

The Jeep Filled With Enemy Ammo Incident

LZ Phyllis was located in Tay Ninh. A little after midnight on May 12, 1969, the NVA began firing approximately 300 mortar shells, followed by small arms and automatic weapons fire. Closer to the base there came recoilless rifle fire and B-40 rockets. Spooky worked out and dropped flares and flares over the wood line. Two Americans were killed during the assault, 24 were wounded. The next morning thirteen NVA dead were found, along with ammunition, grenades, and explosives. This occurred despite a long-standing policy of blowing all explosives in place.

The enemy ordinance was policed up, placed in a trailer, and hauled back to base. Somehow one of the rounds went off, detonating the captured ammo, killing nine Americans. Total friendly losses during the attack and ammo explosion were: SP4 David M. Beck, CPL Richard J. Bennett, PFC Paul D. Elwart, PFC Michael D. Fields, PFC James S. Jordan, CPL Robert G. Krell, CPL John A. Martin III, PFC Jorge L. Mendez-Matos, CPL Roland M. Settimi, CPL John F. Thompson, and CPL David E. Weidner.

Sources: coffelt data base; Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 1st Cavalry Division, period ending July 31, 1969.