

# Night Before Christmas

## A Co 4/3 11th LIB

On the 23rd Dec 69 our company A. Co 4/3 11th LIB set up (NDP) for the night. I was in 2nd platoon 1st squad; my squad leader was Sgt Dennis. We began Digging in for the night; our squad was positioned about 50 meters or so from a river bed, we had to walk about 10 meters or so to the right and then straight down to the river bed. The area where we set up (NDP) was in an open Valley surrounded by mountains in (Quang Ngai Province) where are (AO) was. None of us liked that area because we were all open targets for mortar attacks from the mountains. But no mortar attacks that night. At around 0.800 hour's on 24th Dec 69 -- 3 to 4 guys from our platoon went down to the river bed to fill Canteens



Left to Right- Johnny Bradley, Carr, Peter.C Dempsey,  
Billie Barrel, Standing Sgt Michael Livesay, Sgt Ronald G Dennis  
A Co. 1<sup>st</sup> Sq 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon December 22<sup>nd</sup> 1969

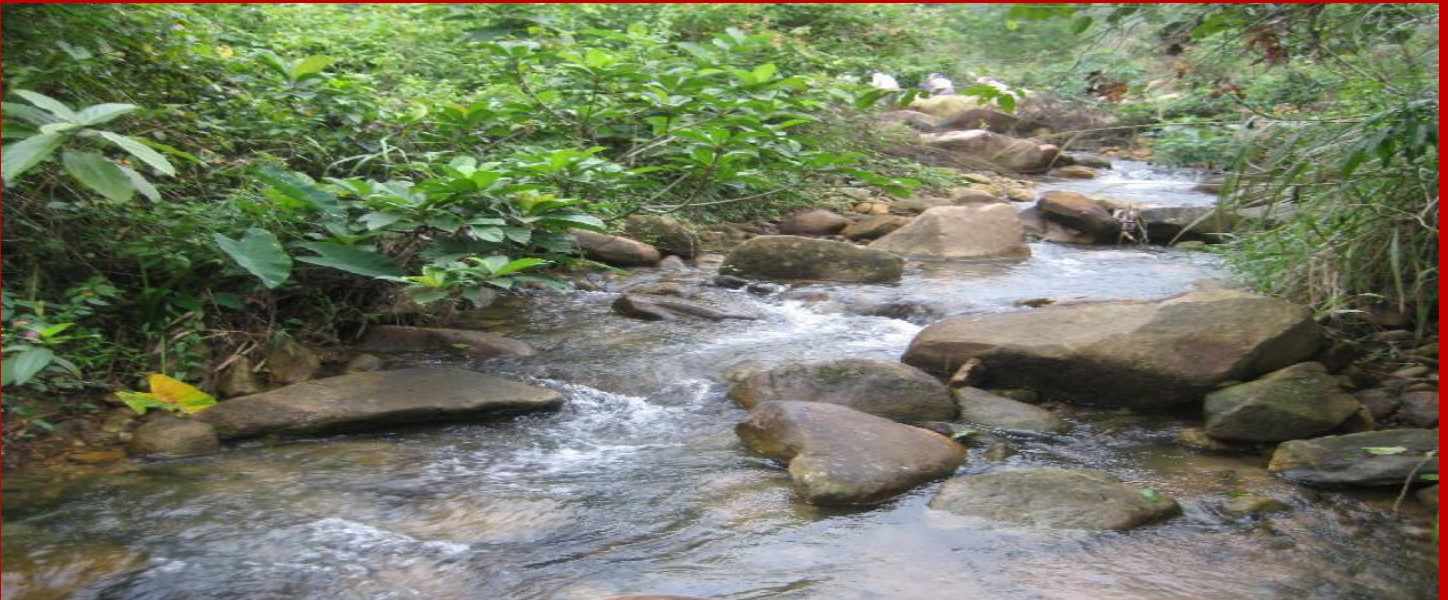
*Left to right  
Johnny Bradley ,Carr,  
Peter Dempsey,Billie  
Barrel.  
Standing Sgt Michael  
Livesay, SgtRonald G  
Dennis  
A Co 1<sup>st</sup> Sq 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon  
December 22, 1968  
Two days prior to NDP*

I remember one of the guys was nicknamed Sunshine. About 5 to 10 minutes later we all heard (M16 Auto Fire). Immediately we all knew they made enemy contact. They came back running like Hell Yelling (NVA/VC) 4 To 5 or more coming up the river bed. At that point our (CO) came right to our squad and told us go get them. When we got down to the river bed no contact with the enemy was made. We did not see or hear (NVA/VC) anywhere. The river bed was small, about 4 meters in width. The other side was a wooded area. Sgt Dennis, Sgt Livesay and another member of our squad went across to the other side to the wooded area They were directly in front of us as we secured them from the right and left. Sgt Dennis found blood trails leading from the right and left of them, at that point they realized the (NVA) done this to confuse us in which way to go. Seconds after realizing this we began receiving (S/A) Enemy Fire. (Sgt Dennis was hit and died instantly) we returned fire with everything we had.

Taken in 2008 Looking toward NDP-in 1969 area was heavy in growth



**The (NVA) was directly in front of us in the wooded area where they took cover. We were set up for (Ambush). We were able to get back to other side of the river bed with Sgt Dennis' body. I remember our Medic working on him trying to bring him back. We marked the area with smoke and our gunships rocket the hell out of the area .The gunships continued circling the area to give us support as needed.**

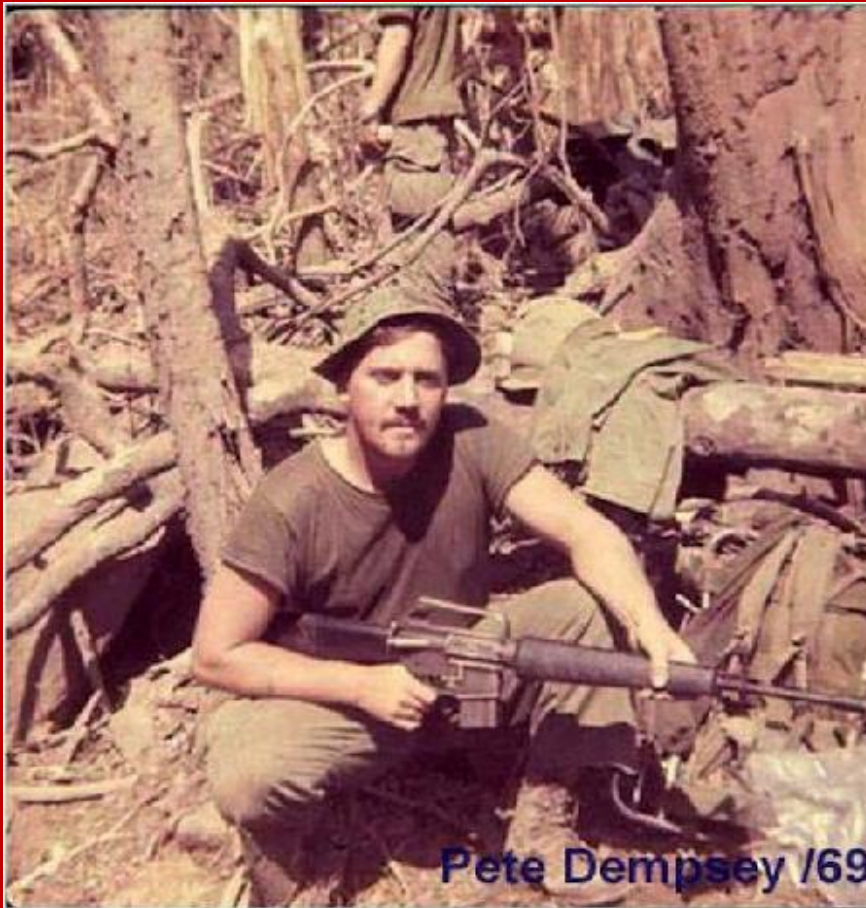


**Spot where Sgt Ronald Dennis was killed.**

**More squads from our platoon came down to support us. We received at that point no more enemy fire. We then began crossing the river bed again to the wooded area about half way across we opened up with M60-M79-M16 fire before getting to the wooded area. At that point I felt a painful burning sting in the corner of my left eye. I was hit and did not even know I was bleeding until our medic got to me. I remember asking him how bad is it and he said not bad Dempsey you will be ok. I remember he was crying, we were all scared. Then he told me**

**Clyde also got hit before me. Sgt Dennis and PFC Clyde were Dusted-off.**

**No more enemy fire, it all stopped. The bleeding in my left eye stopped. I was still in the middle of the river bed when our platoon leader Lt Riggs told me and Sgt Livesay to check out the wooded area. When we got into the wooded area about maybe**



*Peter Dempsey  
A Co 4/3 11<sup>th</sup> LIB  
Americal Division*

**3 meters in I saw to my right a (NVA) hiding under a boulder rock. He was badly wounded. I killed him and took his AK-47. I was so full of anger; I guess that was my best Substitute for all my fear. There was no more (NVA/VC) in the area, they left. IT WAS OVER. The second Dustoff came in and took me out. That day we lost a good friend and great squad leader.**

**Peter Dempsey**  
**A Co 4/3 11th lib (69-70)**