

August 23,, 2023

"The Encounter" Ed Northrop provides an interesting background story surrounding the battle of 501 N.

A short story, that I hope many of you will find interesting. Most of the addressees remember 14-16 Feb 1967 in Vietnam. We refer to it at the "Battle 501N".

One evening Joan and I were eating dinner at a local restaurant with another couple. Later, another 2 couples came in and sat near us. I knew one family. Mike and Ann Warrington. He served in the Navy during Vietnam on an aircraft carrier. He then served in the Secret Service and was assigned to 3 different presidential security details.

To the point. Mike introduced me and Joan to the other couple, interestingly, their first names were Ed and Joan. Mike said that Ed Loy was a retired USAF General and was an F-100 pilot in Vietnam. So we bonded and Gen Loy started to explain one of his most vivid experiences and that was the 2 days he spent flying as a Forward Air Controller (FAC) in support of an Infantry company in a battle against a large NVA unit. (fighter pilots were sometimes detailed to be FAC for 3-4 months). He spent a lot of time flying over this unit's position in an L-19, (piece of paper with wings/engine!!) and listening to the company commanders' wishes and then directing the fighter aircraft on their strafing/bombing runs. I asked where this occurred and he said in the mountains several miles outside of Pleiku. Hmmmm, I asked when, he said, 14-16 Feb 1967, all he knew was that it was an Infantry unit from the 4th Infantry Division in contact. Soooo, I got a little emotional, and explained to him that was my 4th ID company. We talked maybe too long about what he did and remembered. Later he wrote me the attached letter, which I found very meaningful. He also sent me copies of the DFC recommendation and other papers. 3 FACs flew over 501N those 2 days, directing over 100 sorties of fighter aircraft. As many of us know, we survived in part to the actions of the FAC and the USAF. I wrote up the recommendation for the DFC.. BG Loy still had the original letter.

His letter is very meaningful to me and I hope to many of you.. He is referring to a hat he bought for me that has a large 4th I patch on the front, which I still wear. Unfortunately both couples, Loys and Warringtons are now deceased. God Bless all SOLDIERS, but especially all "Warriors". respectfully,

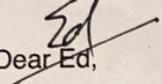
Ed Northrop

"Having Been Led By Love of Country"

SEE LETTER NEXT PAGE

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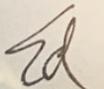
May 3, 2016


Dear Ed,

I just could not pass this hat up. Every time I see something marked with Infantry or 4 ID I think of you and my long-ago FAC/ALO experience with 4 ID in Vietnam. I thought this was a pretty cool hat and told Joan that I was buying it for you when she let me know I didn't need another hat in my closet. I am hoping you will find some good use for it on a golf course or be able to wear it to one of your "Red Warriors" reunions even though it does not show your 1/12th battalion/regimental "Charlie Company" identification.

Please do not think of me as some "old senile, odd guy" for sending you something so trivial on the spur of a moment. After our short "by chance" meeting at your country club with Mike and Ann a few years ago I have enjoyed the rewarding experience of becoming acquainted with one of my personal Army heroes whom I had only previously known as a voice on a radio. Fifty years will have passed this coming February 15-17 since our paths crossed in Vietnam, and even though we never personally met each other before, during or immediately after that one fateful battle in Vietnam the event still lives vividly among my memories. The most gratifying memory is meeting the person who authored one of my wartime awards, a DFC. I never got to tell you the award came to me during a Wing Commander called aircrew safety meeting about 18 months after your written recommendation and I never knew the source because it originated from outside the Air Force. It was not until I met you in the country club, and then through our following correspondence that I was able to match your original recommendation with the award certificate commendation and close my long-time mystery. Since then I have never been able to personally express to you my most sincere and wholehearted thank you for the part you played in my receiving the award. And more importantly, I have never been able to personally tell you of my admiration for you and your leadership, the bravery you and your company displayed during that battle, and the close friendships the surviving members of your company have maintained through the years. I bring this up now because as we get older it seems the possibility of our meeting again is becoming more remote and harder to do. Joan and I are still trying to get to Albany one more time, but every time we get near the date of planned travel an unplanned family demand takes precedence. In the meantime let us keep up our correspondence. You became one of my real heroes that day and our brief passing during a common effort is a memory I still cherish today.

Hopefully we will get to see each other again. I still want to exchange some long lingering thoughts and questions face-to-face. In the meantime Ed and Joan Loy send their best wishes to Ed and Joan Northrop. May God continue to bless your family and your many friends.


Ed Loy