

March 9, 1991

RUSSELL L. ROSS  
''JERK''

Dear Mr. Ross:

You may object to the personal characterization appended to your name above; so, too, do I object to your characterization of me as a liar.

You are free to agree or disagree with anything and everything I write. That's what this country is all about and to a great extent helped make it great. I would be happy to discuss with you anything I have written about the Ia Drang: From my first wire stories filed on Nov. 16, 1965, to the Vietnam Story featured in U.S. News. But personal insults are hardly the place to begin.

For your information, I attend every reunion of the Ia Drang Alumni Association and the 1st Cavalry Division Association. The organizers of those functions---we meet twice a year in case you were actually there and are eligible to attend, and I would be happy to put you in touch with them---have photocopied both the SOF article written back in 1983 and the U.S. News article and distribute them to anyone who is interested.

FYI, I have never suggested in either of those articles or in any other written work that I personally covered the fighting at LZ Albany. I arrived in Albany the morning after the fight, when the battlefield was being policed up and the bodies being dragged to the Chinooks and I talked with as many men and officers as possible.

Of course, you are right that there are differences between the 1983 article and the 1990 article. The first was a personal reminiscence written largely from memory and a few notes; the second published last October was the result of five years of detailed research by myself and Lt. Gen. Hal Moore. In the process of that research we have personally interviewed, taped or otherwise debriefed some 200 survivors of the Ia Drang campaign. A great deal of new information obviously became available as a consequence, information that has changed the way both Gen. Moore and I thought about particular parts of the fight at X-Ray.

As for Albany, I have interviewed dozens of survivors of that ambush and the picture is only now becoming more clear. It was a disaster, not in any failure of the Cavalry troopers but on the part of their battalion commander, a novice, and also on the part of the 3rd brigade commander who delayed reporting the size of the fight to Division headquarters for some 18 hours. As a consequence, reinforcements were not dispatched.

Also for your information, Gen. Moore and I hope before the end of this year to publish a book on the Ia Drang Campaign. We have undertaken the research and the five years of hard work not for any personal gain, but to give the public access to a detailed and comprehensive account of the first major battle of the Vietnam war. A battle that we consider a stunning feat of arms on the part of the troopers of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile).

*Russell L. Ross*

I don't know what your problem is with any of this; I don't know what your interest is in any of this; I don't know if you were a Cav trooper and present for any of these fights. All I know is that a perfect stranger has decided to brand me a liar, and I sure as hell don't like it. My work to date has been warmly received by those who did fight at X-Ray and Albany. This past November the trustees of the Cav Association voted to make me the first, and only, civilian life member of the Association. Then, in January, they voted unanimously to elect me a trustee of the Association. If they don't have a problem, why do you?

If you care to continue this discussion in a rational and polite way, fine. I learn something new from everyone I meet who fought in that place, in those terrible times. I might even learn something from you. But if you call me a liar again I hope it is in person, so I can do something about it.

Sincerely,

Joseph L. Galloway

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Russell Ross

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