

Part One

The story of Roger Donlon captivated me the most. His was one packed full of the type of absolutely traumatic experiences we think of when Vietnam is brought up. In particular the story of the attack of the traitors was unbelievable and although it is hard to catch the tone of a personal story in writing, it's almost as if he is rather indifferent to the whole recollection:

“The first thing each of the traitors did when the attack started— and they knew it was coming— was to slit the throat or break the neck of the person next to them. So right off the bat our Strike Force went from three hundred down to two hundred, and possibly closer to a hundred. And the people we thought would be shooting outward were now shooting inward. It got pretty spicy very rapidly.”

Appy, Christian (p. 14).

Mr. Donlon's story paints a vivid firsthand picture of what sounds like Hell itself. This event stuck with me the most of all Part I. The bluntness and gore of each story like this give reason to believe that one could not make this up. Of course overall feelings and judgments of the war cannot be considered factual, but Roger Donlon seems to be a reliable source for this story if only for the fact that many have vouched for his even harder to believe endeavors (specifically the tremendous list of reasons for receiving his medal).

In this particular situation the sheer adrenaline of the situation would probably aid in its remembrance just as the terror would aid in never letting it go. Roger tells of another frightening occurrence that struck the imagination. One of his Vietnamese interpreters happened to get caught up in the attack on Fourth of July when a “57-millimeter round caught him right at the knees and took his legs off. He just kept running on the stumps. Within about thirty seconds he was dead.”

Appy, Christian (p. 14). There really aren't words to describe that feeling you get in your stomach when reading a personal account of that measure.

