



One afternoon around June 18th of 1969, D Co, 2/5, 1st Cav moved into LZ Ike. That night, Ike was hit hard with at least 3 platoons of NVA; one from the South and others from the Southwest and North.

I was chosen for an LP post outside the perimeter and just inward from the jungle's edge. At dusk, we went out to our positions equipped with M16s, a PRC 25 radio, grenades, claymore mines, and M60s. We set up temporary posts: digging shallow foxholes, arming claymores and establishing radio contact with Ike's command.

Between 1:30 to 2:00 AM, a single grenade exploded about 20 feet towards the LZ followed by an eruption of small arms, artillery and rocket fire. Red tracers zinged over us from both directions. I grabbed my helmet and rifle and jumped for cover.

The enemy units had slipped by our posts undetected. They must have observed us from the jungle, as we later discovered that the claymores had been disarmed.

When Ike erupted, an NVA unit had wedged between us and the LZ. The result was a nightmarish half hour of not knowing whether we were going to get rocketed by the NVA, accidentally mortared or shot by our own at the perimeter. The rear element of the wedged platoon pinned us down with AK47 fire while the enemy fired B40 rockets at us from the jungle: a most miserable crossfire indeed.

After nearly 30 mad minutes, the NVA set up a mortar just inside the jungle and to our left front. Each mortar round fired continued to impact closer and closer. Our RTO estimated the tube location, called in Ike's mortars and silenced the NVA mortar.

A temporary ceasefire was called and we ran for Ike's cover. Rather than moving straight towards the LZ through the compromised NVA unit, we ran around to the West gate. About halfway to the gate, a prone NVA trooper emptied his AK47 at the ten of us. We all dove for cover and eliminated the enemy troop. How on earth we all escaped that deadly AK47 arc I'll never know. The only explanation, other than divine intervention, was that the AK47 shells went between us! We again got to our feet and weren't stopped until we met Ike's West gate.

Inside Ike, we took up positions and started blasting away at the jungle. From around 3:00 AM until before daybreak, Ike maintained a steady rate of fire, including 105 mm artillery direct fire flechette rounds. One of our troopers atop a bunker failed to heed artillery's direct fire alert and was killed. There were reports of hand-to-hand combat replete with rifle butts and bayonets at the LZ's berm-line and at least one attempt to resupply Ike with class five failed because of withering enemy fire.

After a morning ceasefire, a recon patrol was organized to collect intel. The carnage was grim outside Ike. Each NVA trooper we found was carrying B40 rockets, satchel charges or chi-com grenades. Some toted bags of marijuana.

Though riddled and roughed-up, Ike remained resolute and ready after yet another attempt to overrun it.