

November Company

Up on the flanks, Corporal Carroll, the retarded Polack and the machine gun crews cheered as the massive artillery barrage stopped the NVA cold. After about thirty minutes of firing, the big guns went silent – but not before a lone enemy machine gunner found his mark and riddled the Americans with a hundred rounds or so.

Carroll felt a savage blast slam into his upper legs. Blood began to fill the bottom of the machine gun pit. The legs that had carried him through the trails of Blue Mountain convulsed and cramped.

The retarded Polack was shot through the face, knocking out some of his teeth, and two of the ammo humpers were dead, both shot through their heads.

“Where did he come from?” asked Pulaski of the enemy gunner, while spitting out blood and teeth.

“Dunno,” said Carroll, withering in pain.

It was dusk, and a brief lull had fallen over the battlefield. Hundreds of NVA soldiers lay dead and dying. The Marine forces were down to forty men and not much ammunition. Relief helicopters had been unable to pick up the wounded and deliver more ammo because of the heavy enemy rifle fire.

Air strikes were coming in to support the Americans, led by Huey helicopter gun ships that were firing their mini guns and Zuni rockets at enemy forces.

Right behind them were medical evacuation helicopters, and others filled to the brim with much-needed small arms ammunition.

As the CH-34s attempted to land, enemy heavy machine guns tore them to ribbons. One helo dropped right on top of seriously wounded Marines, burning many to death. Two other helicopters took numerous small arms hits while maneuvering in the area, with one of them belching fire from the engine. They tried mightily to land but couldn't.

When heavily-armed Hueys attempted to strafe the gun positions, other enemy anti-air sites nearby shot one more American helicopter out of the sky. In less than ten minutes, the U.S. lost three helicopters and their entire crews.