

Museum News

October 2011



The Battle of Fire Support Base Burt

Extracted from "Vietnam War Paintings" by James Davis Nelson

We hosted an art exhibition at our Visitor Center from July 9 - September 15 featuring the works of Combat Artist Jim Nelson and Combat Photographer Dave DeMauro (catalogue of the exhibition is available from the museum for \$13 shipping included). Both men served as Infantrymen in the 25th Infantry Division. Jim has donated the original canvas painting of the Battle of Fire Base Burt (10 x 5 feet) to the museum and we wanted to share the story of that battle with all of our readers.

There is not room for the entire story in this newsletter. The whole story is contained in Jim's book referenced above, available from the Museum for \$20 softcover and \$30 hardcover plus shipping. The book contains photos of many of Jim's paintings and the stories behind the paintings. The battle story is continued in the paintings "Listening Post at Burt", "Tiger One Ambush", "Counter Attack", and "After the Battle of FSB Burt."

This battle is one of the most significant engagements the 22nd Infantry ever fought. Jim Nelson arrived at the scene shortly after the battle ended and formed the idea for the painting that morning.

On the night of January 1-2, 1968, the 2/22 Infantry (Mech), the 3/22 Infantry and the 2/77 Artillery were involved in a massive human wave attack by four battalions of NVA and VC at a place called Fire Support Base Burt. Throughout the night,

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Friends' Fundraiser Raises Fun and Funds

OOPS! Spring fundraiser is March 31, 2012 not June 2, 2012. Two stories got mixed together in our last issue and caused a little bit of confusion. June 2, 2012 is our annual update of the Vietnam Memorial Wall. Next year, we will be adding 5 names to the wall. Check out that story inside.

The Spring Fundraiser, hosted and sponsored by the Friends of the Museum is scheduled for the Spring again next year. March 31. We'll be at the Holiday Hills Country Club in Mineral Wells this year. Invitations will be mailed in early January with all the details. Remember, you do not need an invitation to attend, just let us know you are coming. All the details will be in the invitation, but we have confirmed that Tumbleweed Smith will be our guest speaker and in addition to Hoot Wibbeler will be entertaining us. Our theme is "Spring in Paris"

Founders Association

The Founders Association is a group of donors who contribute \$1,000 or more before we break ground on the main museum building. We currently have 94 members in the Founders Assn including our newest member **Sherman D. Pike**.

It would be really great if we could increase that number to an even 100 by the end of this year (2011).

Can you help? Will you help? We need to get this museum built and we need everyone to pitch in to make it happen.

the 22nd Infantry, supported by the artillery, helicopter gunships, and jet fighter aircraft, fought back against the vicious enemy assault. When the firing ended the next morning, the Americans emerged victorious. Over 400 NVA and VC were killed. American losses were 23 killed and 153 wounded.

At approximately 11:30 PM, January 1, Fire Support Base Burt came under a heavy ground and mortar assault. This attack occurred in spite of the New Years truce. Fire Base Burt was located approximately 10 kilometers from the Cambodian border in the heart of War Zone C.

In addition to the units mentioned above were Battery A, 3/13 Artillery, a section of Battery B, 5/2 Artillery, a section of Battery D, 71st Artillery and one section of Battery I, 29th Artillery. The 2/22 occupied the western part of the perimeter and the 3/22 was dug in on the eastern half.

Events leading up to the attack began on Dec 31, 1967. At approximately 9:30 PM, the company commander of Company A reported that one of his listening posts (LP) heard movement near its position. Another LP reported movement to its front. The LPs detonated several Claymore mines and then asked permission to return to the perimeter. Their request was denied and they threw several hand grenades toward the enemy. Movement stopped for the remainder of the night.

The next morning, January 1, 1968, Company A made a sweep from their perimeter and discovered two dead Viet Cong (VC) soldiers, one of whom was an officer. Later they found a wounded VC from the same group. Interrogation of the enemy prisoner revealed that the dead officer was from the 271st or 272nd VC Main Force Regiment. Between eight and nine o'clock in the evening on January 1, all units reported movement near their positions.

At approximately 11:30 PM, 60 mm mortars began exploding in the perimeter. Approximately 200 rounds fell within 15 minutes. Shortly after midnight, the main attack began near the northern portion of the

perimeter. Simultaneously, a heavy attack of rifle propelled grenades (RPGs), machine guns, and small arms opened up on the southern portion of the perimeter. The heaviest attack occurred in the east, against Company C, 3/22 Infantry, while a smaller assault element moved to the toward elements of the 2/22 Infantry. An attack from the south followed a road, along which the majority of the attackers moved. They crawled the ditches that paralleled both sides of the road. Soon, a large force opened up with RPGs, machine guns, small arms, and grenades at the eastern perimeter, penetrating the Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion perimeter. It soon became apparent that the main attack was to the southeast, right through the Charlie Company positions. Before long, the enemy had penetrated that unit, but the men fought back valiantly. Lt. Dennis Adkins of Portland, OR, commanded the 3rd platoon of Charlie Company. He described afterwards his impressions of the battle. Here are some excerpts:

“As 3rd platoon leader, I was assigned the last five positions on the south edge of the perimeter. The next position on the other side of the road was a platoon of armored personnel carriers (APCs) from the 2/22 Infantry. Heavy foliage encroached this section of the perimeter and even with brush cutting, we were only able to clear a maximum of 15-20 meters field of vision before beginning to lose daylight. Using the cover of dusk, the men put out a heavy concentration of trip flares and Claymore mines in front of our five positions on the perimeter. Darkness would soon be upon us. One by one as the men rotated from their foxholes through the chow line, several rounds of incoming mortar fire interrupted the evening meal. I remember the secure feeling I had during the massive counter-mortar fire barrage that encircled us for what seemed like more than a half hour. ‘That kind of firepower ought to settle things down for the night,’ I said to my platoon sergeant SSG Alfred Beebe, as I curled up for the night. Just as I was about to fall asleep, around 2300 hours, I heard cries of ‘Incoming!’ and the unmistakable bloop, bloop, bloop of incoming mortar rounds. Everyone was diving into their foxholes.

(continued in February edition)

Update the Wall June 2, 2012

This year in Washington DC, five names were added to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall. Three were Army veterans and two were Navy.

As we recognize those five names, we will also recognize other fallen veterans who have come home from Vietnam since 2011. Most of us now have received some sort of welcome home in our communities or through the media, but those MIAs who we left behind have not had the privilege of that welcome home. We pause each year to remember them and others who have not yet returned.

Many of you have attended our first two updates and I hope you can tell your friends to come to this next update as we plan to make it more memorable each year. We have confirmed our guest speaker for the Army; Lt Gen Jack Woodmansee. We are still looking for our Navy speaker and we have several good ideas to follow up on. We expect to have the Artillery Half Section from Ft Sill again and they will be providing a demonstration for us. This year, they were almost cancelled due to the horse virus, and they arrived at the last minute with little preparation. Next year will be better. We also have scheduled Monica "Lil Sis" Harvey to sing her song "Welcome Home" at this update.

More details have to be pinned down and we will send a flyer out in May or maybe April to give you all the details. Reserved seating up front will again be available for a donation of \$50.00 per seat. Please plan to join us June 2, 2012 for this emotional and important ceremony. The days activities will begin as early as 8:00 am

Coming Events

- October 8 - Crazy Water Festival, Mineral Wells, TX
- November 12 - Veterans Day Parade
Weatherford, TX
- December 18 - Christmas at the wall.
- March 31 - Spring Fundraiser, Holiday Hills
Country Club, Mineral Wells, TX

Museum Volunteers

Very little has been mentioned about our volunteers. We are an all volunteer organization, so there is nothing special about being a volunteer at the museum. This column will attempt to change that paradigm and begin to display some information about our volunteers.

This year through July 31 our volunteers have logged 2,230 hours. Many of our volunteers forget to log hours. Some of them forget on purpose to avoid too much recognition. Some volunteer effort like meetings and parties doesn't really count, so there are lots of hours involved that don't reflect on the logs.

We currently have two categories of volunteers: the maintenance crew does the hard work, outdoors, mowing the grass, running the weed eaters and picking up trash; the Visitor Center volunteers act as docents and maintain the Visitor Center working 4 hour shifts.

You can volunteer to help with either crew. If you're interested, call us at 940-325-4003 and let us know what you would like to do.

You can also be a sponsor of our annual volunteer appreciation banquet in January. E-mail info@NationalVnWarMuseum.org for details.

Visitors to the Museum

We track vehicles entering the gate, and as of July 31, we have averaged 33 cars per day this year. That is 7 day weeks.

In addition, we ask guests at the Visitor Center to sign our guest register. Many are repeat visitors and don't sign in and many visitors never get to the Visitor Center, but of those people who have signed in this year, we have 743 visitors this year representing 33 states and 3 countries.

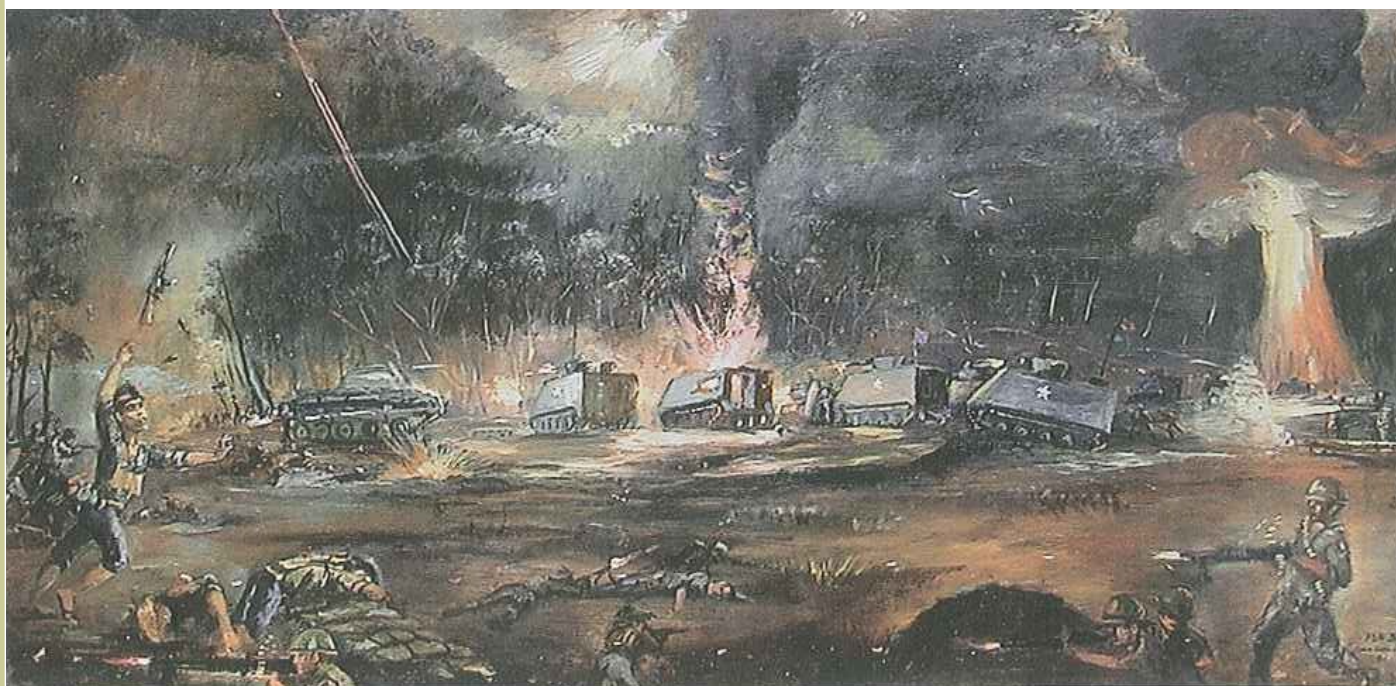
We are currently open 7 days a week from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm and on Sunday we are open until 5:00 pm. All of our staff are volunteers, so our hours can vary over time.

You can call us at 940-325-4003. Leave a message and we will return you call.



P.O. Box 146, Mineral Wells, TX 76068-0146

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Battle of Fire Support Base Burt (Suoi Cut)¹⁵

Artwork by James (Jim) Nelson
See the related story beginning on the front page.