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**Wesley coach recalls his Vietnam service**  
**Books detail Feldman's Marine Corps experience**

Author: *Michael Dan Kellum; Special to the Delaware State News*

Article Text:

DOVER - Larry Feldman is a defensive **coach** for the highly successful **Wesley** College Wolverines ranked nationally again this year. But there was a time he served **his** country in a war on the other side of the earth on landscape that didn't remotely resemble the manicured gridirons **his** team plays on today. He was what was called a "Super Marine" as 1st Reconnaissance Battalion Marines were referred to in 1970.

Mr. Feldman is one of 1,019 Marines and 42 Navy Corpsmen cited in "Books I and II, American Heroes: Grunts, Pilots & 'Docs'" published by Navarro-Hill Publishing Group.

The two books tell how the U.S. Marine Corps' boot camp and advanced training turned enlisted Marines and officers into hard men and then take the reader to **Vietnam** to view the war from the enlisted men and junior officers perspective from 1965 to 71.

These are books about the bleeding side of war by Marines and Navy Corpsmen who put the reader in their bleached white by the sun jungle boots.

The books describe how then-Cpl. Feldman crossed over into Laos a few times and said they never really knew where they were as the maps they were given didn't show any references to Laos on them. He recalled going a few minutes flight time north on an insertion helicopter then turning west for a longer period of time flying in the direction of Laos a mere 50 miles from Da Nang.

One of the scariest moments in Mr. Feldman's tour in **Vietnam** involved crossing over into Laos to search out and locate the exact position of the 375th North **Vietnam** Army Division's position gathering just across the border.

The seven-man Team Flakey Snow Delta headed by 1st Lt. John Hoff, a Boston College graduate, was inserted at 7:30 in the morning in Laos and stumbled upon the overwhelming number of enemy troops. They spent the next eight hours on the run from them.

"It's a good story, enough to still scare me just thinking about it. The hair is standing up on the back of my neck just talking about it," recalled Mr. Feldman.

He said fixed wing came to their rescue with roughly 16 bombing runs against enemy troops trying to run them down and to part the thick jungle to help the Recon team escape and evade those pursuers.

"I asked Col. Bill Drumright (1st Recon's commanding officer) how he was finally able to get us out of there and **his** story was that he had to give up a canteen full of scotch to a pilot he knew to come pull us out of Laos."

Gen. Edwin Wheeler asked to meet Lt. Hoff when **his** team returned safe and sound to Camp Reasoner, 1st Recon's home base in Da Nang.

He asked him how they found the 375th NVA Division so quickly.

"Hoff found them because we knew where they were to start with (having sent many patrols into Laos)," noted Col. Drumright.

In the vein of never letting the facts get in the way of telling a good war story, the colonel said he was told (perhaps by someone with typical Marine hyperbole) that once on the ground in Laos, the Recon team fired their weapons in the air to let the enemy find them.

When presented with Col. Drumright's recollection of how the 375th NVA Division was discovered, Mr. Feldman laughed and said that was not how it happened.

"Wheeler said to give Hoff the Navy Cross for that action," said Col. Drumright.

Mr. Feldman attended a 1st Recon minireunion of Drumright's "boys" at the colonel's farm in 2003. "I hadn't seen the colonel in 33 years and the first thing he said to me after I told him who I was, he said, 'You're lucky you're alive.' I asked him why he would say that and he came back with, 'I sent you out on missions (to Laos) and watched you get on helicopters and I knew you weren't coming back.'," Mr. Feldman said.

"I introduced him to my wife and he told her, 'Honey, you're lucky you have a husband because he went out to die a couple of times.' Each of those times the colonel personally came out to get us in the extraction helicopter."

On another occasion, Mr. Feldman had a typical problem most exhausted Marines encountered in the bush while trying to get some shuteye when **his** watch was up.

On **his** first seven-man long-range patrol with Team Flakey Snow Delta far out in the enemy-controlled mountains, he fell into a deep sleep and began to snore. He recounted how **his** Recon team leader, Cpl. P.J. Hanley, "cured" him from ever snoring again.

It seemed as if he had just dozed off when he was abruptly shaken awake. A razor sharp Ka-Bar knife's edge was pressed against **his** throat! "If you're going to snore, you wear a (expletive deleted) gas mask," warned Cpl. Hanley.

"He gave me the impression he would slit my throat if I snored again. I didn't snore again," recalled Mr. Feldman.

It might have been a drastic measure taken by the Recon team leader with double-digit forays in the bush on patrol but the Delaware Marine swore the "cure" worked since he quit snoring.

Something else he remembered was sweating profusely from the moment he walked up the ramp of the insertion helicopter on into the night in the boondocks.

He asked Cpl. Hanley why he was sweating so much and was it natural.

"You're scared to death. That's why you're sweating so much," Cpl. Hanley replied.

"Then why are you sweating?" Mr. Feldman asked defensively.

"Hell, man, I'm scared, too. You never get over being scared," said the team leader reassuring him. Mr. Feldman came away from **Vietnam** with two Purple Hearts and an appreciation for life.

Editor's note: Michael Dan Kellum is the author of the books which are published by Navarro-Hill Publishing Group, P.O. Box 1088, Longview, Texas 75606. Book prices and ordering form can be found at: [www.michaeldankellum.com](http://www.michaeldankellum.com)

Caption: Submitted photo

Then-Cpl. Larry Feldman, 20, tries to blend into the **Vietnam** scenery decked out in camouflage.

Larry Feldman

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