A Day I Will Never Forget
by William Yale

It was in the spring of 1972, I was in a place called Phu Bai, in the Northern—most part of South Vietnam. Around 1am, my best friend and I were just coming back from watching a movie, and we were relieving ourselves into the tubes outside our bunks before going to sleep. Just as we were finishing, we heard a rushing sound passing overhead. One, two, then three... my friend turns to me and says, " $@!^, we are taking incoming!" We both looked up to the sky as the rounds passed right over our heads. We were in combat gear, steel pot, flack vests, etc, but we were not ready to go to war. At least, I wasn't. Without thinking, I grabbed my rifle and ran to the trench-line and dove in. As I looked up over the berm, I could see fires burning on the airfield and heard secondary explosions. I looked over my shoulder and my friend, Tom, is right behind me and he says, "Hey, we gotta get the guys up." I was quaking with fear, I had completely forgotten about the guys that were asleep. I had never been shot at before and I was scared. I didn't want to leave the safety of the trench-line. But my friend ran ahead of me waking everybody up, so I followed him, and did the same thing. Once all the guys were up and in the trench-line, the firing stopped. What I learned that night changed my entire life. The notion that we are all heroes is true. A man can master his fear and do things that he never dreamed he was even capable.