



AFTER TET, ON FEBRUARY 10, 1968, I took command of the 2nd Battalion (327th Airborne Infantry) 101st Airborne Division. This was straightforward infantry work; pure yes, sir, no, sir, three bags full; square the corners, straighten the lines, sweep the fire base, search and destroy the enemy. This is chain of command administration, don't stop and talk to the old man, take it to the first sergeant.

The tempo of the war at this stage was much faster than when I was here last. There were a lot of bad guys running around now. You could get killed very easily. I felt it was my job as a battalion CO to come to grips with the enemy and destroy him. I went looking for fights and anybody didn't feel the same way shouldn't be around me. When Col. "Rip" Collins commanded the 1st Brigade, each of the Division's battalions shared equally in the hard jobs. Later, when "Doc" Hayward had the brigade, I felt that whenever there was a nasty job to be done the 2/327 got it. I liked that. We were known as the "No Slack" battalion.

During the nine months I had the battalion, I saw some very brave men in the 101st Airborne Division. We had a good track record, many successes. After Hue, we cleared the area around the Division headquarters in what was known as Operation Mingo. Then came action while the 2/327 was attached to the 1st Cav for Operation Jeb Stuart. Operation Nevada Eagle cleared the Hue-Phu Bai area. Somerset Plain swept the southern portion of the A Shau Valley. **The toughest job the battalion had was clearing a seven kilometer stretch along Route 547, which ran west from Hue.** There were no VC here, just NVA regulars! The road faced steep mountain and thick, nearly impenetrable jungle. The cost was high. We got clawed and we clawed back. Eventually, the road was won and **Fire Support Base Bastogne** established.

I learned if you command an infantry battalion in combat in Vietnam for nine months it's going to grind you down. We took a lot of casualties. All losses are bad. Some still stay with me. Much of what happened haunts me to this day.

From: *Delta Force* by Col. Charlie A. Beckwith USA Ret.