



Raider Tales

Stories of Courage & Valor

The combat Marines of "E" Co. 2nd Bn, 1st Marines, 1st Marine Division

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Those Who Walked Point

Remembering Tilo

Friend From Childhood

The Echo Raiders received an email from Richard Achuff inquiring about Tilo Osterreich. Richard was a childhood friend of Tilo:

Echo Raiders,

It's an honor for me to be included with the Echo Raiders. I went to high school with **Tilo Osterreich**. Tilo was my best friend through high school until we joined the military and got separated. I spent many hours at the Oesterreich home, and enjoyed the company of his father, **Rudy**, his mother, **Dorothea** (MOM), and his sister **Karin** (SIS). Tilo was my Ju Jitsu instructor for 4 years.



Richard Achuff
14th Combat Engineers
Wunder Beach, Vietnam, '68

I served with the U. S. Army in the **14th Combat Engineers**, stationed at **Wunder Beach**, the U.S. Army **Logistics and Supply Base** along the coast east of **Quảng Trị** and northwest of **Huế** and later **LZ Nancy** during all of 1968.

I want to tell you that Tilo in our high school yearbook said he wanted to be a state trooper upon graduation. As we know, he never got to fulfill that dream. To honor Tilo, I joined the **Maryland State Police** on January 4, 1971. The fact that I joined the MSP thrilled Tilo's family, and I gave his mother (Dorothea) a new felt Stetson.

Tilo's sister Karin was a stewardess for **Continental Airlines** and volunteered to fly flights to and from Vietnam for the troops until her health became compromised from so much flying. They took her off the flight line and put her in their academy training new stewardesses. Not many people know that.

— Richard Achuff



Cpl Tilo Osterreich
Rifle Squad Leader
3rd Plt, E 2/1

Sea Tiger Reporter



Sgt Steve Bernstson
Reporter, Sea Tiger
Embedded, Echo 2/1

As a combat correspondent for the **Sea Tiger**, I was with Tilo's squad when the incident took place. We had just found an NVA hospital with small fires still warm.

The lone NVA gunner was, apparently, left to slow us down. He did do that until Tilo and his Marines won out.

I wrote up the story for the Sea Tiger. Hope it adds to Tilo's legacy.

— Steve Bernstson



Marines vs NVA – Indian Style

QUANG TRI — Four Marines applied American Indian-style tactics in stalking an enemy, and ended up killing one North Vietnamese Army soldier and capturing his Chinese Communist (Chi-Com) assault machine gun.

The Marines were from Echo Co, 2nd Bn, 1st Marines, 1st MarDiv, and were participating in Operation Medina, a nine-day operation in the mountainous jungles 15 miles south of Quang Tri city.

It began when Echo Co. was cutting its way down into one of the many mountain ravines and came upon a large clearing being used by the enemy as a patrol base camp. Apparently the enemy had been in the area that morning for the Marines found freshly dug fighting positions and pieces of dry paper.

A machine gun opened from within the nearby dense jungle brush. The initial burst of enemy fire wounded three Marines and another Marine was wounded by a grenade the NVA threw.

While the Marines were momentarily pinned down by the enemy gun, 1st squad Squad leader Cpl Tilo Osterreich (Philadelphia, PA) and LCpls Dennis K. Knobloc (Peoria, IL), Donald F. Kita (Flint, MI), and Bruce J. Sisney (Mulkey-

town, IL), began crawling Indian-style into the brush to seek out the enemy's position.

"It was pretty thick going in there and we were all trying to keep quiet," said Knobloc, the point man of the 'brush patrol'.

"When he opened up again on the Marines, I got his general direction and started over that way," Knobloc said. "Then I saw a head of black hair and a set of eyeballs peering over the nearby riverbank and I let him have it with my M-16."

The NVA was dead when the Marines arrived at the position but he was clutching an armed Chi-com grenade.

"The grenade had about 1/8" left of the detonating cord before it would explode. The slightest movement of the body probably would have set it off and we all would have gotten it," said Kita.

Kita, who had previously received demolitions training, gently spread the dead enemy's finger to remove and disarm the live grenade.

"It was pretty tense there for a moment, I must admit," concluded Kita.

The Marines also captured the Chi-Com machine gun complete with 300 rounds of ammunition.

— Sgt Steve Bernstson

Squad Leader



Cpl Bud Strobe
Rifle Squad Leader

Tilo was in 3rd platoon, 1st Squad, and I was his squad leader. His best friend was Dennis Knobloch. Tilo's nickname was "T" and Dennis's nickname was "Knobby". They were inseparable. Tilo was the best point man in the squad and for my money, the best point man in Echo Co.

When I went from Fire Team Leader to Squad Leader, I made him the Fire Team Leader and, when I shipped out, I named him as the squad leader. He was also among the finest human beings I've ever known.

I dedicated my book, **W is for Warriors** to him. There is a photo of him with the dedication.

Tilo shipped over and was killed by a short round. Dennis Knobloch is still with us. Our Platoon Commander was Lt. Richard Panichi.

— **Ivan Strobe (Bud)**
Pastor of Veterans Ministry
Journey Fellowship, Lake Wylie, SC

Platoon Commander



Lt. Lee Suydam
Platoon Commander
3rd Plt, Echo 2/1

Every man of ours was a comrade whether he was personally known as a friend or just another brother in uniform. When a brother fell, it was a time for remorse. If the brother was a dear friend, all the more reason for anguish and bereavement.

But I tell you dear reader, there were no losses more bitterly suffered than the loss of those dear friends and comrades that fell to friendly fire as Tilo did. All too frequently, and because of the lethal nature of all tools in combat, men died from the killing power of our own weapons misdirected by accident or used too close to our forces.

Tilo and his family were refugees from East Germany. Tilo was killed in action by *friendly* mortar fire on April 7, 1968. Four shells came in on top of Tilo's fire team. Three died instantly including Tilo. The others that died with Tilo were **LCpl John Mount** of Vine-land, NJ, and **PFC Thomas Nash** of Atlanta, GA

— Lee Suydam

Eye Witness Accounts

Looking For Combat Stories

Please send your combat stories from long ago when, as young men, we served our country in Vietnam. We'll publish the stories for the rest of the Echo Raiders and upload them for posterity to the Echo Raiders website:
echoraiders.com.



Remembering the exploits of Echo Co — the hair-raising close calls, the brushes with death, the ass-kicking we gave the Viet Cong and NVA — it would be a shame not to record for our descendants the things we saw and did.

Echo Reunion Update

Where:

Hampton Inn, Prescott Valley, AZ

When:

Monday, 27 April 2026 - Friday, 01 May 2026

Most people to arrive on Tuesday, April 28th and depart Friday, May 1st

Program: We will have some "organized" things to do Tuesday evening, Wednesday morning, Thursday morning and Thursday evening. We expect to have a time to honor

those who were killed during most of our time in Vietnam. We will have a time to visit the Pratt Bench in American Legion Park. We will also expect to have dinner together on Thursday evening. (Location To Be Determined).

At some time we will decide where to meet in 2027. More details shortly



Lt. Marshall Croy
Platoon Commander
2nd Plt, Echo 2/1

— Marshall

