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75th RANGER REGIMENT ASSOCIATION INC.
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PATROLLING

APRIL 1991

SPECIAL ISSUE

MISSING IN ACTION

24 APRIL 1971



James A. Champion



PREAMBLE

As U.S. Prisoners of War began arriving back on United States soil, covered by television during 1973, I was astounded when one of the men who debarked from the aircraft was identified as ISSAKO F. MALO, Company L, (RANGER), 75th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division. My astonishment was because I had been in continuous contact with a Platoon Sergeant, a First Sergeant and Company Commander who served with L/75th when the Ranger was captured. They had never revealed a fraction of that information. Thanks to Don Lynch, Company F/58th Infantry (Long Range Patrol), 101st Airborne Division, former members from the 101st LRRP, LRP and L/75th Rangers assembled during June 1986 at Clarksville, TN. and Fort Campbell KY., for their "first ever" reunion following Vietnam. After discussing Ranger Malo with Billy Nix, an association founder who was knowledgeable, I learned of a patrol action that has been hidden, misunderstood by even those involved, for more than fifteen years after the event. Then I got angry. **One of our Rangers was Missing In Action . . .** and no one seemed to care. No one does now apparently!

Billy Nix introduced me to Patrol Leader Marvin Duren, a former member of Company K/75th, 4th Division who was assigned to L/75th after K/75th was deactivated. Marvin is a Georgia boy and his callsign was "Georgia Peach". Marvin and I were discussing the mission when he lit up like a security light. Glancing over my shoulder, I noticed a slender Warrant Officer in a Flight Suit approaching, smiling at Marvin. Knowing they had something **special**, I made tracks. I learned he was CWO Behrens, a Medical Evacuation Helicopter Pilot with the 326th Medical Battalion, "Eagle Dustoff." The more I heard the more curious I became. As a professional soldier who spent more than three decades in the business, there were many unanswered questions. Some were answered when Marvin made a special trip to Columbus, Georgia and related his recall of that eventful patrol. He was wounded so grossly it was amazing that he survived. My quest for the answers began. It ended with more questions than when it began. The Defense Intelligence Agency has the new information. They have not acted on the information since I provided it during April 1988. *They are only seeking remains, not live MIA/POW's. Why!!!* **Bob Gilbert**

THE MISSION

Marvin's Team was inserted in the Ashau Valley, I

Corps, Vietnam on 23 April 1971 at approximately 1500 hours. A 3rd year agricultural student at age 20, Marvin volunteered for the draft. Following basic and AIT he arrived at the 4th Division where he attended sniper school and was assigned to Company K/75th Rangers. After fourteen missions with K/75th, the division rotated to CONUS, Marvin with other Rangers transferred to Company L, (RANGER) 75th Infantry, where he became assistant Team Leader for SSG David Smith, another K/75th alumni for five or six months. Marvin made the overflight on 22 April 1971. In conventional units that's a Leaders reconnaissance. Other members of the team were John Sly, designated as the assistant team leader (ATL), a former Special Forces trained medic named Steven McAlpine, Sgt Fred Karnes who was on his first mission with L/75th after having spent several months with the 5th Special Forces Group which had returned to CONUS. Issako Malo was from the islands somewhere in the Pacific. He has been reported by various members of the unit as Samoan, or from Guam or the Philippines. We have been unable to confirm it, however, we believe this was Malo's first patrol also. (He receives our newsletter)

The other member of the team was James A. Champion, a Texan and highly respected member of L/75th whose coolness under fire in tight situations earned him the respect of everyone who knew Champion, especially Corporal Dave Quigley who pulled numerous missions with Champion. The mission? A simple radio relay for patrols working so far out they could not maintain contact sans a Ranger Team acting as radio relay to the base station and the TOC. A "Simple" radio relay mission cost Lima Company an entire team of Rangers, overrun by a North Vietnamese force during the early morning hours of May 11, 1970, just eleven months earlier. They were all killed in action (KIA). Tactical doctrine for Long Range Patrol units had, for many years prior to Vietnam, dictated an Airborne relay for any patrols operating beyond the normal range of their radios. Some Vietnam LRP and Ranger units were fortunate enough to have leaders who recognized that problem. The 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile), loaded with helicopters and with nearby Phu Bai airfield never did for their Rangers or Long Range Patrols. Duren recalls diverting from their primary patrol insertion point because of ground fire. Callsign Dallas 20 Foxtrot on 56.70 MC, the team inserted at coordinates YC 483923 at 1500 hours

23 April 1971. The purpose of the radio relay was to maintain contact with a Platoon of L/75th Rangers inserting on the floor of the Ashau Valley to lay Anti-Tank mines along Route 547, *normally an engineer unit function.*

North Vietnamese Tanks and other tracked vehicles had been moving along the valley floor for ten days to two weeks. At approximately 0100 hours a couple of weeks earlier, Billy J. Nix a member of L/75th watched noisy cat eyes moving toward his Teams position astride Rt. 547 on the Ashau, valley floor. Thinking he was hallucinating from fatigue, Billy began punching other Rangers awake saying hey, hey those are F__king Tanks."

Tanks passed within feet of the patrol base along side the road. In typical REMF fashion, the 2/17th Air Cavalry Staff said, "Tanks ? Bullshit."! Reported again by Ranger teams from Lima Company further south, the often arrogant 2/17th Air Cavalry nearly wiped out an entire Air Cavalry Troop they put on the ground to **prove the Rangers were lying.** An Air Cavalry Troop, (dismounted), is no match for a tank. Nor is a team of Rangers. Marvin's bird was taking fire at their primary LZ. The alternate LZ lay in a saddle with steep slopes on both sides. Taking the point, Marvin moved rapidly 10 to 15 yards from the insertion point where, according to SOP, they would, "LAY DOG", for forty five minutes to determine if they had been observed. Moving over a small hump in the terrain, the pop, pop, pop of an AK47 burst caught Marvin in the right hip, twice, taking out muscle and meat.

In milliseconds, when others were watching baseball on TV in the land of the big PX, Marvin was hit in the chest and stomach with some rounds exiting under his left chest. Grenades burst around him and fires from AK-47's and rifles tore into his spleen, appendix, left lung, left arm and he was hit twice in the back. Firing from concealed positions, the NVA kept the team pinned down. They could not reach Marvin. Later McAlpine crawled to him, made an insertion in his neck and began a Saline IV. It would be 2 1/2 hours before anyone in this Division would release a helicopter to evacuate Marvin Duren. Two other Dustoff Helicopters in the Ranger Teams A/O, with newly assigned Pilots would not chance coming into a Hot LZ for Marvin. Normally, Dustoff extractions were accomplished via a roster of pilots. Warrant Officer Frederic Behrens was number four on the list of scheduled pilots for a Dustoff mission. Fred monitoring the

radio traffic, moved his number up, went into a hot LZ and made a successful extraction of Marvin Duren. Enroute to the 85th Evacuation Hospital at Phu Bai, Duren requested CWO Behrens to please go back and get my ATL, he's wounded. Behrens promised he would. Marvin, recalled that at approximately 1730 hours, 2 1/2 hours after he was hit, he was being dragged, under fire, toward Behrens Dustoff chopper by who he thought was Sly and McAlpine. Sly disappeared from under Marvin's arm and he perceived Sly was hit; especially when the Dustoff Crew Chief leaped off the bird to help. On his preceding mission, Marvin had NVA armor moving past him at a distance of fifteen feet. His Team killed one NVA and captured two that day.

Sergeant (E-5) Fred Karnes: Karnes was located attending the Infantry Officer Advance Course as a Special Forces Captain. Karnes insists he was the ATL for the mission, however, the L/75th modus operandi was to let a new Ranger with rank observe, pass and prove himself to the satisfaction of Team members, before acceptance in the unit. It is understandable the ATL, an older Ranger who had done that, John Sly was the real ATL. Karnes revealed the LZ they inserted on was a Hot LZ that morning. Sly and Karnes were still on the LZ when Duren was ambushed. Karnes got the initial call for Dustoff and a Pink Team from 2/17th Cav. Pink Teams consisted of observation choppers and Cobras. Seeing Duren unable to move, Karnes crawled to him leaving the radio with Sly. Unable to move Marvin alone, Karnes called for Ranger Champion to lay down suppressive fires with his M-203 while Sly and McAlpine crawled forward to help. McAlpine started the IV before Sly and Karnes began carrying Duren down the hill. At this time Marvin Duren was hit by something with such force, that all three were knocked to the ground. In the seriously wounded mind of Duren, John Sly was hit. A replacement Team Leader SSG William R. Vodden (Ret) a Canadian was inbound to the Hot LZ in a bird flown by Captain Louis J. Spiedel from Troop B, 2/17th Air Cavalry. The instant Vodden cleared the skids, the UH-1H was hit by ground fire from concealed bunkers and crashed down the mountain.

Navy Lieutenant Commander Roger Madison, then a Dustoff Co-Pilot had completed six months as a Captain with the 101st Airborne Division Artillery and was riding out the remainder of his tour as a Dustoff Co-Pilot. Behrens and Madison were



airborne seeking Rangers who were still in contact with the NVA on the East side of the Ashau Valley, who had WIA's. The ridge was alive with dust, smoke, flashes of grenades and tracers as Behrens made a West to East approach, without Gunship cover, successfully extracting Duren and transporting him to the 85th Evac Hospital at Phu Bai. An easy mission in Madison's recall. Staff Sergeant William R. Vodden, a Team Leader in L/75th Rangers had just showered, shaved and changed into clean Cammy's with all the patches and paraphernalia he could tastefully and legitimately wear following a five day and four night mission. Scheduled for R&R in Australia, Vodden was directed by the Company Commander to select someone to replace Duren. Vodden volunteered, not for noble or patriotic reasons, but to get another mission in while directing a Medevac and having another bird extract the team.

On short final Captain Spiedel advised Vodden, "Watch your ass there is ground fire coming up at us." Leaping from six feet above the LZ Vodden ran to the Ranger Team's position as rounds from a heavy machinegun hit Spiedel's helicopter, causing it to crash. At the team's perimeter Vodden noted Duren had been treated by McAlpine and Johnny Sly had things under control. A Dustoff was enroute. Dropping his ruck, Vodden moved to Duren's position and told him to quit malingering. In obvious pain, Duren testified to Vodden's sexual preferences, legitimacy and smiled as much as his condition allowed. Firing from NVA subsided a few moments and erupted again. Looking about, Vodden observed a door gunner from Spiedel's chopper, head covered with blood, staggering across the LZ toward the Rangers, before falling behind a log. Calling to him the Rangers saw him rise again and fall. Vodden ran to his location grabbed the door gunner and after determining he was okay, attempted to return to the Ranger perimeter.

With the door gunner between him and the enemy positions, Vodden moved with his left arm around the gunner's waist about three steps when he was hit with such force the two flew apart. Vodden landed in a bomb crater. Opening his eyes he was looking at the sole of his boot. Vodden recalls picking up his leg and throwing it away from him so it would be where it belonged, alongside the other foot. Finding that unnerving Vodden crawled deeper into the crater as rounds began kicking up

dirt around him. Taking stock, Vodden saw an entrance and exit wound, one field dressing for it, a signal mirror broken by gun shots and seven years bad luck flashed through his head. Vodden's map and flash panel were nearly history from gunshots. His canteen was missing causing immediate thirst to set in. Vodden observed the Dustoff carrying Chief Behrens and Captain Madison arrive, as he watched it, another door gunner from Spiedel's chopper plunged over the rim of the crater, coming to rest at Vodden's feet. The gunner advised Vodden both pilots were trapped, upside down, in the helicopter; legs pinned in the wreckage. The gunner attempted to exit the crater to reach the Ranger position behind Vodden and came under heavy fire. Saying he was returning to the bird, he ran across the crater and rolled over the rim; disappearing downhill.

Firing began again and Vodden saw the dustoff on short final. As it took off Vodden spotted the first door gunner. Later he heard Duren got out on that run. Vodden heard another helicopter, later, and in moments learned of its fate from the survivors of the Ranger Team and crew. Seriously wounded himself, Vodden had no idea the helicopter was CWO Behrens and Captain Madison coming back for what they believed were other wounded. Firing from the NVA positions continued in spite of the Cobra Gunship support and intensified as the Dustoff landed. Vodden heard the bird land, take off then the engine shut down. Hearing a lot of yelling, Vodden saw men tumble into his crater, escaping the withering fires from NVA positions. Vodden recalls a Captain he thought was the pilot, a crew chief, one door gunner and three Rangers. Vodden believed Sly had been killed after evacuating Duren and calling another in for extraction. Vodden opined nothing was lacking in Johnny Sly's abilities as an ATL under extremely demanding conditions. Vodden knew only one of the Rangers, James Champion, and believed the others arrived in the unit while he was on his prior mission.

Champion related events to Vodden as they occurred after Vodden was hit and blown into the crater. Over the rim of the crater appeared the door gunner from Spiedel's helicopter who had exited in a hail of NVA gunfire earlier. Vodden recalls the gunner's name as Steve and that he was from Michigan. That is all Vodden recalls about Steve although they were together in the crater the 23rd, 24th and 25th of April 1971.

REUNION

1/101st LRRP - F/58th LRP - L/75th RANGERS
14 - 15 JUNE 1991 HOLIDAY INN FT CAMBELL, KY
INTERSECTION OF I-24 & HWY 79

We are still seeking Steve, the door gunner from Cpt Spiedel's 2/17th Air Cav. bird. With darkness the Cobra Gunships left and firing ceased from the NVA positions, Steve related the plight of his pilots and a dustoff crewmember went with him to extricate the pilots. They returned later saying it would require machinery to extricate either pilot. Vodden recalls the Captain, who must have been Rodger Madison, saying, under cover of darkness he planned to move to the top of the mountain with his crew so helicopters could see them in the morning. Vodden got into a heated argument concerning night movement. Stay put instead of crunching around in the jungle possibly losing contact, not to mention the air support knew where they were now, and, further, they had no radio to tell anyone of their intent. All except Steve agreed with the Captain and they moved out at night fall.

Using Vodden's survival knife Vodden and Steve carved two holes in the craters side allowing their legs to protrude. There was no enemy activity that night. At first light a Light Observation Helicopter zoomed up the mountainside, hovering over Steve and Vodden who waved. It disappeared. Searching the sky two specks appeared, growing larger as seconds ticked away. We waved our hands as they seemed to be coming straight for us Vodden recalled. As they grew larger and closer Vodden believed the choppers were after the group on the hill top, who had left the night before; the crew and surviving Rangers. The gunships poured deadly accurate fires on those hapless men. Vodden and Steve waved frantically, hearing screams and yelling as the gunships pulled up and came at them again and again. Champion made a break for it and dove back to the relative safety of Vodden's crater, the stock of his weapon shattered from gunship fires, advising Vodden he believed all were killed except himself. Cobra gunships continued rocketing and firing up the areas around Vodden. Any movement was suicide. The heat and dust of the brawl made their lack of water more noticeable. Steve who periodically had been down and up the mountain checking on his trapped pilots reported they were pinned, upside down in the helicopter. It looked like a pancake. The Pilots were in bad shape.

Using Vodden's survival knife again, pulpy roots were dug and squeezed to provide water for the pilots to help relieve their suffering. Champion lost his web gear during the battle and had only his weapon with the shattered stock. Vodden opined

*their situation was very poor and he did not expect them to make it through another night. Openly and frankly Champion, Vodden and Steve discussed the inevitable end. Vodden, with a shattered femur, could not move. His loss of blood made that impossible anyway. Since it didn't appear the cavalry was going to arrive like in the movies, they discussed evading and escaping to fire base Bastogne, about one kilometer north of their position. Drying his bloodsoaked map in the afternoon sun, Vodden gave Champion his compass, half his magazines and frags and discussed the E&E route. After the jets and gunships departed, Steve and Champion would try and make it out. Vodden wanted the story told. At dusk they wished each other the best and parted company. Vodden, unable to exit the crater, locked and loaded, waiting for whatever the night would bring. Hearing scrabbling at the rim of the crater, Vodden took aim. Three years in the Canadian Army was all that saved Steve as he slid back into the crater. Vodden held his fire based on the Canadian aim, identify and fire technique. Steve allowed he could not leave his pilots. **Champion was on E&E alone.** Steve had a .38 with six tracer rounds and nothing else. Vodden had ten frags and twenty magazines. They stared out into the blackness, watching the rim of the crater.*

When Dustoff returned to the Ranger team for Johnny Sly. Behrens was unable to pinpoint the teams location because of smoke and dust from the battle swirling around the team. He orbited out and away for another run on the LZ, his third run in the LZ. He had no choice given the terrain and team location except to approach from the same direction each time. . . fully cognizant of the danger to his crew and aircraft. Madison was expecting wounded, however, the remainder of the Ranger team boarded dustoff. Behrens pulled pitch as Madison watched muzzle flashes and felt the heat of NVA tracers as they smashed the windshield grazing his cheek. Madison heard the low RPM audio activate going off the ridge and watched CWO Behrens perform, "a flawless autorotation back into the LZ." Madison was unaware Chief Behrens had been shot in the foot and upper body; the former knocking his foot off the pedals before autorotation.

Sergeant Fred Karnes had just arrived in L/75th Rangers from the 5th Special Forces Group. The 5th was going home and Karnes volunteered for the Rangers and was on his first mission

REUNION

JUNE 1991

F/51st LRP

AUSTIN, TX

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as part of Duren's team. Karnes was under the impression the team inserted on their primary LZ. He revealed another team had come out of the LZ that morning and it was HOT. Karnes seemed puzzled by hearing, sixteen years later, their bird had taken ground fire and inserted in the alternate LZ on 23 April 1971. Karnes revealed Duren was wounded before he and Sly could clear the LZ and unable to move. Karnes called for a Pink Team and Dustoff. Leaving his radio with Sly, he crawled over a rise in the ground to Duren. Unable to carry Duren alone, Karnes ordered Jim Champion to lay suppressive fires on the NVA bunkers with his M-203. McAlpine, the former Special Forces medic and Sly crawled forward to assist Karnes. McAlpine began an IV in Duren's neck. As Karnes and Sly began dragging Duren back to the teams perimeter, Karnes revealed that Duren was hit again by something with such force it knocked all of them down. At this point Duren believed that his ATL, Johnny Sly was hit, as Sly slid out from under Duren's arm.

Karnes observed the 2/17th Air Cavalry lift ship arrive with SSG Vodden and get blown down the east side of the ridge by NVA fires as Vodden cleared the skid. At 1730 hours Duren was picked up by Eagle Dustoff pilots Behrens and Madison. . . nearly two and one half hours after he was wounded. Fighting raged around the Ranger perimeter. Dustoff made another run on the LZ. Seeing it as their only hope for extraction, the survivors piled on board. As the dustoff lifted off Karnes observed muzzle flashes. Sitting on the floor in the right door, Karnes looked forward to see the dustoff windshield explode as tracers ripped past the co-pilots face. Turning to see where they impacted, Karnes watched tracers pumping into the Crew Chiefs plexiglass visor making mush of what had been a face. Karnes felt the bird make a pedal turn the autorotate back into the LZ. With heavy fires coming straight at him Karnes, rucksack on his back, weapon in hand did backflips exiting the left door as the bird touched down. The team was now separated, individual survival instincts took over.

Cpt Roger Madison, Sergeant Fred Karnes and Specialist Johnny Sly spent the night together on the mountain ridge. The whereabouts of CWO Fred Behrens, James A. Champion, Isaako Malo who was later taken prisoner during this fight and Steven N. McAlpine and crew-members of the dustoff were unknown..... Vodden and the

remaining doorgunner from Cpt Speidels bird were forgotten in the confusion. On the morning of 24 April 1971, Roger Madison told Sly they had to find a Radio to let friendlies know there was someone alive on the mountain. Karnes had begun a one man recon to pinpoint bunkers and other NVA positions. Madison remembered Sly's eyes widened as he told him to search for a radio. A sniper was firing at anything that moved. Sly moved ten feet when a shot rang out. Looking at Karnes, Sly said, "I'm Hit", and slowly sank to the ground, an NVA bullet in his back. He was dead by the time Karnes traveled twenty feet to reach him.

CWO Fred Behrens spent the night alone, wounded in the foot and torso. Before exiting the Dustoff, Fred reached for an obsolete WWII Thompson Submachine gun. Hit in the upper arm by a sniper, Behrens had watched the NVA in Khaki shorts dragging their dead and wounded away from the Ranger LZ and his dustoff. Behrens determined the location of the sniper who had shot him and dumped a burst of .45 caliber rounds from the Thompson into the tree blowing him away. Down to half a magazine and seeing no hope for rescue. Behrens hunkered down, alone, wounded, waiting for the end of this hell in a small place.

Karnes located a rucksack with a team radio. he turned it over to former Redleg, Madison, who began calling in fast movers and cobra gunships. All day on 24 April 1971 Madison directed napalm, rocket and bomb strikes on NVA positions. Karnes recalls, "fighting was close, Madison called air in on top of them to keep the NVA at bay". We had to move back several times because of the dirt, debris, trees and stuff showing down on us Karnes recalled. Aware one or more Cavalry Troops landed on the ridge to the north of them and possibly one or more Rifle Companies from the 502nd, all of whom were stopped cold by the NVA, Madison and Karnes decided on an evasion. Moving off the west side of the ridge toward the end of the second day, 24 April 1971, Karnes and Madison heard someone hail them. The team medic, Steven N. McAlpine came running down the hill saying he thought he was the only one alive on the mountain until he saw them. McAlpine related that Malo was wounded badly, in the hip. He had left Malo in a hole on top of the ridge when he spotted them moving. The three continued down the mountain, turned north for a leg then east, up the mountain into the 2/17th Air Cavalry positions.

173rd AIRBORNE BRIGADE

REUNION

FORT BENNING

19 - 23 JUNE 1991

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Karnes and McAlpine spent the night of 24 April together within the confines of the 2/17th Air Cav perimeter. Madison and the wounded riflemen from the Air Rifle Platoons were evacuated. Karnes saw dead from the 2/17th were everywhere.

Madison's concern after autorotation was clearing the aircraft which still had 800 pounds of JP-4 fuel on board. Behrens and one other person were crawling ahead of him when a Ranger inquired about the doorgunner. Crawling back to the bird, Madison found him hanging by his monkey strap. Every few seconds the NVA used him for target practice. Angry now, Madison freed him of the monkey strap, took off his helmet, cradling his head in Madison's lap. His crotch, soaked with warm sticky blood, made Madison look down at the crewmembers face. It wasn't there! All the rounds going by Madison during takeoff went through his visor. Madison reconsidered crawling away from the chopper. Dragging the lifeless crewmember out of the line of fire, Madison crawled a few yards, drew his .45 caliber pistol and waited. Nightfall came and Madison could hear the NVA recovering their dead. Lying next to a log Madison went unseen. He considered shooting at the NVA but reflected if he missed, he'd just piss them off and they might throw a frag and it would be all over.

At first light Madison crawled back to the chopper meeting Sly, Karnes and one other he believes was Malo. Madison knew where his dead were but the wounded he was unsure of. Throughout the 24th of April 1971, firefights erupted. Chips flew off the logs Madison used for cover. After Karnes located a radio Madison learned from air cover that a battalion of NVA were moving up the mountain to reinforce whoever they were already locked into. Madison said, "thank God for the Australian Canberra Bombers. . they dropped 750 pound bombs around me all day long, stopping the NVA Battalion and giving me an Excedrin headache you wouldn't believe unless you had been lifted off the ground by their concussion." The bombing drove those NVA close to Madison even closer. He saw the bushes move as they changed positions. Madison, not knowing Behrens, was in among the NVA, directed Cobra Gunships on the them. Hearing Behren's shouts, Madison called the gunships off. He knew where Behrens was and for the first time that Chief was hit. Later on, 24 April the 2/17th Air Cav. was inserted about 100 yards from the LZ. They lost ten men immediately to NVA fires. Some of the NVA were

sandwiched between Madison and the 2/17th Cav., with Behrens somewhere in the middle. Calling Cobra leader, Madison asked him to dump right on top of him, so he and Karnes could E&E.

After evacuating with the Cav., Madison spent overnight at the 85th Evac. at Phu Bai. Still recovering from an AK-47 wound ten days earlier, Madison's wounds from this fight were superficial. Walking the few miles to L/75th Rangers Company area, Madison asked for Johnny Sly's hometown and address. *Madison was never debriefed!* There he was, the Rangers still had people trapped on that mountain and nobody asked him squat. Seven months later Madison visited John Sly's parents at Independence, MO., and thanked them for their son's valor. Sixteen years after the battle Madison said, "Thank you for listening." *He still hasn't been debriefed!*

Vodden estimated about an hour after Steve clambered back into his crater telling him Champion had gone on E&E alone, he heard firing.

A pretty good firefight erupted lasting five to ten minutes. Vodden believes without knowing for certain, that this was James A. Champion's last stand. He knows one thing for certain, if it was, Champion went down fighting like a Ranger. **The Lone Ranger!** Vodden heard movement all night long. Twice silhouettes were spotted at the craters edge. After emptying a magazine at them Vodden threw a frag for good measure. There were no bodies there when Vodden was rescued and he wonders now were they phantoms, seen by red rimmed, sleepless eyes. Were they removed by their NVA comrades?

Early morning, the 25th of April 1971 the scenario repeated itself with a Loach appearing and the Cobra Gunships coming at us again. This time over our heads and very close. Incredibly low flying jets screamed overhead rocketing and bombing the area around us unmercifully. Helicopter gunships left their signature all over the mountain. Vodden thought nothing could live through this and brightened thinking rescue might be a possibility. Steve reported his Co-Pilot dead. In the distance they saw many helicopters, Vodden knew help was on the way. Steve and Vodden realized they were going to get through this alive. They dug more roots and squeezed them for water. After drinking some, Steve took the last of it to Captain Speidel. In the afternoon Vodden heard small arms firing and yelling. After that two Rangers from LIMA Company ghosted out of

the bush, Dave Rothwell (Muldoon) and Donald O. Sellner. Vodden was dusted off and spent over a year in hospitals being medically discharged in May 1972. In a hospital at Okinawa Vodden saw Marvin Duren and Captain Speidel. Speidel looked very bad. He had been amputated below the waist. Gaunt, staring straight ahead, he was being wheeled by his wife and parents down a corridor. Vodden did not recognize him until he asked a nurse who the man was. *Vodden was questioned one time, briefly, at Valley Forge Hospital concerning the last time he saw Jim Champion.* Vodden is a hard rock miner in Canada now, he works 100 straight days, seven days a week.

Karnes and McAlpine remained within the 2/17th Air Cavalry perimeter on the ridge. On the third day, 25 April 1971 he and McAlpine returned to the Ranger LZ with a five man reaction force of Rangers from L/75th. All volunteers, all believing they were going to die trying to reach their trapped buddies, **they had to try.** The Commanding General, Tarpley, intended to call an Arc-Light (B-52 strike) on the position. Believing he may have Rangers out there, the Ranger Commander sought and received permission for the five man Ranger reaction force to try and reach survivors. Coming into the LZ on the Ridge, inside the 2/17th positions, the Ranger reaction team came under intense fires from NVA in bunkers. Corporal Dave Quigley took the point carrying an AK-47. His plan was to rush the bunkers, however, the NVA pinned everyone down except Quigley. Unaware, Quigley assaulted across the ridge alone straight through the NVA positions, firing the AK as he ran. Arriving at the downed Dustoff, he found Sly's body, then the dead from the 2/17th Air Cavalry who attempted to reach the Ranger perimeter and riflemen from the line companies, Bodies were everywhere. He saw Lt. Chennault's body. Chennault, a platoon leader in the 2/17th had established good rapport with the Rangers, especially Quigley by helping them out of tough situations earlier.

He found CWO Behrens and described Behrens as "Looking like a piece of swiss cheese there were so many holes in him." He asked Behrens if he was the only one alive out there. Learning Behrens had nothing to eat or drink for over two days, Quigley dropped a canteen with a can of apricots and began to assault bunkers, accompanied by the Company Commander who finally caught with him. Quigley described the chopper Vodden had leaped

from as three hundred yards down the mountain, upside down and so flat you wouldn't believe anyone could have survived the crash, "Flat as a frisbee"

After securing the area, *Corporal Quigley and Sergeant Herb Owens searched for Malo and Champion. They located Malo's rifle.* A helicopter went up with a loud speaker calling for Malo and Champion in case they were laying dog hoping to evade and escape. No Luck. **The Rangers esprit was crushed knowing two of their own were out there, some place, and they were powerless to do anything more to help them.**

Issako F. Malo was taken prisoner. Most of us who left L/75th earlier were astounded when Malo stepped off the aircraft of returning Prisoners of War. That lack of information may be attributed to embarrassment, felt by some, concerning the "SOFT" Radio relay mission Duren's team was given. James A. Champion has never been found. He is, **MISSING IN ACTION.** We do not know if Major General Tarpley carried out his desire to carpet bomb the NVA in that area following the Ranger reaction force mission. It would not be hard to determine from either Army or Air Force records, for anyone choosing to pursue it.

POINTS TO PONDER

A Monday morning quarterback might ask. . . If Marvin Duren was hit before Fred Karnes and Steven McAlpine could get off the landing zone, who was the pilot flying their insertion, who failed to turn around and extract them? A Saturday afternoon quarterback might ask. . . If Madison, Karnes and McAlpine could make an end run on dug in NVA in bunkers and reach the 2/17th Air Cavalry positions. . . *why didn't a reaction force from that unit go back the same way and retrieve Malo, Vodden and Steve. They may have even gotten Champion before he hit his E&E route. We may not have had a POW or an MIA. Why was no one debriefed upon returning from this mission?*

Dave Quigley left for R&R that very night. The Defense Intelligence Agency was blindsided for lack of information concerning James A. Champion and this mission until April 1988, Twenty-Two months of inquiry revealed many of these details and was provided to them. Why does the Defense Intelligence Agency continue searching for remains of known dead *rather than those who may still be alive?* Your attention is directed to the following facts. During January 1980 a French Naval Pilot shot down in 1954 in the midst of the French-Indo China War

(read that Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia) eluded his captors and made his way to Thailand. He had been a prisoner of the North Vietnamese for 26 years and they denied it. Negotiations to end the war in Vietnam included return of POW's from Vietnam only. It did not address those Americans being held by the Pathet Lao Communists in Laos or the Khmer Rouge Communists in Cambodia. You should really ask your Congresspersons WHY. Henry Kissinger should know. When the North Vietnamese claimed they returned all the POW's from the French-Indo-China war, France claimed they were holding many thousands more. In 1962 the Vietnamese released 30 French POW's. In 1967, while we were still fighting them they released 100 French POW's. During 1971 hundreds more were released. During 1980 a French Foreign Legionaire escaped from Laos and alleged hearing about a POW Camp holding over 100, "big whites."

Senator Jesse Helms and his staff have laid the blame for abandonment of live POW's directly at the steps of the White House.

CIA Director William Casey (deceased) said, "the nation knows they are there, everybody knows they are there, but there's no groundswell of support for getting them out." First, they might have to bought back like the French did to get their men back. Secondly, the U.S. Department of State and the White House would have to deal with Communist Governments that they do not want to acknowledge as legitimate national leaders. Why can't they be our SOB's like Saddam Hussein was when the U.S. provided him the means to fight Iran? Who cares about political trivia. We accomplished the mission! It is their turn. Regarding the American Prisoner of War issues we recommend a book: **KISS THE BOYS GOODBYE.** BY Monika Jensen-Stevenson & William Stevenson, Published by the Penguin Group Penguin Books USA Inc., 375 Hudson St. New York, NY 10014. Ask your library to purchase it, read it, then ask **WHY and ACT.**

EDITORS NOTES:

President Bush and other influential governmental figures have stated, "Vietnam is finally behind us, we have put to rest the Vietnam Syndrome." I say, Vietnam will never be at rest as long as one of our Rangers is MIA/POW. Only our apathy or failure to act as responsible individuals can rid the government of their responsibility. Take five damn minutes to write your Congressman and Senator. Bob has stated to me, "If one of our members doesn't take action on this and then comes to me with a problem, @#\$@#*%*%".

Michael Creamer N/75TH RANGER

Michael Creamer who worked as a consoler with Vietnam veterans became one of the people he was trying to help. He took his own life in March 1991. In tribute to Michael and the other members of our association, we ask that you contact a former team member and just let him know that you are there. That was Michael's wish and also the associations

TAPS

Richard Butler, L/75, died of a heart attack on 15 February 1990. Richard was the former Commander of VFW Post 2511 located in Pontes, Indiana. A brick mason, Rick was involved in building Veterans memorials and other veteran affairs. Always smiling when he got off the bird from a mission in RVN. "The KID" will be missed. **He cared.**

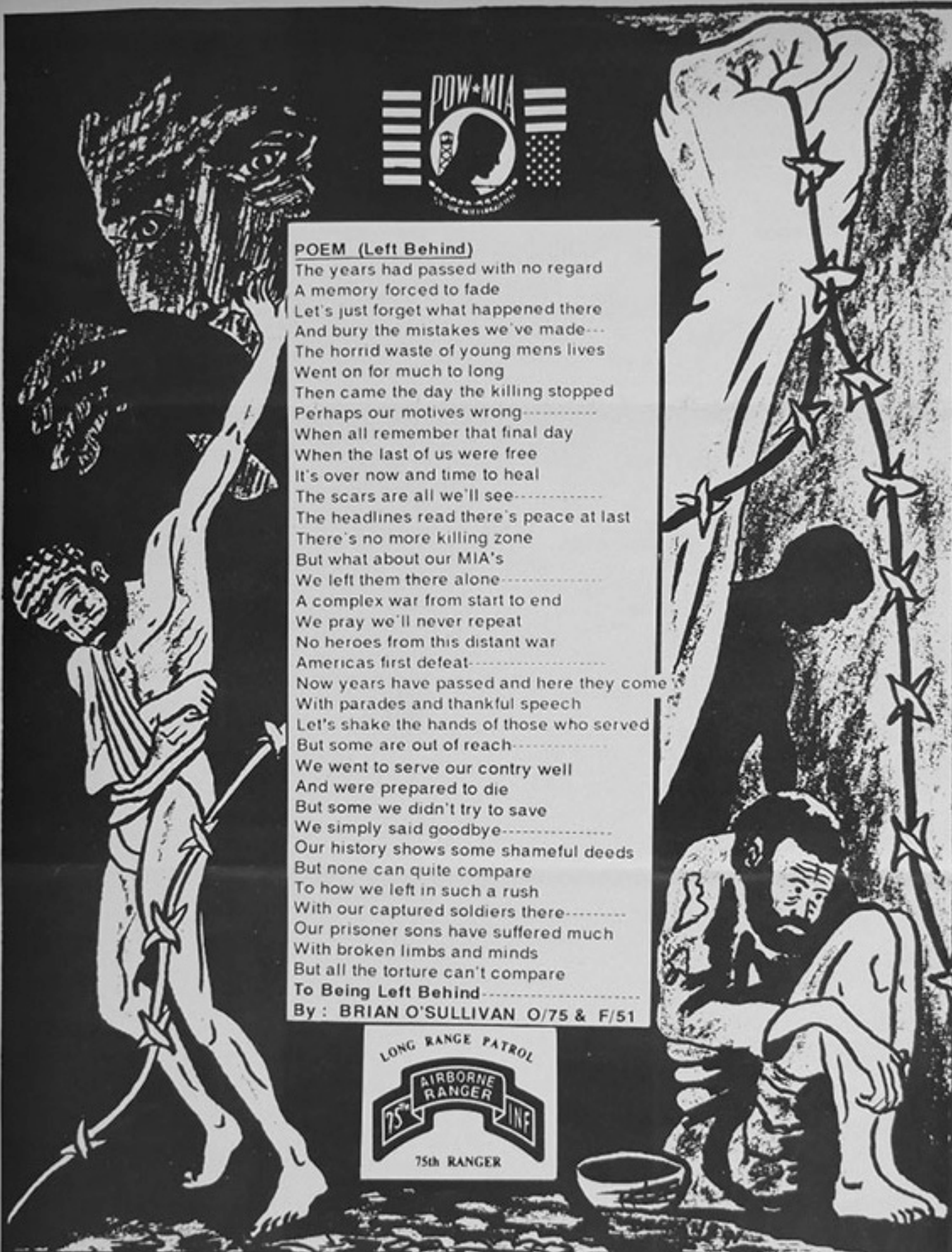
The Associations thoughts and prayers go out to Dick James, former CO of N/75, and the whole James family. Recently Dick's father who served with the US Army for 30 years, in the ranks of Pvt to First Sergeant, the Warrant Officer ranks and Lt through Col. passed away.



POEM (Left Behind)

The years had passed with no regard
A memory forced to fade
Let's just forget what happened there
And bury the mistakes we've made...
The horrid waste of young mens lives
Went on for much to long
Then came the day the killing stopped
Perhaps our motives wrong.....
When all remember that final day
When the last of us were free
It's over now and time to heal
The scars are all we'll see.....
The headlines read there's peace at last
There's no more killing zone
But what about our MIA's
We left them there alone.....
A complex war from start to end
We pray we'll never repeat
No heroes from this distant war
Americas first defeat.....
Now years have passed and here they come
With parades and thankful speech
Let's shake the hands of those who served
But some are out of reach.....
We went to serve our contry well
And were prepared to die
But some we didn't try to save
We simply said goodbye.....
Our history shows some shameful deeds
But none can quite compare
To how we left in such a rush
With our captured soldiers there.....
Our prisoner sons have suffered much
With broken limbs and minds
But all the torture can't compare
To Being Left Behind.....

By : BRIAN O'SULLIVAN O/75 & F/51





LONG RANGE RECONNAISSANCE PATROL

75th RANGER
REGIMENT ASSOCIATION INC



Dedication

CHINA-BURMA-INDIA

VIETNAM

IRAN

GRENADA

PANAMA



THE CREDIT BELONGS TO THE
MAN ACTUALLY IN THE ARENA,
WHOSE FACE IS MARRED BY
DUST AND SWEAT AND BLOOD ...
WHO KNOWS THE GREAT ENTHU-
SIASMS, THE GREAT DEVOTIONS;
WHO SPENDS HIMSELF AT A
WORTHY CAUSE; WHO AT BEST
KNOWS IN THE END THE TRIUMPH
OF HIGH ACHIEVEMENT, AND ...
IF HE FAILS, AT LEAST FAILS
DARING GREATLY, SO THAT HIS
PLACE SHALL NEVER BE WITH
THOSE COLD, TIMID SOULS WHO
KNOW NEITHER VICTORY NOR
DEFEAT.





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