

CHARLES DWAIN ROBERTS**Class 9-69**

is honored on Panel 19W, Row 8 of
the Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Full Name: CHARLES DWAIN ROBERTS
Wall Name: CHARLES D ROBERTS
Date of Birth: 5/30/1944
Date of Casualty: 8/12/1969
Home of Record: NORMAN
County of Record: CLEVELAND COUNTY
State: OK
Branch of Service: ARMY
Rank: 2LT
Casualty Country: SOUTH VIETNAM
Casualty Province: TAY NINH



2LT Roberts was assigned to Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 77th Artillery. He was serving as a Forward Observer with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division when he and four other members of that unit were killed in action on that day.

From the wall-usa.com

C.D. They Hardly Knew You

C.D. was a rock. He gave me hope. He was one of the few others who like me was married at the time we were at Ft. Sill. I could always count on CD with his quiet deliberation to keep our little band of brothers from getting too far out of line. When they called our names for final assignment they sent me to Korea and CD off to Nam. When I saw his name on the Wall this week I was stunned. I thought only Bob Wright had not returned. Out of our 9-69 class two of our best - both Oklahoma boys - were KIA. I live nearby the Wall now and will touch his name on the panel when I next walk down the path and probably shed a tear thinking how his wife and family must have ached in pain knowing he was gone. I will try and think of CD each day and pray his family and friends will know that he did not die in vain.

Pat Patterson
Class Mates in OCS Class 9-69
3449 Sleepy Hollow Rd
Falls Church, VA 22044
February 12, 2003

Charles is buried at Maysville Cemetery, Maysville, Oklahoma

A Note from The Virtual Wall

On 12 August 1969, A Company, 2/27th Infantry, lost 5 men - four of their own, and their Artillery Forward Observer, 2LT Charles D. Roberts:

2LT Charles D. Roberts, Maysville, OK (B Bty, 2/77th Arty)

SSG Denny R. Lappin, Canton, OH

CPL Stephen A. Snidow, Fort Smith, AR (medic from HHC attached to A Co)

SP4 James H. Marshall, Selma, AL

PFC Aaron B. Smith, Arkansas City, KS

For our Brother, who was assigned to Battery B, 2d Battalion, 77th Artillery (FA)



For Our Brother, who died while serving as an artillery forward observer with 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry (Wolfhounds)

Posted by: Dutch McAllister

Relationship: we served together

November 15, 2009

From the Virtual Wall

Charles was one of three young men from the small, southern Oklahoma town of Maysville killed in Viet Nam. He was a 1962 graduate of Maysville High School and a 1967 graduate of the University of Oklahoma College of Business. At the time of his death he was serving as an artillery officer. He left behind a wife, Jane, and an eight month old daughter, Barrie Kaye. You are remembered and we are so grateful for your sacrifice. May God bless and keep you. I would enjoy hearing from anyone who served with Charles. From a Viet Nam vet and fellow Maysville H.S. graduate

Rodney Clarke Jones

28 Dec 2002

Building a Patrol Base -- the Hard Way

August 12, 1969 Fire Support Base Jackson, Vietnam

Lieutenant Colonel William E. Ebel was a big, tall, good-natured man. He ordered me to build a fort on the Cambodian border. Nine slicks were to transport Captain Charles Varence Penn's Alpha Company to the site in two lifts, starting at 0700. Cargo helicopters would bring in 17 loads of supplies and we'd build the fort. One company from the South Vietnamese 50th Infantry would join us later, and we'd run combined operations from there.

The air was very heavy. We poured sweat as we formed up in the flat field outside Fire Support Base Jackson's wire. The helicopters showed up at 0700, but there were only four of them. There was no time to argue. Captain Penn, PFC Canfield (Penn's radio man), Lieutenant Roberts (artillery FO), and I jumped on the lead helicopter with two other men. Eighteen men piled in the remaining three slicks, and we headed west. From the air, the wide expanse of rice paddies below looked peaceful. We touched down in a rice paddy, vicinity grid coordinates XT377144, jumped out, and rushed for a tree square. The sun was in our faces. Two twisted and blackened tree stumps stuck out at odd angles near our position. I sensed that we were being shot at before I heard the sound. Lieutenant Roberts fell on his face. A brief spout of blood shot from his left temple. Canfield, hit in the stomach, took one step and fell flat. We dove behind a paddy dike and pulled Canfield and Roberts to cover. We were lying in a foot of water. Penn took Canfield's radio and I took Roberts's. We couldn't see the enemy, but they were close and firing at us from three sides. I called for artillery fire behind the enemy and adjusted it toward us by ear. Frank Leach, the battalion S-3, got helicopter gunships. I told them to circle in from behind us, so they wouldn't have to fly through the artillery trajectory and we could keep the artillery coming. I didn't want to lift it.

Lieutenant Graul, Sergeant Naputi, and the rest of Alpha Company landed 400 yards to the west, out of the crossfire. They crawled forward to our position. "We can't see where we're going," said Graul on the radio. "I feel like a mole!"

We lobbed grenades over the paddy dike, kept heads down, and tended the wounded. I pulled down Canfield's trousers to look for an exit wound. There wasn't one, but he had crapped in his pants. Aaron Smith let out a weak groan as I applied his bandage to a protruding brownish gray coil of intestine.

I needed to put the artillery right on top of the enemy without killing my own men. "When you see the smokescreen," I said, "grab a body or weapon and move 100 yards to the rear." Major Bob Greene flew in about 10 yards off the deck and put down a perfect smokescreen. He took several hits.

Penn and I grabbed Canfield under the arms and hustled to the rear. We each had a radio as well, and we fell every few steps. All six wounded soldiers were pulled back.

Bodies and weapons were left behind. Captain Penn, PFC Dixon and I crawled back three times. We pulled the dead to cover first, and then recovered the rifles. We were totally exhausted. Weariness more than fear made it hard. Now, artillery from all over was falling on the enemy with loud whooshes. Spent shrapnel splashed in the paddy water. In that one day, the six-gun battery of 105mm howitzers at FSB Jackson fired 3000 rounds. Brigade Commander William J. Maddox, flying his own helicopter, put in 17 airstrikes. The planes dove low through the clatter of small arms fire to drop napalm. The bombs drifted in slowly with a rushing sound. Sometimes we could feel the heat. "It's hard to see how they could take so much," PFC Wellman of Argillite, KY told a reporter later. The enemy fire seemed to slacken.

Three helicopters responded to my call for medevacs. One made it in and picked up Canfield, who would survive, and Smith, who wouldn't. Two other helicopters were shot down. The crews joined us on the ground.

Around 1500, Colonel Ebel arrived with Delta Company and a platoon of Charlie Company. He crawled forward to take command. I rushed over to brief him, but he was hit as he reached the two downed helicopters. Four shirkers were hiding under one of the helicopters. I pulled my pistol on them. "Get a stretcher out of this helicopter and carry Colonel Ebel back there," I said, "And if you drop him, I'll shoot every one of you myself."

We dragged the rest of the wounded and dead farther back where they could be evacuated, and it shames me now to think that I did not know any of their names. The shirkers faked wounds and climbed on the helicopters. I would see they got theirs later.

By 1600, it felt like the enemy fire had been suppressed enough for us to get in on top of them. I asked Greene to put in another smoke screen and I shifted the artillery. Penn and Alpha Company assaulted the tree square to our right (south), "We were held up by RPG fire and AK fire coming from two bunkers in front of us," said SP4 John Fahey of Queens, NY, the next day, "But with the smokescreen we managed to get close enough to throw grenades in." Jay Yurchuck and Delta Company attacked the tree line to our front (east). Lieutenant Kau'i's C Company platoon advanced on the bunkers to the left (north). I went in with Yurchuck's company. "If you get hit, sir, who's in command?" asked Colonel Ebel's radio man.

"You are, for awhile," I replied.

"Then don't get hit, sir," he said.

Gunships fired 10 yards to our front. "They're shooting us!" shouted Lieutenant Faircloth.

"You're hitting us," I radioed the pilots. "Lift it a little, but keep it close."

"They're trying not to hit you," radioed Colonel Maddox.

"They're doing great," I responded.

A couple of Delta Company's M16s exploded because of water in the barrels. It wouldn't drain out with a round in the chamber.

Lieutenant Faircloth stepped over a dead enemy soldier and into the treeline. Lieutenant Kauai's men advanced slowly. "You have got to keep your men moving!" I radioed. "We're receiving flanking fire from your front!"

"He's doing the best he can," Colonel Maddox broke in. "Let me get a couple of gunships over there." That's all Kauai needed.

In the tree squares, it was face-to-face. The enemy fought to the death, but we took the ground. "There wasn't much to take over," said PFC Paul Wedlock, of Scranton, PA. "The whole area was all bombed out, blown apart, or otherwise turned upside down." We pulled North Vietnamese corpses from their holes and stacked them. Villagers would see to their burial. Captain Anderson pulled a blue and red ribbon from a dead man's chest and pinned it to his jungle hat.

It was getting dark. We formed a perimeter and I considered sending out a listening post. "Sir," said Sergeant Hurley of Alpha Company, "We'll need every man on the perimeter tonight." On April 15, every last man in a listening post had been killed when the North Vietnamese attacked Patrol Base Diamond III. Hurley wanted me to know that, if I gave the order, I would have to force the men to obey. It was an easy decision. The troops had done good work and the five minutes' early warning we would have gotten from a listening post was not worth the risk. "We do need every man on this perimeter," I said.

The next day, Delta Company flew back to Fire Support Base Jackson, and Kauai's platoon flew back to Shamrock. Alpha Company began constructing the fort. Around noon, Colonel Maddox stopped by to see how the construction was going. I was glad to see him. He introduced Lieutenant Colonel Moore, who had once tried to teach me Mechanics of Fluids at West Point, a losing battle. I was glad he didn't remember me.

I described the battle and explained what we were doing. Colonel Moore walked the perimeter and made some suggestions. He pulled out a map. "Maybe you should send a patrol down this stream bed tonight," he said.

His suggestions were reasonable, but the men were working slowly, and I expected an attack soon after dark.

"Sir," I said, "Only one of us can do this. If you want to do it, I'll leave. Otherwise, please let me do it my own way."

He left. I didn't know it then, but he was my new battalion commander. The Vietnamese company did not join us until after the work was done. Their adviser was Bob Kramer. I later taught tactics with him at Fort Benning.

We named our little fort Kotrc, after Jim Kotrc, the Delta Company Commander who had been killed two weeks earlier at the BoBo Canal.

At the time, I did not even know the names of the men whose bodies I put on the helicopters after the battle, but the 25th Division yearbook gave to them and to our other dead this epitaph from the Confederate War Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery:

Not for fame or reward
Not for place or for rank
Not lured by ambition
or goaded by necessity
But in simple obedience to duty
as they understood it
These men suffered all
sacrificed all
dared all
and died

Thirty years later, I learned their names:

Name	Rank	DOB	Hometown
Denny Ray Lappin	E-6	4/4/44	Canton, OH
James Henry Marshall	E-4	11/8/49	Selma, AL
Charles Dwaine Roberts	O-1	5/30/44	Norman, OK
Aaron Bruce Smith	E-3	10/9/46	Arkansas City, KS
Stephen Allen Snidow	E-3	7/12/48	Ft Smith, AR
Millard Preston Wheeler	E-3	6/11/49	Hamersville, OH

One Vietnamese Kit Carson Scout, a defector from the VC, fighting on our side, was also killed. I do not know his name.

By Major Charles Darrell, who was executive officer of the battalion, and who assumed command after the battalion commander was wounded