



## 2nd Battalion 1st Infantry Chapter, Americal Division Veterans Association (ADVA)

WEBSITE: [www.b-2-1-196lib.com](http://www.b-2-1-196lib.com)



Volume 7

"A Soldier Once And Always"

May 2017

**Commanders Corner:** Spring at last! As usual, behind on getting my outside stuff done; I blame the weather, etc. instead of taking a 2 week vacation in March and a week in April. It seems as if my priorities have changed over the last couple of years. At the suggestion of our esteemed At-large officer, "Juju" Deriscavage, I have added a new page to the web site this month. It is under "2/1 Chapter Information" in the left hand column and reflects the origin of our chapter. Sounds like Amanda, Bill and Susan Van Buren's daughter is still improving; which is great news. Still need to hear from members planning on attending the Americal reunion in Minneapolis; just email me or Jesse Mendoza. We desperately need the info to plan the size of our hospitality room. Our room has always been the best one at the reunion and a lot of folks drop by throughout the reunion; some of almost live there. Jesse and his wife Eileen, along with a supporting cast of volunteers, do a great job of taking care of our needs; especially my favorite, Budweiser. I have been to Minneapolis before; back in the old days when I had a job. It's a nice area and the people I met up there were really hospitable. I know I have been stressing the fact we will be having elections this year but, it's imperative we have some nominees for Commander, Vice-commander and Secretary/Treasurer. Just have someone in mind when you attend our annual Chapter Meeting. Next year, 2018, we will be electing our 2 At-large positions. I hope all of you have a wonderful summer and anyone that wants to come to my house and help out is welcome. I always have several projects going at once and my wife would like for some of them to get completed before I pass on and she has to spend her inheritance on people to finish them. One last thing; we would love for our members to pick up the ball and submit some articles for publishing in our newsletter. Don't worry if you are not a prolific writer; we'll accept anything you want to submit and can help with editing or subject content if you desire. Pictures are also welcome.

*Keep safe and may the bond of battle never be broken!*

Chuck



Growing old is hard work... The mind says "Yes"! But the body says "What in the hell are you thinking?"



### 2017 ADVA National Reunion Bloomington, MN – August 23-27

Attendees will stay at the Hilton Minneapolis/St. Paul Airport Mall of America hotel at 3800 American Blvd E, Bloomington, Minnesota 55425. Hotel reservations can be made by calling the Hilton at 952-854-2100 or on the web at <http://group.hilton.com/americaldivisionveteransassociation>. Use the reunion Group Code: ADVA. The reunion room rate is \$114 per day plus 15.25% tax. The group rate will be offered three days before and three days after reunion dates. Call in your room reservation if you plan to use the extended dates or have any problems with the Hilton web site. There is free Hilton shuttle service from the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport (MSP) to the nearby reunion hotel. We have teamed up again with Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFR). AFR will provide web based reunion registration, pre-selected banquet seating with your friends, and on-site reunion support. You may register for the reunion, tours, and banquet by completing the online form and pay by credit card at [afr-reg.com/americal2017](http://afr-reg.com/americal2017). For more details visit the Americal Division Website; [Americal.org/reunion](http://Americal.org/reunion), or 2/1 Inf Chapter website; [b-2-1-196lib.com/reunion](http://b-2-1-196lib.com/reunion) events.

**Trump Awards Purple Heart at Walter Reed Military Hospital:** President Donald Trump awarded a Purple Heart to an Army Sergeant First Class Alvaro Barrientos wounded in Afghanistan. The first of many Trump likely will award during his service as commander in chief of the U.S. military. "When I heard about this ... I wanted to do it myself," Trump said during a brief ceremony at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, outside Washington. Barrientos, who was wounded in action on March 17 in Afghanistan. "Congratulations on behalf of Melania and myself and the entire nation. Tremendous," said Trump, mentioning his wife. It was Trump's first visit as president to the military hospital. Barrientos, whose right leg below the knee had been amputated, was brought into a hospital atrium in a wheelchair, accompanied by his wife, Tammy. Trump kissed Barrientos' wife before pinning the medal on the sergeant's left shirt collar, grasping Barrientos by the shoulders and then shaking his hand. The Purple Heart is awarded to service members who are wounded or killed in action. Besides Barrientos, Trump met privately with about a dozen service members who are receiving care at the medical center.

**Military Pistol Kills Japanese Zero:** Owen John Baggett was born in 1920 in Graham, Texas. By 1941 he graduated from college and went on to work on Wall Street, but by the following year, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps (now USAF) when the United States entered the war. A studious man, he graduated from pilot training in just five months and was sent to Burma, flying a B-24 Liberator. What happened the following year is one of those stories hard to describe. On March 31st, 1943, Baggett and his squadron were sent on a mission to destroy a bridge of strategic importance. On their way, the B-24s got intercepted by Japanese Zeros which hit the squadron hard. Baggetts' plane was riddled with bullets to such an extent that the crew was forced to bail out. While parachuting, a Japanese pilot decided that downing the plane wasn't enough. He circled around and started shooting at the bailed out pilots, killing two of the crew. Seeing this, Baggett did the only thing he could. He played dead. Not convinced Baggett was dead, the Zero pulled up to him at near stall speed, the pilot opening his canopy to check on his horrendous work. Not wasting any time and thinking on his feet (no pun intended), Baggett pulled out his pistol and shot the pilot right in the head. This is considered the best shot by a Caliber .45 M911 pistol of ALL TIME. The last thing he saw was the Zero spiraling toward earth. When he landed, he and the other bailed out crew members were captured and sent to a POW camp where they remained till the end of the war. They were liberated by OSS agents (World War II version of the modern CIA) and Baggett was recognized as the only person during the war to down a Zero with a pistol.



**USS Arizona Survivor Rejoins Shipmates, Interred Aboard Ship:** A veteran who survived the attack on Pearl Harbor and died last year at age 94 has been reunited with his fallen shipmates on the sunken USS Arizona. Raymond Haerry was interred on the ship in a ceremony that his granddaughter says was solemn and beautiful. Haerry was 19 years old when bombs started falling on his battleship on Dec. 7, 1941. He never returned to Pearl Harbor while he lived because the memories were too painful. As he neared the end of his life, he told his family he'd like to be laid to rest there. Haerry died Sept. 27 in Rhode Island. Five Arizona survivors remain. Haerry's granddaughter, Jessica Marino, traveled from New Jersey to Hawaii with her family for Saturday's ceremony. She handed his urn to divers, who placed it within the ship's sunken hull. Hundreds of sailors and Marines are entombed there. "That was the point at which I kind of lost it," Marino said. "It was really sad, but also really sweet to see. It was amazing." Only USS Arizona survivors can be interred on the ship. Haerry served for 25 years in the Navy, retiring as a master chief. He's the 42nd survivor to rejoin his shipmates, according to the National Park Service.

**Death Toll from Massive US Bomb Strike Rises:** The number of militants killed in an attack by the largest non-nuclear weapon ever used in combat by the U.S. military has risen to 94. Ataulah Khogyani, spokesman for the provincial governor in Nangarhar, said the number of Islamic State group dead was up from the 36 previously reported. "Fortunately there is no report of civilians being killed in the attack," Khogyani said. The U.S. attack on a tunnel complex in remote eastern Nangarhar province near the Pakistan border killed at least four IS group leaders.

**Taliban Gunmen Storm Afghan Army Base, 100 Casualties:** A Taliban attack on an Afghan base Friday could turn out to be country's deadliest on an Afghan military installation, and is raising questions about the army's ability to hold off the Taliban -- who are seeking to topple the country's central government. A spokesman for the Afghan Ministry of Defense said more than 100 people were killed and wounded in Friday's attack on a mosque at the headquarters of the army's 209th Corps. Other reports put the casualty figures at 140 or more. There are no reports of coalition casualties, although German military advisers, from NATO's Train Advise Assist Command-North, often collaborate with troops on the base, which is near Mazar-i-Sharif. A Resolute Support spokesperson did not respond to an email asking whether any coalition personnel were on the base at the time of the attack. A statement from Gen. John Nicholson, the top U.S. and NATO commander in Afghanistan, condemned the attack as "barbaric" because it targeted a place of worship. "All of us at the NATO Resolute Support Mission condemn such murderous and reprehensible actions," the statement said. The Taliban said the attack was launched in revenge for the killing of two of their "shadow" governors in the northern part of the country. A statement from the group noted that the base was a primary launching point for night raids and other operations in the region. Gen. Dawlat Waziri, a Defense Ministry spokesman, said he expects the death toll to rise because many of the wounded were in critical condition. Initial reports said eight soldiers were killed in the attack. A statement from President Ashraf Ghani posted to Twitter said he "condemns the cowardly attack." Ghani traveled Saturday to Mazar-i-Sharif to visit members of the 209th Corps. The attack happened about 1:30 pm Friday when as many as 10 militants dressed as soldiers and driving Afghan army vehicles talked their way onto the base by feigning a casualty they said needed urgent medical care at the base clinic. Once on the compound, they targeted a mosque full of unarmed soldiers performing Friday prayers. It took several hours for Afghan commandos to put down the attack.

**Pres. Trump Signs Bill to Extend Veterans Choice Program:** President Donald Trump extended the Veterans Choice Act on April 20, 2017 to set the stage for a push in Congress to expand the program and allow more access to private care for veterans. Flanked by veterans at an Oval Office ceremony, the president signed the bill to extend the Choice program, which was to expire on Aug. 7, and allow the expenditure of the remaining \$950 million in the program. The Choice Card program allowed vets facing lengthy wait times at Veterans Administration facilities or living more than 40 miles from the nearest VA to seek care in the private sector. Those already in the program will not need to re-apply under the bill signed by Trump, VA officials said. The new bill -- the Veterans Choice Improvement Act -- addressed a major complaint of veterans service organizations by directing the VA to cover co-pays and deductibles directly for private care rather than reimbursing veterans for paying up front. Trump used the signing ceremony to renew many of the pledges he made on the campaign trail to reform the VA. "I've been telling all of our friends at speeches and rallies for two years about the VA, how we're going to turn it around, and we're doing that," the president said.

Henry is five years old and just begun reading. He points to a picture in a reading book and says, "look mom it's a frickin elephant." Deep breath... What did you call it? "It's a frickin elephant" Look here it says so right on the picture!" So it does, African Elephant. Hooked on phonics? Ain't it wonderful!

**V.P. Pence Warns Era of Patience is Over:** On a 10 day visit to Asia, Vice President Mike Pence, warned the U.S. wants North Korea to "abandon its reckless path" of developing nuclear weapons and testing ballistic missiles. "The era of strategic patience is over," Pence said April 17 as he visited the border between North and South Korea. "President Trump has made it clear that the patience of the United States and our allies in this region has run out, and we want to see change." Pence and his wife Karen made an Easter weekend visit to Korea, where his father served in combat as part of the 45th Infantry Division in 1953. "Like so many who have worn the uniform and come home, my dad didn't think the heroes were the ones that came home," Pence said. His visit came as North Korea continued to ramp up tension by attempting to fire a missile that exploded seconds after launch. That attempt was "just the latest reminder of the risks each one of you face every day," the vice president told troops during a visit to U.S. Army Garrison Yongsan.

**U.S. Airstrike Kills Taliban 'Shadow Governor':** U.S. officials said recently that a Taliban "shadow governor" was killed in an airstrike in Afghanistan as part of the effort to deny "Taliban freedom-of-movement" in the region. U.S. forces in Afghanistan said Quari Tayib was known as the "shadow governor" of Takhar province. He was killed in a strike in Archi District in the Kunduz province on April 17, the statement said. Tayib had been a target of interest in 2011 and was directly responsible for the deaths of U.S. servicemen in Afghanistan, officials said. According to The Guardian, Taliban shadow governors are responsible for directing insurgents fighting in Afghanistan. They work with more freedom in areas where Kabul does not have control. Two other Taliban shadow governors were killed in separate U.S. airstrikes earlier this year.

**Four Vietnam Veterans to Receive Silver Stars for 1972 Rescue:** The four-man Army crew of a UH-1H "Huey" chased a burning C-130 transport plane as it crashed near Saigon in 1972, hovered over the wreckage and pulled five men onto their helicopter. They did this while taking -- and returning -- fire. And they all survived. On Tuesday -- 45 years later, to the day -- the Huey crew will receive Silver Stars, the military's third-highest decoration, for their action. Robert Monette, who was the helicopter pilot that day, said the medals were "unexpected, and very, very humbling." "We did these sorts of things in the air cavalry all the time, the difference this time being it was recognized and documented," said Robert Frank, the air mission commander on the Huey. "Heroic things were done every day. Sometimes somebody would see it, other times they wouldn't." Monette, a chief warrant officer, Frank, a captain, Spc. John Deslouriers and Spc. Leonard "Bruce" Shearer were on a reconnaissance mission when they spotted the C-130 Hercules, its right wing flaming. It had been struck by ground fire while on a supply run to An Loc in southern Vietnam. The Huey crew watched as the aircraft crashed into a marsh. The Vietnam bureau of Stars and Stripes reported at the time that the C-130 "burrowed into the muck... broke in two and whooshed up a whirlwind of debris and flames."

**Drone Defense Works:** A 10-day experiment at Fort Sill, Okla., using a 5-kW laser mounted atop a Stryker combat vehicle to destroy unmanned aerial vehicles succeeded in silently destroying 50 drones, but Army officials already knew a laser could work. The real advances were in the ability to search the sky for targets, increasing the distance at which a target can be destroyed and working on "soft" kills that leave the drone intact enough after a crash landing to provide useful intelligence.

**Intelligence Agencies Fear Rogue Insiders as Much as Spies:** Forget about spies. It's rogue insiders that cause heartburn at U.S. intelligence agencies these days. Few spy cases have broken in the past decade and a half. In contrast, a proliferation of U.S. intelligence and military insiders have gone rogue and spilled secrets to journalists or WikiLeaks, the anti-secrecy group. The leaks are as damaging as any major spy case, perhaps more so. And they have underscored the ease of stealing secrets in the modern age, sometimes with a single stroke of a keyboard. Since early March, WikiLeaks has published part of a trove of documents purportedly created by cyber units of the Central Intelligence Agency. WikiLeaks continues to upload the documents and hacking tools, dubbed Vault 7, to the internet for all to see. For its part, a mysterious group that calls itself the Shadow Brokers has re-emerged and dumped a large catalog of stolen National Security Agency hacking tools on the internet, including evidence the agency had penetrated Middle Eastern banking networks. "In the past, we've lost secrets to foreign adversaries," retired Air Force Gen. Michael Hayden, a former director of both the CIA and the NSA, said in an interview. "Now we've got the self-motivated insider that is our most important counterintelligence challenge." Hayden cited the cases of Army Pfc. Chelsea Manning, convicted in 2013 for releasing three-quarters of a million classified or sensitive military and diplomatic documents to WikiLeaks. He also mentioned Edward Snowden, the former NSA contractor who shook public opinion with his disclosures to journalists in 2013 about U.S. surveillance practices. Hayden added the Vault 7 disclosures last month, which others presume were stolen by a contract employee at the CIA. Lastly, there is the case of Harold T. Martin, an NSA contractor accused by the Justice Department in February of hoarding 50 terabytes of highly sensitive data from the agency at his Maryland home, in a shed and in his car. Martin's motives are not publicly known. Traditional motives for spying -- summed up by the acronym MICE, which stands for money, ideology, compromise and ego -- were not apparently at play in any of those cases. "No foreign service used any of those characteristics against any of the people we mentioned. It's kind of sui generis. How do you stop that?" Hayden asked. The cases have brought attention to how widely U.S. intelligence agencies, which have a total annual budget of \$53 billion, employ outside contractors. "The reason that they exist is that we have jobs that need to get done, and done rapidly," said Dave Aitel, a former chief scientist at the NSA who now is chief executive of Immunity Inc., a Miami cybersecurity firm. When global events affect security priorities, he added, large new intelligence programs can stand up rapidly with contractors. "The government can put together a billion-dollar company in three weeks," Aitel said. "It's an amazing system." Contractors pass the same hurdles for security clearances as government personnel. "The government is doing the vetting," said Bryson Bort, a graduate of the Military Academy at West Point who is chief executive of Grimm, a Washington-area cybersecurity firm. The number of contractors in the intelligence community is not publicly known. A Congressional Research Service report Aug. 18, 2015, cited figures from 2007 that indicated 27 percent of the 100,000 members of the intelligence community workforce were contractors.

Sometimes the first step toward forgiveness is realizing the other person was born an idiot.

An atheist was seated next to a little girl on an airplane and he turned to her and said, "Do you want to talk? Flights go quicker if you strike up a conversation with your fellow passenger." The little girl, who had just started to read her book, replied to the total stranger, "What would you want to talk about?" "Oh, I don't know," said the atheist. "How about why there is no God, or no Heaven or Hell, or no life after death?" as he smiled smugly. "Okay," she said. "Those could be interesting topics but let me ask you a question first. A horse, a cow, and a deer all eat the same stuff - grass. Yet a deer excretes little pellets, while a cow turns out a flat patty, but a horse produces clumps. Why do you suppose that is?" The atheist, visibly surprised by the little girl's intelligence, thinks about it and says, "Hmmm, I have no idea." To which the little girl replies, "Do you really feel qualified to discuss God, Heaven and Hell, or life after death, when you don't know shit?"

**The Lost Graves of Tarawa:** Tom Vosmer doesn't recall exactly when he learned his cousin had been killed during the Battle of Tarawa. He might have been 6 or 7. The loss was nonetheless devastating. "Even at that age, I remember being deeply affected by the news," he says. "The name 'Tarawa' was imprinted in my mind very powerfully." For decades, however, Tom didn't realize the breadth of the tragedy his family had endured following the bloody assault on a key Japanese stronghold in the South Pacific in November 1943. Pfc. Ronald Vosmer and hundreds of other Marines who were killed in just three days of battle were hastily buried and then lost. By early 1949, a military review board declared many of the remains, including Vosmer's, unrecoverable. Scores of families were deprived of the certainty of knowing what happened to their loved ones and the solace of bringing them home for burial. Seven decades later, the family finally has closure. In October, Vosmer finally came home to rest in the Denver cemetery where his parents and sister are buried – thanks largely to the efforts of History Flight, a nonprofit group that has spent more than a dozen years and tens of thousands of hours finding the lost Marines of Tarawa. "Such a pity this could not have happened while his parents were still alive," says Tom, who traveled from his home in Australia to attend the funeral in Colorado. "But at least it has happened, which gives us some comfort." OPERATION GALVANIC Providing comfort to the families of the missing Tarawa Marines has been an excruciating challenge, emblematic of the price the tiny atoll exacted as the United States attempted to push back the Japanese. The Battle of Tarawa was essentially the battle of Betio, a two-mile ribbon of sand and coral in the Gilbert Islands about 2,500 miles southwest of Hawaii. Protected by a network of bunkers, machine-gun nests, anti-aircraft batteries and other armaments, Tarawa was the most heavily fortified atoll the United States invaded in the Pacific. A Japanese admiral reportedly claimed the United States couldn't take it with a million men. The U.S. invasion, known as Operation Galvanic, was crucial to securing a foothold in the central Pacific from which to launch assaults on the Marshall and Caroline islands. It was a near-calamity from the start. Most of the enemy fortifications survived intense pre-invasion shelling from U.S. warships. Aerial bombing runs were late or didn't materialize, says Dean Ladd, then a 23-year-old first lieutenant and platoon leader. Lower-than-anticipated tides stranded U.S. landing craft offshore, making them easy targets for the Japanese.

**75th Ranger Regiment Team Wins 'Best Ranger':** A two-man team from the 75th Ranger Regiment outperformed 53 teams to win the grueling 34th annual David E. Granger Jr. Best Ranger Competition. During the April 7-9 event at Fort Benning, Georgia, Capt. Michael Rose and Master Sgt. Josh Horsager of the 2nd Battalion, 75th fought through 60 hours of mental and physical challenges to take that title back to Joint Base Lewis-McChord after nine years. In second place were Master Sgt. Chad Stack Pole and Staff Sgt. Carlos Mercado, representing the 82nd Airborne Division, followed by Capt. Robert Killian and Staff Sgt. Erich Friedlen, representing the Army National Guard, for third place. Of the original 53 teams to begin the competition, only 21 completed the buddy run on the final day of competition. The Best Ranger Competition was named in honor of Lt. Gen. David E. Grange Jr., a former Ranger instructor and Ranger department director, who served in World War II and the Vietnam War. Grange also commanded Fort Benning, the 2nd Infantry Division, and the U.S. Sixth Army.

**Wear Poppies to Honor the fallen:** During this special month of May, we take time to honor and remember those who never came home. For Medal of Honor recipient Florent "Flo" Groberg, his thoughts turn to Command Sgt. Maj. Kevin Griffin, Maj. Thomas Kennedy, Maj. Walter Gray and Ragaei Abdelfattah, a volunteer with the U.S. Agency for International Development. Groberg received the Medal of Honor for intercepting a suicide bomber in Afghanistan on Aug. 8, 2012, an attack that killed those four men. "For the rest of my life, I made a dedication that I would live for them," Groberg said. "I would live for their families. I would wake up every single day and do whatever I can to earn that right to be on this earth, that I earn the right to wear this medal around my neck that does not belong to me. It belongs to my brothers who never came home. It belongs to their families. It belongs to you. It belongs to the United States of America, our flag and every individual – military and otherwise – who put their lives on the line." One does not have to wear the nation's highest award for valor to properly honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice so others could live in freedom. In fact, the entire American Legion Family is asking all Americans to honor these heroes on National Poppy Day, May 26, 2017. We encourage all veterans, servicemembers and patriotic citizens to wear or display a poppy on National Poppy Day to remember our fallen and support the living. National Poppy Day, of which the Boeing Co. is a premier sponsor this year, broadens a tradition that began in 1920, when the poppy became an official flower of the Legion Family. Just like the Legion, the history of the poppy as a symbol dates back nearly a century. In the aftermath of the Great War, the flower flourished in Europe and came to represent the sacrifices made by U.S. troops and millions of others who struck a blow to tyranny. Since that time, the American Legion Auxiliary has become known for its work distributing poppies, as a way to remember our nation's fallen and raise funds to help veterans and active-duty military personnel with medical and financial needs. This year we ask the entire American Legion Family to expand these efforts by promoting National Poppy Day in communities across the country. By wearing poppies on May 26, we honor every U.S. servicemember who has given his or her life in the name of liberty, freedom and democracy. At the same time, by wearing this simple red flower, we show our support for veterans of generations to come.

Got tasered picking up my friend at the airport today. Apparently security doesn't like when you shout. "Hi Jack!"

## Operation Attleboro: The 196th's Light Infantry Brigade Baptism By Fire in the Vietnam War: *Part two of a series:*

Meanwhile, Meloy's B Company, commanded by Captain Robert P. Garrett, had already landed at 0921 on an LZ some four kilometers to the east of the rest of battalion and was heading northwest toward the blocking position established in the operations order. The LZ was cold, but after B Company had moved on a few kilometers they discovered an abandoned fortified VC village.

At 1120, the 2/1, composed of B and C Companies, 2/1, and commanded by the battalion S-3, Major Ed Stevens, was attacking on Red Axis north and northwest toward the blocking position, and encountered a small VC outpost protected by a Claymore mine. After neutralizing this position, at 1600 the 2/1 was ordered to reinforce the 1/27 and was lifted by helicopters to an LZ in vicinity of the 1/27. They closed on the position at about 1800 and immediately occupied positions on the south perimeter of Meloy's fighting forces. Evacuation of the dead and wounded began at sunset and lasted into the night. There were minor probes by the VC that night but no significant ground attacks.

Late that evening, the 196th operations (S-3) section published orders for the next day. The 1/27 was to attack northeast, guiding on the same trail ('Ghost Town Trail'), and set up positions some two kilometers from their present location. B Company, 1/27, was to attack west along the abandoned and overgrown highway Lien Tinh Le (LTL) 19 and link up with the 1/27. The 2/1 was to attack east about 2\_ kilometers and set up a position that would be about two kilometers to the southeast of the 1/27 objective. A Company, 2/1, with the battalion commander, had been moving on Blue Axis about four kilometers to the east. They would attack west and link up with the 2/1 to re-establish unity of command. The 4/31 would attack northwest to a blocking position about one to 1\_ kilometers northeast of the 1/27 and 2/1 objectives. The purpose of the plan was to prevent the 9th VC Division from moving to the southwest and to consolidate control of all subordinate commands of the 196th LIB. Although it was clearly important to consolidate the command, the new plan perpetuated the obvious mistakes of the original plan by moving individual, company-size units cross-country through terrain that made it next to impossible to maneuver and maintain control.

At 0800 on November 4, 1966, the 4/31 departed their battalion base, marching northwest to reach their blocking position. They encountered no opposition. B Company, 1/27, began moving west to link up with the 1/27, but later, under instructions from General DeSaussure, B Company reversed its direction to become part of the 4/31 blocking force. A Company, 2/1, with the battalion commander, also began its move to the west to link up with the 2/1. At 1040 the 2/1 began its move to the east. The 1/27 commander, wishing to avoid any unnecessary conflict with a sister battalion, did not continue the attack until 1140 in order to give the 2/1 time to deploy well to the east.

The 1/27 moved out with Captain Cole's A/1/27 leading, followed by the battalion command group, then C/3/21 and C/1/27 at the rear. The lead element had moved approximately 200 yards through the dark, triple-canopied jungle when all of A/1/27 came under heavy fire from small arms and automatic weapons. Major Meloy immediately ordered C/3/21 and C/1/27 to move to the left flank of A/1/27, sensing that the VC were strongest on the A/1/27 left flank. In order for the Americans to break through the enemy defensive position, the VC right flank had to be rolled up. While making this maneuver, C/3/21 inexplicably had one platoon go to the right of A/1/27. Captain DeVries later explained that the 2nd platoon leader had simply misunderstood a command given over the radio. Due to the 'unbelievable battle sounds which went on for hours in the thick, highly resonant jungle,' the platoon leader mistook 'right' for 'left.' The 2nd platoon went past A/1/27's front on the right flank and found themselves in a heavy firefight. The unit fought with distinction. Sergeant Lester Armstrong, of Molden, Mo., a squad leader, attacked a VC bunker with an automatic weapon recovered from a badly wounded squad member, and knocked out the bunker. Sergeant Armstrong later received the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC) for his action.

Sergeant Armstrong's actions were but one example of the many selfless, heroic acts that took place during those three days of heavy engagement. Two Medals of Honor and several DSCs were awarded to members of the two Wolfhound battalions (the 1/27 and 2/27). After Sergeant Armstrong's one-man assault, the platoon pulled back to the company CP and moved into position to the left flank of A/1/27. Meanwhile, the platoon from C/1/27 that was to go to the right flank of A/1/27 could not make much progress because of heavy fire. To fill in the gap, the commanding officer of A/1/27 ordered his right-flank platoon to curve back and link up with the platoon from C/1/27, which it did.

At this point there was no radio communication with 196th headquarters. However, an Air Force forward air controller (FAC) flying overhead was contacted, and he relayed messages to the 196th CP. In his book *Ambush*, S.L.A. Marshall pointed out that the 196th's commander lacked communications equipment adequate to control 'a far-extended and rapidly shifting battle' from his command helicopter.

Since there was no progress on the ground, higher headquarters decided to reinforce the 196th with Major Meloy's sister battalion, the 2/27, commanded by Lt. Col. William C. Barrott. The commanding officer of the 2/27, at the division base camp at Cu Chi, was alerted at 1246 for possible movement.

Major Meloy had already contacted the S-3 of the 2/1 and requested assistance to relieve the pressure on the 1/27. The 2/1, with B and C companies, immediately reversed their march to the east and started moving north and west to aid the 1/27. Almost immediately, automatic weapons fire from dug-in VC positions and rifle fire from snipers in the trees was directed at the advancing 2/1 companies and became extremely intense.

To the west, at the 1/27 CP during the height of the firefight at about 1330, Major Meloy was wounded in the right elbow by mortar fragments. Although he was in pain, he refused evacuation; he also refused medication because he was worried that a pain reliever might affect his ability to think clearly. To the east of the firefight at 1435, Captain Garrett, commanding officer of B/1/27, turned his company westward, away from the planned linkup with the 4/31 to go to the aid of his own battalion. Apparently he did not have the blessings of the 196th's commander to change his mission, but his overriding concern, in the isolation and confusion of the moment, was to help the rest of his battalion.

Meanwhile, C/2/27, commanded by Captain Gerald F. Currier, had been ordered into the battleground to relieve the pressure on the 1/27's left flank. The company from the 2/27, unbeknown to Meloy, landed at an LZ close to the fighting at 1440, but much farther west and north than Meloy wanted them to land. The company immediately moved east in an attempt to roll up the VC right flank. The battalion commander, Colonel Barrott, accompanied C Company. It took C Company and the battalion command group two hours of walking through the dense underbrush of the hardwood forest to reach a spot less than two kilometers away, where they thought they were on the flank of the VC. In fact, they were to the rear of the VC dug-in defensive positions. At 1451, an estimated 100 VC in a skirmish line made a frontal assault on the first platoon, A/1/27. This was the first of three such assaults, which diminished in size and intensity. The second assault was launched at 1515 against A/1/27 and C/3/21. Meanwhile, C/2/1 had reached a point about 300 meters to the southeast of the 1/27 and had come under fire from the VC left flank at 1515. Major Meloy then ordered B/2/1, commanded by Captain Joseph Czubecki, that had been moving to aid the 1/27 with C/2/1 and the 2/1 S-3 command group, to maneuver and protect the right flank of A/1/27 and C/1/27. By 1600, C/2/1 had broken contact with the enemy and was ordered to the southwest to cover the southeast portion of the perimeter to the right of B/2/1.

The third and weakest frontal assault was made by the VC at 1630. It had no adverse effect on the 1/27, which had already deployed. At that moment, Major Meloy had control of seven rifle companies in the immediate vicinity. By November 5, Major Meloy eventually would control the movements of 11 infantry companies. It was an obvious violation of the principle of span of control, and the commanders on the ground were concerned that the situation was out of control.

At about this time, A/2/27, commanded by Captain Robert Foley, landed on a cold LZ to join the 1/27 and assist 2/27 in securing the left flank. By 1715 it was discovered that C/2/27 and the battalion command group had gone too far and were behind what later was determined to be the entrenched recon company of the 9th VC Division and members of the 1st Battalion, 273rd VC Regiment. The VC positions were discovered when C/2/27 came under heavy fire and the company commander was killed. Under the command of the ranking platoon leader, the company assaulted the VC position, but was unsuccessful. The VC had numerous automatic weapons and camouflaged fields of fire. At that point Barrott threw a smoke grenade to mark his location for the aircraft overhead. An FAC saw the smoke and took a reading. He determined that C/2/27 was about 100 meters to the north of the bogged-down 1/27. At 1734, Barrott took a squad and moved south in the direction of the 1/27 in an attempt to link up. Barrott crossed a well-concealed lane of fire and was instantly killed by automatic weapons fire. The company first sergeant, a platoon leader, a platoon sergeant and several radio operators were also killed during this firefight. C Company, 2/27, was now completely isolated on the battlefield, and the men were ordered by Meloy to stop where they were and form a tight perimeter to defend themselves that night in case they should be attacked.