

Fred's Beer Run – 1967 Camp JJ Carroll RVN

Has anyone heard of the famous “ **Camp JJ Carroll Beer Run** “...?

It involved Charlie Company 1/9 and a Fred V. Smith from North Carolina in September of 1967 at Camp JJ Carroll.

Fred is the most modest man you'll likely ever meet and to this day remains the same. We are life long friends and I'll consider myself very lucky to stand Guard Duty with him, if we're called to do so for The Lord. Anyway, Fred is a big boy from North Carolina who has done some hunting and knows how to smell out the rats. In Vietnam, Fred always displayed a keen sense of where 'Charlie' was located...he saved many a good Marine with this ability. Also, he was able to make this famous run and even today, I'd vote for him for President of "These here United States." So here is the true story but I got to tell you, Fred will say...well, I don't remember that, are you sure?

It was a late night, around 2230 hours and rockets started to rain in like, "rain" from Dong Ha Mountain across the valley. Charlie loved that mountain for he could see in every direction for miles and miles. Camp Carroll is on a plateau that stood out for him like a target that said... 'Hit me, if you can'.....and he did that night. I'm betting the rockets were not more than eighty feet apart upon impact and thirty seconds between launches. I've never seen or heard so many damn rockets, but none of that seemed to bother Fred as the entire 3rd squad of the 3rd platoon ran to the north perimeter of Camp JJ Carroll that night. We waited for Charlie to pay us a visit for surly this action was a 'prep' for a ground assault. We had trenches, but Fred stood up and at 6' 3" to 6' 4", he made one heck of a target....I yelled to him to get down. I was his Squad Leader and I was always saying that to him...of course I'm just a 'stub' when compared to him. He got down for a few moments, and then rose again. This time he was sniffing the air just like a coon dog would. The very next thing I know, he's running to the rear area away from the trench on the northern perimeter. I was asked... 'where's he going...what he is afraid of? "Gentlemen, I don't know but Fred is afraid of nothing...he'll be back." I prayed that this time for sure, I'd be right. Please remember that rockets are still raining in and we are ready for a ground assault at any moment. Rockets impacting causes flashes of light and of course the famous whistle of shrapnel flying through the air. My God, here comes Fred carrying two cases of beer like a waiter with a tray of food being delivered. This is a sight that will remain with me forever; rockets raining in and Fred running with the beer for his fellow Marines. Sounds like a movie or at least a Medal of Honor move to me! He made it to our trench and we all proceeded to consume two beers each and sing the Marine Corps Hymn and of course, taunt 'Charlie'. It seems as though the Officers had a beer tent that was penetrated by rocket shrapnel and that caused the beer to foam up and Fred being 'alert' noticed it. He could have been elected President of the United States that night.....Love you, Fred!!

SEMPER FI TO FRED.....& ALL MARINES, EVERYWHERE !!

“Good Night Chesty.....wherever you are!! “

Chuck Sawyer “C” 1/9.....3/3 Actual 1967

