

THE WALLET

Part 1 LT Dennis Sheridan

I spent decades trying to forget and I was successful to an extent. So what follows is from my memory. Right, wrong or indifferent I am responsible for any errors. My photos are on the <http://www.327infantry.org>.

Halloween October 31, 1969, Phu Loc District, Vietnam, 3d Plt B Co 2/327 101st Abn, my first night in the field. At dusk we move out headed south from the Thu'a lu'u bridge on Hwy 1 to an ambush site a couple of clicks away.

MOTIVE to get THE WALLET: In the dark my platoon was moving across the rice paddies. We crossed a stream so deep that I had to carry our Vietnamese Kit Carson Scout on my back. I was totally wet and everything I carried was soggy including my personal letters etc. That night a firefight, as a cherry LT, I directed a response, fired my weapon, received fire. 3d Platoon needed an emergency resupply of class five at dawn. So many lessons learned the hard way (PS: it was a friendly fire incident with no casualties).

SUPPLY Sgt helped: I remember having THE WALLET during our time in those rice paddies and since I did not get back to the rear for several weeks I must have gotten THE WALLET a week later with the resupply, we had a good supply Sgt.. THE WALLET is a passport size pocket wallet, leather looking plastic with a Screaming Eagle on the front and inside were several sealable plastic pouches like baggies. Waterproof great for keeping photos, the latest letter from home, code of conduct card etc. dry.

HISTORY: THE WALLET was with me through the following;

November 1969 to December 24th: 3d Plt B Co Night operations/ambushes/sweeps in and around the rice paddies west of Hai Van pass near Firebase Los Banos. Several firefights with Vietcong body counts and a few water buffalo. Only friendly casualties were minor shrapnel wounds from RPG's. The platoon varied from 20 to 24 men with a Vietnamese Kit Carson Scout (ex-Vietcong). We did some joint operations with the ruff puffs (regional Vietnamese forces).

Christmas Eve December 24th 1969 to April 1970: transferred to 2nd Plt A Co 2/327: Night operations, ambushes, sweeps, cordons', CA's in and around Nuoc Ngot east of firebase Tomahawk, mostly semi independent platoon missions. We spent Christmas "30% alert day pause" in Thuy Yen village orphanage. After Christmas through the end of January 1970 the platoon size averaged 14 men (11 men, myself and two NCO's). Senior NCO was an E-5 with less than 2 years in the army. Two firefights with 5 NVA body count and no casualties. [I regret not keeping up with the medic reports. I recently discovered that some of my men did not get Purple Hearts they rightfully earned, but in a 14 man platoon no one gets out of the field] After January we bulked up to 20-24 men in the platoon. February saw eight night ambush firefights with 22 body count. March was more of the same then a CA into the canopy. April more of the same, night ambushes, lots of contact.

Star and Stripes: during our time in the canopy we had a news/photog in our midst. I was anti media at the time and gave strict orders to keep the (blank) away from me and with the rear section with the platoon Sgt. We were moving down the mountain and I was with the point section rappelling down a rock when I looked up and saw the (blank) taking my photo. (blanking) I lost my footing and went head face into the rock, saved by my steel pot. The photo taken, before I lost my footing, made the Stars and Stripes newspaper page two.

Late April to June 1970: XO/acting CO A Co 2/327. Staff job, "I can't believe I signed everything that he put in front of me". This is a quote written on the back of my picture of Sgt Jerry Osan company clerk. Most fun was being Pay Officer, we didn't have checks, debit or credit cards, we gave out funny money (military script). I had to get out of the rear, they made you shine your boots.

June to December 1970: 2/327 Bn Support Platoon Ldr, the forward supply operations and helipad on Firebase Tomahawk. Most of the Bn was in the canopy.

Firebase Tomahawk, June 10 est. 0200 hrs, NVA in the NNE wire, RPG's, 122mm's. I had a section of the SSW bunker Line. I was sightseeing watching the NNE side, scary. Lots of fireworks, the ammo bunker was blown up creating my first construction job. Daylight brought a 35-40 NVA body count and 4 POWs caught in the concertina

Monsoon Kate October 1970: For several days nothing was flying, we had units in the canopy go over a week without resupply. The rice paddies were flooded 4-5 feet deep, nearest dry land was two clicks south of Hwy1 . I had previous SF training in rubber boats. We had a boat trucked out to us, hell of a time blowing it up by hand pump. Platoons in dire straits came down to the edge of the flood and we rowed supplies out to them, priority was food, ammo and cigarettes. My worry was floating over and snagging barb wire with booby traps, theirs or ours attached. . We brought out an exhausted scout dog team.

January 1971 to March 1972: Stateside I carried THE WALLET as a normal wallet. CO A-424, Co D, 5th SF, snow skiing school, SF mountain climbing training, SF underwater operations school.

April 1972 to December 1990: hidden inside a OD green trunk in the closet. I was encouraged by my wife Sandra to contribute something to support the deployed soldiers. We decided on THE WALLET, included a patch from Vietnam.

Part 2 Keith Young

My time with the Wallet began in December of 1990. I had been corresponding with Dennis Sheridan and his wife for about two months. We had exchanged a few letters and I had received a few boxes from them.

Well in one of those boxes, as I remember it, the wallet was enclosed. Seeing, it has been 19 years and about 8 months since I received it, I am a little foggy on it! But, I do know it was not hand delivered, nor did the tooth fairy drop it off! I remember, being floored by it. Even then I knew this was something special, something Dennis had carried in Vietnam. It was a link to the past and not something to be lost or put aside. I of course showed it to everyone I came across. Told them about Dennis, the Platoon Leader from Vietnam, who had contacted us and was supporting us. I carried it on me, every day I was there! I carried it in my left breast pocket and used it as my wallet. I never let it out of my sight!

On a off note, when I received the wallet, I had already left 3rd Platoon, to not so greener pastures, to the HHC Support Platoon. I told him I would send the wallet back or give it to someone in 3rd Platoon, but he said, no. He had also served as the Support Platoon Leader. So the link was not broken.

We were north, as we referred to it, the night the war began. We were sitting on the screen line or speed bump, as we called it. Waiting for the 4th largest Army in the world to roll south, which it never did! Once the war started, we hung out on the line a few days and then moved back to Camp Eagle II, pick up more of the Unit Basic Load and waited to move north.

I will tell you as a Spc/E-4, I generally had no idea where we were going and when. We had no CNN, FOX or radio to listen too. All news came in the mail, snail mail, there was no e-mail! Either the Chain of Command told us about it or we did not know.

While there waiting and wondering, the SCUDs came to remind us we were at war. The large rockets were fired to cause panic and fear in the general population of Saudi Arabia. We could see the patriots firing and hitting the rocks. Of course came the Gas Alarms and that pain the ass! It was a boring time, with an occasional time of O-shit, where is my mask! Every scud alarm we masked till the all clear! I will tell you, everyone took the Gas seriously! At least the first ½ dozen times.

The high light of our time at Camp Eagle II was the AT-4 incident. Some private in 2nd Platoon Charlie Company, fired a live AT-4, into the tent of 2nd Platoon Weapons Squad, B Co 2/327th. It wounded about 17 men, a few who were friends of mine. The round left the tube and hit a Cpl, name unknown in the shoulder and tour him up! He was the team leader in the squad of the kid who fired it! He was Charlie Company's only causality. So he says, he thought it was a training round! The worst wounded in B Co. was Estep, Pena and SSG Henry. Estep, was hit at least a dozen times by shrapnel and a mess, Pena was hit several times as well and SSG Henry took a single hit to the lung. Sucking chest wound. They said, he walked down and gave report to his PL and then collapsed! Then there was Suprlock, he was 3rd Platoon B Co. he was hit in the head and injured pretty good. Spc Danious, spelled wrong got hit in the back, not seriously. The largest number of causalities was a squad in A Co, who were in the tent across from Estep,

Pena and SSG Henry. They all got peppered, but none too seriously. The war was over for some of them, many never got to go forward, because of their wounds. Some were evacuated to Germany and back home! Where was I? I was with Sgt. Mitchell a few miles away trying to cash a check! Never go to war broke and always have a check book, casual pays suck! LTC Col. Thomas and CSM Johnson (aka Darth Vader) were not happy, but LTC Thomas put a spin on it! Now you know what it looks like when all hell breaks loose! Get used to it. We did not know it at the time, but this would be the single largest mass causality issue for the 101st ABN DIV, a friendly fire incident. Not very friendly, but an incident!

We finally left the gas alarms and SCUDs about a week into the war. Some of the Battalion convoyed and some flew! I fly to the western edge of Saudi Arabia, on a stripped down C-130! No seats, sitting on rucksacks! Only time in my life I have seen this. We moved into position south of the Iraqi Border. We set up a defensive perimeter and waited. It sucked, it was cold and cold! Rain and mud. Orange mud that stained our clothes and just made us feel so wonderful! We pulled guard, prepped Ammunition and waited! The highlights were the Artillery duels between the Iraqis and the French who were on our left flank! It was a morning ritual. Artillery and tracers, we could see it and hear it, but none were close. Closest thing to us, was a few stray rounds, either that or the USAF was dropping unwanted ordinance in our area! Who really knows. I was a Spc/E-4 and rumors ruled!

Then very late on the night of the 23rd or early on the 24th all hell broke loose. MLRS started firing north and air activity increased off the charts. The ground war started!

I then carried the wallet from Saudi Arabia into Iraq, on 24 February 1991. I participated in the Air Assault, as a member of the sling load team. So, no Air Assault, we convoyed into Iraq with some of B Co 2/327th 3rd Platoon (-), a squad or so. They were the convoy security element, at least some of them. It was a long boring ride in the sand and wind. Nothing notable, except when we arrived. There was a downed Huey, yes, a Huey. Crashed due to engine trouble and was slug out a few day later! We arrived in Iraq at the Battalion AA, where we waited. We got hit with a huge no shit sand storm. It was blinding and last over 24 hours. I remember, Garcia's sleeping bag, neatly rolled in a ball blowing away. He found it buried in sand the next day. It was a cold night; I gave him my poncho liner. Was not funny to him at the time. After the sand storm, we marshaled the battalion for a move further north. We were all lined up, waiting for H-hour to go. When we heard the cease fire come over the net! Talk about disappointing! I knew then, as I know now that was a mistake! Politics and Politics, but, the wallet would get to see another round! And the argument would be settled!

We stayed in the AA for a miserable 27 days and finally were flown out! To more misery. They were moving so many troops; they only flew us back into Saudi Arabia. Where we waited for trucks. We waited about 12 hours, in the cold and rain. It blew ass. It got dark and we finally saw the lights on the trucks. We all got up, put away our ponchos and gave up our dry spots! Of course, only enough trucks for ½ showed, so I got to sit down and wait another 2 or 3 hours! This time we didn't get up, so there were enough trucks! We were taken back to the airfield and return to Camp Eagle II. There we waited and cleared our gear. Of course we cleaned pine straw out of ammo nets we never used! It was rather fun and started getting hot!

Of course, we finally left! We headed back home! I was lucky enough to sit next to Christopher Whitaker on the freedom bird home! He was a friend of mine from HHC 3/327th IN, 81mm Mortar Platoon. He is also, sort of the guy my son is named after! We had a great flight, flirting with the flight attendant! Mary Beth Beck! It was a great flight, food and smiling faces. I will never forget how quiet it got, when they played Lee Greenwoods, "I am proud to be an American"! As I say, we were all proud and happy to be coming home. America loved us, for at least 30 days, it was great coming home!

The wallet then traveled with me back to the world! We left Saudi Arabia in April of 1991 and headed to Germany and then back to Fort Campbell! I met up with Dennis and his wife Sandra, in Fort Worth, TX. There I offered the wallet back to Dennis, but he said it was mine. We talked about if there was ever another war, I would pass it on.

The wallet stayed with me, when I PCS'd to Hawaii from Fort Campbell. I got out of the Army in 1993 stayed in Hawaii a little while and moved back to Ga. in 1994. It moved back to Hawaii in 1995 and stayed there until 2003. When the war clouds over Iraq were showing, Dennis and I discussed trying to contact the 3rd Platoon B Co 2/327th. Just to support the platoon, then we further discussed, attempting to safely, transfer the wallet, to the next guy. The 3rd link in the chain. I called the unit and left a message, I never go to speak to David. But, I got a call from his wife Cathy and explained the wallet to here, I called it a book at the time, but she gave me David's address. So the wallet waited 14 years of so, before it would return to Iraq of all places!

On a wing and a prayer I mailed it to David Gramling. Then, I believe a 1st Lt., Lt Gramling was the PL of 3rd Platoon. He later acknowledged receiving the wallet and carried it through Operation Iraq Freedom I. He had it with him on H-hour and now it was his. Of course I explained the rules. If he is KIA, let his wife know, send it back to me and when the 3rd Platoon goes somewhere else, a new place, i.e.: Afghanistan, I/he was to pass it on. When he did, of course, that is his story!

I of course did not stay out of the Army too long or miss any of the latest wars. I joined the United States Army Reserves in 1998 and have mobilized three times. I was in Baghdad for OIF II with the 1st Cavalry Division March 2004-05, in Diyala Province Aug 2005-2006 and in Kunar Province, Afghanistan, OEF who knows from Dec 2007 to Sept 2008. This ironically is the current home of the wallet with 1Lt Roush.

Part 3 CPT David Gramling

One morning in early March 2003, CPT Tony New and 1SG Ron Gregg called me into the Bravo Company CP. The runner they sent told me that there was some “history book” that had been sent to B CO and that it was for the 3rd PLT Leader. At the time I was the youngest PL in the BN, I had only gotten to Fort Campbell about a month and a half earlier, and I thought this was some additional duty that I was about to be signed up for. Needless to say, I was surprised to learn that a Vietnam and Desert Storm Vet were asking me to carry this wallet on our pending deployment to “somewhere in the CENTCOM AOR”, as the orders stated. The note that I got from Keith was worded very seriously as I recall, and I knew this was something that I had to do right.

Several days after getting the wallet, Bravo Company was on a plane heading to Kuwait to stage in makeshift camps that had been set up along the Iraqi-Kuwaiti border. We spent several weeks at Camp Pennsylvania waiting for the orders to move north into Iraq. We passed the time training basic platoon skills, patrolling the desert at night, doing PT in our new JSLIST MOPP suites, and rushing into the concrete bunkers as the SCUD alarm went off when the Air War kicked off. On the night of March 23, as President Bush told the world that the war was beginning, B CO was packing and staging our vehicles when SGT Hassan Akbar attacked the 1st BDE HQs tent with hand grenade, killing two and injuring several others. Two days later, we were crossing the LD from Kuwait into Iraq. I kept the wallet in a 200 round SAW Gunners Pouch on my Body Armor, along with maps, protractor, compass, GPS and an extra magazine. Conditions weren't very wet, but I felt as though I had to keep it in a Ziploc bag near the back of my pouch so nothing would happen to it.

The wallet stayed in my gear the rest of the deployment, wherever my gear was, it was there. Every patrol, convoy, or Air Assault mission, I had it with me. I am fully convinced that it was a good luck charm for me and the platoon, as we did not have any casualties that entire year-despite a few close calls. No Slack fought from Kuwait to An Najaf (where 3rd Platoon took a knee several blocks away for the Golden Mosque) all the way to Al Hillah. After this, No Slack moved by Air Assault all the way to Northern Iraq, South of Mosul. It was here that 3rd Platoon conducted patrols along the Tigris River into the villages where the Iraqi and Kurdish populations came together. As crazy as it sounds, I kept the wallet in my cargo pocket as I completed Air Assault School at Q-West Airfield. Fortunately, the instructors never found out about it! Eight months into the deployment, I became the Company XO, and although my time with 3rd PLT was over, I still got out with platoons for a few missions. When it came time to redeploy in FEB 2004, I sent 2/3rds of the Company with the Commander and 1SG on a flight back to the states from Mosul. 1SG let me pick the Platoon I would want to convoy back to Kuwait with various other elements of the BN. The decision was not hard at all, and 3rd PLT with some of the Company HQ and the XO headed convoyed all the way through Iraq; passing through Baghdad, to Kuwait where we helped the BN redeploy all of its equipment. But the adventures of the wallet were only beginning.

OIF 05-06 Ramadi

After spending a year as the XO for B CO 2-327, I volunteered to join the newly stood up 4th BCT 101st. I thought it be a chance to get some more Platoon Leader time, so I signed in at 1st BN 506th IN in OCT of 2004. When I got to the BN and the CDR learned I had already been a PL and XO, they decided to put me in the S3 shop, where I did a variety of different jobs from AS3, S3 Air, BN UMO, and the Civil Military Officer (S5 or S9 as it is today). We spent most of the next year standing up the new unit, basically having to recreate everything in addition to training. In NOV of 2005, the unit deployed to OIF.

4th BCT was stationed in Baghdad, but 1-506th got orders to go to MNF-W in Al Anbar Province to be assigned to the 2nd Marine Division, and later 1st Armor Division. I spent the deployment at Camp Corregidor on the Easter side of Ramadi during the pre-surge time frame. It was a tough tour, my unit took a lot of casualties and KIAs, and we got mortared daily at the FOB. Even though I was on staff, I got the chance to go out on missions with our CA or PSYOPs team, or with any of the Company Commanders that let me tag along. Where ever I went, the Wallet went with me, but it was now carried in a smaller ACU medics pouch. Reality was I had more close calls this tour as the CMO guy than my last tour, a couple RPG were fired in my direction, small arms fire, and an IED that missed the vehicle I was riding in. After a year in NOV 2006, the unit redeployed, but I as the BN UMO had to head down to Kuwait to make sure the BN's equipment made it off the convoy and on to the ships heading back to the states. I redeployed with a small element from 4th BDE, and when we got to Fort Campbell I was the last soldier off the plane. Later I learned, as I saw my picture in the Fort Campbell Courier, that I had gotten credit for being the last soldier off the last plane returning from Iraq for the Division. I've doubted the legitimacy of this honor every day since, but it was nice to be recognized shaking hands with the General.

Pakistan

After attend the Military Captains Career Course in 2007, I asked to be reassigned to Fort Campbell and the Division. I came down on orders for the G2, not exactly what I wanted, but at least it was a way to get back to the Division. The Division HQ was on orders to be the CJTF Headquarters in RC East in Afghanistan. 1st BCT had orders to Iraq again, so I thought that I would be the keeper of the wallet for Afghanistan as well. But the G2 had other plans. They need an Intelligence LNO to the Pakistani General Headquarters (their version of the Pentagon). In March 2008, I was on a plane heading to Bagram Airbase, and as soon as I got to Bagram I caught another flight to Islamabad. The LNO job in Pakistan was very interesting, but it was something I pretty much had to figure out how to do on my own. I would go to GHQ every other week to meet with the PAKMIL planners, occasionally sharing intelligence and operations updates. When I wasn't busy with that, I was briefing the Chief of the Office of the Defense Representative to Pakistan Admiral Lefever or US Ambassador Anne Patterson on the situation in RC East from the information I received from the 101st in Bagram. I would also head down to Peshawar to meet with the 11th Corps who was in charge of the tribal areas along the Afghan/Pakistani border. Every month there were border flag meetings, so I would usually board the Pakistani helicopters and fly to a border post either on the Pakistan or Afghan side. Most of the time, the wallet was carried in a non-

descript civilian backpack, as I was usually in civilian clothes. Even though this wasn't the standard deployment for the wallet, it was important that I had it with me as I did in the other deployments.

When I got home from the deployment in May of 2009, I left Division for my next job, S2 for 1-502 IN. During that following year, I was able to meet Dennis for the first time at Week of the Eagles. Of course I had the wallet with me, and was able to show him the updates since he had last seen it. During the summer and into the fall, it was becoming apparent that most of the Division was going to be heading to OEF, including No Slack. My time with the wallet was coming to an end, so just as Keith had done for me, I bought a Combat Patch and a CIB, wrote a note about the wallet and its history, and prepared to pass it to the new 3rd PLT Leader. It was tough parting with the wallet, as I felt it had been with me through so much, but it was time for someone to get it back into the fight in Afghanistan. The day I took the wallet over to the Company, I was able to link up with 1LT Patrick Roush just before he was going into an OPD. Again, the wallet was passed on the fly, as it had been to me. I told him who I was, who Dennis and Keith were, what this wallet meant to us, and that it was his turn carry it into Afghanistan. I wish I had more time to talk with Pat, but we both seem kind of busy getting ready for our next deployments. Even from first impression, I knew Pat Roush would be the right guy to carry on this tradition, and from what I hear, he and his troopers are doing quite well keeping 3rd PLT famous.

Part 3 CPT Patrick Roush

It was summer 2009, during the annual Fort Campbell celebration of Week of the Eagles, that I first met Dennis Sheridan. I was a new 2LT and Platoon Leader of 3rd Platoon, B Co., 2-327 IN. Coming into the unit, it was very apparent that there was a strong sense of pride and esprit de corps in the Battalion, expressed in the unit motto (No Breather from Work, No Relief from Combat, No Request for Respite, No Slack). This motto was created in Vietnam, where the Battalion, and Dennis, fought against a determined enemy in horrendous conditions. The particularly wet climate led to a unique tradition and brotherhood which I was about to join.

Dennis visited me in the Platoon office (called a “command post” or “CP”), and introduced himself. He explained that he was the PL of my platoon in Vietnam. I remember his story about his first day with the unit. Halloween night, 1969, Dennis met the Platoon in the jungle and was greeted with an intense firefight. He imparted on me a little bit of combat wisdom: “When that happens, Pat, you have about 30 seconds to make a decision.” He explained that you only get one chance to make a first impression on your Soldiers in combat. If you fail in that half minute, you will lose all respect and confidence your men have for you, and the results can be fatal.

It was great meeting Dennis that day, and as I and the Platoon prepared for an upcoming deployment to Afghanistan, the first in the unit’s history. There was a lot of uncertainty, but I was excited to be a part of a new chapter in No Slack history. It was a lot of responsibility for a young lieutenant, but I was about to receive another special charge: the keeper of The Wallet.

CPT David Gramling, an intelligence officer in 2nd Brigade at Fort Campbell, stopped by my Platoon CP one day. He explained that he was preparing for a deployment to Afghanistan himself, and had once been the Platoon Leader of 3rd Platoon. We didn’t have much time to talk then, but he wanted to pass The Wallet on to me before we both left. He showed it to me and explained its history. The Wallet was carried into every conflict the Platoon has been in since Vietnam. Unlike other unit symbols and traditions, it was not simply passed along to the next Platoon Leader. To carry The Wallet, you had to lead the Platoon into a new conflict.

It was a small, unique fraternity that I was given the honor of joining. Dennis carried it into Vietnam, Keith into Iraq in Desert Storm, and David into Iraq in OIF; and now it was mine to carry into Afghanistan. It was a symbol of the special trust that was placed in me to lead to the men of 3rd Platoon not only into combat, but into a new conflict. Although I hadn’t done anything to deserve this yet, I knew one thing: I could not screw this up.

In April 2010 the 3rd Platoon “Bushmasters” deployed to Kunar Province, Afghanistan. We were detached from our parent company to serve under HHC, and were assigned an Area of Operations that centered around the Nawa Valley. Although we were a part of many Battalion operations, this valley was our responsibility. It is a steep, canyon-like valley that leads to the Pakistan border. It hosted a newly “paved” road, which itself became as much of a frustration as the enemy. After heavy rains and IEDs destroyed much of the road, reconstructing it so we could get to our AO became a huge challenge.

My vehicle actually rolled off of the road one night as we were returning from a patrol. While most of the road overlooks steep cliffs up to several hundred feet, I was lucky enough to roll only about 20 feet down. When we stopped, my St. Christopher (patron saint of travelers) medal was laying on my face. Everyone in the vehicle was okay, and I believe that we had some special help that night.

Inside The Wallet, along with picture of each of its custodians, was placed a 101ABN combat patch and Combat Infantryman's Badge. This was to be pinned on my uniform when we first engaged in combat. It did not take long, and it was a very proud moment. Not only was I now a combat veteran, I was part of the line of veterans that have lead 3rd Platoon in combat. Although I did not have a good place to carry The Wallet on my gear physically (and I was very nervous about losing it or ruining it), the combat patch never left my shoulder, and it is the only one I have worn. It became my good luck charm, as if the other Wallet-holders were looking after me and the men.

As a Platoon, we conducted almost daily combat patrols to Nawa and other areas. Building and protecting the key infrastructure such as this road was one of our principle missions. We worked hand-in-hand with the Afghan Border Police, who manned several Observation Posts along the road and the border, and developed strong relationships with them. 3rd Platoon served in many larger operations, including Strong Eagle I, II, and III, Eagle Claw II, Enterprise, and Huntsville. Operation Huntsville was one of the most memorable, as we were selected to lead a company Air Assault onto a hot LZ on the border. When a resupply helicopter was shot down, wounding several of our comrades, the Bushmasters were ready.

From roads and villages in the Kunar River Valley to forested mountaintops, in the heat of summer and cold of winter, during daily patrols and week-long operations, the men of 3rd Platoon preserved its storied reputation. I explained to them the story of The Wallet, and the understanding that if something were to happen to me, they must send to The Wallet back to David. This was not simply a tradition that I kept to myself, however. Dennis, Keith, and David provided immense support to me and the whole Platoon throughout the deployment. Our Platoon received many times more care packages than anyone else. When asked who they were all coming from, I eagerly explained the story behind The Wallet. I was in constant contact with Keith, who spoke to me as a brother even though I had never yet met him. And whenever I had doubts about what to do, Dennis would give me wise advice, like "Pat, Remember in deep mud a man can float if he spread eagles and stays still. If you run out of supply ask for 12 man rubber boats from the SF guys near you. Each boat will hold one weeks rations and a basic load of Class V. with one steerer and two oarsmen for a undermanned platoon." Although I never got a chance to use the boat, it meant so much to me to have this kind of support. Whenever I was frustrated, I could always count on my predecessors to give me the boost I needed to get back at it.

I felt that it was especially for this story to end in the same place it began. During Week of the Eagle 2011, Dennis was honored as Distinguished Member of the Regiment for the 327th Infantry. The four Wallet-holders were finally, and for the first time, together in one place. It was an amazing moment and a truly unique tradition. Four generations of 3rd Platoon warriors brought together because Dennis didn't want his stuff to get wet.