



Volume I,

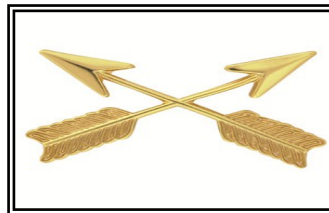
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Billy M. Smith Chapter

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Billy graduated from Sunset High School at the age of sixteen. Too young to work he enrolled at Arlington State College (now UTA). There he met Captain Willard Latham (later Post Commander at FT. Benning) who influenced him greatly. Upon reaching eighteen he immediately enlisted in the army as a medic. Eventually he made his way to jump school and Special Forces as a 91B3S special forces medic. He was assigned to the 1st Group on Okinawa. His first deployment was TDY on an A team to Thailand. He was then sent TDY to Vietnam on ODA-232. Here he earned the respect of his teammates and was highly thought of for his skill. On 6 November 1963 while on patrol and assignment to destroy VC rice fields contact was made with the enemy. While chasing VC suspects he and his weapons sergeant ran upon a VC encampment. The VC were prepared and opened fire. His weapons sergeant only fired a few rounds in return when he was instantly killed by a head wound. Billy made it into his second thirty round magazine before he likewise suffered a severe head wound. Upon regaining consciousness Billy crawled to and attempted to bandage the wound of his teammate and himself. He then took a grenade and pulled the pin and clasped it in his hand in case the VC attempted to capture them or take their weapons and ammunition. He was found unconscious with his head resting on his teammates leg. Billy barely survived his evacuation (his death certificate was shipped with him needing only a signature and time) having meningitis and pneumonia. When stabilized at Ft. Sam the doctor said he would never be in better shape and would slowly deteriorate. Following is the after action report of the patrol.



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DETACHMENT A-232
1st SF Gp (Abn), 1st SF
USASF
APO 17, U.S. Forces

9 November 1963

URGENT: Report of Investigation

THRU:USSF Coordinator
c/o MAAG Det, Ban Me Thuot
APO 17, U.S. Forces

TO: Commanding Officer
Hq, USA Special Forces, Vietnam
APO 40, U.S. Forces

1. On Wednesday, 6 November 1963, Patrol "PETERSBURG", consisting of the 319th B/S Co (101 Rhade), three (3) USSF, one (1) VNSF, and one (1) Rhade interpreter departed Ban Don with the mission of destroying the VC rice fields known to be in grid square 49PYV90.

2. On Friday afternoon, at around approximately 1345 hours, Sfc William J. Everhart, RA 17 251 707, SP5 Billy M. Smith RA 18 560 857, and the 1st Gp, 3rd Sec, 319 B/S Co (Sec Adj - Y-Klang and Gp Ldr - Y-Coc for a total of nine (9) Rhade and two (2) USSF left the base camp to reconnoiter for additional rice fields to be destroyed.

3. As the patrol neared the rice field at 49PYV940010 at approximately 081415, they spotted three women working in the rice field. The women ran to the north and the patrol followed. Y-Coc was leading, followed by Sfc Everhart, SP5 Smith, and the rest of the group (see Sketch #1).

4. The patrol was firing during the pursuit, but search of the area did not disclose expended brass or female bodies. Sfc Everhart had one empty 15- round carbine magazine in his pocket and a magazine of seven rounds left in his carbine. SP5 Smith had eight rounds left in the two taped 30- round carbine magazines left in his weapon.

5. As Y-Coc, SFC Everhart, and SP5 Smith rounded the turn at the base of the finger (see sketch #1), they were taken under fire by the VC located in the jungle camp. According to Y-Coc, the fight lasted only two or three minutes. SFC Everhart was hit first and presumably, died instantly. Approximately one minute later, SP5 Smith was hit and fell backwards (see Sketch #2). The Rhade, thinking the Americans to be dead, withdrew to inform SSg Frank D. George RA 16 276 924, who had remained at the patrol base. The nearest estimate as of time of death and injury was 081430.

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6. At approximately 081430 hours, SSg George, having heard the sound of the fire fight, began assembling two (2) sections of the 319th B/S Co to move to assist the recon patrol. As he was leaving the patrol base, the Rhade elements of the recon patrol returned with information that SFC Everhart and SP5 Smith were dead. His immediate concern was to prevent loss of two M-2 Carbines, ammunition, and the grenades known to have been carried by SFC Everhart and SP5 Smith. His second thought was to confirm the information he had received and to recover the bodies.

7. At approximately 081445, an L-19 with Sgt Robert M. Danieal, RA 19 599 934 and Captain Frank Flanders flew over for a recon mission previously requested by patrol Petersburg. At this time, Ssg George informed the L-19 of the information that he had received and that he was moving out to prevent the loss of the weapons and to recover the bodies. The L-19 returned to Ban Don and passed the data received to the undersigned.

8. The initial "CROWN" report was dispatched to Nha Trang at 081530. The L-19, with M/Sgt Edward L. Dawdy, RA 46 078 226, and Capt. Flanders, flew to Ban Me Thuot to obtain the two H-21 helicopters on "stand-by" at that location. A team consisting of the undersigned, Sgt Wesley T. Sable, RA 13 656 410 (Medic) Sgt John E. MacKay, RA 13 641 217 (Radio Sgt), Lt Nam (Camp Commander), and Y-Bleih (interpreter), reported to the Ban Don LZ for pick-up by helicopter.

9. In the meantime, SSg George arrived at the scene of the fire fight, reconned the area by fire, and found SP5 Smith seriously wounded in the head and SFC Everhart dead (see Sketch #2). Apparently, SP5 Smith was rendered unconscious when hit, but had regained consciousness as he had moved approximately three (3) meters until his head was resting upon SFC Everhart's leg. He had also attempted to bandage himself. Clutched in his right hand was an M35 grenade with the safety pin pulled.

10. The two sections of the 319 B/S Co pushed on into the VC jungle camp where one (1) dead VC was discovered (see Sketch #3). Examination of the body revealed a packet of papers that were given to the USSF Coordinator on 9 November. A path out of the VC camp led to a second VC jungle camp located approximately two hundred (200) meters NW at 100 - 150 higher in elevation than the first camp. The Company Commander, 319 B/S Co, tripped a grenade booby-trap and received a fragment in the right back above his kidney.

11. SSg George was in constant contact with the L-19 (M/Sgt Dawdy and Capt Flanders) and he kept a running account of data to them that greatly aided the evacuation of SP5 Smith. Upon reaching the rice field at 49PYV940015, the H-21 were unable to land due to their size and twin rotors.

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12. The party cited in paragraph 8 was picked up at approximately 081745 hours by HU-1A helicopter. Upon reaching the LZ at 49PYV940015, the HU-1A pilot decided to drop the rescue party on the rice field at 49PYV940020. With extremely excellent flying skill, the pilot landed the rescue party.

13. The rescue party reached the rice field at 49PYV940015 at approximately 081805 hours, where medical attention was given to SP5 Smith and SFC Everhart prepared for evacuation. At this time 081815 hours, the HU-1A pilot, upon his own initiative, landed his aircraft in an area that the undersigned did not believe a helicopter would fit.

14. SP5 Smith was evacuated by chopper accompanied by the MC doctor from Ban Ne Thuot. The rescue party, consisting of the undersigned, Sgt Sauble, SFC (E7) Alley (Medic from Ban Me Thuot MAAG Det), Lt Nam, and Y-Bleih, the 319th B/S units, along with SSg George, moved with SFC Everhart's body to the rice field at 49PYV940010. Return to the patrol base camp was prevented due to the difficulty of moving the body in the jungle during darkness.

15. During the morning hours of 9th of November, Lt Nam, Y-Bleih, Sgt Alley, Sgt Saubel, and SFC Everhart's body were evacuated by HU-1a to either Ban Me Thuot or Ban Don as appropriate.

16. During the period of 091100 to 091430 hours, an investigation of the area was conducted by the undersigned, SSg George, and the 3rd Section of the 319th B/S Co. It was during this period of time that two VC jungle camps were burned to the ground. Two (2) pigs and three (3) chickens were utilized by the B/S troops and numerous baskets, tools, and clothing were destroyed.

17. The undersigned was evacuated by HU-1A to Ban Don along with Y-Coc to prepare this investigation at 091645 hours November 1963.

HERBERT J. DEXTER
Captain Infantry
Commanding, A-232

