

Michael Ruane story by Joseph Bilby

Mike was living in Jersey City when he attended Seton Hall University, where he was a member of the ROTC and the "Triphibian Guard" club or military frat. He recruited me into the "Triphibs" when I was a freshman. He was apparently commissioned as an armor officer, but somehow ended up as an infantry Company Commander in the 196th Light Infantry Brigade at Fort Devens MA. The brigade was deployed to Vietnam while I was serving there in the 1st Division MP company. They were based about 20 miles west of us. The 196th got involved in a major firefight that went into the night, and I was awakened at midnight or so to take an ammo convoy up to them. I forget the name of the operation. We had a five-tank escort and were confronted by a blown bridge, but finally got up to Cu Chi to turn the convoy over. I could see flashes on the horizon, which I assumed was the 196th fighting. What I did not know, until I met Mike many years later, he was a company commander in the fight. We were a few miles apart, but did not know it at the time. Mike served in both the National Guard and Reserves following his tour in the war and discharge from active duty.