



[Home](#) > [Vietnam War Articles](#) > [War Story](#)



The National Archives

War Story: Operation Tuscaloosa

16 October 2006

John Culbertson

An Hoa Basin, South Vietnam – Arizona Territory: My liberty ship docked at the bustling port of Da Nang, Republic of Vietnam in late December 1966. I was a Marine infantryman, MOS 0311. As a replacement I was assigned to one of the rifle battalions of the 5th Marine Regiment. In Vietnam, the 5th Marines had fought ferocious jungle battles around the beleaguered Marine Firebase Con Thien in the fall of 1966.

My liberty ship docked at the bustling port of Da Nang, Republic of Vietnam in late December 1966. I was a Marine infantryman, MOS 0311. As a replacement I was assigned to one of the rifle battalions of the 5th Marine Regiment. In Vietnam, the 5th Marines had fought ferocious jungle battles around the beleaguered Marine Firebase Con Thien in the fall of 1966. Now in late December, the battalion had returned to its TAOR in An Hoa Basin some twenty-five miles southwest of Da Nang down Highway One.

I joined the veteran Marines of Hotel Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines under their highly regarded commanding officer, Captain Jerome Doherty. Captain Doherty was in his second tour in Vietnam having already skippered Mike Company 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines in 1965. In January 1967, the Marine High Command sought a pitched battle with one of the twenty-four battalions of communist infantry and support troops operating in our I Corps sector of Quang Nam Province.

Our specific focus militarily was the hamlet dotted rice producing valley know as the "Arizona Territory". The Arizona encompassed the Song Thu Bon and the Song Vu Gia river valleys, and contained several hundred square miles of fertile rice paddies and densely inhabited peasant villages. It was here in the rice belt northwest of An Hoa that the local and main force VC, along with their NVA allies came to re-provision their battalions in the fertile fields that blanketed the Arizona.

The 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines began the New Year in 1967 patrolling along the river valleys in the Arizona hoping to make contact with the elusive enemy. Instead of finding

sizable opponents who would stand and fight, as the Marines of 2/5 had experienced on the DMZ at Con Thien, ambushes and a lethal assortment of booby traps and mines were the order of the day.

Intelligence was gathered and forwarded to First Marine Division HQ at Da Nang where analysts discovered that new enemy battalions were moving into the Arizona. These enemy forces were already challenging Marine efforts to pacify the hamlets and villages and return the countryside to the peaceful rule of the South Vietnamese government. No guerrilla campaign in history had ever won without the support and cooperation of the indigenous population. In South Vietnam the peasants were caught in the deadly tug of war between the Viet Cong and their NVA henchmen, and the South Vietnamese ARVN and their American allies. 1967 would be the year that the Marine Command at First Division at Phu Bai would press the offensive with the ultimate goal of forcing the VC / NVA to fight a series of fixed battles.

The 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines fielded the veteran, combat hardened troops capable of carrying out an aggressive assault on the Viet Cong Headquarters at Phu Loi along the Son Thu Bon River, then miles northeast of An Hoa. An operational plan was developed by the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines' staff and approved by First Marine Division HQ. The plan was codenamed: Operation Tuscaloosa.

Lt. Col. W.C. Airheart had fought in World War II as a Marine sergeant. In the Korea war he led a rifle company as a Marine Captain. In Vietnam, Colonel Airheart was one of the most experienced combat officers at the battalion level in the entire Corps. In addition to Hotel Company, Foxtrot Company, under the able command of Captain G.S. Burgett, was also slated to take the field against the enemy. Along with the four hundred 0311s of Foxtrot and Hotel Companies were added the assets of Headquarters and Supply Company under command of Captain A.J. Boccuti. H & S Company would furnish engineers, heavy weapon support, and handle re-supply and medevac, as well as deal with any contingencies such as refugees or enemy prisoners. Two platoons from Echo and Gold Companies would be on standby at the An Hoa airstrip ready to board CH-46 Sea Knight helicopters to be lifted into battle to support either manoeuvre company or to block off the escape and evasion routes of the enemy.

Foxtrot and Hotel mounted increasingly heavy patrol activity into the Arizona during the middle part of January. The wet season was in full swing and dense fog and swollen paddies bogged down the Marines. The weather definitely favoured the Viet Cong. Patrols ran ten to fifteen clicks through vast expanses of rice paddies, pushing through to distant tree lines, which indicated another village or hamlet that had to be searched. Marines hunted the Viet Cong the Viet Cong, confiscated contraband weapons, equipment, food supplies and enemy documents.

The few fire-fights that occurred were no more than brief, sharp ambushes, initiated by the enemy who would quickly break contact and flee. The Marines would hit the deck at the first sounds of battle, return suppressive fire, then assault. The VC would immediately melt away into the tree lines surrounding the rice paddies or disappear into the myriad of tunnel

complexes that dotted the countryside.

The overall effect of these short engagements was to frustrate the Marines and their commanders. Marines were taught to isolate and pin down their enemies, then, with controlled small arms fire and supporting artillery, attack the individual pockets of resistance until the enemy surrendered or died.

On the 24th of January Hotel marched from An Hoa with complete packs, 60mm mortars and M60 machine guns with extra ammunition for both the tubes and the MGs. Foxtrot left the nearby firebases of Phu Loc 6 and advanced through the Arizona's paddies and hamlets toward a night time link-up with Hotel Company. Kit Carson scouts, forward observer teams, scout dog teams, and ARVN interpreters were added to the H & S Company to support the manoeuvre companies.

Foxtrot entered Bao An Tay and received reports of enemy troops entering a tree line a thousand metres beyond the hamlet. The reports had come from nineteen refugees who were fleeing the communist forces moving into the Son Thu Bon River area. Foxtrot's point squad found several grenades and rifles along with a plastic covered bundle of documents. They were discovered in a hole covered up with bags of rice inside a hut. The Battalion Commander was alerted by radio at his command post in the field at the firebase at Phu Loc 6. Col. Airheart radioed the Company Commander of Foxtrot that he was proceeding by chopper to Bao An Tay. A jet strike was called on Button Thrust UHF from MAG-11 (Marine Air Group) based at Da Nang.

The Colonel was airborne with his staff as the four F-4 Phantoms sliced in low over the paddies lining up for their napalm runs. The ordnance cart-wheeled end over end until it reached the ground where the ruptured canisters engulfed the enemy trench line in a black, billowing cloud of smoke and flames that flashed glowing bright orange as it peaked out of the searing hellfire. Co. Airheart landed as another 75 refugees ran into the village from a previously hidden trench situated between the hamlet of Bao An Tay and the napalm strike. The Colonel received word that "many Viet Cong soldiers run away to the river". Two VC nurses were intercepted trying to escape with the refugees. The two captured nurses and the rest of the refugees were then lifted out in several chopper runs for interrogation.

The Colonel then ordered Hotel and Foxtrot's commanders to form a tight defensive perimeter for the night while he contemplated the strategy to bring his Marines into striking distance of the communist forces within their riverine sanctuary.

The 25th of January dawned with Foxtrot splitting off from Hotel to approach the river from the south while Hotel patrolled to the east. Foxtrot's point squad soon jumped a squad of VC hiding in a ditch at the edge of a large paddy. The VC knew they were trapped 200 metres from their village and the relative safety of their bunkers. With no other options they struck out for cover, as the Marines requested permission from their platoon leader to open fire. The point scout killed the VC point man with his second shot at 400 metres. The entire Marine squad opened up in volley fire and in thirty seconds cut the VC patrol to

pieces.

Foxtrot called a fire mission on the enemy village after its point squad took several bursts of automatic weapons fire as it approached the ville. The 155 battery at Fire Control Centre, An Hoa fired a single Willy Peter spotting round that impacted in the open rice paddy between Foxtrot's point and the village. The FO added several hundred metres to the range and called "fire for effect". White Phosphorous shells tore into the hamlet, sending smoking sections of thatched roofs and palm fronds flying through the air. In five minutes the fire mission turned the village into a smouldering collage of black and white geysers belching smoke and flame as the streets and huts filled with burning chards of jagged, white hot metal.

Foxtrot formed a firing line and poured a long volley of small arms fire into the ville, kicking up a dust in the abandoned streets and skipping rounds into the flimsy huts that survived the artillery barrage. The Marine fire was devastating.

Foxtrot manoeuvred into position along the base of a large emerald-hued mountain. An hour before nightfall Hotel Company moved up to join its sister company, forming a crescent shaped defensive perimeter. The six rifle platoons of Foxtrot and Hotel overlapped into tight elliptical perimeters tied back into the main body. Ambushes and listening posts slipped out an hour after the sun slid behind the jungle-choked mountains. The night came in an inky blackness coloured only by the chirps of Asian crickets signalling each other along the edges of the surrounding rice paddies.

In a low crouch, I moved out silently to set up my listening post a hundred metres out in front of the Third platoon, along Hotel's main perimeter. I selected a shallow depression at the edge of a ploughed field running away to my front. Dropping into it I assumed a comfortable sitting position with my M-14 rifle across my knees. I began to commit the distinctive terrain features to my front to memory, a safeguard against tricks of the mind as the night progressed. My view consisted of a hundred metres or so of ploughed ground running gently rolling swells toward a distant tree line on the far side of the field. The sloping finger of a massive hill dropped down into the field about 75 metres away on my starboard flank.

The silence was suddenly broken by the dull "gong, gong, gong" of cow bells as the obscure shapes of passing cattle moved into my line of sight. I focused hard on the animals, squinting to make out the shapes of any two-legged critters mingled with them. As I raised up to get a better look, VC soldiers using the herd for cover fired a burst of grazing fire toward my position. It was time to vacate the premises. I gathered my feet under me, and when the firing slacked off I thrust out of my crouched position and ran weaving and dodging to the rear. I threw myself into the first ditch I came to, tearing and bruising myself against the clusters of bamboo that grew along the edges. I landed half conscious and gasping for breath. As battered as I was, none of the enemy bullets had found their mark.

A fire team reached my position seconds later, returning fire toward the VC muzzle flashes

flickering in the distance. One Marine shouldered an M-79 grenade launcher and fired several rounds out into the field in front of my listening post. The HE rounds burst among the enemy with telling effect, forcing the VC to withdraw back into the tree line on the far side of the field. But when the grenadier brought his weapon down from his shoulder, the VC fired a sustained burst of interlocking AK-47 fire toward the silhouette of the still standing Marine. The green ChiCom tracers tore into the man's body, knocking him off his feet. With a groan he fell across my prostrate form at the bottom of the ditch. I pushed his still warm body to the side and felt the hot pulsing of his blood as it leaked through the dark stained rents in the chest plate of his flack jacket. He twitched once or twice and was still.

The enemy fire died away and the night was silent once more. We recovered our dead comrade and returned quickly to our lines, the weight of our loss falling heavy on our hearts.

The ambushes and LPs were recalled and the remainder of the night passed as peacefully as it had begun. As I knelt shaking in the faint illumination of the false dawn, someone stuck a cup of steaming Joe in my hands. Its sudden warmth reminded me of the life-blood of my fallen brother that had soaked my trousers just a few hours earlier. He had come to my rescue, and now he was dead.

A short time later Foxtrot and Hotel saddled up to move to the river. Word came down from the platoon leaders that Operation Tuscaloosa would be scrubbed at 1800 hours if we failed to make contact with the VC forces that had so far eluded our sweeping manoeuvres. It was the morning of 26th January 1967, a day that the Marines of 2nd Battalion, 5th Regiment would never forget for the rest of their lives.

Foxtrot moved out with Hotel in trace. More than four hundred Marine infantry in column formation with their Headquarters and Supply units bringing up the rear. A short thirty-minute march brought the Marines to the vegetation choked bank of the Song Thu Bon River as it cut its way toward the sea.

The point squad heard the river before they actually saw it, and halted the formation twenty metres from the water's edge. The troops knelt in place, so many light green blotches against the darker emerald of the jungle foliage.

The company commanders and platoon leaders moved up to join their point elements, crawling forward to the positions secured by the lead scouts. It would be the job of these scouts to break the trail down to the river, locate a crossing, then find suitable cover and concealment on the opposite shore for the rifle squads that would follow.

A large sandbar out in the centre of the river ran across our front for perhaps a thousand metres, dividing the river into two separate streams. The open terrain of the sandbar consisted of a number of small dunes interspersed with clumps of marsh grass. The open area ran for nearly five hundred metres across before it petered out against the second channel of the river. Somewhere downstream the two streams joined

again. The sandbar was a wasteland without cover or protection, and it had to be crossed.

The two company commanders devised a plan for crossing the river with Foxtrot leading the way on Hotel's port flank. Foxtrot would move downstream where the two branches reunited and cross the river there, while Hotel covered its advance. When Foxtrot reached the safety of the opposite bank, it would pivot on its starboard flank toward Hotel Company and take up position to provide flanking fire on any enemy troops opposing Hotel's crossing.

Two 105mm howitzers from Echo Battery, 11th Marines were deployed on a nearby firebase at My Loc 2 to provide close support if the crossing was opposed. Fire control at An Hoa Combat Base also had its 155mm howitzers and 8-inch self-propelled guns trained to support the crossing. MAG 11 at Da Nang had a flight of F-4 Phantoms loaded with Napalm ready to scramble. The Battalion aid station at An Hoa was alerted and CH-46 Sea Knight helicopters were placed on pad alert to provide medevac assistance. Everything was ready.

Captain Doherty had seen his share of combat, but he was about to experience a new level of ferocity that would outstrip anything he had faced before. He called his pint scouts forward. "Lafley, bring Culbertson up on point. You two are going to cut a path down the bank and enter the stream where it is at its narrowest out to the sandbar. Move skirmishers across the sandbar and halt the lead fire teams two hundred metres from the enemy bank. If we are hit crossing, do not stop until positions are taken at the forward half of the sandbar two hundred metres from the opposite shore. We will run artillery missions on the southern bank dislodging the enemy. Then we will assault directly into the enemy's trench line and destroy him".

I moved forward with Lafley and picked up the steep trail cutting down the riverbank. Halfway down I looked to my port flank and saw the point squad of Foxtrot struggling through the current onto the far shore. I jumped from the edge of the bank into the swirling current, and discovered that the freezing water was four feet deep. I struggled across the narrow stream and came to rest against the lead edge of the sandbar, which stood a full five feet above the surface of the water. As I reached the protection of the sandbar sniper fire erupted from our flanks kicking up plumes of water out in the stream. I pulled myself up onto the sandbar as the rest of the squad waded the stream behind me. When everyone in the point squad was safely across, we reassembled and crawled ahead across the rolling expanse of sand.

As the rest of the platoon crossed the stream, the sniper fire began coming from our rear. The point squad moved out continuing to edge into position until it was facing the southern bank two hundred metres straight ahead. When we reached our positions we began to take small arms fire from dug in positions along the top of the opposite riverbank. Single, aimed shots and short bursts from automatic weapons laced into the dunes where we lay clustered. Amid the ricochets of screaming bullets we pushed the overburden of sand to our front as we scooped out shallow fighting holes.

Foxtrot was coming under increasingly heavy fire to our port side. When the company attempted to manoeuvre to roll up the VC flank, Captain Burgett's CP group was hit by a VC 82mm mortar. The enemy gunners had line of sight trajectory on the Foxtrot commander and his RTO. Burgett was seriously wounded and his radioman was killed instantly.

Meanwhile, back at Hotel's CP, Captain Doherty was attempting to raise Captain Burgett on the radio. Foxtrot with its commanding officer, was bogged down under the intense enemy fire now pouring into its exposed position from a well concealed enemy trench line.

Second Platoon had formed skirmishers and was advancing behind the point squad. They were forced to halt their advance and take up firing positions out in the middle of the sandbar. The VC had pinned Foxtrot down, and was shifting men along their trench line, a fighting complex that extended some two thousand metres along the southern bank of the river.

Hotel came under increasingly heavy small arms fire, as the VC gunners rolled 12.7mm heavy machine guns into place and began to hammer at the sand dugouts that harboured the point element.

Two Marines at opposite ends of the trapped platoon were hit in the head by rifle fire and died where they lay. There was no help forthcoming. The VC had every square inch of the sandbar targeted, and they were turning it into killing ground. No one could move without becoming a target for any number of VC gunners.

A Marine screamed to my front not ten metres away, and my face was peppered with bloody slices of human flesh blown back on me. A lone Marine struggled to his feet, with bright red splotches covering his buttocks and thighs. He moved forward a step or so before another volley of VC small arms fire slammed into his midsection. He pitched forward face down, his arms raised above him gesturing like a preacher giving a Sunday sermon. His blood flowed out slowly, making puddles in the golden sand around him.

I wiped the gore from my eyes as PFC Holloway screamed that he was shot in the face. The enemy round had actually punctured his helmet, hitting the headband in the front, then, deflecting around the liner to slam into his pack. Holloway had always been lucky like that.

82mm mortar rounds began impacting into our positions among the sand dunes, as the VC gunners walked rounds though our terrified platoon and up the northern bank of the river toward Hotel's CP group.

Enemy bullets laced into the Marine positions, and CP group under fierce attack. Company Gunnery Sergeant Husak was hit by an enemy bullet that cut a deep furrow the length of his left forearm. But it would take more than that to keep the indomitable Sergeant Hussak out of the fight. The Korean War vet didn't bother to cover the wound

with a battle dressing as he returned fire over the heads of the second platoon. There would be time for that later.

Captain Doherty ordered Third Platoon onto the sandbar to support Second Platoon. He then moved his CP group up with the First Platoon into the river to cross on the port flank of the pinned down Second Platoon. An artillery fire mission was called into An Hoa's Fire Control Centre and the 155mm battery located there. These long-range guns were soon firing delayed fuse shells into the hardened bunkers sheltering the VC on the southern bank of the river.

Captain Doherty watched as salvo after salvo slammed into the opposite shoreline until the bank was literally denuded of vegetation. By then, half the VC had been either killed or wounded by the huge artillery rounds impacting into the soft earth, caving in the trench line and splitting the log reinforced roofs of the protective bunkers. The remaining VC waited silently in the dust choked darkness of their remaining bunkers as the Marine artillery tore their sanctuary apart and buried alive those not killed outright by the explosions.

The two 105mm guns supporting Foxtrot had already fired over eight hundred rounds, enabling the company to finally turn the enemy's flank and advance into the VC positions facing Hotel, now decimated by the Marine artillery barrage.

Captain Doherty now manoeuvred his Marines onto Second Platoon's flank. The enemy fire coming from the southern shoreline had slackened, enabling the Marines of Hotel Company to breathe a sigh of relief. But casualties had been heavy.

In the final moments of the enemy's extremely heavy grazing fire that raked the sandbar from stem to stern, the young commander of Third Platoon had drawn his .45 pistol and rushed forward to rally his pinned down Marines. As he passed by my fighting hole, he was stopped in mid-stride as a burst from an enemy automatic weapon hit him dead centre in the chest. Lt. Smith was knocked on his back, dead before he hit the ground.

A short, black Navy corpsman rushed forward to assist the fallen officer, only to be struck down himself by another burst of enemy fire. He fell dead across the body of the slain officer.

A platoon sergeant ran up to the two bodies, not realizing they were already dead. VC gunners had him in their sights before he could reach them. A dozen thumb-sized holes appeared in his torso as if by magic, spinning him through the air like an acrobat. The dying NCO splattered the dead corpsman and platoon leader with a fresh blanket of American blood.

Captain Doherty ordered Gunnery Sergeant Gutierrez to give the command to form the company on line. "ON LINE! THE CAPTAIN WANTS EVERY MARINE ON LINE. FIX BAYONETS. FIRE FROM THE HIP. FORWARD, MARCH. COMMENCE FIREING". Gunny Gutierrez led the Second Platoon in an assault line with Marines abreast firing from

the hip as they crossed the final two hundred metres of sand to the second stream. The entire rifle company had joined in the assault, with Hotel Company picking up some of the Foxtrot's stragglers on the way. Nearly two hundred Marines advanced confidently into the second stream.

The Viet Cong had already pulled out the survivors of their main force, and had fled down the road to the village of La Bac where they would regroup to meet the Marines' next assault. The VC commander left behind a squad sized element of men too wounded to escape. They had orders to defend the trench line against the Marines, and to delay them for as long as possible. It was a suicide mission.

As the Marines assault line entered the stream and came into clear view, the Viet Cong suicide squad opened up from point blank range, sending a short, but deadly, volley into the exposed Marine ranks. One Marine was killed and four others wounded. The enraged Marine riflemen raked the enemy positions with deadly fire, as they scrambled up the clay bank and into the VC trenches. The enemy soldiers who survived the return fire were bayoneted.

The Marines had taken fifty-five casualties in the river crossing and the subsequent two hour fire-fight at the sandbar. Most of the wounded were from small arms fire, which produced the most serious wounds.

The enemy lost fifty-seven confirmed dead with another sixty-four probable KIAs in the bunkers. Approximately fifty enemy soldiers were estimated wounded from the number of blood trails and weapons left behind. Rifles, ammunition, uniforms, and four pounds of documents were left behind by the main enemy force escaping to La Bac.

Medevac helicopters from An Hoa landed on the sandbar and removed the dead and wounded. The remaining grunts broke for chow on top of the enemy trench line, looking across at the sandbar where so many of their comrades had fallen.

When they finished eating, they cleaned their weapons, replenished their ammunition, and waited for the companies to receive their marching orders for the second assault of the day into La Bac village to destroy the remnants of the B-20 Main Force Battalion.

Hotel formed platoons on line. Gunny Gutierrez ordered Third Platoon to take the point and advance through a French rubber plantation toward La Bac. Hotel destroyed a number of VC sniper positions and a machine gun nest attempting to block their march on La Bac.

PFC Lafley and I crawled up a trail and came under fire from a reinforced bunker to our front. I took the position under fire with my M-14, shooting the parapet to pieces. Moving up, I punched a hole through the bunker and peered in only to see a VC looking back at me. I stepped back and shot him through the chin breaking his neck. An M-79 man fired two rounds into the bunker killing the second VC. PFC John Lafley opened up on a third sniper, and with accurate rifle fire shot a dozen holes in the VC.

Later in the day, I attacked an enemy hut housing a machine gun position. At the same time, a Marine machine gunner named John Materazzi opened up on the VC in the wooden hut with his M-60. Between the two of us, we killed five VC and set the hut on fire. With these enemy positions finally silenced, the platoons of Hotel Company formed up for their second assault of the day against La Bac village.

As Hotel's second and third platoons formed to begin the assault, the 155mm guns at An Hoa began their adjusting fires to zero in La Bac. Once La Bac was targeted, Gunny Gutierrez requested delayed fused rounds fired for effect. For ten minutes the salvos of 155mm slammed into La Bac. The VC were trapped in underground bunkers that were easily destroyed by the huge shells. Half the enemy force was killed or wounded by the deadly underground explosions. The remaining VC survivors crept into their spider holes and slit trenches. The Marines knew the VC would fight to the death. Their fate was already sealed.

The Hotel point squad formed a firing line, and on command poured a deadly volley into the still smoking hell of La Bac. The machine gun squads of John Materazzi and PFC Gedzyk ran long belts through their guns and stitched the huts, sending long bursts low into the thatch and wood. On command the Marines of Hotel Company entered La Bac and witnessed the final horror of destruction from artillery and rifle fire. Dead VC lay in tortured clumps along the village streets. One corpse lay draped across the doorway of a smoking hut.

The Marines marched into the ville firing from the hip into the charred and smouldering buildings. The surviving enemy troops were cut down where they stood. But one Marine was shot dead and three others were hit. The Marines spread out through the village and hunted down the remaining wounded. La Bac was now in Marine hands. The weary leathernecks of Hotel and Foxtrot companies had fought savagely for nine straight hours.

At the battle's end, some fifty additional enemy soldiers had escaped through the fire and smoke into the dense jungle at the far side of the village. The village was then thoroughly searched, while Captain Doherty reported in to the battalion. Colonel Airheart ordered the men to form a perimeter around the captured village and to stand down. Two fresh platoons were being heli-lifted into the area to block off the VC escape routes. When they arrived the Sparrowhawk Platoon from Echo Company took a fleeing VC platoon under fire killing one and finding several blood trails.

The First Marine Division staff choppered in to Phu Loc 6. On the 28th January, the Commanding General of the First Marine Division, Major General Herman Nickerson, addressed the officers of the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment. He praised the battalion for a stunning victory under extreme conditions. Two hundred twenty-one enemy soldiers had been killed or wounded in the day long battle. The two Marine assaults that day were reminiscent of the past Marine battlefield exploits. The Viet Cong B-20th Main Force Battalion had ceased to exist as a result of the Marine aggressiveness shown at the sandbar, and again later in La Bac village. The raw courage and resourcefulness of

Marine warriors will not be soon forgotten by the vanquished Viet Cong Main Force battalion that tried to but could not stand in the face of superior firepower and valour.

The General and the officers of the Second Battalion raised their glasses of wine and a beer as the Commanding General made his toast. "Gentlemen, let us toast our Marines and honour the fallen heroes of the Fifth Marines. None Finer".

As if on cue, the officers of the First Marine Division and specifically the Fifth Marine Regiment, snapped to rigid attention and echoed the General's words.

"NONE FINER!"

This article was originally published in Behind The Lines magazine. VietnamGear.com has reproduced this article with the kind permission of Gary Linderer.

Follow us on  

Copyright © VietnamGear.com. All rights reserved. This material is intended solely for internal use within VietnamGear.com. Any other reproduction, publication or redistribution of this material without the written agreement of the copyright owner is strictly forbidden and any breach of copyright will be considered actionable

[Guest Book](#) [Contact Us](#) [Site Map](#)

Copyright © 2005 - 2025 VietnamGear.com. All rights reserved.
[Terms & Conditions](#)