

April 21, 2020



Ed Northrop

Friends and fellow Warriors -- I am going to attached a letter to share, that I wrote to then Chaplain Max Wilk, 1/12 IN 4th ID.

Sometime around late February to early March 1967, Max had flown into an LZ that we in C/1/12 had occupied. Chaplain Wilk did visit the men in the field as often as possible. He later retired from the US Army as a Colonel, lived in Colorado Springs for years, but moved to Kansas City several years ago to be closer to family.

I wrote this letter to Max, while he was in the hospital recovering from injuries he sustained when his Huey crashed into our LZ. The rotor blade hit a tree and crashed. The Huey landed on top of him, and the men of C Co helped lift the Huey off him. All the while he is yelling "No Smoking !! JP fuel leaking everywhere," and it was leaking on HIM!

He had hurt his back and was evacuated and he never returned to the 1/12. I saw him later, while stationed at Ft Leavenworth, KS. He attended several of our reunions, but his health finally stopped him from attending. He had saved a letter that I had wrote to him, and later returned this letter to me, thinking I might like to have for my family. Hope you enjoy.



Chaplain Max Wilk

Obviously at the time that i wrote this, I and some others were frustrated with the new Bn S-3, a Special Forces Captain that thought he knew everything. I finally got so upset, I challenged him to a fight. He was so arrogant and would talk down to everyone. After LTC Lay went to become the Division G-3, the Bde XO-- LTC Wilcox became the Bn CO, he lasted about 1 month, he was replaced for the next 6 weeks or so, by the Bde S-3, don't remember much about him. Then LTC Wright became the CO.

I just thought that maybe some of you would enjoy remembering and reading, even though i did reflect on some of my frustrations at the time.

Respectfully, ***Ed Northrop***
Ducti Amore Patriae

Dear Max, 2 April 1967

Believe me, it was great hearing from you, I certainly enjoyed your letter, and it is presently making the circuit within the company.

Well, I'm sorry to hear you won't be returning to the "Red Warriors" and if you don't know it already, I'll tell you, you will be missed, by the men and me. Now, who can I tell my problems to, there is no one in this battalion you can even talk to now, everyone is a prima donna, I think you know what I mean. Well make it and in good fashion too, but you know Max, things are tough enough, ^{and} the pleasant atmosphere we now work under, makes it just that much harder. Oh well - - -

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Tomorrow we are having our change of command and awards ceremony. Our new Bn C.O. is a Lt Col Wright, who spent 6 months around Saigon doing something or other. I have not met him yet, but all the gossip has it that he is a very fine man. I really don't care how fine he is, just so long as he has some guts to make a decision and can tell that dam S-3 where to go. Time will tell.

Things are still going pretty good, and we have had little or no contact in the last 2 weeks. I will bring you up to date on some other action. On 16 ~~Feb~~ March - B Co conducted a CA into an LZ (remember the long, long, LZ about 10 kms South of 3T) and was hit, they fought for about 4-5 hours, killing 10 VC, they did a good job. We (C Co) closed in later and that night got mounted by the bad

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guys, we suffered slight casualties, no
one killed. The 17th we moved out to
find the enemy mortar position - which we
did and found all kinds of goodies. We
moved out a little further and came
to an old LZ of the 1/4, here Cpt
Quinn flew in an H-23 to pick up
^{some} enemy papers we found. He left and
we hadn't moved 100 yd and slam, boom,
boom, boom - Charlie was waiting.
But did "Charlie Charlie" surprise them.
I maneuvered my platoons here and there
and after 5 hours of tense fighting we
killed 11 NVA (2 of which were CHINESE)
and we suffered 2 KIA (TUCKER & CHURCHES)
and 5 WIA (all OK now). They were
fighting from old American bunkers and we
were in the open - Terrain was wide open
to be honest when those rounds were zipping

over my head I was just a little nervous. ^{⊕ ?}
Anyway I was very proud of my men and
everyone did an excellent job. I put in
27 awards - 4 silver stars - 15 B.S. and
8 ACM w/ V - I put in Lt Jennings
and Lt Bulgani for the S.S. w/ V, they
really did a fine job. Since that time
we have had no contact what-so-ever.

The Recon platoon also was involved
in a fight the same day. They did a
real fine job - killing about 5 NVA,
but S/sgt Kaneko was killed and
SFC Shaffer was injured, ~~and~~ ^{along} with
Sgt Ray. The latter two are fine now. Lt
Williams did a fine job.

Cpt. Taggs has returned to
A Co and feeling just fine. Ed Shearer
is still doing a tremendous job with
B Co and Lon is leaving his problems
back in the Bravo Charlie.

1st Sgt Peneda will be leaving me
soon, as I approved his 1049 and

He is awaiting transfer to Hqs. Co
IFFV in NHA TRANG. He deserves
the change and I'm happy for him. I
plan to put SFC Cattergay as the new 1st.

I thank you for all you did for
me Max, you were a tremendous
influence on my way and habits and
my changes in attitude. You will be
sorely missed my friend by all in this
battalion, may God Bless you Max, and
remember don't do the twist for awhile.

Thank-you for the Easter message,
it was appreciated

Well Max, this letter has dragged
on, but I always liked talking to you,
please write when you can I will always
enjoy your letters, and I will do my
best to answer.

God Bless Max and I will keep
my head way-way down - Ed.