

A war story from Donald Jones of Lovelady

Again, we were up before daylight on May 19, 1969, the same ungodly jungle heat, again, very little sleep. Mortared again through the night—they knew exactly where we had dug in. Now we were in our fighting holes waiting to see if they would hit us. They didn't—so while filling in our holes, and eating a cold C-Ration, while millions of mosquitoes were having warm meals—we were preparing mentally and physically to move out.

I'm one of about 65 Infantrymen left in Charlie Company of the Army's 82nd Airborne in HoBo Woods, Vietnam. We were again in the middle of a swarm of NVA Regulars. Because of the terrain, we were spread out in a single column.

Just after noon they hit us from dig-in positions; up close.

A thick clump of bamboo is the only thing that kept me from being among the many casualties from the initial massive volume of rifle, machine gun, and rocket propelled grenade fire that came in on us.

By us bringing in volleys of artillery, almost on our own position, interrupted only by Huey Gunships, Cobras, and Phantoms with their bombs and Napalm, we were able to fight our way out, while dragging our casualties and set up a small perimeter and started digging in.

It's getting close to dark. So far, I'd been lucky. Part of the side of my boot was blown off but I only had little more than a throbbing scratch.

Got word that three or four guys were left in there and at least one was wounded. We knew what happened when we were captured.

Infantrymen, down south,

weren't "bargaining chips," so were guaranteed a very slow horrible death. So I grabbed my M-16 and ammo and led a medic back in.

The wounded guy was a friend—he had a really severe leg wound. A chopper was on its way and I and another buddy was getting hi to the clearing. The distinct blasts from AK-47s started up in front of us.

I left them and tried flanking the NVA who were determined to stop us. As I was working myself through the maelstrom to try to "take them out," was suddenly in the middle of an explosion.

As I slammed back down to earth badly wounded, my first thought was disbelief. I knew many of my company would be wounded or killed, but not me!

The Huey came in hard with the door gunner blasting a path. If we couldn't get to it, he would lose his leg and I'm not sure if I would make it till morning.

Struggling, we made it. Saw a lot of heroism that day but on the chopper out, the greatest award I could ever receive was when my buddy looked up at me. (I'd propped myself up in the corner to keep from drowning on my blood) and reached out and held my dirty, bloody hand in his dirty, bloody hand and through my



Don Jones

mangled face, I could see he had slight tears and great concern in his eyes—not for his really bad wound—but for mine.

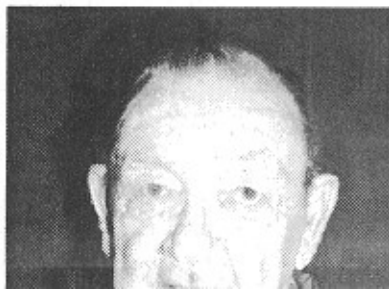
I now live with my wife Judy Boudreaux in the peaceful woods near Lovelady. Hopefully, HoBo Woods' scars have healed, just like most of mine eventually did.

(Note: I didn't know SPC. Carl Eason, the soldier from Lovelady killed recently in Iraq, but I respectfully send my sincerest regards to his family.

I heard how my family was devastated when I was only wounded, so I can only imagine what Eason's family are going through.

I would have been proud to have served shoulder-to-shoulder with him."

Houston Countian served in WWII



only 20 years old when he flew his first combat mission during World War II in the Army Air Corps; "That was before the present air force," he explained.

Millwee was a gunner on B-24 Bombers flying in formation on 33 combat missions out of India, Burma,