

Chapter 13 LZ English

All through May, attacks continued in the area. We had a run up to Chu Lai, on the way back we had to low level along the beach. Normally we flew above small arms fire range, however when big explosive shells are flying overhead, you tend to fly low enough not to run into one. The picture is shelling near the Bong Son



River near LZ English.

On May 1, 1972, Quang Tri City in the north evacuated after four days of near continuous enemy rocket, mortar and artillery fire. This event

marked the collapse of the 3rd ARVN division and the beginning of a mass exodus to the south of civilians and soldiers alike.

In Military Region II, LZ English, near Bong Son fell on May 1. The presence of naval gunfire delayed the fall, but the ARVNs could not (would not???) hold. The US 7th fleet had about 30 destroyers in the area supporting the ARVN 2nd and 3rd divisions.

When we turned inland towards Lane, we were flying over a free fire zone. That meant any people in the area were presumed enemy, and we could fire without further permission. We did fly over a valley northeast of Phu Cat that was subsequently hit with a B52 Arc light mission. When we flew over it the first time it was lush with tall trees and vegetation. When we flew over it after the arc light, it was just light colored pockmarked soil.

When LZ English fell, it panicked the population of Qui Nhon. Linh's mom evacuated to Nha Trang, but Linh stayed at Qui Nhon. There were several days that the hootch maids were not picked up, but when they came again, she was there.



Note the ND flag behind Linh.

My requests to extend my tour were denied. It was looking like I was going to go home in July.

The picture shows Linh sitting on my bed which was

attached to the wall. I had a shelf attached to the wall at the same level as the bed. Mom used to send me treats, one of my favorites was sunflower seeds. On this occasion I had the sunflower seeds on the shelf behind a tackle box. I was just getting to sleep when I heard a noise. No flippin rat is going to get my seeds, so I hauled off and whacked the tackle box with my elbow and squashed the rat between the tackle box and the wall.



Even before this incident we started a score card. We weren't killing too many people, but we were hell on rats.

The picture below is Koreans sighting in a mortar on a hill top overlooking An Khe pass.



We had many operations supporting the Koreans in the An Khe area. We had one mission to take a NVA prisoner to a couple fire bases where he supposedly pointed out enemy positions.



Eventually, the ARVNS re-organized and retook LZ English. In Support of that, we based out of Phu Cat and stood by with Cobras and Snow Snake.

War is Hours of boredom and a few minutes of shear terror. This is Lt Bill Jeanes and others waiting for a mission.



While we were waiting, we watched F4 air strikes to the Northeast. To our horror we watched one follow his bombs in.

Well the Cobra's got a mission and took a round in the rotor blade. They put it on the ground at LZ English. We went over there to take a look at it and the round was close to the blade root. It was fairly common to have bullet holes in a rotor. We could hear them from a long ways away because of the whistling sound. This one was not safe to fly, so we took Snow Snake back to Lane and strapped a Cobra blade through the cargo bay and flew back to English with the idea of replacing it on site. The only complicating thing was that LZ English was still getting mortared. Apparently they didn't have a spotter because the rounds seemed to be somewhat random. We got there, found a $\frac{3}{4}$ ton truck to stand on and removed the old blade. These blades are heavy, and holding them above your head while taking mortars trying to line up a close tolerance bolt is a bit tricky, but we got it done and got the heck out of there. Normally after a blade

change we adjust the blade to minimize vibration. We didn't bother with that till we got it back to Lane.

The Vietnamese gave everyone that participated in the operation a cross of gallantry. Mine was with a silver star this time.

