

PREFACE

I know from the many reunions I have attended with former soldiers of Delta Company, 2/8 Cav, that we don't all agree on the details of the combat experiences we shared. For example, at several of our reunions one of my former troopers continues to ask, "Skipper, remember that gook we threw out of the chopper?" I swear, we never threw anyone out of a chopper. In fact, what I remember about the few prisoners we did take was, as soon as they were secured and no longer a threat to us, my soldiers offered them cigarettes and some of the tastiest items from the C Ration boxes, like the peaches or pound cake. Prisoners were never in our custody very long since the intelligence types from higher headquarters couldn't wait to meet them. In that regard, we did put POWs on helicopters in the custody of others and I do not believe for a minute that any of them got thrown out.

Over the years since Vietnam, I have written many letters on behalf of my soldiers to help them get combat awards they should have received but didn't, mostly with a favorable outcome. Another type of letter I have written for my soldiers is in support of their claims for Veterans Administration (VA) compensation for PTSD. This letter described a gruesome or traumatic incident or event in which the soldier was involved contributing to his PTSD. After one of our reunions I wrote such a letter for one of my soldiers who told me he was still deeply troubled since he

found the head of an unfortunate soldier who was blown to bits on LZ Rita one night by a mysterious explosion. One or two reunions later, another soldier asked for such a letter telling me he had been the one who found the dead soldier's head. The deceased soldier actually left enough body parts on the LZ that I sincerely believe neither one of those soldiers was untruthful and both had found a trauma inducing piece of human anatomy. I wrote a letter for him also.

I am sure after my book is published and I let my guys know about it, many of them will want to get it and bring it with them to a reunion, at which time I'll be happy to sign their copy. But I am also sure some will write or call me or tell me at that next reunion, "Skipper, that wasn't the way that incident went down." Or, "That happened on LZ Carolyn, not Rita," or, such and such "... happened a week later than you wrote." However, this is my military memoir and, that being the case, the only recollection that counts here is mine!

I am also sure there will be hurt feelings for some of my combat brothers whom I didn't mention by name. The fact is, with incoming replacements due to tour completions caused either by normal DEROS or by enemy action, easily two hundred or more soldiers were with me in Delta Company. They will have to be satisfied knowing that they are my brothers and I love them.