

1stLt. John P. Connolly's Photos

Platoon Commander, 2nd Platoon, Alpha Co., 1st Engineers attached to
2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, 1970

Books I & II, American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & "Docs"

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1st Marines Regimental CO Col. E.A. Wilcox addresses 2/1 officers at their Officers Club in 1970 and gives praise to Lt.Col. Bill Leftwich Jr. to Wilcox's left and 1st Engineers for a job well done, according to 1stLt. John Connolly.



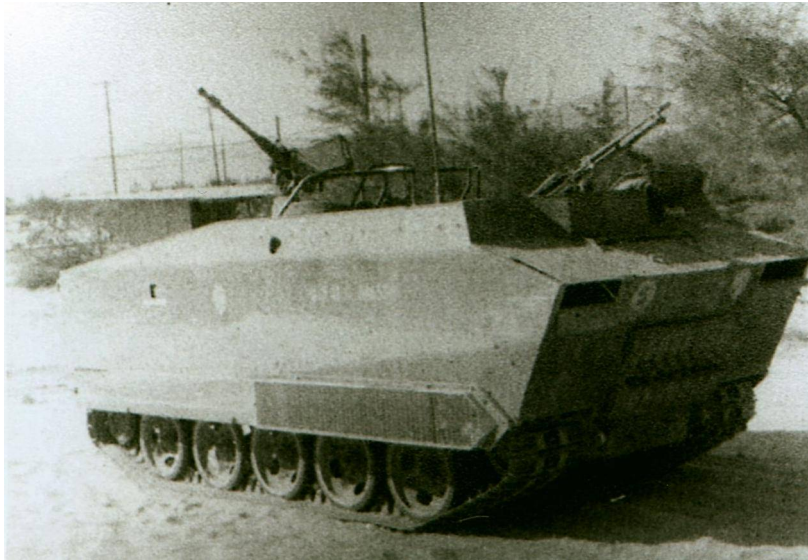
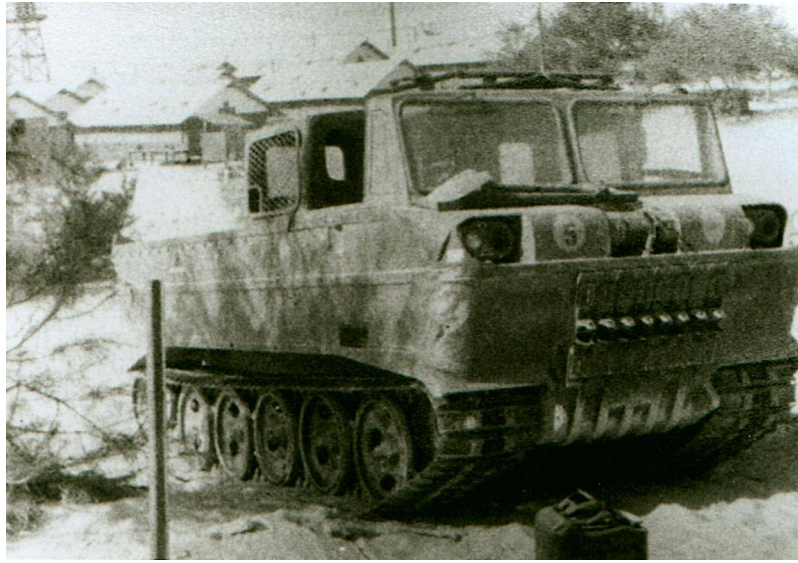
1stLt. John P. Connolly, 2nd Platoon, Alpha Co., 1st Engineers outside a fortified bunker in Vietnam. Connolly's mantra was no engineer's day was complete until he blew something up. He was attached to 2/1 during a part of his tour in Vietnam.



1st Engineers' 1stLt. Jim Mortimer was temporarily assigned to Saigon to train the Vietnamese in road sweeping.



One of two M1A1 Abrams tanks attached to 2/1 from, I believe, 2nd Platoon, Charlie Co., 1st Tank Battalion. "Easy Rider" is written on the business end of its 105mm tube. Note the .50 caliber machine gun on top and the covered 1 million-candlepower Xenon searchlight for lighting up targets at night.



Two tracked vehicles in Vietnam believed to be at Hill 55, Nui Dat Son where 1stLt. John Connolly, platoon commander, 1st Engineers, operated out of on occasion.



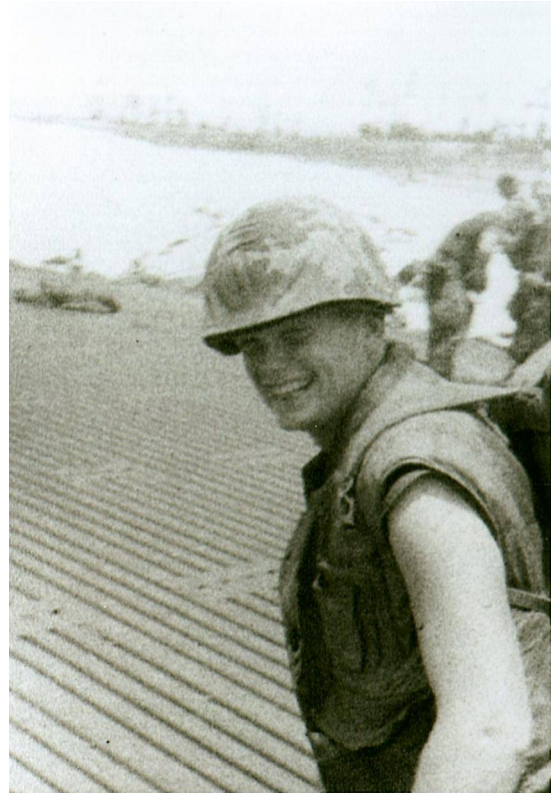
2ndLt.s Frank Busam, left, and Lon Getlin from 2/1's Golf and Hotel Companies in 1970.



Lt.s Reed Hambleton, 7th Marines and Jim "Lucky" Lindholm, 2/1's S-5 Civil Affairs officer.



About to board a Sea Knight transport helicopter at Camp Lauer, 2/1's LZ, Fox Co., 2/1 skipper, 1stLt. Matt Heck, at left, gives last minute instructions to his Marines, probably a platoon commander. Heck is shown smiling for the camera in the photo at right.



Fox Co., 2/1 covers up from the powerful rotor wash from a transport helicopter that has just settled down on Camp Lauer's LZ. The company was headed out for an operation this day. Note one of the Five Elements mountains rising out of the landscape in the background. A resupply cargo net full of C-rations and ammo, at left, is ready to be attached to a Sea Knight and transported to the bush to a combat platoon.



1stLt. Matt Heck, Fox Co., 2/1 CO, at right, leans forward against the stout wind thrown off by the Sea Knight's rotor wash as he approaches the back ramp of the helicopter at Camp Lauer's LZ. His radioman is shown pulling his PRC-25 radio antenna down to avoid the overhead swirling rotorblades.



A fully loaded down with combat gear grunt Marine approaches the back ramp of a transport helicopter on the LZ at Camp Lauer. The aircraft's crew chief looks on at left as a 2/1 ground crew Marine in white t-shirt stands by. Notice the mechanical "mule" off to the right in the distance. "Mules" were indispensable in moving large quantities of resupply items to the LZ for the helicopters to put in their resupply nets flown out to the bush troops.



Fox Co., 2/1 loads up in a helicopter totally armed for war at Camp Lauer's Landing Zone in 1970. Note the rectangular cross slung bandoleers of M-16 ammo and the shiny heads of the M-79's (breech-loaded grenade launcher) 40mm rounds. The metal sheeting on the LZ kept the sand from blowing helter-skelter and made the landing area all-weather otherwise it would've been impossible for the Sea Knight's to land during monsoons or rainy weather.



This is a better view of what a Fox Co. Marine had to carry into combat if he was the grenadier, M-79 or blooper, man or someone assigned to carry the 40mm High Explosive, buckshot, smoke, illumination or flechette (hundreds of barbed hooks) rounds. This poor guy is carrying his complement of gear for the bush as well as a vest with the shiny rounds' heads sticking out. He is loaded down for bear. If he should ever get hit by ordnance setting off his vest, it would be a devastating explosion for him or anyone near him. A small story...one day as EchoCo., 2/1 was returning to Camp Lauer by foot for a 48-hour stand down and was only about 200 meters from the front gate, a moment of panic occurred. The story I heard was the M-79 man was releasing the catch on the breech of his grenade launcher and then snapping it shut as he walked along talking to his buddies. He snapped it one time to many and didn't realize he had a HE round in the chamber. Fortunately the HE round "blooped" upwards. I'm sure there was a profanity-laced comment by the grenadier as the familiar sound of a round leaving the M-79 had everyone yelling, "HIT THE DECK!" and cursing and praying all at the same time. No one knew where the round would come down and there were some mighty anxious moments while the HE round was in flight deciding where to impact. We heard the explosion in the Echo Co. office nearby and ran outside to see what had happened. The round exploded harmlessly in a mound of sand off the road into Camp Lauer. The grunts were a mixture of laughter at each others' reaction to the possibility of injury or worse and cussing the grenadier for his scaring the bejesus out of them. This turned out to be a good day in Nam.