone know what we did"? I told them about the web site but most did not know what that was. I was trying to explain, but getting nowhere, when I awakened in a cold sweat.

Which brings me to the point: GET YOUR STORIES ON THE WEB SITE! Just do it!

I told you in the last newsletter, and it bears repeating: "A close look at the [firefight page](#) shows there are gaps that need to be filled. [This is where you can be of help and I exhort you to do so.](#) Take a look at the events and contact me if you have any stories to be added to the narratives. Your stories are very important and mean a lot to everyone else."

Only Reggie Anderson responded to that request. Thank you Reggie! I'll be interviewing him soon, and his story will be included in the story of the 506 Valley Battle. I am waiting for yours. Surprise me. And that reminds me: You don't have to write! Just call me, I'll turn on my nifty little digital recorder, and, well, there you are! I'll happily do all the rest.

Danny Walsh e-mailed me. He is the nephew of—and named after—Daniel Maguire, KIA at Tam Quan 11 December 1967. Danny wants to keep the memory of his uncle alive and is sending in photos to be posted on the website soon. We'll let you know when that happens.

THAT'S ALL FOR NOW. BRING PLENTY OF AMMO. CATTRACK6INDIA...OUT

Bob March

(360) 627-0918

SUCCESSFUL SANIBEL ISLAND OFFER RENEWED FOR 2020

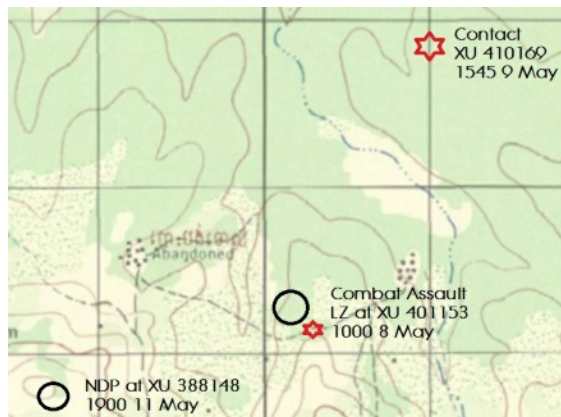
EXCLUSIVE "FIRST CHANCE" SIGN-UP AT DELTA REUNION

The *Raymond E. Redalen Foundation* offered a furnished, gulfview condominium at one of America's premier vacation destinations, free of charge to Delta Vietnam veterans last year. Twenty-one veterans signed up.

Delta Veterans who attend Delta's October reunion had an exclusive "first chance" to reserve the week of their choice for the 2020 season. Spaces still remain, so the offer is now open to the rest of our veterans. Look for the brochure in your mail soon.

(continued from Page 3) Delta was still on Evans on the 6th when two 107mm rockets impacted 100 meters outside the perimeter. The same day, additional ARVN units poured across the border at three points: at the Dog's Head (just north of the Parrot's Beak); northeast of the Fish Hook; and near Phouc Binh.

On 8 May Delta flew 8 kilometers west from Evans to XU401153. Moving off the LZ to the southeast, the company's flank security was engaged by a sniper at a distance of about 30 meters. Delta returned fire, and contact was broken off without result or casualties. Elsewhere, D Company 2nd Bn., 12th Cav, fought an engagement with NVA regulars defending another large enemy depot containing 326 tons of ammunition and supplies they named "Rock Island East," after the famed Illinois arsenal.



and supplies they named "Rock Island East," after the famed Illinois arsenal.



Delta's Cache 4-5 May

By this time stories of the shootings at Kent State began to reach US Forces in Cambodia, even dominating the front page of *Stars and Stripes*. The four students were becoming martyrs, while American soldiers killed would be unrecognized and unremembered by all but their families. One soldier wrote home, "I am quite pleased with Cambodia and quite upset with student unrest at home. None of us here can understand it."

May 17 was a log day. Following resupply, as the company moved away from its perimeter, it came in contact with an NVA platoon. Supported by tube and aerial artillery, Delta killed 15 of the enemy. As for Delta, PFC Richard Haithcox, Stateville, NC, was killed in action. Seven were wounded.

Still based on FSB Evans, the 1/12th was the last remaining cavalry battalion in the Fish Hook. South of Evans, a D company automatic ambush killed 1 NVA, and at mid-morning May 19, moving out of its NDP, Delta came into contact at XU467118 with an estimated NVA company. Delta lost one killed in action, SP4 Bobby Lemons, Dyersburg, TN, while accounting for 4 enemy killed. The Battalion Surgeon came to the field to assist company medics with the wounded.

The next day, as Delta moved northeast, contacts with a disorganized enemy continued. At XU410169 D Company engaged three NVA, killing one, and while setting up an automatic ambush, received sporadic small arms fire. On the evening of 10 May, at XU388148 Delta engaged movement near its NDP. Three detainees, two wounded, were evacuated to Tay Ninh.

Over May 10-11, the single deadliest American fire fight of the invasion was fought by 3/506th Inf, 101st Airborne in the Prek Drang base camp, where B Company engaged two NVA companies, killing 47 at the cost of 8 US KIA and 28 WIA.

(continued on Page 7)

Secretary's Report

HAPPY NEW YEAR! I hope everyone had a great Holiday Season and was able to enjoy it with family and friends.

Well boys, for the approximately 120 of us who served in Delta during May and June of 1970, this year is the 50th anniversary of our time spent in Cambodia.

I am dedicating my efforts as Outreach Coordinator to encourage veterans of that era to attend the First Cavalry Reunion in Louisville, KY, June 10 to June 14. *This reunion features a special luncheon for Veterans of Cambodia* along with a regimental luncheon and the Division Banquet.

There are 30 members of the unit who have passed on to Fiddlers Green since returning home. Our numbers are decreasing. Please consider attending this reunion, you owe it to yourself to experience being with the men that you served with.

I have compiled a list of guys that served in Cambodia (including platoon and nicknames). So, if you have any question call me 347-853-1281 or email me at fredmacl66@outlook.com

Good Health

Fred Mac Kennan

BOOK REVIEW

INCURSION

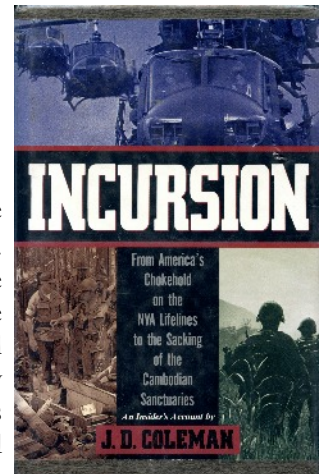
From America's Chokehold on the NVA Lifelines Lifelines
to the Sacking of the Cambodian Sanctuaries

J.D. Coleman

Incursion just might be the best book you can read to understand the Cambodian Incursion of 1970 not actually written *about* the Incursion. By beginning the narrative with the Cav's move from I Corps to operate astride the enemy's approaches to Saigon, author JD Coleman allows the reader to understand the larger policy decisions that led to that move, and later to the incursion itself. Going beyond an on-the-ground military history, Coleman bridges a gap by letting us understand Washington's internal debates and how those strategic decisions shaped the tactical decisions in Vietnam.

Using the 1st Cavalry Division as his narrative centerpiece, Coleman recounts how brilliantly successful that division was in interdicting the enemy supply and reinforcement routes from Cambodia into bases near Saigon, and how the Communist sanctuaries were finally attacked and destroyed. In Coleman's view, the greatest benefit of the incursion was squandered by limiting the raid—for political considerations—to 60 days and its thrust to 30 kilometers beyond the frontier. He argues that the war's outcome might have been very different had the Creighton Abrams/William Colby strategy of interdiction and pacification been adopted earlier in the war, ending Westmoreland's policy of attrition. Still, the curtailed invasion denied NVA ammunition, medical supplies, weapons, and training facilities—likely buying the Republic of Vietnam two extra years.

Incursion is available from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Thriftbooks and other on-line sellers. -TWK-



(continued from Page 5) The 1/12th was relieved from the operational control of the 11th ACR to the OPCON of the 1st Cav's 3rd Brigade on 27 May, and moved the battalion TOC to Fire Support Base Thor at XU910285, 300 meters across the border into Vietnam. Delta and the rest of the battalion began operating within artillery support range of FSB Thor. Delta air assaulted from Thor on June 8 to replace B Company in the field at XU844327 six kilometers west in Cambodia. That day a New Zealand Captain, accompanied by Battalion Sergeant Major James Delmont, joined the company. Delta's point and rear elements were simultaneously engaged within a few hundred meters of the LZ by an enemy element probably shadowing B company. The contact resulted in 4 NVA KIA.



Log day in Cambodia

When the point element was engaged on June 10, SGM Delmont went forward and was killed by small arms fire. There were no other casualties, nor did the company report any enemy losses. Due to terrain, Delmont was unable to be extracted until June 13.

Delta walked out of Cambodia to FSB Thor on 29 June; all American units were now out of Cambodia. US ground forces had advanced 19 miles into Cambodia; gunboats reached 22 miles up the Mekong River. 50,659 Americans participated in the campaign on both sides of the border, 19,300 inside of Cambodia. The 1st Cavalry Division committed the most troops—7,401—to the incursion. 382 Americans

were killed in Cambodia during the two months and 1,525 were wounded.

In *Into Cambodia*, Keith Nolan wrote, “After the 1968 Tet Offensive, Washington negated its advantage by stopping the bombing and placing its faith in negotiations.” The same wrong-headed policy prevailed after the Cambodian Incursion. Congress repealed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution and forced withdrawal by June 30. That the Cambodian invasion saved American lives fell on deaf ears at home, but was validated by the men in the field. One infantry officer said, “After Cambodia, you couldn't pick a fight (with the NVA). If only we had persisted, we would have won the war.”

Even famed advisor and war critic Lt. Col. John Paul Vann concurred, calling the incursion “the most favorable development, other than [the VC defeat in] Tet [1968], that occurred in this war.”

J.D. Coleman in his 1991 book *Incursion* (see review) wrote, “The American soldiers who had withstood repeated blows from North Vietnamese regular army soldiers and then watched helplessly as they disappeared into the sanctuaries of Cambodia had few reservations about the morality of the invasion.” Even today, former soldiers are unequivocal when asked whether they would do it again. The answer is, “Hell, yes.”

-TWK & FMacL-

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