



DAVID PREVETTE

Close, Too Close...

“On June 17, 1969, while patrolling on Long Tau River, we were ambushed on a small canal at 0230 hours. Our PBR was hit by small arms fire and 57mm rockets. Our cover boat had one KIA and two wounded. As we turned back toward them with my 50-cal. wide open, suddenly my gun tub was violently hit and I was almost knocked out of it. We had now rejoined our cover boat 121 and were full speed out of the canal and heading back to Nha Be.

After a long patrol and tying up at the pier, I headed to the chow hall and then had a few hours' sleep. I was awakened and told to come back to the piers. What awaited me stabbed my heart and brought me to my knees. I saw a large hole on the left side of my gun tub, and then realized an unexploded 57mm rocket grenade had fired into it—an unexploded weapon of death. I held it and thanked God. I was back on the river soon.”

—David Prevette, U.S. Navy, 1969

While teaching photography at the Sawtooth School for Visual Art, Navy veteran (1967-69) Martin Tucker solicited photos from local Vietnam veterans. Soon he had thousands. After he edited them down to a manageable number, they were printed and framed, then exhibited at the Sawtooth School. The veterans were invited to the exhibit, and their reactions to their images recorded. These remarks, including David Prevette's above, became the captions for the photos in the book, Vietnam Photographs from North Carolina Veterans: They Memories They Brought Home. The exhibit toured the country for two years and is now permanently housed at the North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh. A selection of photos is on exhibit at the Museum of the Albemarle until April 30.