

What is needed now is input from the men of our unit ~ as we all know from past experience; 4 to 6 men can go on a mission and be no farther than five meters apart the whole time and when debriefed, have accounts so different you'd wonder if they were on the same mission! So now is time, give your perspective of your time in "YOUR" unit. Send your comments / corrections / additions in an email to Mike Wise williamwise@me.com by October 31, 2011.

"The Committee"

(3rd DRAFT 9/23/11)

Unit History

L R R P / L R P / I Co. (Ranger) 75th Inf. (Airborne)

1st Infantry Division (Vietnam)

Prologue

"His face was all painted up for night walking now like a bad hallucination, not like the painted faces I'd seen in San Francisco only a few weeks before, the other extreme of the same theater. In the coming hours he'd stand as faceless and quiet in the jungle as a fallen tree, and God help his opposite numbers unless they had at least half a squad along, he was a good killer, one of our best. The rest of his team were gathered outside the tent, set a little apart from the other division units, with its own Lurp-designated latrine and its own exclusive freeze-dry rations, three-start war food, the same chop they sold at Abercrombie & Fitch. The regular division troops would almost shy off the path when they passed the area on their way to and from the mess tent. No matter how toughened up they became in the war, they still looked innocent compared to the Lurps. When the team had grouped they walked in a file down the hill to the LZ across the strip to the perimeter and into the treeline."

--Michael Herr, in Dispatches © 1968

Organizational History:

Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (Platoon), Troop D, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry, 1st Infantry Division:

- December 1965 to April 1966.
- Capt. John Sanders Commanded the Blue Platoon (LRRP)
- LRRP Platoon was made up of about 25 – 30 volunteer combat veterans who were required to complete RECONDO School before team assignment (some were assigned prior, but went to school at the first available opening).
- Primary base camp was Phu Loi after 1/4 Cav. Headquarters moved from Di An.
- Call sign for the LRRP Platoon was "Phantom". (Some say it was Fathom, either one depicts the mission of unit.)
- Teams averaged 4 to 5 mission per month.
- Mission focus was on long duration Recon and Observation of assigned AO's (Area of Operation) targeting enemy movements, locations, AO general conditions and enemy unit strengths prior to Brigade and Division operations. Some ambush missions (for the purpose of capturing POW's & documents) were conducted.

HHC, 1st Infantry Division Provisional LRRP Detachment:

- April 1966 to August 1967
- General DePuy assumes command of 1st Infantry Division on 15 March 1966, in April 1966 he directed the formation of a LRRP detachment, and it was the first "divisional LRRP detachment" to be formed in Vietnam. ¹
- General William C. Westmoreland, commander of Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), officially authorized the creation of provisional LRRP units on 8 July 1966
- LRRP Detachment still supported by D Troop ("Darkhorse") 1/4 Cav. and remained at Phu Loi.
- Recruitment to increase the unit up to 118 men starts in mid 1966 however, it is not achieved.
- Mission and Operational requirements are the same; Recon and Observation of assigned AO's targeting enemy movements, locations, AO general conditions and enemy unit strengths prior to Brigade and Division operations. Ambush missions did increase during this period (for the purpose of capturing POW's & documents) the number of team's increases and the number of missions per team remains the same.

LRP Detachment, HHC, 1st Infantry Division:

- August 1967 to December 1967
- General Hay assumes command of 1st Infantry Division in February 1967. In August General Hay redesignates the unit as LRP Detachment HHC, 1st Infantry Division and moves the unit to Lai Khe. At first, the LRP Detachment is under the operational control of G-3 then, temporary under the Military Intelligence Battalion then back to G3.
- Capt. London remains in command during the move and reorganization at Lai Khe.
- Capt. Price takes command in July 1967.
- Unit call sign is changed to "Wildcat"; looking back, this seemed to indicate a change was coming.
- Mission and Operational requirements remain generally the same; the move to "direct action" gets its start during this period. The removal of the Reconnaissance "R" was an indication of the mission change coming for the unit.
- Another period of intense recruitment takes place in December running through February of 1968, and during this transitional period only 2-4 teams are operational at any given time.

1) Eyes behind the Lines: Page 42 - US Army Long-Range Reconnaissance and Surveillance Units

By; Major James F. Gebhardt, US Army (Retired) Combat Studies Institute Press Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

Company F, 52nd Infantry Long Range Patrol, 1st Infantry Division:

- December 1967 (January 1968) to February 1969.
- Army Command reorganizes LRP Detachments into LRP Companies on December 20, 1967.
- Capt. Price remains in command and the unit remains at Lai Khe.
- Training continues (at RECONDO School & Company level)
- 12 Teams are organized during this period.
- Due to the political climate in the States regarding increasingly high WIA/KIA's in the war zone,--Division commanders are restricted in new offensive operations and can only broaden operations in support of units being attacked. The LRP "Mission" changes to a more aggressive one where teams conduct more ambushes and are inserted into areas where contact is certain to take place; this enables commanders to engage enemy forces with larger combat units in a "pile-on" tactic. Due to this direct contact approach, mission duration is shorter and teams are more heavily armed. Heavy-Teams (Hunter-Killer) of twelve men (two teams) are used on a regular basis. Recon and Observation missions are used, but can be changed by team leaders or command once enemy units are discovered. "Direct Action" tactics by use of artillery, air or direct team ambushes become the norm rather than the exception.
- Some teams are attached "Op-Con" to combat Brigades for extended periods to conduct these types of missions.
- Capt. Lindman takes command in August of 1968

Company I, (Ranger) 75th Inf. (Airborne), 1st Infantry Division:

- January (February) 1969 to March 1970
- Commanding Officers;
 - Captain Allen A. Lindman 1 January 1969 - 4 March 1969
 - First LT Jerry M. Davis 4 March 1969 – 29 April 1969
 - Captain Reese M. Patrick 29 April 1969 – 14 May 1969 (KIA)
 - Captain Hamor R. Hanson 14 May 1969 – 15 October 1969
 - Major James J. McDevitt 15 October 1969 – 8 November 1969
 - Captain Robert D. Wright 8 November 1969 – 10 March 1970

➤ More information of the like kind listed above needed

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Narrative of the First ID LRRP/LRP/Ranger Experience:

- The history of our unit “type” predates the founding of this Republic, wherein small units of dedicated, highly trained, determine and brave men can, and did, have a dramatic effect in defeating our nation’s foes. This was just as true in Vietnam—as in any time in our history.
- The sacrifices of our brothers and their bravery will remain with us always, though our losses were a heavy burden, as our unit operated in one of most contested areas of the Vietnam War. Our Area of Operation (AO), War Zone “C”, was a major supply and infiltration route of the North Vietnamese Army. Located along the Cambodian border in III Corps, it was a “target-rich environment” of enemy activity.
- The men of the 1st Infantry Division LRRP/LRP/Rangers operated in this zone for over five years with great success, no matter the mission type--reconnaissance or direct contact--the men of our unit lived, fought and sacrificed in the true spirit of the “MOTTO” of the 1st Infantry Division;

“No Mission Too Difficult, No Sacrifice Too Great—Duty First”

- No account of our history would be complete without recognizing the heroic contributions of Troop D, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry’s “Dark Horse” pilots and crews. It mattered not, whether it was the “Clowns” Huey Slicks, the “Outcasts” H-13 or OH-6/Cayuse Scouts or the “Mustangs” Gunships, we all owed our lives numerous times to these dedicated and courageous aerial professionals. It can be said, without exaggeration, that most of us would have never made it home without them. If one were to reference their acts of “daring-do”, they would nonchalantly say that: “We were just doing our job”. No helicopter unit “did their job” better.
- One only needs to remember the daring extraction of the LRP team by a Cobra Gunship, piloted by Larry Taylor. Taylor’s “guns empty” Cobra, was the only hope the team had of survival. Defying numerous orders up the chain of command, Taylor made yet one more, heroic act of many that night and extracted the team on the rocket-pods and skids of his Cobra. Although Taylor’s heroic act was the first ever Cobra extraction of a LRP team in combat, the courage and dedication he displayed to save the team was common amongst the Dark Horse pilots and crews.

Narrative By Unit Period:

LRRP - Troop D, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry, 1st Infantry Division (December 1965 to April 1966);

- Division reconnaissance initially, from October 1965, had relied on the armored 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry. The squadron's aerial unit, "Darkhorse" (D Troop), contained an aero rifle platoon, under the command of CPT Richard Murphy, that rapidly responded to scout helicopter sightings and downed aircraft, but was precluded from longer ground patrols. During April 1966, Maj. Gen. William E. DePuy formed a provisional division Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (LRRP) contingent that was attached to D Troop (Air), 1/4 Cavalry, but which specialized in ground searches that stretched over several days inside hostile territory.

- This first group of highly trained and experienced LRRP's set the standard for their brothers to follow, not only in skill and determination, but attitude as well. The LRRP/LRP/Rangers were a fiercely independent group of men who did not suffer fools easily regardless of their rank. While this attitude may have offended some (OK, most other division units), it serve these men well. Team Leader's were picked by skill and leadership ability and not solely on rank. Senior leadership of the unit had to be strong to lead these men--1st Sergeant McConkey, Field 1st Sergeant's Morton and Tapia, Captains Sanders, London and Price--provided the necessary leadership that formed the cornerstone of the unit's history. etc etc

HHC, 1st Infantry Division Provisional LRRP Detachment (April 1966 to August 1967);

- Etc, etc

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Company F, 52nd Infantry Long Range Patrol, 1st Infantry Division (Jan. 1968 to Feb. 1969);

- Etc, etc

Company I, (Ranger) 75th Inf. (Airborne), 1st Infantry Division (February 1969 to March 1970)

- Etc, etc