

KIA 12 June 1970

WO1 John S Wilson

Warrant Officer John Wilson was flying as pilot with Aircraft Commander Tom Tindor on a 10 ship Combat Assault into LZ Kelly. They were chalk 2 in the flight when an AK47 round entered through the floor, missing the armored seat, collective and the chicken plate and killed Warrant Officer John Wilson instantly. This particular LZ was the worst I would encounter in my tour as a pilot. The LZ was contested with the first aircraft taking fire, which was unusual. They normally waited until the 2nd or 3rd ship before shooting started. I was in the middle of the flight and when I turned on final I could see the entire side of the canyon sloping from the LZ ablaze with what looked like 4th of July sparklers only they were muzzle flashes from NVA AK47s. We were flying through a literal wall of bullets. While on final a Redskin (D/158 Cobra flying as gun cover) flew to my front and below. I asked what he was doing and he responded, "My job, I'm out of bullets". He was attempting to shield me from enemy fire. After this combat assault our company was temporarily listed as combat ineffective due to aircraft battle damage.

Ken Mayberry
phoenix50@neb.rr.com

From: sbutrym@us.ibm.com
To: beegee@abraxis.com, phoenix50@alltel.net
Date sent: Wed, 24 May 2000 10:53:52 -0400
Subject: **Re: Tindor & Wilson**

Gary,

I saw Ken's reply to your note about WO Wilson. I'll have to check the date but my memory is that Wilson was killed during the LZ Kelly insertion. He was the copilot in chalk 2 and I was the same in chalk 3 a brand newbie in country and on one of my first CA's. I was flying with Paul Stewart, Phoenix 22. I don't remember if Wilson's ship made it into the LZ or not but we did and then it got too hot and the insertion was suspended temporarily. Paul and I had the only empty bird other than flight lead and the guys on the ground were running out of ammo and in danger of being over run. There were only two or, if Wilson's bird made it in, three, ships full of troops on the ground. We went back and got a load of ammo and went back into Kelly with a ton of Cobra cover and kicked the ammo out as we went thru. As we got out of there pulling everything we had, we went into a small cloud and there was a cobra coming off a run in the cloud with us, lots of yelling

about which way to break, etc. Ugly, ugly day. 22 and I got an air medal with "V" device for going back in which is how I can get the date. Wilson was new in country also I believe and I think the newest guy in the unit other than my buddy Mike Cataldo and I.

Steve Butrym