

*Following are two letters from soldiers who fought in Vietnam. Tim Driscoll, the author of the first letter, volunteered for the Marines straight out of high school, and after basic training, was sent to Vietnam. He stayed there a year, from February of 1968 to February of 1969, before returning to the U.S.*

*The second letter was written by an anonymous sergeant who was drafted.*

### ***Fighting in Vietnam***

March 4, 1968

Well Mom,

There really is a war going on over here. We made contact in daylight yesterday for the first time since I've been here. You know how they say war is not like the movies show it. Well, they're wrong. It's exactly like the movies.

We were on a Company-size patrol when they hit us. 1st plt was in the front, we were next, and 2nd plt was in the rear. Wayne was working with the 2nd plt on the machine guns.

They hit the first plt, and everyone got down. Then first moved up 50 meters, and we moved out to the left. As soon as we moved behind a hedgeline, an automatic weapon opened on us. We just kept moving.

We finally got out of range about 100 meters down the trail. Then we got on line and assaulted a hedgeline 50 meters in front of us. We didn't meet any resistance; so, after we got on the other side, we got down and waited. Then we got the word the 1st plt was in bad shape and needed us. So, we were going to move out on line about 50 meters and then swing to our right and get the gooks in the middle of us and 1st.

We started out on line, keeping low and moving slow. It was a clear, open field we were going across. We were halfway across when fire opened up from our right. Everyone got down, and the St/Sgt started yelling at us to keep moving; so, we being young, brave Marines got back on line and kept moving.

But then the bullets started zipping around our legs and raising dust. We knew for sure they were shooting at us then. We weren't about to stay on line after that. We bolted to the right, ran about 25 meters, and took cover behind dirt piled up all along this road.

We waited there, just the 1st squad (2nd and 3rd squad were behind us), for about five minutes. They weren't shooting anymore; so, we start sticking our fool necks up to see what was happening. And they started shooting again. Now we knew where they were, tho. They were dug in right behind a thick bamboo patch, about 2 squads. At least now we could shoot back. We were doing pretty good--holding our own. Four of them started to run, and we cut them down.

THEN! we started receiving fire from our rear. I started getting scared, then, because we had no protection to the rear. They had us pinned down for 1/2 hour. We couldn't even raise our heads to see where they were. Finally the 2nd and 3rd squads moved up and cleared up our rear. We continued the fire fight to our front.

By this time, we had taken a few casualties, including our ST/Sgt--shot through the neck close to the collarbone. A medevac chopper landed right behind us as we set up a hard base of fire, turning our M-16s on automatic. Our St/Sgt wouldn't leave tho; and he kept running around yelling orders, his neck all patched up. (He thinks he's John Wayne.)

After awhile, we thought we had wiped them out because they kept running and we kept cutting them down. After awhile, the fire stopped; and the S/Sgt wanted a frontal assault on the positions. We didn't like that idea because, if there was one automatic weapon left, it could tear our whole squad to pieces.

We finally made him see the light. We threw a few grenades; and, sure enough, they started shooting again. We just exchanged fire for another hour, and then the TANKS!!! came. Three tanks with the 2nd plt swept through the position from our right. I saw Wayne with the M-60. There were 3 gooks left. The tanks opened fire when they saw them. Killed two and took one prisoner.

All that took a little over five hours. One of our Corpsmen was put up for a medal.

Wayne told me later that he was feeding the machine gun, and the A gunner was shooting, when a chicom landed right next to the A gunner. He toppled over Wayne, and Wayne had to take charge of the gun. That plt had one killed.

Mike sent me a letter and told me not to tell you he is coming to Nam. I'll write him and tell him how lousy everything is around here. We got mail three times last week, and I got a whole mess of letters from you. I got a letter from Sonny, and he says Dan will be OK. I hope so.

Where do you think I should go for R&R (in 5 months)? Tokyo, Hong Kong, Bangkok, Taipei, Australia, Hawaii, P.I. or Oki?

I'll write soon,

Tim

*I'm Sick of this Shit*

30 MAR 71

Dear Mom and all,

Don't worry, I didn't get another purple heart. My buddies are all dead. Out of our Infantry Company 21 killed, 29 wounded, and 27 of us are left to talk about the 5 hours of hell we went through.

It's too late to bitch, but the truth will not be told to the U.S. A lot of men are killed but they tell you only half the number.

I can't sleep good anywhere now. I'm trying to forget the horror of Sunday morning. Mom, I'm sick of this shit.