

INCOMING

**THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE 3RD BATTALION
15TH FIELD ARTILLERY REGIMENT TOWED
FT MCCLELLAN AND ANNISTON AL**

*Original
Newsletters
3rd Battalion
History*

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3rd BATTALION



121st US ARMY RESERVE COMMAND

HHB & SVC BTRY
FT. MCCLELLAN

"A" BTRY
CULLMAN

"B" BTRY
TALLADEGA

"C" BTRY
GADSDEN

Commanders Corner

As I sat down to write my comments for this Incoming I stopped to reflect on where I was at on 13 August 1977. I had arrived in Germany headed to my duty assignment with E Troop 1st Squadron 10th US Cavalry 4th BDE Forward the Buffalo Soldiers attached to 8th ID at Wiesbaden AFB.....while back Stateside the 3rd Battalion was beginning to fire their very first mission on my birthday.

On that day 47 years ago 13 August 1977 at 1440 hrs FP3 the 3rd Battalion fired its first ever round at Pelham Range in what would lead to many more over the course of 17 years. From that first round going down range via the M114A1 Pig to the last M198 live fire in 1993 the Battalion expended roughly a total of 73600 rounds or more. How this estimate breaks down FTX Weekend would be 47600 total rounds and AT 26000 total rounds. On average this means that each tube fired 4088 rounds as this includes the M114A1 and the M198. Of course this is an estimate and quite honestly the total could be higher. Thanks to LTC Mike Long, CPT Roseman, and MSG Wendell Gibson for assistance with the Ammo accounting.

Those rounds represented the manpower, training, logistics, transportation and leadership that let our Battalion grow. They were the result of planning, blood, sweat, and hard work by you-the Soldiers to make it happen. Getting those rounds downrange was of course, leading to rock solid performances during our AT's. It's much more than the numbers.

Beginning in early September the Reunion Invitations will be mailed to everyone so be on the lookout. So be safe keep your powder dry as Stephanie and I truly look forward to seeing everyone of you again at the Reunion in November.

Reunion News and Updates

3rd Annual Reunion for the 3rd Battalion FAR

Location: Oxford Civic Center
401 McCullars Ln, Oxford AL 36203

Date: 30 November 2024
Check-in Begins 1100 ~ Reunion Time: 1200-1600 hrs.

Fully Catered Meal Dad's BBQ
Two meats ~ Three Sides ~ Bread
Tea (sweet and unsweetened) ~ Dessert Artillery Cake
Dress Code: Business Casual - St Barbara Authorized

Cost \$20 person Check or Money Order made payable John Hoehne Sr

Invitations with RSVP's will be mailed NLT 1 September 2024



*Number 6 Gun Crew near
Lai Khe 1968—photo by
Bill Knauer*



*Alpha BTY 6/15 FAR Gun
Emplacement—photo by Bill
Knauer*



Bravo BTY 6 BN 15th FAR 1969

The CSM's Corner

Greetings to all Red legs of the 3/15/FA, it's summer time. Remembering back, I recall it would be getting close to AT time. I would like to take just a little trip back to some of them. Quite a few of you will remember them, even if I can't remember the year, recalling the Battalion's trip to Fort Sill. 1SG Glenn, 1SG Montgomery, 1SG John Miller, and others of the Advance Party, were treated to a warm Fort Sill welcome. As we were settling in at the old WW2 buildings, we noticed a thunderstorm mounting, so we all gathered on the first floor, ready to ride it out, only it turned out to be one of the worst tornadoes, that completely demolished Witch Falls Texas killing several, but we rode it out. Another great feat was when then CPT Ray White convoyed the Battalion wheeled vehicles from Ft McClellan to Fort Sill, and brought every vehicle in on time.

Remembering Camp Shelby, (hot is not really how to describe it) it also had the worst dog leg of any range we fired on,. "Oh"yes that's the year the cooks blew up the mess hall; we ate boiled chicken for a solid week. Then there was Ft Stewart, hot, hot, hot, humid beyond belief like Shelby, and rain like you wouldn't believe. When we moved the five tons would push mud with their front bumpers, and the gnats, and Mosquitoes were more than plentiful for everyone.

I will stop there for now, as there are so many more stories that need to be told. I will try to add more as time goes on.

May God bless and keep you and your family safe during this summer season.

Donald Peak
CSM Ret. USAR
3rd Battalion 15th FA Regiment

3rd Battalion Reunion Survey

We're on the brink of our 3rd Reunion and I personally anticipate it being as enjoyable as the first two. While planning this event I have received several suggestions on timing, venue and menu etc., which lead to this short survey. Please respond and send back to me by email or by text so we can meet the expectations of as many as possible. Deadline for returning survey 30 September 2024.

johnhoehnesr@gmail.com or Text 210-249-1818

Timing: The Reunion timeframe (late November early December) was originally set to link with St. Barbara Ball

Should the Reunion be moved to a different timeframe? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If YES, what two-month timeframe works best? _____

What time of day for the Reunion?

☐ 1200-1600 ☐ 1800-2200

Venue: What is most important in selecting a venue? (*Pick 2*)

☐ Cost ☐ Central location ☐ Hotel availability
☐ Parking ☐ Handicap access

Menu: The first reunion was a plated dinner and the second a buffet.

What do you prefer? ☐ Plated meal ☐ Buffet

What cost range are you comfortable with for your meal?

☐ \$25-\$30 person ☐ \$30-\$40 person ☐ \$40-\$50 person

Photographer: Is it important to you to have a photographer at the Reunion? ☐ Yes ☐ No

The Cannoneer

14 August 1977

THE CANNONEER

Vol. I, No. 3

3d BN, 15th FIELD ARTILLERY

14 August 1977

BATTALION FIRES FIRST ROUND IN ALABAMA

Murphy's Law in Full Operation

The scene was FP3 at Pelham Range. The time was 1440 hours, 13 August 1977. The firing mission had been given by the OIC CPT Rex Renz. Safety and security measures had been taken by 1LT Clifton Kirksey and 2LT Richard Conti. The Battalion Commander, LTC Philip E. Holladay, was the lone individual who determined the moment when the hills would resound the echoing blast from the 155mm howitzer, where all eyes were cast

The entire battalion stood tense and expectant awaiting the first loud burst signaling the turning of a new page in the history of the unit.

Onlookers included the ARCOM Commander, MG L.D. Redden, COL N.E. Craun, Jr., LTC R.B. Major and members of the press.

No one was more anxious than the crew who had set the sights and

loaded the weapon---members of A Battery from Cullman, commanded by 1LT Donald Robertson.

LTC Holladay grasped the 50' lanyard and asked the members of the crew, "Do you think it will fire?" His question was answered in the barroom heard for miles around!

The crowd breathed a sigh of relief, smiled their approval and broke out into applause and shouts of acclamation!

The feeling was truly justified, for the day had been long and trying, for Murphy's Law had taken its toll.

Only the word from forward observer 1LT R.P. Lovelady could determine the real success of the mission. That word was on target. The round landed in the impact area!

Murphy had been beaten. A new page in history had been turned!

RECENT PROMOTIONS GIVE

BATTALION NEW LOOK

You may have wondered what has been looking so different lately among the troops of 3/15th FA. The smiles seem a little brighter, the pay checks a little heavier and the collars a little darker.

All that comes as the result of some 27 promotions that have taken place among EM and NCOs since 8 July 1977.

Promotions have been possible for a number of individuals because of their pursuing MOS qualification, their recommendation by their supervisors and meeting the other requirements included in the regulations. Others' applications are in process.

See PROMOTIONS, Page 4

NEW RECRUITING EFFORTS BRING NEW TALENT

We are glad to welcome into the Battalion the
See NEW TALENT, Page 4

MEET OUR COMMANDERS. . .

Second in our series of feature stories on Battery Commanders concerns 1LT Gerry Chalker, Commander of Service Battery.

LT Chalker is a native of Opelika, Alabama, but moved to Birmingham, where he graduated from high school. He received a commission through the ROTC program at Auburn University, where he graduated in 1971. Prior to coming with us, he was a platoon leader with the 310th Chem Co (SG).

In civilian life, the LT is Loan Officer for Anniston National Bank. He is active in the Heart Association and Jaycees.

He lives in Anniston with his wife, the former Princie Ingram. It is good to have him on our team.

RECRUIT A FRIEND

INTO
THE 3D BN, 15TH FA

FORTHCOMING DRILL DATES (Reporting Times)

10, 11 September
(0720 Hours)
1, 2 October
(0720 Hours)
12, 13 November
(0650 Hours)

TRAINING "ON TARGET"

Every effort is being made to make training in the 3/15th FA both stimulating and rewarding for all the members. An emphasis will continue to be placed on MOS qualification and and learn-field artillery subjects in general.

In addition, basic military subjects will also be included. During the next drills, individual and crew served weapons qualifications will be central. An instructional team from the active army will provide some of the training.

This is a time learn- can be fun and exciting.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER. . .

My family and I were driving home recently from a trip which took us through southern Illinois. We had decided we wanted to enjoy some of the scenery along local highways rather than endure the endless miles of boredom on the interstates. We plotted our route according to the map we had at our disposal.

When we reached the Ohio River where we expected to cross a bridge into Kentucky, there was no bridge--only one little sign indicating the "Highway 19 Ends" right at the river bank.

While an old ferry took us across the river I began thinking of how much I have come to take for granted things which are available to me only at some cost to someone. I had just assumed that someone would have built a bridge across the river. They hadn't. And I guess I am glad.

See "Chaplain"
Page 3.



Many thanks are due countless individuals in this battalion who silently and dependably do their jobs without getting their names published. We have to have both those whose job is to get the weapons fired and those whose jobs make it possible for that to happen. TOGETHER we get the job done.

"LUNCHEON
IS BEING
SERVED ON
THE PATIO."

Congratulations to SSG Gary Garrett of the Medical Section who was united in marriage 1 July to the former Carol Duncan in Gadsden. We wish both of them many years of happiness together.

Chaplain's Corner. . . (Continued from Page 2)

Likewise, the progress we make in our unit comes at some price to someone. We talk of how often Murphy's Law ("if something can be fouled up, it will be") operates. And yet, there are infinite times when Murphy's Law does not operate--when things run pretty smoothly and function with little frustration. We must not take those times for granted nor overlook them.

That happens only because someone paid the price necessary to make it happen. Let us be grateful for the times when things go right!

Where else but in the Army Reserve can you go camping and get paid for it?

PROMOTIONS (from Page 1)

Congratulations to each of the following upon their promotion to the rank indicated:

HHB: SGM A.O. Reynolds, MSG Jake Landers, SFC Jim Burleson, SSG Gary Garrett, SGT Kenneth Digby, SGT Marion Bryant.

SVC: SGT Berry Leavey, SGT Jimmy Adams.

A: 1SG Gary Davis, SFC John Schwaiger, SFC Tru-men Carden, SSG John Miller, SGT Kent Cooper, SGT Tommy Creel.

B: SFC Dalton Painter, SFC Henry Williams, SSG Ronald Dison, SSG Carl Smith, SGT Shevey Glenn, SGT Robert Waiters, PV2 John Faulkner, PV2 Robert Tucker.

C: SSG Gary Davenport, SGT Jimmy D. Johnson, SGT Bobby Stewart, SGT Ronald Tilley.

SGT and Mrs. Marion Bryant recently became parents of a healthy baby boy. Michael Alson was born to them on 23 July. We congratulate them on this addition to their family.

DRILL DATES

10, 11 September

1, 2 October

12, 13 November

NEW TALENT (from Page 1)

following individuals who have recently decided to join the 3/15th FA:

SFC Wright, SVC
SFC MacMillan, HHB
SSG Aultman, C
SSG Teague, C
SGT Ellen, C
SGT Gladden, C
SP5 Hancock, C
SP5 Wildman, HHB
SP4 Bailey, SVC
SP4 Battles, C
SP4 Bradford, C
SP4 Edwards, B
SP4 Greenwood, C
SP4 Pickard, C
SP4 Pointer, C
SP4 Rivers, B
SP4 Rubens, C
SP4 Simmons, SVC
SP4 Truss, D, B
SP4 Veasy, C
PFC Stone, HHB
PFC Lett, C
PFC Richardson, B
PFC Woods, HHB
PVT Barlow, SVC
PVT Hicks, SVC
PVT Luker, C
PFC Warren, HHB

TRACK CLUB RUN MAY BE SOLUTION TO WEIGHT CONTROL PROBLEM

If weight control seems to be one of your problems, you may wish to take part in the monthly fun run at Fort McClellan, Sponsored by the Coosa Valley Track Club. The next run is Saturday, 3 Sep 77, at 0800 hours at Galloway Gate. You can take your choice of the 1½, 3, 5 or 10 miles course.

For more information, contact SSG Tony Stepleton, AST, HHB: 238-4648.

~~RE-ENLISTMENTS~~ RE-ENLISTMENTS

A unit improves each time a good man re-enlists. That has long been a slogan and a true statement. We are proud to announce the reenlistments of three good men and congratulate them & the unit in securing the continuing commitment of these men.

They are: SFC Brock, HHB (2 years), SSG Stepleton, HHB (6 years), SP4 Bradford, C Battery (1 year).

Red Legs — Looking Back

My very first trip to Fort Stewart was as an engineer. We were tasked with making the runway at Camp Oliver longer in order to land the new (at that time) C141 aircraft, used in Ranger Training and Special Forces training at Stewart. There was nothing on Stewart except for a few WW2 buildings, and concrete pads for tents, as Stewart was not a popular military base at that time. By the time we began using Stewart, it had blossomed into the home of the 24th Infantry Division, with major, major improvements.

I also recall a certain Chaplin running over a rather large wild hog on his way to the OP: didn't hurt the Chaplin, or the CUCV, but the hog was toast. The discussion at the OP was whether should we go get the hog and have Hog Roast for the Battalion!

I remember occupying a firing point close to Bravo Battery late one night, and they had a very unfortunate blow back from the breach of one of there Howitzers. Thank God no one was hurt, but the fire fight was on, as it set the range on fire. Alpha Battery was preparing to assist, but it turned out our assistance was not needed, as B Battery had everything under control in a short time. Sitting behind those Howitzers, was a five ton loaded with ammo and powder, which could have been a disaster. It gave everyone a good scare.

CSM Don Peak
Battalion CSM

Being the Service Battery commanders driver was really exciting at times. I hardly ever left my jeep because he was always on the go at any given time. Basically, three trips to Pelham Range tells you all you need to know.

Crossing the bridge at the tank crossing he would usually say, "One day we're gonna cross the tank crossing." Sure enough, one day we pulled up and he said, "Today's the day. " I asked, "What's that, Sir?" He replied, "We're going through and don't get the SOB stuck!" We made it.

One day, we were going around the east boundary of Pelham Range. We topped the hill where I stopped because there was what looked like a small lake. We looked at each other and he said, "Go for it and don't get the SOB stuck!" We got only a little bit wet because the top was off our jeep as the water rolled up and over us like a big wave, but we made it.

One night as we were leaving Firing Point 1, the grass was higher than the top of our jeep. A round was fired and we could hear it going over overhead, but we made it.

To finish out the weekend, being the good soldier I was and always obeying orders, we were hungry and so following orders, we went through a Wendy's drive-thru! We made it!

SGT Craig Waschko
SVC BTY

Deadly 6 Viet Nam

The 6/15 Artillery departed Fort Sill 1 May 1967 for Vietnam. An advanced party of 13 officers, 8 NCO's and 2 enlisted men departed Fort Sill by air on 15 May and arrived at Ben Hoa on 17 May 1967. On 26 May the main body of the battalion arrived by ship at the port of Vung Tau and moved directly by air the following day to Lai Khe. Equipment arrived at Lai Khe 4 days later by road. By Division policy, the battalion had to select a radio call sign beginning with the letter "D". The 6/15th Artillery chose "DEADLY" as its call sign. Its permanent base camp was established at Lai Khe with Headquarters, Service and C Batteries, Battery B went to Phouc Vinh and battery A to Phu Loi.

The original mission for the 6/15th was to be the permanent base camp fire support but was changed and it was now to provide direct support to infantry units on deployed operations. General Depuy's assignment of all 4.2 inch mortars in the Division to the Division Artillery permitted this change, this change in mission permitted "DEADLY" batteries to begin combat operations 30 June 1967. However, DEADLY personnel were in combat during the Battle of XOM BO II on 17 June 1967. Captain Joe Piram, artillery liaison officer from DEADLY to the 1/16 Infantry, and some forward observers accompanied the 1/16 Infantry on an operation east of Quan Loi. While this was happening, main units of the battalion were going through their final training and in-country indoctrination.

The first combat mission assigned the 6/15 was to establish a fire support base at the Dutchman's, an open area west of Chon Thanh, to support operations of 2/28 Infantry. This was a real learning experience for everyone from the battalion commander to the junior private. DEADLY (minus Batteries A and B) with a platoon of 155 mm howitzers from 8/6 Artillery accompanied for perimeter defense by an infantry company from 2/28 Infantry and a cavalry troop moved North on Route 13 to Dutchman's.

DEADLY was still at the Dutchman fire support base on 4 July. In accordance with Division Artillery instructions, 50 rounds were to be fired, one for each State in the union starting at noon that day. Just

before noon a Chinook helicopter landed outside the perimeter to quote one of DEADLY's soldiers, Philip Jones, in a book written years later, "You can imagine our surprise when the tailgate of this huge machine opened up and out marched the Division Band. Honest to God! Trombones, trumpets, tubas—a thirty piece marching band right here in the middle of the boonies. We cheered like crazy men! If any VC had been watching I'm sure that they were totally demoralized by this flagrant display of patriotism." That was DEADLY's Fourth of July 1967 in Viet Nam.

About the 15th of July, DEADLY moved to Quan Loi just east of An Loc. The Division had received intelligence that VC and NVA units were moving into the area. DEADLY's tactical command post (TAC CP), plus Battery C were positioned on the west side of the air strip at Quan Loi. The airstrip was on the top of a small hill and presented an excellent target for an occasional mortar and rocket fire. Just to be certain that the VC could find us, the airstrip had a hundred foot communications tower with red lights to help the VC gunners. One of DEADLY's enterprising soldiers shot out the lights one night as the VC mortars started firing.

Protection of the airstrip and small base camp at Quan Loi was provided by an infantry company of the 3rd Brigade, a platoon from the 1-4 Armored Cavalry and Battery C, 6/15 Artillery. On the night of 11 July, while Battery C was providing fire support for an Army of the Republic of Vietnam compound located five miles away, the base camp and Battery came under a combined VC mortar, rocket and ground attack. While continuing to provide fire support for the ARVN Compound, the Battery Commander, Captain Mark Haselton, directed one-half of the Battery to provide its pre-planned final protective fire. That night Battery C received its baptism under enemy fire and in the process fired more than two thousand 105 mm rounds of ammunition and stopped the VC attack.

By 30 September 1967, the battalion had fired 100,000 rounds in support of the Division. Over the next few months, the battalion assumed OPCON of numerous artillery units that supported the Division in the Quan Loi area on operations that took place in the Terre Rouge area during the the time that DEADLY's tactical

command post and Battery C operated out of that location. At this time, the other elements of the battalion. Batteries A and B, were out on operations supporting the maneuver elements of the Division at the Battles of Da Yeu (6 Oct. 67), Ong Thanh (17 Oct.), Srok Silamlite I (29 Oct.), Srok Silamlite II (30 Oct.), Loc Ninh (31 Oct.), Srok Silamlite III (2 Nov.) and Srok Rung (7 Nov.).

At the Battle of Ong Thanh, 2nd Lieutenant Harold Durham, an officer from Battery C, 6th of the 15th Artillery was the forward observer for Company D, 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry. Durham was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously for outstanding service above and beyond the call of duty. Although mortally wounded and having lost one of his hands, Durham continued to direct supporting artillery fire and help protect the small perimeter with his rifle. Lt. Durham set an example for all artillery men of the Division. As a matter of fact, he was not scheduled to go to this operation—he volunteered to take the place of an officer from the 2nd Battalion, 33rd Artillery who was not available for it.

DEADLY's Tactical Command Post (TAG CP) of 12-15 men, consisted of a Fire Direction Center, and battalion command element with communications personnel controlled the fire support for many of the 3rd Brigade operations and could be tailored in size so that it could be moved by one Huey. This was the procedure at first light on 30 October 1967, when it moved with Battery A to Loc Ninh to support the Special Forces camp that had been attacked during evening hours of 29 October. Two companies of 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry, moved with DEADLY's Battery A to set up a fire support patrol base on the south end of the Loc Ninh airstrip. The next morning at 0055 hours 31 October, the VC mortared and three hours later the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 272 VC Regiment attacked in three waves across the airstrip only to be cut down by the gunners of Battery A. The attack on the airstrip and the Special Forces camp was repulsed for the time being. The VC attacked again on 1 November and were unable to mass for a ground attack because of the deadly point blank fires from Battery A. The VC were also unsuccessful on their third attempt on 2 November. October and November 1967 was a very busy period for DEADLY. All the firing batteries were involved in a series of combat operations moving by chopper and by road. The men were now

veterans and air mobile operations, artillery raids and supporting infantry combat operations were a piece of cake.

The fast pace of the Division's operations required cross assignments for the Operation Control (OPCON) of batteries from one battalion to another. On 29 November as the VC and NVA attacked the Special Forces camp at Bu Dop, DEADLY Six was notified to be ready to go on an aerial reconnaissance that night. Sometime after midnight on 29 November the battalion commander, DEADLY Six, met General Hay, LTC. Pendleton, the G3 and LTC Cochran, CO 1/28 Infantry at the chopper pad at Quan Loi. They flew over the battle area which was illuminated by the firing around the SF camp. General Hay pointed out the positions for the 1/28 Infantry and DEADLY to occupy.

After the rapid orientation, DEADLY Tac CP consisting of three soldiers, a captain and battalion commander, departed with the second lift of Hueys for the SF camp. They landed at the selected position outside the SF camp and beside the airstrip, which by daylight had become somewhat quieter.

Positions were prepared and the firing battery (A 2/33 FA), which was OPCON to DEADLY for this operation, was hooked in a couple of hours later (DEADLY's Battery C, usually at Quan Loi, was committed to another operation). Maximum effort was made to complete our defensive position, but due to the extremely hard ground little progress was made when the first VC attack came across the airstrip.

There were two attacks that night—one around midnight and the other two-three hours later. The VC attack was directed at the artillery side of the fire support base. Using "Bee Hive" and high explosive direct-fire rounds from the 105 mm Howitzers, the artillery and the 1/28 Infantry beat off both attacks with heavy losses to the VC and NVA forces. The next day began with intermittent mortar and recoilless rifle fire. It was during the daylight that several artillerymen were wounded and one killed.

The artillery was running low on ammunition and the resupply attempted during a lull in the previous night's battle, had been a failure. The hook which was carrying 100 to 200 howitzer rounds dropped its cargo from about 500 feet after receiving VC machine gun fire. None

of the 105 mm rounds were usable. The Air Force tried to resupply the FSB and after several attempts, managed to drop several hundred rounds by flying low and slow while being fired at by the VC at the other end of the airstrip. They were pushing the ammunition boxes out on to the airstrip without landing.

Several aircraft were hit but all made it out safely, and by the end of the day there was sufficient ammunition on hand to provide fire support to the other Big Red One operations, which continued until after Christmas.

On 28 December the battalion TAG CP and Battery C moved back to Lai Khe from Quan Loi. On 29 December, Battery A also closed in to Lai Khe. So for the first time since DEADLY arrived in Viet Nam, the battalion had most of its personnel together (less Battery B, which was still operation with other brigades within the division).

None of the operations of the firing batteries could have been carried out without the dedicated assistance of Headquarters and Service Batteries which provided the administrative and logistical support for the fast moving, fluid operations required by the Division. The Battalion Executive Officer, Major Edward Maksim, assisted by the battalion staff (less the S3 and fire direction officer), was responsible for supporting the battalion on combat operations with ammunition, supplies, replacement of major weapon systems, battalion level maintenance of vehicles, delivery of mail, processing, assigning and transporting replacement personnel, delivering hot meals and/or “C” rations.

Three days after DEADLY returned from almost six months of continuous field operations, the VC launched their infamous TET Offensive on 31 January 1968. Although the firing battery personnel had often received mortar, recoilless rifle and rocket propelled grenade fire, this was the first time that battalion rear experienced all of the above plus 122 mm rocket fire. The Division G2 had sent messages to all battalions during the early evening of 30 January, informing them that the TET truce had been broken by the VC in the U.S. Marine sector in the northern area of South Vietnam. Further, the message directed units to be alert for a similar indent or activity in the Big Red One area of operations. All perimeter positions were reinforced and

wherever possible, personnel were required to sleep in underground bunkers.

Thus, when the attack on Lai Khe came at 0300 hours on 31 January, DEADLY batteries were alert and ready to fire weapons in defense of the Lai Khe base camp. Because DEADLY personnel were either at their duty stations or in low bunkers, there were a few casualties. This attack by fire was the first time that DEADLY had been on the receiving end of the newly arrived 107 mm (CHICOM) rocket.

The next morning, the VC continued pumping rockets and recoilless rifle fire into the Lai Khe base. DEADLY's Battery A was to hook out at 0730 for an early morning operation to the west of Lai Khe when one of the VC rockets hit the ammunition dump where our rounds were stored in A 22 bags. The entire dump exploded over a period of hours. However, each battery position at Lai Khe had several thousand rounds of artillery ammunition, so this loss did not hamper our offensive and defensive operations, at least for the short term.

DEADLY Six, utilizing his helicopter to search for the enemy rocket position and located several but they were no longer occupied. However, he did observe a large number of VC or NVA west of Lai Khe in the vicinity of Highway 13 and put a Time on Target mission utilizing all Division artillery batteries within range. Meanwhile, the air mobile operation to the west of Lai Khe, went as planned, although somewhat later. This operation, which placed a FSB within range of VC forces moving north and south (to and from Saigon), was one of a series of similar actions taken by the Division, to interrupt the enemy's freedom of movement during TET.

For the next month, DEADLY batteries were on the move constantly first to the west of Lai Khe then toward Saigon, then back into the more familiar terrain of the Division's area of operation. At one time during the TET Offensive DEADLY 52 (TAG CP/FDC) controlled the fires of 13 batteries, supporting several night defensive positions. In March of 1968, DEADLY TAC CP settled into Phu Loi to support operations to the northeast of Saigon and west of Bien Hoa, staying there for a couple of weeks until the tempo of operations swung north again. DEADLY TAC CP moved back to Lai Khe in mid-March and operated out of

the Division base camp. The battalion continued to support all three brigades on their operations. Although this period was not as hectic as the last three months of 1967, spring 1968 found DEADLY's batteries performing their missions of base camp fire support and establishing fire support bases with the infantry.

In summary, the battalion participated in all of the Division's major battles from the summer of 1967 to the summer of 1968. Fighting under the call sign DEADLY, the men of the 6th Battalion, 15th Artillery distinguished themselves at Quan Loi, Da Yeu, Ong Thanh, Loc Ninh, An Loc, Srok Rung, Xa Cat, Tong Le Chon, Bu Dop, Hill 172 and numerous others. DEADLY gained a reputation throughout the Division for being quick, accurate and deadly. DEADLY artillery liaison and forward observer personnel working directly with the infantry and cavalry displayed courage and initiative and provided dedicated and professional support. It was during the major TET battles in 1968 that DEADLY's reputation was further enhanced and maintained. BG Frank E. Serio, then a Lieutenant Colonel, was the units Battalion Commander from its inception at Ft Sill in December 1966 until June 1968.

The men of DEADLY are proud to have been members of the Big Red One!

The Above article was written by BG Frank E Serio (Ret)

For the 15thFAR.org website



Chaplain's Corner with Chaplain Wes Hodgins

Long ago, the LORD promised to Abraham “I will bless those who bless you and I will curse those who curse you; and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed”. Today, it would seem that the whole world is condemning Israel, God’s “Chosen-People” because they are counter-attacking a group which without provocation both deliberately and maliciously attacked them on October 7, 2023. The re-emergence of Israel as a nation, and in the land of Promise in 1948 is proof that the LORD keeps His promises. Several wars have come upon them subsequent to their re-emergence as a nation; all were lopsided-victories for Israel. This current conflict should alert the Church that the return of Israel’s Messiah (Jesus) is just over the horizon. In the past, God used wicked nations to judge His people for their sin. Then He judged those nations for their own sin and because they were ruthless in judging His people. Today, may we seek to bless those whom God has chosen because it will bring God’s blessing richly upon us. And, yes, we do need that blessing today!

Chaplain Hodgins



Troops after the TET 1968—photo by Bill Knauer



*1LT Bill Lieb, B BTY 6th BN 15th FA
Summer of 1969 in War Zone C—
Photo by Hugh McMuffin and the US
Army Field Artillery School*

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