



Dennis Frank Hertz

Headquarters Battery
1st Battalion
14th Artillery Regiment
23rd Infantry Division



March 1970 - October 1971



U.S Army Reception Station

Chicago, Illinois
11 March 1970

Fort Campbell

Kentucky
11 March 1970 - 16 May 1970
Co. E, 3rd Training Battalion, 1st Training Brigade

Fort Campbell was the home of the Basic Combat Training Center for the Army
during the Vietnam War.

Basic Combat Training Included:
Familiarization with light infantry weapons
Physical Training
Classroom Sessions



Left: Dennis Hertz at Fort Campbell
Right: Fort Campbell main gate



Fort Sill

Lawton, Oklahoma
18 May 1970 - 17 July 1970
Battery B, 7th Training Battalion

Fort Sill was home of Field Artillery Training Center. While at Fort Sill Dennis Hertz completed Advanced Individual Training to become a Cannon Fire Direction Specialist, Field Artillery Operations and Intelligence Assistant.

Training Included:
Fire direction training and testing for the 105mm Howitzer
Physical Training
Weapons familiarization and qualification
Vietnam specific training

After completing Advanced Individual Training at Fort Sill Dennis Hertz was on leave until 6 August 1970 when he left for Vietnam.



Left: Artillery Range
Right: Gas mask drill



Vietnam War

1 November 1955 - 30 April 1975

North Vietnam and its southern allies, known as the Viet Cong, fought initially against France, and later against South Vietnam and the United States. The United States government viewed involvement in the war as a way to prevent a communist takeover of South Vietnam. American military involvement began in 1950 and escalated in the early 1960s. U.S. combat units were deployed beginning in 1965 and American military involvement ended on 15 August 1973. On 30 April 1975, Saigon, the capital of South Vietnam was captured by the North Vietnamese marking the end of the Vietnam War.

On 6 August 1970 Dennis Hertz flew from St. Louis, Missouri to Fort Lewis, Washington to Anchorage, Alaska to Tokyo, Japan and on 8 August 1970 arrived at Cam Rahn Bay in South Vietnam.





Cam Ranh Bay

8 August 1970 - 18 August 1970

The United States Air Force operated a large cargo/airlift facility called Cam Ranh Air Base. It was one of three aerial ports where United States military personnel entered or departed South Vietnam for their tour of duty.

Cam Ranh was used as a reception center for the Army. Soldiers new to Vietnam would receive their uniforms, equipment and orders then transfer out to their units.

Dennis Hertz was assigned to the Headquarters and Service Battery, 4th Battalion, 42 Artillery Regiment, 4th Infantry Division at Camp Radcliff.



Left: Army Barracks
Right: Airport passenger terminal



Camp Radcliff

An Khe, South Vietnam

18 August 1970 - 10 November 1970

4/42 Artillery, 4th Infantry Division

Camp Radcliff was in a remote valley in the shadow of Hon Cong Mountain surrounded by the hills of the Central Highlands. Its strategic location allowed for the defense and control of the Central Highlands.

While at Camp Radcliff, Dennis Hertz drove a Jeep for the Major and worked as a radio operator in the Tactical Operations Center.

On 10 November 1970, Dennis Hertz was assigned to the Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 14 Artillery Regiment, 23rd Infantry Division at Chu Lai.



Left: Jeep Duty
Top Right: 4/42 Tactical Operations Center
Bottom Right: Dennis Hertz at Camp Radcliff



Chu Lai

South Vietnam

10 November 1970 - 9 October 1971

HHB 1/14 Artillery, 23rd Infantry Division

Chu Lai was a United States Marine Corps base from 1965 to 1971. Shortly after conventional ground forces began arriving in 1965, it became necessary to open a second airfield at Chu Lai because of the heavy traffic into and out of Da Nang.

Chu Lai was also home to the Army's 23rd Infantry Division from 1967 until 1971.

While at Chu Lai, Dennis Hertz worked 12 hour shifts in an underground bunker as a Clearance NCO. He was responsible for verifying there weren't any U.S. troops, ARVN's or civilians in the area to be shelled.

On 9 October 1971, Dennis Hertz left Chu Lai for Cam Ranh Bay. On 13 October 1971, he flew from Cam Ranh Bay to Fort Lewis Washington.



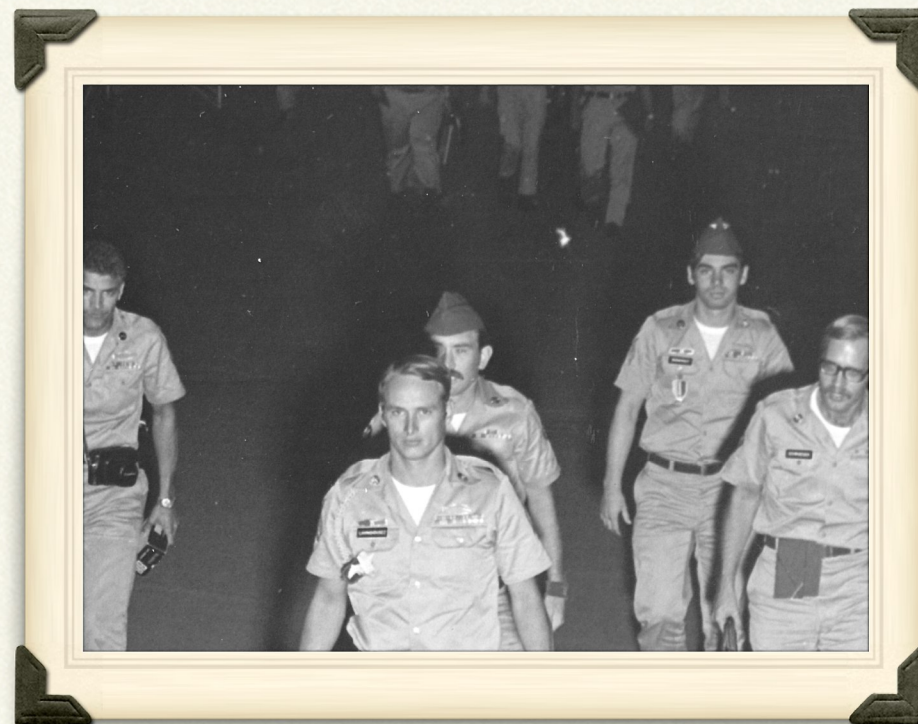
Top Right: 1/14 Artillery Headquarters
 Top Right: Fire Direction Control barracks
 Bottom Left: 1/14 Tactical Operations Center
 Bottom Right: Dennis Hertz at Chu Lai



Fort Lewis

Tacoma, Washington
U.S. Army Personnel Center

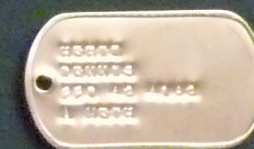
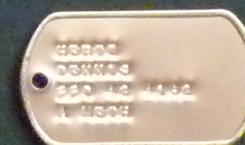
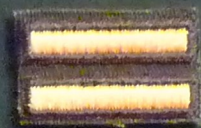
Dennis Hertz was discharged from the United States Army on 14 October 1971.



Left: Freedom Bird
Right: Dennis Hertz arriving at Fort Lewis



Medals & Awards



SPECIALIST DENNIS FRANK HERTZ
HEADQUARTERS BATTERY 1ST BATTALION
14TH FIELD ARTILLERY REGIMENT
23RD INFANTRY DIVISION
UNITED STATES ARMY
11 MAR 1970 - 14 OCT 1971



14th Field Artillery



Bronze
Star



23rd Division



Specialist 4



Army
Commendation



Good
Conduct



National
Defense



Enlisted Artillery



Overseas Service Bars



Vietnam



Gallantry
Cross



Vietnam
Campaign



Expert



Marksman

Bronze Star Medal

Awarded to individuals who, while serving in a combat theater, distinguish themselves by heroism or outstanding achievement.

- Awarded for support of military operations against communist aggression in the Republic of Vietnam (1 June 1971 – 10 September 1971)

Army Commendation Medal

Awarded to individuals who demonstrated heroism, meritorious achievement or meritorious service.

- Bronze oak leaf cluster represents 2 awards.
 - Awarded for meritorious achievement (1 October 1970 – 25 October 1970).
 - Awarded for meritorious achievement (February 1970 – January 1971).

Army Good Conduct Medal

Awarded to individuals who demonstrated exemplary conduct, efficiency and fidelity and had honorably completed three years of active military service or one year of service while the United States was at war. The award was not automatic and required certification by a commanding officer.

National Defense Service Medal

Awarded to all members of the Armed Forces for any honorable active federal service (Vietnam War 1 January 1961 – 14 August 1974).

Vietnam Service Medal

Awarded to individuals who served in the Vietnam Theater of Operations after 3 July 1965 through 18 March 1973. Personnel must have served in combat with a unit supporting a military operation.

- Bronze Star for Vietnam Counteroffensive, Phase VII campaign (1 July 1970 – 30 June 1971).
- Bronze star for Consolidation I campaign (1 July 1971 – 30 November 1971).

Gallantry Cross – Republic of Vietnam

Awarded by the Vietnam government to all United States military personnel who have accomplished deeds of valor or displayed heroic conduct while fighting the enemy for the period 20 July 1965 to 28 March 1973.

Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal

Awarded by the Vietnam government to United States military personnel who served in the Republic of Vietnam for 6 months during the period from 1 March 1961 to 28 March 1973.

14th Field Artillery Regiment Unit Crest – Motto: *EX HOC SIGNO VICTORIA* (Victory by this sign).

23rd Division Patch – “Americal Division”.

Specialist 4 Rank Patch/U.S. Insignia/Enlisted Artillery Branch Insignia – promoted to Specialist 4 on 10 May 1971.

Overseas Service Bars – each bar represents 6 months overseas in a combat zone.

Marksmanship Badge

Awarded to individuals upon successful completion of a weapons qualification course, issued in 3 grades: Expert, Sharpshooter, Marksman.

- Awarded Marksman with Auto Rifle (M16 Rifle) 17 April 1970.
- Awarded Expert with Rifle (M14 Rifle) 8 July 1970.



Headquarters
U S Army Training Center and Fort Campbell
Fort Campbell, Kentucky

Certificate
this is to certify that

DENNIS F. HERTZ

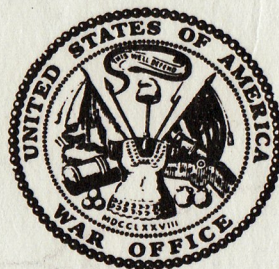
Co. E, 3rd Bn. 1st Bde. has successfully completed Basic Combat Training
as prescribed by ATP 21-114 at Fort Campbell, Kentucky on 16 May 1970

Official:

Thomas R. Maddell
Thomas R. Maddell
Lieutenant Colonel, GS
G-3

John P. Arutz
John P. Arutz
Colonel, Infantry
Commanding

Department of the Army



Certificate of Training

This is to certify that

Private Dennis F Hertz

has successfully completed

FIELD ARTILLERY OPERATIONS AND INTELLIGENCE ASSISTANT

Given at

Btry B, 7th Tng Bn
USATC FA
Fort Sill, Oklahoma

Charles R Stout Jr
CHARLES R STOUT JR
CPT FA
Commanding

Citation

BY DIRECTION OF THE PRESIDENT

THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL

IS PRESENTED TO

SPECIALIST FOUR DENNIS F. HERTZ

UNITED STATES ARMY

who distinguished himself by outstandingly meritorious achievement in support of military operations against communist aggression in the Republic of Vietnam. During the period

1 JUNE 1971 TO 10 SEPTEMBER 1971

he consistently manifested exemplary professionalism and initiative in obtaining outstanding results. His rapid assessment and solution of numerous problems inherent in a combat environment greatly enhanced the allied effectiveness against a determined and aggressive enemy. Despite many adversities, he invariably performed his duties in a resolute and efficient manner. Energetically applying his sound judgment and extensive knowledge, he has contributed materially to the successful accomplishment of the United States mission in the Republic of Vietnam. His loyalty, diligence and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself and the United States Army.



THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETING:

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
AUTHORIZED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER, 24 AUGUST 1962
HAS AWARDED

THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL

TO

SPECIALIST FOUR DENNIS F. HERTZ, UNITED STATES ARMY

FOR

MERITORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT
IN GROUND OPERATIONS AGAINST HOSTILE FORCES

IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM FROM 1 JUNE 1971 TO 10 SEPTEMBER 1971

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON

THIS 18TH DAY OF OCTOBER 19 71

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "F. Kroesen".

FREDERICK J. KROESEN
MAJOR GENERAL, USA
Commanding



A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Robert J. Droege".

SECRETARY OF THE ARMY



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT
THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY HAS AWARDED
THE ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL

TO

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS DENNIS F HERTZ,

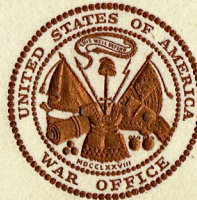
UNITED STATES ARMY

FOR

MERITORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
DURING THE PERIOD 1 OCTOBER 1970 TO 25 OCTOBER 1970

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON
THIS 28TH DAY OF OCTOBER 19 70

Wm A. BURKE
Major General, USA



SECRETARY OF THE ARMY



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT
THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY HAS AWARDED
THE ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL

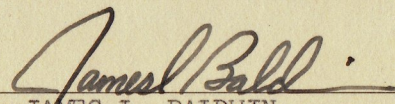
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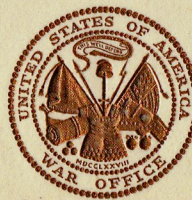
PRIVATE FIRST CLASS DENNIS F. HERTZ, UNITED STATES ARMY

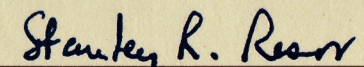
FOR

MERITORIOUS SERVICE IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM FROM FEBRUARY 1970 TO JANUARY 1971

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON
THIS SEVENTEENTH DAY OF JANUARY 1971


JAMES L. BALDWIN
Major General, USA
Commanding




STANLEY R. RESOR
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY



CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

In recognition of the active service of

DENNIS FRANK HERTZ

The United States Army presents this testimonial
of esteem and gratitude for
Faithful Performance
of duty

14 October 1971

DATE

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "W. C. Westmoreland".

W. C. WESTMORELAND
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff

CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

FOR SERVICE IN THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES

DENNIS FRANK HERTZ SP4 US ARMY 11 March 1970 - 14 october 1971

I extend to you my personal thanks and the sincere appreciation of a grateful nation for your contribution of honorable service to our country. You have helped maintain the security of the nation during a critical time in its history with a devotion to duty and a spirit of sacrifice in keeping with the proud tradition of the military service.

I trust that in the coming years you will maintain an active interest in the Armed Forces and the purpose for which you served.

My best wishes to you for happiness and success in the future.

Richard Nixon

COMMANDER IN CHIEF





Memories of Vietnam

by Dennis Hertz

I was drafted in March of 1970. I left Kankakee and went up to Chicago to be processed into the Army. I didn't know where I was going to be sent for basic training. Once in Chicago I was informed that I would be going to Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

Fort Campbell, Kentucky

I spent eight weeks at Fort Campbell. Shirley came down to see me one weekend and she brought my parents down with her for graduation from boot camp. I was able to visit with them for several hours the night before graduation and for a few minutes after the ceremony. Immediately after graduation I was to board a transport plane to Fort Sill, Oklahoma for AIT (Advanced Individual Training) training. My dad decided that they would wait to see me off. There I was sitting on my duffel bag with the other guys and our relatives were standing on the road beside us but we couldn't go over to visit with them. After an hour or so, we were allowed to see our family for a short time because plans were changed and we didn't leave until the next day.

Fort Sill, Oklahoma

Shortly after I got to Fort Sill, I was able to call Shirley to give her the good and bad news. The good news was that if she came out to the base, I could live off base rather than in the barracks. The bad news was that we were almost certain our group would be going to Vietnam.

During AIT, I took tests over my subject area—Fire Direction Control. I was being trained to calculate where the 105mm guns needed to be set for artillery strikes. I continued to do marching and PT drills and had to qualify with a rifle. I got very nervous about qualification because if I didn't shoot well enough with the rifle, I would be recycled and have to go through the same eight weeks of training again. We were also given training on how to use a gas mask, which included how to quickly put one on and what to expect if we did come in contact with a gas attack.

I was only given a few days of Vietnam specific training. We drilled how to exit a helicopter and practiced throwing a grenade and shooting a M60 machine gun. That was kind of cool, although I got rid of the grenade as quickly as possible. I was expecting to be dodging bullets when I arrived in Vietnam.

My orders called for me to report to Fort Lewis, Washington the beginning of August 1970. I left Shirley at the St. Louis Airport and took a flight to Fort Lewis. We were only at Fort Lewis part of the day then loaded on a plane that took us up to Anchorage, Alaska. We flew for 22 hours before I arrived at Cam Ranh Bay.

Cam Ranh Bay, South Vietnam

I don't remember very many details of being there. I know we were issued our clothes and equipment and received our orders for what unit we were going to be assigned to. I do have two distinct memories and neither one were pleasant. The first night several of us were assigned to a small barracks. When we turned on the lights we were greeted by several very large rats. I have seen house cats smaller than those critters. Needless to say none of us slept very well. The next day didn't get any better. I was lucky enough to get latrine duty. I had to remove barrels of crap from under the latrine, soak them with diesel fuel and burn them. That was a very nasty job.

An Khe, South Vietnam

My first unit was the headquarters battery of the 4/42 Field Artillery at Camp Radcliff in An Khe, which is in the Central Highland region. When I arrived I was informed I was not going to be assigned to a battery at a base camp. Instead I remained at the main base camp where I drove a jeep for the Major and served as a radio operator in the Tactical Operations Center. I spent many hours at the motor pool having my jeep inspected and maintained.

One thing that stood out during my stay there was the incident involving a “lifer” Sargent who was new in country. He decided he was going to run the battery as if we were stateside. He decided we would have “roll call” every morning at the same time. On about the third day while we were standing in formation we heard the “whistle” sound of mortar shells going over our heads. We all took off for the bunkers. Obviously the dinks knew we would be there. Fortunately for us they were about 100 yards long on their calculations. There weren’t any formations after that day.

At this time of the war there was some troop withdrawal. Guys with less than 3 months remaining of their tour got to go home. The rest of us were reassigned to different units. We spent a couple of weeks packing up every thing in the base camp. All equipment, weapons and ammo were loaded on to trucks to be moved to a different location. I don’t remember where we went, but because I had a military driver’s license I had to drive a ¾ Ton truck on the convoy. It was kind of scary because we had to drive through the “An Khe” pass, which was known for enemy ambushes. Luckily we got through without incident and arrived at our final destination about 3 hours later. I spent a couple of days there waiting to be transported to my new unit, the Headquarters battery of the 1/14 Field Artillery located at Chu Lai.

Chu Lai, South Vietnam

It was interesting when I arrived at the large base camp in Chu Lai. It is located right on the South China Sea and I was surprised to see that my barracks were about 100 yards from the beach. Over the next 11 months I spent quite a bit of spare time playing football, and swimming on that beach. The camp had an airstrip, a NCO club, and a PX. On that first day when I reported to my new unit I saw an old friend sitting on the barracks step. Wayne Schroeder and I were in boot camp and AIT together. We also came to Nam on the same plane, but were sent to different units from the reception station. After our “reunion” we remained friends for the rest of the war. In fact we processed out together and went home on the same “Freedom Flight”. I really regret that we never took each others contact information. He was from the Chicago area so contact would have been fairly easy. I guess at that point in time we just wanted to move on with our lives.

I was trained to calculate the settings for 105mm artillery guns but during my tour I didn't do this once. I worked 12 hour shifts in an under ground bunker as a Clearance NCO. My job was to make certain that when our 105's were fired there wouldn't be any "friendlies" in the area. This included U.S. troops, ARVN's, and civilians. To do this I used maps of the entire area. Contact was made with the various agencies using land lines and radios. Most of the time we kept pretty busy clearing grids for fire missions called in by infantry units we supported. There are two incidents that happened which stand out. One time during the day a new Lt. AO flying in a helicopter called in a fire mission claiming he saw 100 VC in the open in a rice paddy. Our commanding officer questioned him because the dinks didn't walk in the open. He said he was certain so we shot a couple of hundred 105mm and 155mm rounds. When the smoke cleared our "kill" was about 10 water buffalo. Needless to say the Commander was not happy. Word had it that the LT. was humping the bush with the grunts as a FO the next day. One day after my shift someone came and told me I needed to go see the Major concerning a LZ landing mission that I had cleared. For some reason several civilian "wood cutters" were where they should not have been. Unfortunately we killed some. Everyone had the proper clearance so none of us got in trouble.

The camp received enemy rocket attacks quite frequently. The bulk of the attacks were on the airfield, which was 3 or 4 miles from my location. I do remember two incidents of incoming fire very well. The first happened about 2 am the morning I was to fly to Hawaii for R&R. I was sleeping when several rounds hit close to my barracks. I jumped out of my bunk and sprinted to the bunker all the while thinking my ass was going to be blown away. I fell several times on my way out scraping my arms and knees on the wood floor. The other time happened in the late afternoon. My buddies and I were playing cards after work. The rounds startled us and we all headed to the bunker. Two guys in our unit came out of their rooms on the run headed in opposite directions. They hit head on, knocking both of them out. The rest of us thought it was funny, the two involved in the collision didn't see the humor in it. Aside from black eyes they were fine.

A few months after I arrived in Chu Lai I was playing football on the beach with several of my buddies when I stepped on a shell or a piece of glass. I cut my foot and had to go to the base hospital for stitches. When I got there I had to wait because medivac choppers had just arrived with several wounded soldiers. I was lying on a gurney for several minutes before I looked at the patient next to me. To my surprise it was a wounded Viet Cong soldier. What a scary character he was. On the way out after treatment I saw 3 or 4 GI's that were badly wounded. I realized I was lucky to only have my "shell" wound.

Vietnam has a very hot, humid climate. Most days the temperatures were 100 degrees or more with bright sunshine and high humidity. During the monsoon season it would rain hard for days at a time. I remember that the sound of the rain was deafening on the tin roof of our barracks. We had one storm where the seas got so high that they had to shut down the mess hall for several days because the waves were hitting the sides of the building.

I think it was monthly that the USO would schedule a band at the NCO club. If I was not working the night shift I usually went. They weren't that good, but it was something to do. The funny thing about the bands were the singers were all from the Philippines but would sing all types of music including Rock, MO-town, and Country. These types of music sung with an Asian accent were really strange to hear.

In April of 1971 I was able to meet Shirley in Hawaii for R&R (Rest & Relaxation). Shirley and I had a week together to see the many sights on the island. The one I remember the most is the memorial for the USS Arizona at Pearl Harbor. Typical Army, I was late getting in on the first day and had to leave early on the last day.

I left Vietnam in October of 1971. I will always remember the flight on my "freedom bird". I still remember the cheers when the wheels touched down at Fort Lewis. After a day of processing out I flew to St. Louis where Shirley met me. It was a great homecoming. When we arrived at her parent's house I was greeted with a large banner reading "WELCOME HOME DENNY".



