Since “B” Company got left holding the bag, I have lost my guys. They don’t think leadership cares or gives a damn and I can’t disagree. The other line platoons in the battalion are all experiencing discipline problems. On one occasion, Charlie had followed us all day and in late afternoon we came out of the coconut palm forest on a trail that led into a paddy where we were waiting for Romeo Sierra (resupply). As the chopper came in from behind us, snipers from the trees opened up and got the pilot and the rotor. The chopper came crashing down. We were ordered to assault the ambush and I dove off from the dike we were on into the canal under the trees. I was chest deep in water and I was searching for Charlie. When I looked around, no one else had assaulted. They had jumped behind the dike and bullets were kicking up dirt on the dike. As an experienced infantryman, I knew you had to assault an ambush to keep the enemy from having clear shots at you. My men were shooting carelessly from behind the dike. This was spring 1969 and if this keeps up, I don’t think I will make it home.

Saddle up! These words would grab my heart as the sound of young boys bustling about getting their rations, their basic load, who would carry the 60 ammo and who would carry the LAWS rocket. Each mission an adventure into the unknown. The light laughter and bickering all signs of nervousness. I’ll be on point and probably in Lt Franklin’s chopper.