Frank Summers was a product of East Texas and a graduate of Longview High School. In high school, Frank played tennis, was a Golden Gloves boxer, and never had problems finding a good-looking date. He had a reputation as a talented artist who could create realistic sketches of any subject. He also was a skilled chess player.

Frank came from an important East Texas family that traced his heritage to the Mayflower colonists on his father's side and to Charlemagne on his mother's side.

Frank's father, Burke T. Summers (A & M Class of '23), was a one-term member of the Texas House of Representatives, and worked for many years as a registered lobbyist for the brewing industry. Prominent Texas politicians like Allen Shivers, and Henry Gonzales were frequent visitors to the Summer's home.

Frank's half brother, Burke T Summers, Jr. (Texas A&M Class of 48) served as a lieutenant in the Air Force during and shortly after the Korean War. Frank had two younger brothers, including Link Summers who came to A&M four years after Frank and was a fish in Saber C.

Frank Summers enrolled in the A&M College of Texas in September 1960 and declared Economics as his major. He was assigned to Company E-2, better known as Rebel E, where he joined 50 other freshman from all around Texas and the United States to begin the year-long process that would make them into Aggies.

The Class of '64 freshmen in Rebel E were an exceptionally talented and creative bunch. In fact, by the time they graduated, Frank and his "fish Buddies" produced the Commander of the Corps of Cadets; several class officers and student activity officers; a junior yell leader; the top Cadet at the Army ROTC Summer Camp, several Distinguished Military Graduates; and at least three members of the Who's Who in American Colleges and University.

Frank fit perfectly into this group and his talents often had very practical value.

Frank was a great cartoonist. We first became aware of this when he redesigned and redrew the Rebel E medallion posted outside our dorm.

Gordon Davis '64
Franklin Dallas Summers '64

It should not come as a surprise that the group's creative energies often rebelled against the efforts of their upperclassmen to get them into some form of military order and discipline. Frank always seemed to have a role in these "Good Bull" rebellions.

...my best memory of his artistic talents came when he sketched each of the E-2 sophomores, depicting them so accurately as a "particular part of the male anatomy" that we knew who each one was. It was very funny... until the sketches were discovered by the "depictees". In short, Frank had a terrific sense of humor.

Gordon Davis '64

There were times when Frank Summers used his creative skills to help others accomplish significant and even life-lasting goals:

...three of us in E-2 went through fixed-wing pilot training as paid for by our ROTC contract. To qualify, we had to take a test to see if we were "suited" to be a pilot. I won't forget that Frank reminded us that be sure to answer all of the questions with the answers that showed we enjoyed the most daring activities - like riding motorcycles was a better answer than reading books. Frank's suggestion on how to beat the system worked, we were all accepted in the program, went on to be Army helicopter pilots, and the rest is history. If it had not been for that one comment by Frank about that test, it is very possible that I could have missed the cut for that opportunity. The government paid for all my flight training and then the G.I. bill gave me additional ratings that I still use to this day. For the last 17 years I have lived in an air park right next to the airstrip and my airplane is in the hangar next to the house.

Tom Hartley '64

Most guys are not particularly proud of the photo they took as a freshman for the Aggieland yearbook. There was something about the absence of maturity and those wonderful haircuts that made us all happy that the pictures were presented in "postage stamp" size. In contrast, Frank's freshman photo in the '61 Aggieland shows him as a confident and poised freshman, ready to make his mark on Texas A&M and the World.

....Frank was a person who was comfortable in the world and open to experience--if that makes sense. His laughter often provided just the right perspective on things.

Craig Abbott '64
Dormitory life at Texas A&M in the early 1960's could be miserably boring. Frank Summers relied on his creativity to defeat the boredom.

...one night Frank and "unknown parties" gathered a huge ball of newspapers, lit it, and shoved it out of the 4th floor of the dorm ....the flaming mass landed on a Tactical Officer coming in the door to the 1st floor. A chase ensued, all escaped, and, despite water boarding, Minor Peeples did not confess.  

Dick Stengel '64

Frank gave nicknames to everyone. Shelly Veselka was "Duck Butt"; Craig Abbott was "The Great White Lizard"; John Knight was "Fat Knight"; Tom Hartley was "Teatley"; Al Moffet was "Dromedary"; Adams was either the "Mole","Abdul", or "The Sheik"; and Huddleston was "Mee Maw".

Several Sources E-2 Class of '64

The Caldwell Cannon

It was inevitable! As the "course of human events" unfolded in the late winter and early spring of 1961, even the most untrained observer, perched on the old water tower high over Sbisa Dining Hall could sense that something important was about to happen. Too many imperatives and too many opportunities were coming together in time and space for Aggie history to avoid new chapter.

The most significant example of "good bull" since Sully had a full head of hair was about to happen – and Frank Summers was heavily involved.

Every Ag who travelled up State Highway 21 from San Antonio, Austin, and points southwest could tell you the opportunity had been sitting there for several years. You always rolled carefully through Caldwell, easing back on the throttle to avoid the attention of the sheriff. You passed around the old traffic circle and just as you bid farewell to Caldwell... there it was!

There, next to a worn and ragged, one-story, pre-fab VFW Hall stood a wheel-mounted, World War II vintage, 155 mm cannon  (It was actually a howitzer but never ask an artilleryman to explain the difference.) No matter what it was called, it was there and, if you listened carefully you could hear it shouting the famous Texas Battle Cry: "Come and Take it!" .....So they did!
Franklin Dallas Summers '64

We had planned to capture that cannon ever since I was a fish (in 1959). We even conducted a couple of late nite/early morning reconnaissance to Caldwell to develop a plan. Of course we never did follow thru, but the Class of '64 E-2 fish decided they would take up the challenge.

Johnny Anthis '62
First Sergeant, Company E-2

There were no reporters or photographers "embedded" with Company E-2 freshmen the night of the Caldwell Raid. However, one of the raiders, Shelly Veselka '64, was there that night.

A year or two later, Shelly Veselka wrote a nine page term paper for his Philosophy 304 class entitled "Aggieland". The paper told the story of his E-2 buddies and their life in the Corps. The paper included this detailed description of the Caldwell Cannon raid.

As we moved into the second semester, the semester with the dance weekends, we were called into a meeting by our C.O., Mr. Yeargen, approximately three weeks before the Combat-Military Weekend. He suggested to us that we bring a 155 howitzer, which rested in Caldwell, twenty-six miles away, to College Station for the weekend. Many of us knew of the cannon because of the San Antonio boys in our outfit who had passed it on their way home. Frank Summers was elected leader of our organization and sent groups out on the next two weekends to scout the objective. Our fertile minds grew many ideas, including a diversionary tactic of using dynamite on a deserted hill on the opposite side to town. What we needed most was a flatbed truck to haul the cannon, but this never materialized. Our only equipment became a rented hydraulic jack to lift the brake out of the ground.

During call-to-quarters on the Thursday night of operation, sack out passes were obtained from our first sergeant in order that we might get some rest before our undertaking. At midnight, cars were loaded and we left for Caldwell along the back road. Everyone's face was blackened and the approach to the cannon we made cautiously. There we were, all huddled around the cannon, buried to its axle in the ground, and everyone hitting the ground when a car approached. With the brake freed by the jack, twenty pairs of hands began to push the cannon to the car on the road. But nothing moved. The flat tires in the ground held it fast. Hot car after hot car tried to pull it loose, until finally, Gordon Morrison's 1951 Chevrolet jerked it free. In the next three blocks, our rope broke six times and we had to rent a chain from a local service station.
We contacted Jack Smith, who had been watching the local officers, to tell him to rejoin us and we left Caldwell after circling the courthouse twice because of a wrong turn. To keep the cannon from rolling into the car when we stopped, Richard Hinnant, Al Moffett, and myself rode on the trunk of the car to hold it with our feet. To have the cannon trailing behind us exceeded our imagination, but it rode. After a couple of miles the worn rubber on the right tire came off, but we proceeded on the wheel. The wheel wobbled crazily and about five miles later, it went rolling off. Now we seemed stymied and began to push the cannon to the side of the road but discovered that the axle still revolved and decided to continue. The axle cut a rut into the road which can now be seen filled with tar on the back road to Caldwell. Soon the axle stopped turning and only the momentum kept us going. As the steel ground into the highway, sparks flew for ten feet to the rear. Light began to appear on the horizon, and many a farmer stood flabbergasted as we rolled and slid past with our sparks flying. Just before reaching the railroad tracks, the other tire came off and jammed us to stop in front of the Vet Hospital. When we told the first sergeant, Johnny Anthis, he said, "You mean you brought that cannon all this way to leave it to the Vets." Immediately we spun to our task, hooked up the cannon, and with Jack Smith driving, the cannon was brought to a halt beneath the flagpole in the quadrangle of the old area where we lived.
No one could believe that the cannon was there and we had not really believed that we could do it. By noon, the Trigon knew who had perpetuated this dastardly deed and we received stern disciplinary action. Our outfit, on the verge of being broken up because of excessive hazing by the sophomores, shakily held on to existence. Every participating individual received eight hours on the bull ring, conduct probation and was campused for a month. This action drove us together as we had been the previous semester under the hazing of such experts as John Cunningham, John Hoopes, and Wes Paulus.

All that remained of the cannon returned to Caldwell and was placed in cement outside the Cannonball Inn on Highway 21. Because of this exploit we assumed the title of the "Caldwell Raiders," which gave us an identity and a unity for many years to come.

Shelly Veselka '64

The record shows that Frank and his E-2 fish buddies would survive hours of "disciplinary tours" and conduct probation, although they may have left an indelible mark on the Bull Ring. Company E-2 was so prominent at these Saturday marching sessions that they needed their own standard.

I still have the "guidon" we used to walk Bull Ring...it was the head of a guidon attached to a short broomstick. We even attached "battle streamers" to the pole along with a small, homemade Rebel E flag. Yes, we were rebels! Paul Dresser '64

Junior and Senior Years

Frank's reputation as an energetic and enthusiastic leader spread throughout the Corps during his sophomore year. That spring, Frank and Mike Dodge were elected Class of '64 Junior Yell Leaders, marking the beginning of a great friendship and an exciting (busy) year for both.

It would be an understatement to describe Frank's junior year as a whirlwind of sporting events, corps trips, and social activities. He may have even squeezed in some academic endeavors when time allowed.

The 1962-1963 Yell Leaders
From a photo-collage on the wall of the Diamond Club at Olsen Field
Early in his junior year, Frank was selected for Ross Volunteers. Twice each week, he joined the 2d Platoon and learned how to march all over again, this time with a Marine Corps touch provided by his Platoon Leader, Sheldon Best '63. The reward for these drill sessions were trips to New Orleans for Mardi Gras and San Antonio for Fiesta. Frank must have enjoyed RV's. In his senior year, he served as a Non Commissioned Officer in the RV Company.

In contrast to his first three years at A&M, Frank's senior year appears to have been quiet and uneventful. Frank served as Education Officer on 4th Battalion Staff, commanded by his fish Buddy from E-2, Shelly Veselka. It appears that Frank spent the year enjoying Senior privileges, savoring his last good times on campus, and gathering grade points to support an application to Law School. This part of his life came to a close on that day late in May when General Rudder handed Frank his diploma, someone read him his oath of office, and Lieutenant Frank Summers, US Army, walked out of G. Rollie White.

Active Duty, Law School, and Recall

We have little information about Frank's two years of active duty after graduation. We know he was assigned to Fort Knox, the home of Armor and Armored Cavalry. Frank could have performed a variety of roles as a lieutenant at Fort Knox, ranging from an armor unit platoon leader to a support staff member for the Armor School. We do know that Frank drew praise for his work as Officer in Charge of the Army support to the Kentucky Derby. The Vietnam War grew during these years and it is certain that Frank's role put him in contact with many who were on their way to the Combat Zone.

With his two-year obligation complete, Frank took off his uniform and headed for Austin, where he joined Mike Dodge and enrolled in the UT School of Law. It appears that Frank got the most out of his time in Austin and it appears he gave his usual 110% to his academic efforts and to the Austin social scene. Why Frank was learning the law, the Vietnam War reached a crescendo with the Tet offensive in January 1968 when over 4,000 Americans died in the first month of the offensive.

The significance of the situation in Vietnam may have reached Austin because Frank's academic and social life came to an unexpected end sometime in late 1968/early 1969 when the Army surprised everyone and recalled Frank Summers to active duty. This was more than a recall to active duty – Frank was ordered to four months of preparatory training and Vietnamese language school – and on June 29, 1969 Captain Frank Summers landed at the big arrival base at Bien Hoa.
Vietnam

The Tet Offensive in January 1968 serves as the watershed for the Vietnam War. Casualties for both sides peaked dramatically in 1968 and dropped continually in subsequent years until the war’s end. North Vietnamese units and the Viet Cong were so badly mauled in the Tet Offensive and Allied counteroffensive that, for the rest of the war, the Communists were forced to adopt conservative, more realistic methods and objectives. American forces responded by putting fewer forces in the field and by adopting a more defensive strategy.

Vietnam was still a dangerous place. The only difference was that the war now saw fewer, multi-unit operations and more small unit engagements. The war was beginning a slow, downward spiral caused by military imperatives on the ground and political pressure from both home fronts.

Most lieutenants and captains deployed to Vietnam not knowing where they would be assigned or what they would be doing. In his case, Frank Summers' preparatory training, especially the language training, made it clear that Frank would be assigned to the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam or MACV.

United States military effort in Vietnam was the responsibility of two, parallel commands. Large, regular force units like the 101st Airborne Division and the 1st Cavalry Division operated under US Army Vietnam (USARV). Soldiers dedicated to the military assistance and advisory mission were in MACV. The mission of the American units in USARV was to destroy the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese units in South Vietnam. MACV had a more complicated and certainly more difficult mission. MACV's mission included three tasks: train and assist the Vietnamese Army, protect the population from Viet Cong influence, and build democratic institutions. The Commander of USARV answered to the Commander of MACV, thus ensuring some degree of coordination.

MACV advisory teams were small isolated teams of Americans, often in remote areas, and supported only by Vietnamese forces. Advisory teams were assigned to 44 provinces and over 200 district teams throughout the country. Teams were also assigned to each Army of Vietnam (ARVN) division. The teams were small and very self-sufficient. A typical district team had 6-8 American officers and NCOs. A major or lieutenant colonel led the team that included 2-3 captains serving as advisors and operations officers. Enlisted ranks included technicians like weapons specialists, artillery controllers, communicators, and medics.

Like most new guys, Frank Summers stepped off a contract airliner at Bien Hoa airbase and probably spent his first night or two in the combat zone at the large replacement depot called Long Bien Junction, just outside Bien Hoa, waiting for some indication of where he would spend the next 364 days. Frank's wait was not long. He learned his fate quickly because he had a buddy looking out for him.
Franklin Dallas Summers '64

Advisory Team 46 - Dien Khanh District

Captain Frank Summers' stay at Long Bien Junction ended quickly when he was told to gather his gear and climb aboard a truck headed back to Bien Hoa, where an airplane – probably a single engine "Beaver" or "Otter", or a twin engine "Caribou" – waited to take him 180 miles northeast to the coastal city of Nha Trang.

Frank had never seen Nha Trang and it is unlikely that he realized that his orders to go there were caused by the intervention of a fish Buddy who controlled MACV duty assignments in the Central Highlands.

David Morrison '64, Frank's classmate from E-2, was serving his first tour in Vietnam as the assignments officer for all captains and majors going to advisor positions in the I Field Force area. Each day David would see a stream of names sent from Long Binh Junction telling assignment officers like David what officers had appeared on each incoming flight. If he recognized a name and he had a corresponding opening, then the new guy would be grabbed, flown up to Nha Trang, and given an assignment.

David Morrison's presence in Nha Trang was a blessing in many ways. He not only was able to get Frank the assignment he wanted, in the next several weeks, David and Frank spent a lot of time together enjoying Nha Trang.

For posterity's sake, David made careful note of the things they did and has put these memories to paper in the form of a narrative that captures the uninhibited pastimes that they enjoyed. More importantly, David gives us the only available description of the days before Frank died, telling us where he was and how it happened.
Here is David Morrison's (AKA M'Arson's) story:

A

**SPACE AND TIME CONTINUUM**

doctor and by

F. Dallas Summers

I last saw Frank at A&M at the 1964 Graduation.

The next time I visited Frank for five months in Vietnam was August 1969.

The SPACE IN TIME CONTINUUM unchanged....

As the officer assignments operative, for O1 through O4 (Captain thru major), on the MACV side of I Corps, Nha Trang, I got a TWX (a 1969 version of an e-mail) from MACV Saigon on the next day's arrival of two LTs, one Major, and one captain.....**CPT Frank D. Summers!**. **JOLT!!**. This could only be the Frank Summers I know.

Next day, when I was in my huge office, which was good luck for me and kind of like a stage for Frank.

**CLANKING**..... My steel door opened wide to frame **CPT Frank Summers** in full combat gear. It was time for Frank’s first words since 1964…

“M’ARSON, watch this!”

Frank unbuckled and dropped his pistol belt and his “forty five”. He unstrapped and tossed away an M-17 mask! (Where did that gas mask come from?) Lastly, he slipped off a very full, big combat pack. Then, standing full upright, Frank dropped into a perfect squat! No AIK or papa-san executed a squat more forcefully.

Frank said, “See, M’arson, anybody can do it if I can do it.” Huge continuing laughter. Meanwhile, those in the office above me had to be wondering what the hell was going on in my office.

**Frank’s back-story:**

“I arrived five days early for my port call in Fairfield, CA, met another MATs team replacement—a 1LT—and the two of us spent two days exploring SF bars and hopping up on bar stools and squatting. Two bars threw us out, but in a third bar, the bartender laughed, thought it was funny, and said, ‘You guys can stay. Just make people laugh.’”
Assignment Options for Frank: Frank finished 12 or 16 weeks Advisory School including six weeks of Vietnamese language training. So the options in my purview for making Frank’s duty assignment were:

- Oversee MATS teams--a field assignment, or
- Staff member of Advisory Team 46 for Khanhwa Province, in Nha Trang; or....

“M’ARSON, I WANT THE HOTTEST DISTRICT TEAM LEADER JOB YOU’VE GOT.”

So, I advised Frank that no district team leader slots were open right now, but then said: "Wait, I'll ask my boss, the Colonel, upstairs about the background on this."

N.B. A background event: I had recently assigned a Quartermaster Major on his second tour to Vietnam, who told me, “Captain Morrison, this is my last chance for a combat assignment and my only chance to be on an O6 (Colonel) promotion list. I talked to my Colonel upstairs who interviewed the QM Major and agreed that I could assign him as a district team leader to a district with constant combat activity. His district was in a firefight three months later, with the Major manning his .50 cal Machine Gun on the camp water tower and that stopped the ground attack.

I went upstairs to see my boss, the Colonel, who agreed with me about Frank—told me to stash Frank in some mox-nix duty with Province Team 46, until a District Team Leader position opens up.

Living and Working in Nha Trang: [space and time continuum of Frank continues]

Got us a 2-man room in the Pacific Hotel, adjoining the MACV HQs and my office. Frank got a jeep (WWII ARVN type) from the Team 46 Ops Officer and an office in an ARVN HQs, and waited. We listened to a lot of Linda Ronstadt, (still the Stone Ponies), Bob Dylan, and PP&M. Dinner and movies at Officer’s Club.

N.B. Recent ground attack in the City of Nha Trang before I arrived. KIA 15 bad guys, I think two MPs died—so we carried our M-16s wherever we walked or visited in Nhatrang. [Dramatic space and time continuum]
Late September all ranks of major and below were moved out of the Pacific Hotel and the King Duy Tan Hotel to the new Camp Roberts west of Nha Trang. Frank and I had a hooch on the second floor. I scrounged some paint. Frank said, “Let’s paint our door bright red in honor of CHARLOTTE.”

I left my officer assignments job to become an S1/S4 advisor on Province Team 46, got my own jeep and commuted to my office in a different building close to Camp Roberts. During this time, Frank got a limited assignment as short-term liaison officer to a field location— I think MATS teams— because of his advisory and Vietnam language training. While living at Camp Roberts, we had lots of rumors of ground attacks, so we bulked up. I had my .45, my M-16, added a grease gun and a big box of ammo. Lastly I acquired an AK-50 (with bayonet), with 1000 rds ammo, and 5000 rds ammo for the M-16s. Frank got a long Russian rifle 7.6 mm, but no details on the rifle, and a Port Said sub-machine gun, the Egyptian version of a Sten gun, 9 mm, with a side-mounted magazine, and lots of ammo.

Frank’s liaison gig required him to drive on a country road, ALWAYS yellow, often RED, to get to his field duty assignment. Frank never asked for a shotgun to ride with him or asked for an escort vehicle. He always drove the jeep by himself. The road was basically straight, so Frank drove his jeep to highway speed, then switched to driving with only his left arm, cradling his Port Said in his right arm and hand, with the barrel poked through the steering wheel and aimed through the windshield. Frank never got shot at, but dropped his windshield and successfully fired the Port Said through the steering wheel. Frank had plenty of ammo, so he practiced this on many of his trips to the field location.

[dramatic SPACE AND TIME Continuum]

Boys will be Boys Day  [And a SPACE AND TIME Continuum opportunity for Frank]

With five other MACV HQs guys—mostly captains—and one SF captain from an A-team, rode a HUEY-SLICK up to a 1500-foot high knoll overlooking Camp Roberts. In the past, bad guys with a 75 mm RR dropped shells at terminal range so no accuracy but three or four times a month. To stop it, the SF put a 1st LT and 30-40 guys from an A-team on a permanent assignment on the knoll. We took our M-16s and .45’s, Frank’s PS SMG, his Russian rifle, my AK-50 and my grease gun. While up there, we blew all the ammo we had with us downrange. We flew back to Camp Roberts four hours later with no remaining ammo.
So, moving forward in his space and time continuum, Frank practiced being in a state of official ennui, preparing as best he could, without much guidance, to be a rigorous and helpful addition to his future ARVN commander. Frank and I had no mutual projects in that period running up to the 2nd of December when I left Nha Trang for Saigon to DEROS. Frank did help me with practical advice on the major shipment of Agent Orange and Agent Red or White, to an ARVN field division, as part of my S4 advisory function. We made an aerial shipment of three palettes on the USAF C-130, not for spraying by that C-130, but as a bulk delivery from the US stockpile to the ARVN stockpile.

After departing Nha Trang on 2 December 1969, I spent four days in Saigon awaiting my port call date of 6 December. My last effort at fellowship was to call Frank from TAN SON NHUT and, having missed him, left a message with a clerk to try to find Frank with a request to call me. Life can have small important successes. Frank called me about 10 minutes before boarding, and so for five minutes we congratulated each other, told small lies to each other, and wished each other the best in the days to come. Thus, ended my part as a visitor in the space and time continuum of Frank D. Summers.

We exchanged one letter each sometime in January or February 1970, but I have no memory of specifics, and I do not know where I would look to find Frank’s letter.

In March 1970, Cambodia closed the Ho Chi Minh Trail at their border and diverted its traffic of fresh NVA soldiers, equipment, and supplies into the Central Highlands. The I Field Force area, including the districts just west of Nha Trang, began receiving a double ration of main force units looking for a fight.

My next entry into the SPACE AND TIME continuum, by and for Frank Summers, came with a phone call from Jess L. Mayfield on the 12th or 13th of April 1970 telling me that Frank had died in Vietnam. For months and months, I wondered and wondered.

The opportunity to exchange wonder for specifics came in May 1971 on my return from my second tour to Vietnam. On the way from Saigon to my duty assignment in Quang Tri, I took a day in Nha Trang to visit Team 46 HQ’s where a youngish 1st LT administrator unearthed the official report of Frank’s death and hovered closely at hand while I read it. His charge to me was no recorder, no notes and no copies of any materials.
Franklin Dallas Summers '64

In about two hours of reading and then rereading some sections and rereading other sections, the basic picture still in my mind today is of a ground attack by the NVA on Frank’s district HQ’s to which he had been assigned on a day and under circumstances I was not privy to. My recollection is that some ARVN soldiers died, and the U.S. were safe, except Frank’s team sergeant, an SSG E-6, who sustained scary and profusely bloody wounds. The attack was in the evening or early morning hours, so no MEDAVAC was available to come get the staff sergeant, but Frank or his team members literally, on the radio-net, flagged a gunship which agreed to land and take aboard Frank’s team sergeant in a small compartment in the tail boom of the helicopter just large enough to receive one litter.

Gratefully, Frank’s team sergeant was then in an evacuation hospital within 20 minutes. The team sergeant’s injuries were profuse but not life-threatening and not serious internal injuries. The sergeant lived and, I believe, returned to continue his tour of duty in Vietnam.

On the ground of Frank’s district HQ’s, however, there was no such relief available. From the detailed commentary and references in what I believe the Article 32 report that I read stated, Frank blamed himself solely for causing the sergeant’s wounds.

After the sergeant was on his way, and when the combat activity ceased, Frank’s team all returned to the team house for the night to go to bed. As in the case with all field locations where U.S. personnel are on duty, Frank’s team of seven or eight U.S. personnel were required to have a 24-hour radio contact. After the team had retired, Frank moved back downstairs to the area where the Radio Telephone Operator (RTO) maintained radio contact through the night, relieved the young soldier and directed him to go to bed while Frank took the night radio guard.

These particulars about that night at the team HQ’s are the best detail I can recall from the report that I read in Nha Trang.

"Sometime after Frank took charge of the radio, the team heard one gunshot, reacted instantly, and, in moving downstairs discovered that Frank had shot himself in the mouth with his M-16 rifle, was still showing signs of life, and commenced life-saving triage."

I invite the appropriate level of scrutiny and belief or disbelief of these, my last personal comments, about the space and time continuum of Franklin D. Summers. As a volunteer for this combat duty and, thus, in my view of military dynamics, a hero of this combat action, Frank died an unnecessary, terribly tragic death. The aspect of his death, though not heroic, does not diminish his heroism at seeking out and being part of the tragedy of combat in Vietnam.

So ended the mortal life and space and time continuum of Frank Summers who then moved to the Heavenly level of space and time, both of which are infinite. I propose, if I may presume the greeting Frank received in Heaven, that Frank walked casually and quickly past the Hellevator to approach the stairway to Heaven. I seek the understanding that we may all, in fact, see each other again in a Christian Heaven and be greeted by Roncowicz and Summers and, most recently, Shelley Veselka.

David Morrison '64
Some Afterthoughts

In my opinion, anyone who stepped off an airplane at places like Ben Hoa, Da Nang, or Tan San Nhut became a hero the minute their foot hit the ground. It mattered little if they were an infantry platoon leader or a spare parts clerk, a fighter pilot or a cavalryman, — they were in harm’s way and they were there because it was their duty to be there. Each and every one was a hero.

Similarly, I believe everyone who stepped off that airplane came home wounded. Some wounds were mortal — 53,307 of them to be exact. Others won a "Red Badge of Courage" and came home with the most revered of medals – the Purple Heart.

Others – many, many others – came home with no visible wounds but unbelievable pain. Theirs was the pain of guilt that comes from the loss of a buddy or the self-doubt and fear that comes when you think you could have done more. This pain is as real as if you took a direct hit from an RPG or an SA-2; or a burst from an AK-47. Some carry these indelible wounds for decades. Others succumb to them much sooner.

I do not know what others may think or say. I do know I will tell my grandchildren that I knew Frank Summers, that Frank was a hero, and that Frank died because he was wounded in a fire fight somewhere west of Nha Trang on April 11-12, 1970.

John Dickson ’64

It's been said that a person never dies....as long as there are those who think and speak of them. I believe that to be true because as I read these stories about Frank, he was as alive and as real as he was on the days of which you wrote....... He does indeed live on.

Minor Peeples ’64

Captain Frank Summers

was buried with full military honors at the

Zachary Taylor National Cemetery, Louisville, Kentucky

Section D, Site 2058

Frank is remembered on the Vietnam Memorial at

Panel 12W, Line 129

WELCOME HOME, FRANK SUMMERS