

The following letter was sent to John's parents by his commanding officer, Captain John V. Brennan, who assumed command for Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 13th Marines on 11 Jan 1967.

Captain Brennan had previously been the Operations Officer (S-3) for 2nd Battalion, 12th Marines, to which John's battery, Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 13th Marines was attached. Alpha Battery was physically located Hill 55 approximately 19 mile southwest of Danang. The Fire Missions John controlled on 31 Jan 1967 were recorded as follows:

Fire Mission 1	155mm	105mm
WP	4	
HE	78	
Fire Mission 2		
WP	4	
He	27	116

John adjusted 229 rounds of artillery on the Viet Cong positions. The resulting enemy casualties were described as "3 KIA (conf)" The fire mission was initiated at 10:55 and the end of mission was 11:25. Unfortunately, both John and his radio operator, L/Cpl Edward Paul Hanshaw were killed by sniper fire during the engagement.

Battery A  
1<sup>st</sup> Battalion (Rein), 13<sup>th</sup> Marines  
2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 12<sup>th</sup> Marines  
3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division (Rein), FMF  
FPO San Francisco 96602

2 February 1967

Mr. & Mrs. John A. Filpi  
910 Woodland Drive  
Glenview, Illinois 60025

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Filpi,

It is with a heavy heart and deep sadness that I write to you to render further information regarding the death of your son and my friend and brother officer.

As I am certain you know, John was the Artillery Forward Observer for "D" Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 26<sup>th</sup> Marines, which is located near Hill 55, southwest of Danang.

During the morning of 31 January, a squad from "D" Company was pinned down by heavy fire from a numerically superior enemy force. At about 9:45 AM a detachment of 15 men including John and his radio operator were dispatched to render assistance.

Upon arrival at the scene, John immediately directed an intense volume of artillery fire which allowed the heretofore trapped squad to maneuver to relative safety.

While directing these initial volleys, John was wounded by one round of enemy small arms fire.

As his own reinforcing elements began to withdraw, John, without regard for his own safety, remained at his position and continued to direct artillery fire.

Another Marine ran to John and insisted that John return with the withdrawing elements. Because of John's wound his fellow Marine was assisting John to an armored vehicle which was waiting to evacuate the wounded. While maneuvering across the rice paddy John was hit twice more. A medical corpsman immediately ran to render assistance. While being treated John was again wounded by two rounds of small arms fire. Several minutes later, although everything possible was done to care for him, John succumbed to his multiple wounds.

John's actions during the ill fated morning of 31 January were typical of his dedication, devotion and professional competence.

I feel honored to have known John since his arrival in Vietnam last September and am proud to have served with such a fine American. His brilliance, sincerity and extreme competence are qualities which we all respected and admired. Deeply dedicated to the enlisted members of his Forward Observer team, John's guidance, instruction and example have unquestionably caused them to be better men.

Although I certainly realize that my meager word can do little to console you, please know that John is deeply missed and that we share your deep sorrow.

It may comfort you to know that a memorial service was held for John on 2 February and that his many friends attended.

If you feel that I can be of any help to you, please do not hesitate to write to me.

Sincerely yours

John V. Brennan  
Captain, U. S. Marine Corps  
Commanding