



Long Island Scale Model Society

<http://www.lisms-ipms.org>



Guest Speaker Robert Cuce
4/60th ADA Batallion First Field Forces II Corps
E Battery 41st Artillery, 50cal Quad Gun Truck

Meet Bob Cuce on Monday, February 25th, 2013 at the Levittown Public Library at 7:30 pm. He will be our honored guest of the Long Island Scale Model Society meeting. This biography is taken from several interviews with Bob by our club President, Robert DeMaio, where they met as co-workers, became friends and Robert built a model replica of Bob's Quad 50 Gun Truck.



Robert Cuce after Basic Training.

Right: Robert's Truck in Vietnam. Note their little pup, Hoss, under the truck shading him from the hot sun.

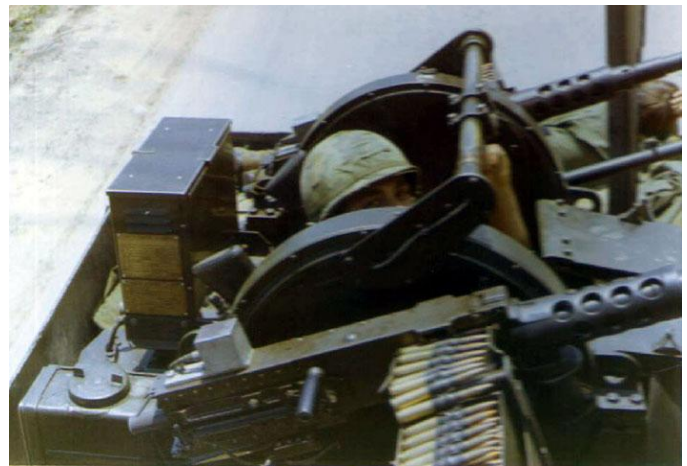


The truck crews painted their vehicles non-regulation semi-gloss black because they could, and provided a stealth effect at night while guarding the perimeter. The enemy had a difficult time spotting them. Even if the enemy spotted them in the perimeter at dusk, the trucks were usually relocated in the perimeter at night. The fine dirt on the Vietnam roads became high maintenance for the truckers. The crews often cleaned the trucks with diesel fuel which created a glossy finish.

Bob and crew hired a local town artist to paint the shields with the Vietnam maps with the two years of the crew's active service time there, and the script writing as well, A Whole Lota Lead and Young Crusaders. If you have no idea where the latter came from, ask Robert to tell you.



Bob sitting on a sister Quad Gun Truck “Back Field In Motion” in Dong Bathin, Vietnam. Later it was renamed and repainted “Freedom Fighters”.



Robert checking out his Quad 50 weapon system preparing for a convoy run.

Bob was a member of E Battery, 41st Arty, U.S. Army serving as the gunner of a Quad .50 Battery mounted on a specially converted Five Ton truck. He was stationed at An Khe in the Central Highlands, and at “Oasis”, a small firebase west of Pleiku just inside of the Cambodian border, and Tuy Hoa along the Vietnam coast, and Dong Ba Thin (north of Cam Ranh Bay) supporting the 5th Special Forces and an aviation helicopter unit, and a small unnamed fire base south west of Cam Ranh Bay supporting the 101st Airborne. This entailed virtually every military section of Vietnam except for the southernmost “Delta” or IV Corp.



Left: A chopper picture view of a fire bases on a hill top. No protection from the enemy up here on the narrow hilltop.



Right: Makeshift sleeping quarters: A Canvas tarp and long branches placed right, provided additional shade for sleeping. A stockpile of sandbags provided additional protection for incoming enemy mortar rounds.

Bob’s role was perimeter defense, convoy support and direct fire support for ground operations. He was responsible for the care and use of the World War II vintage Maxson Quad .50 Gun Turret, originally designed as an anti-aircraft weapon but also used in the anti-personnel role from its inception.



Robert training a newbie on the Quad 50 Big Dog.



While on the Fire Base, our Guard Dog, Hoss, was on the lookout for the enemy.



This USA World War II grease gun with flash suppressor was captured from a Vietnamese enemy by Bob in Cambodia. It saved his life in a perimeter fight and was very useful on all missions.



Bob posing with his life saving machine gun after the mission. He celebrated with brewskies

Since Bob captured this machine gun, he kept it by his side while firing the Quad 50. The Quad was designed in World War II primarily as an anti-aircraft weapon to fire in the sky. In Vietnam they were useful as anti-personnel weapons. These being mounted on a 5 ton truck limited its' downward firing degree angle effectiveness if the enemy got too close to the truck. In a fire fight battle, an enemy soldier charged his truck. Bob stood up on the Quad chair and fired his machine gun down at the soldier holding an RPG and killed him before he fired on the truck.

He ran convoys as far south as An Loc and as far north as Dong Ha. Operations were mainly in the central highlands (An Khe, Pleiku, and Kontum). Just as "the Red Ball Express" is remembered from WWII, convoys were a crucial link in the logistical chain to keep American troops fed, clothed and armed. The roads the convoys travelled were often mined, boobytrapped and ambushed just as happens in today's Iraq. Various armed vehicles "rode shotgun" to protect convoys, but it was gun trucks with expert gunners like Bob that the Viet Cong and NVA feared most. Anybody can fire the powerful .50 cal. machine gun but a turret with four guns requires a true marksman and one who knows how to get the most out his guns without quickly burning them out becoming defenseless.



An RPG hit this Quad 50 truck at Mang Yang Pass and loosened the heavy Quad bed. The bed was removed from the chassis. If trucks were not repairable, the parts were salvaged and used to repair other trucks.



The driver of this 18 wheeler truck was shot causing the truck to topple over in Mang Yang Pass between An Khe and Pleiku. Beer was an important cargo run for the GI's and had to be protected with fire power of Bob's Quad 50's.



Left: Not all convoy missions were official business. Ladies from the cities were able to hide behind the armor protection shields on top of the truck. MP's were not allowed to climb the vehicles for inspection due to regulations and the truck was too high for them to see above. How's this inspiration for a small diorama? Would it be "small composition" since most girls were under five foot tall?

Below: Under the direction and photos of Bob, Robert DeMaio duplicated Bob's truck in 1/35 scale from 3 models kits and accessory kits.



Whenever the Quad 50's were present, they were the fist line targets on the enemy's hit list. Bob Cuce miraculously survived two tours in Vietnam with various awards. He attends his unit's reunions every year where he displays and shows off his one of a kind model. Today, Bob lives on Long Island with his family and is a database manager. He still fires weapons! Rifles are his sport, especially M1 Garands. Instead of driving a 5 Ton Truck, he drives a Chevy Colorado, and leaves the guns at home.

Of special interest for modelers is that Bob has photos of Gun trucks and can describe how they were painted and why. Hear first hand that what you thought you knew about Vietnam Gun trucks; you may be wrong!