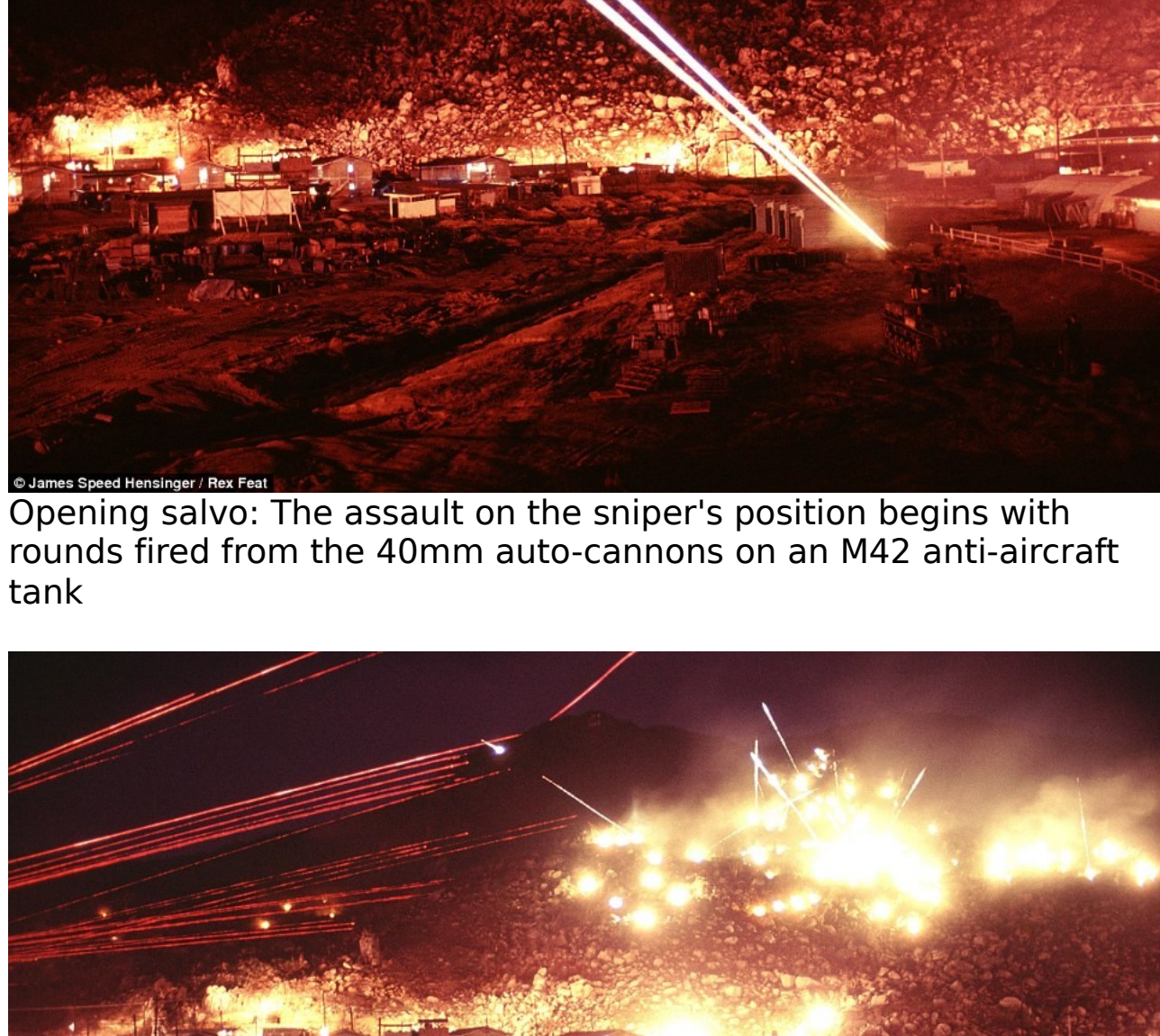


Astonishing Vietnam War photos reveal the moment U.S. troops unleashed hell on Viet Cong sniper in hills above an Army camp

By [Daily Mail Reporter](#)

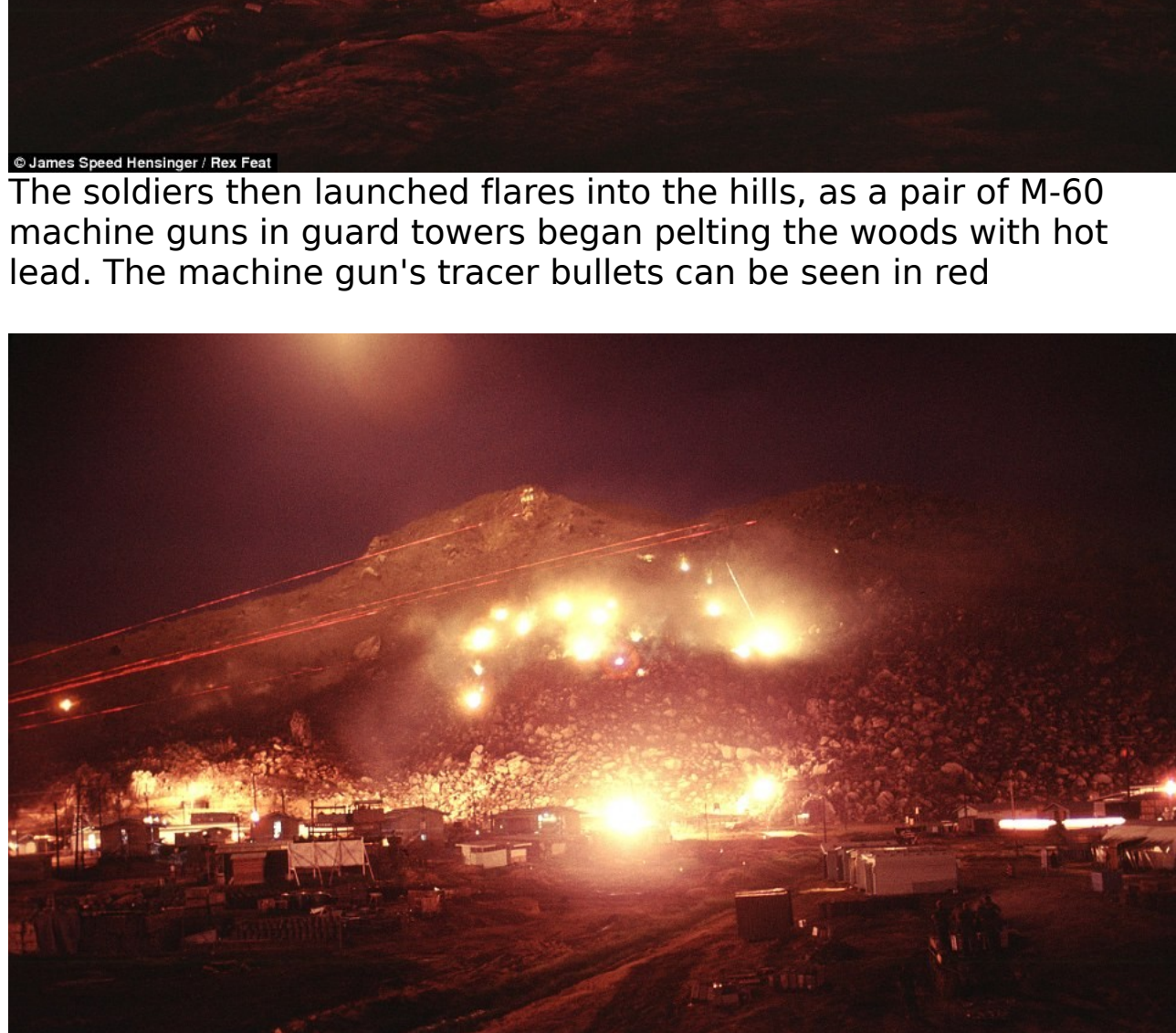
A Vietnam War veteran has released incredible night-time photographs he took of American troops opening fire on a Viet Cong sniper who had been firing on a U.S. Army camp. For more than four decades, photographer James Speed Hensinger kept these incredible photographs to himself, not releasing them to the public until now.

Hensinger was just a 22-year-old paratrooper with the 173rd Airborne Brigade in April 1970 when a Viet Cong sniper began spraying automatic rifle fire on Hensinger's base in Phu Tai, near the coastal city of Da Nang.



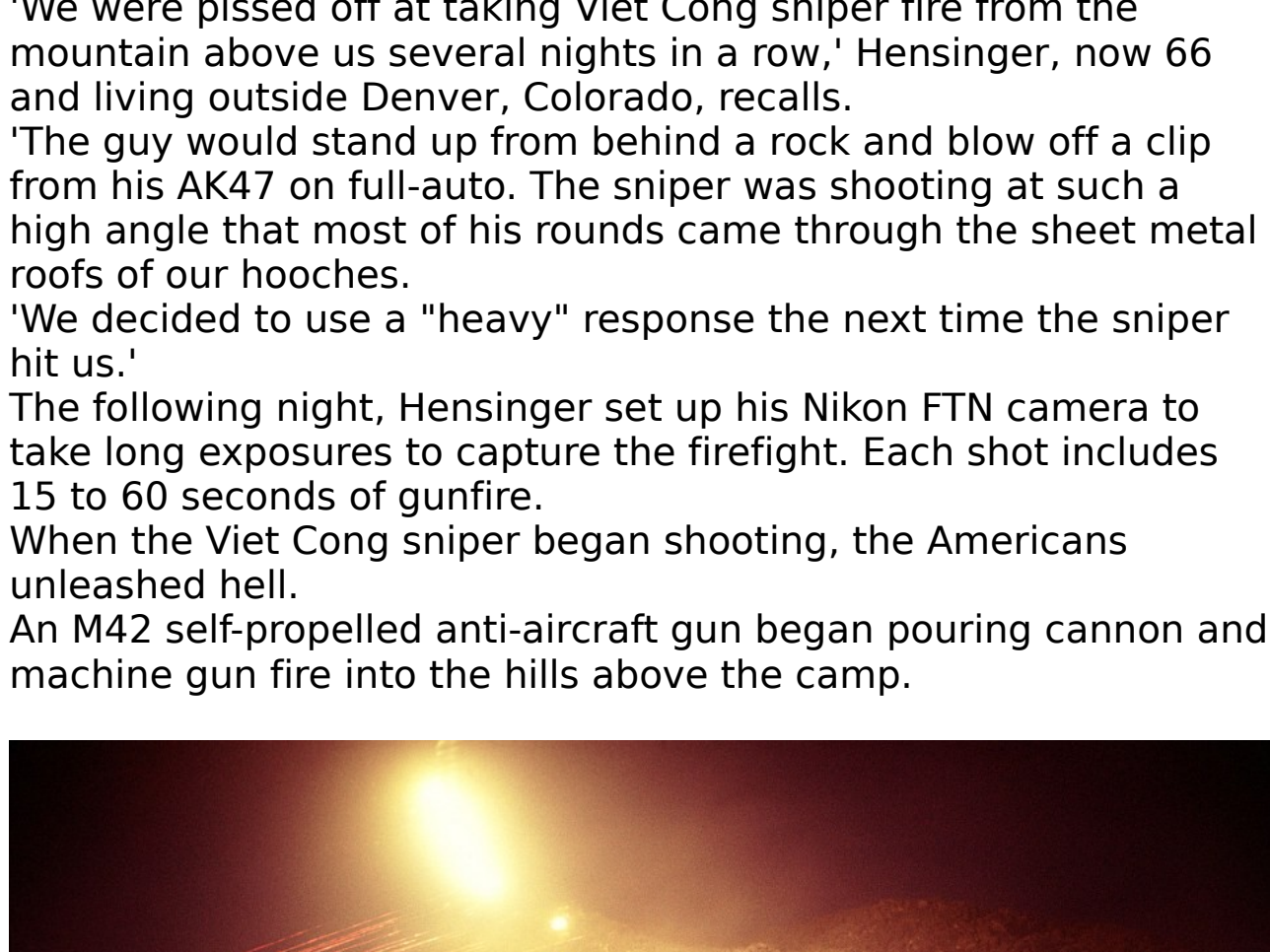
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Opening salvo: The assault on the sniper's position begins with rounds fired from the 40mm auto-cannons on an M42 anti-aircraft tank



© James Speed Hensinger / Rex Feat

The soldiers then launched flares into the hills, as a pair of M-60 machine guns in guard towers began pelting the woods with hot lead. The machine gun's tracer bullets can be seen in red



© James Speed Hensinger / Rex Feat

The U.S. soldiers were trying to kill a Viet Cong sniper who routinely fired on the camp from the safety of the rock outcroppings.

'We were pissed off at taking Viet Cong sniper fire from the mountain above us several nights in a row,' Hensinger, now 66 and living outside Denver, Colorado, recalls.

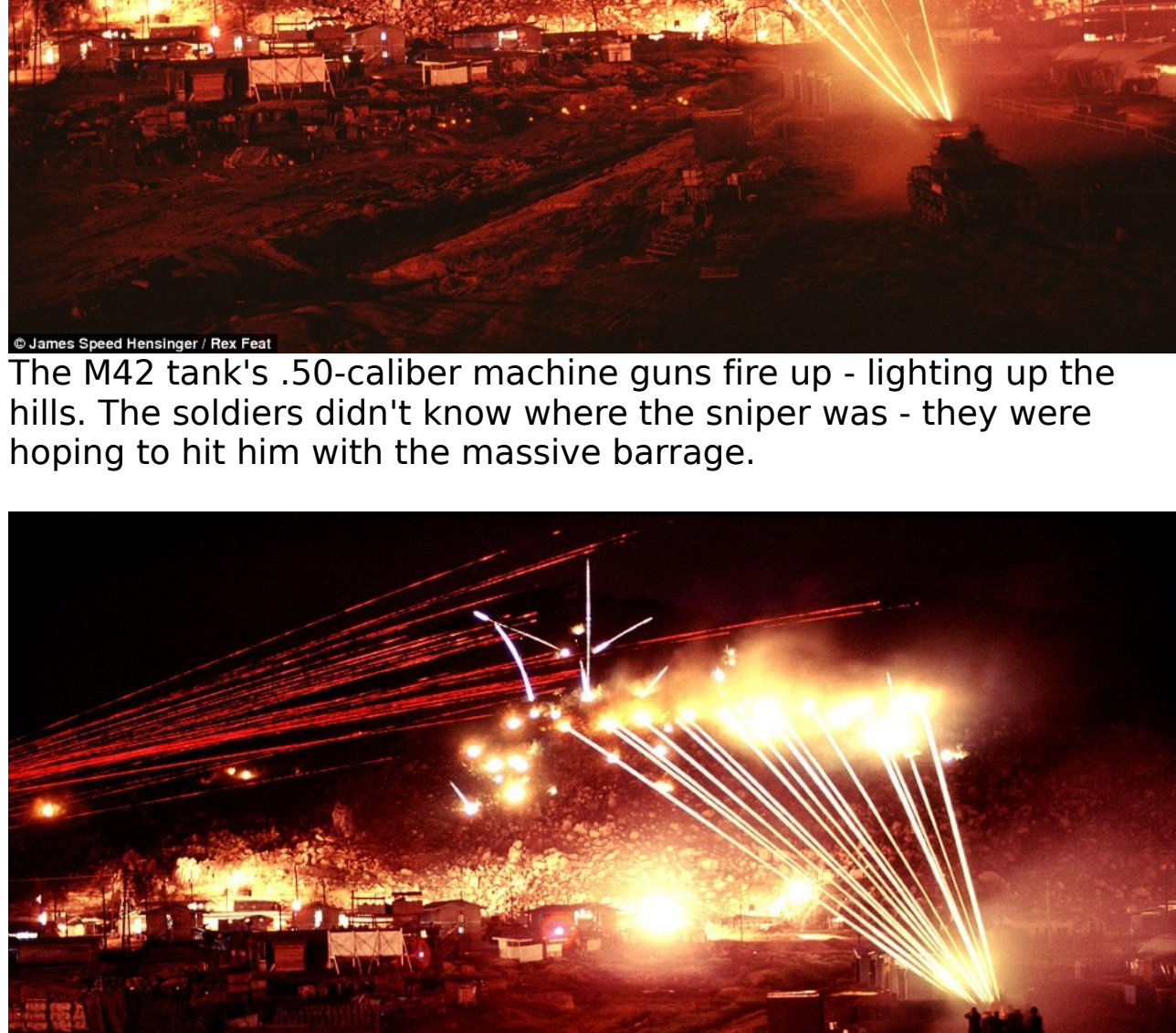
'The guy would stand up from behind a rock and blow off a clip from his AK47 on full-auto. The sniper was shooting at such a high angle that most of his rounds came through the sheet metal roofs of our hooches.

'We decided to use a "heavy" response the next time the sniper hit us.'

The following night, Hensinger set up his Nikon FTN camera to take long exposures to capture the firefight. Each shot includes 15 to 60 seconds of gunfire.

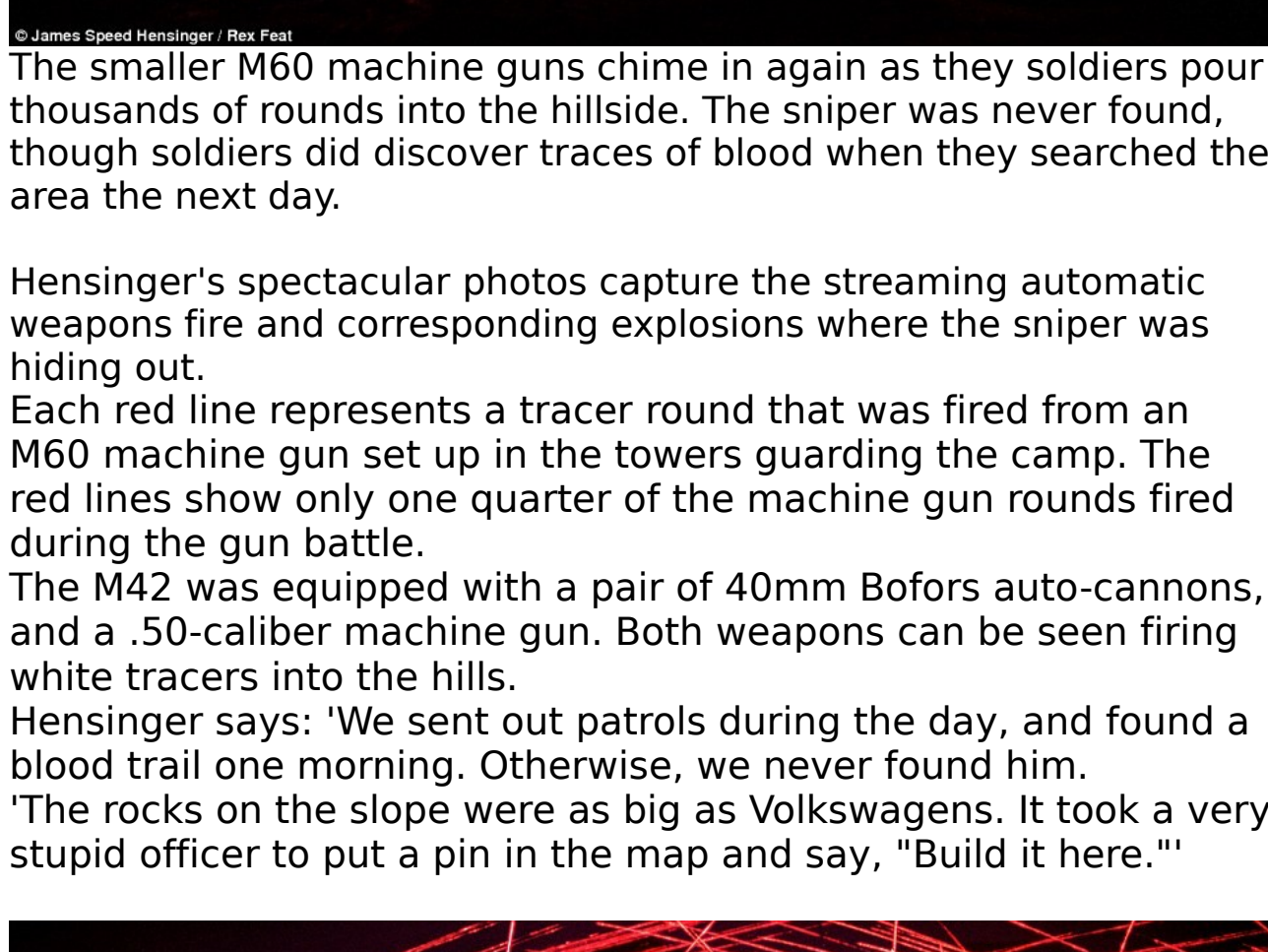
When the Viet Cong sniper began shooting, the Americans unleashed hell.

An M42 self-propelled anti-aircraft gun began pouring cannon and machine gun fire into the hills above the camp.



© James Speed Hensinger / Rex Feat

James Speed Hensinger was a 22-year-old soldier when he set his Nikon camera to take long exposures. He didn't know what to expect when he sent the film off to be developed. What he got back is nothing short of incredible



© James Speed Hensinger / Rex Feat

The M42 tank's .50-caliber machine guns fire up - lighting up the hills. The soldiers didn't know where the sniper was - they were hoping to hit him with the massive barrage.



© James Speed Hensinger / Rex Feat

The smaller M60 machine guns chime in again as they soldiers pour thousands of rounds into the hillside. The sniper was never found, though soldiers did discover traces of blood when they searched the area the next day.

Hensinger's spectacular photos capture the streaming automatic weapons fire and corresponding explosions where the sniper was hiding out.

Each red line represents a tracer round that was fired from an M60 machine gun set up in the towers guarding the camp. The red lines show only one quarter of the machine gun rounds fired during the gun battle.

The M42 was equipped with a pair of 40mm Bofors auto-cannons, and a .50-caliber machine gun. Both weapons can be seen firing white tracers into the hills.

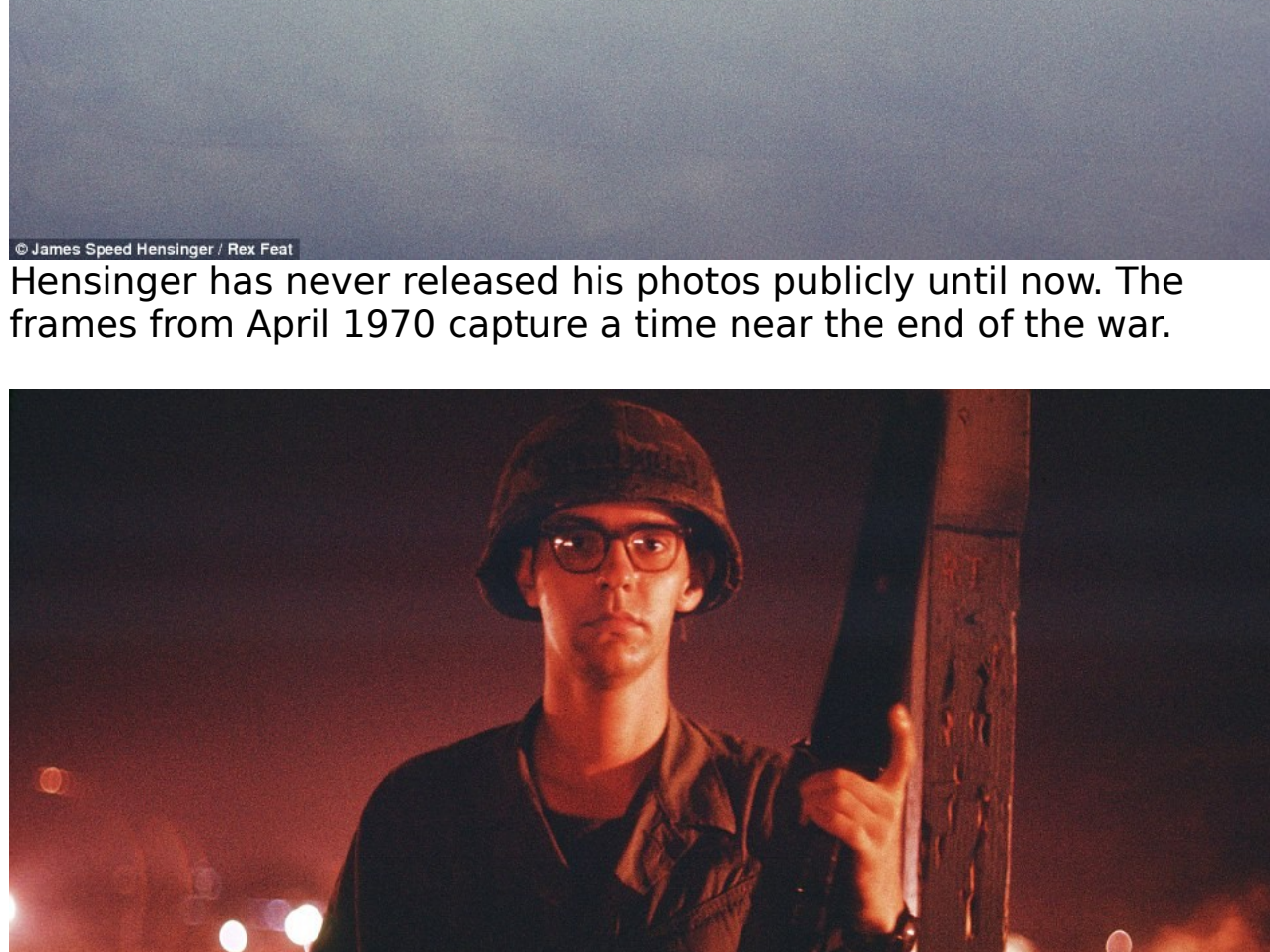
Hensinger says: 'We sent out patrols during the day, and found a blood trail one morning. Otherwise, we never found him.'

'The rocks on the slope were as big as Volkswagens. It took a very stupid officer to put a pin in the map and say, "Build it here.'"



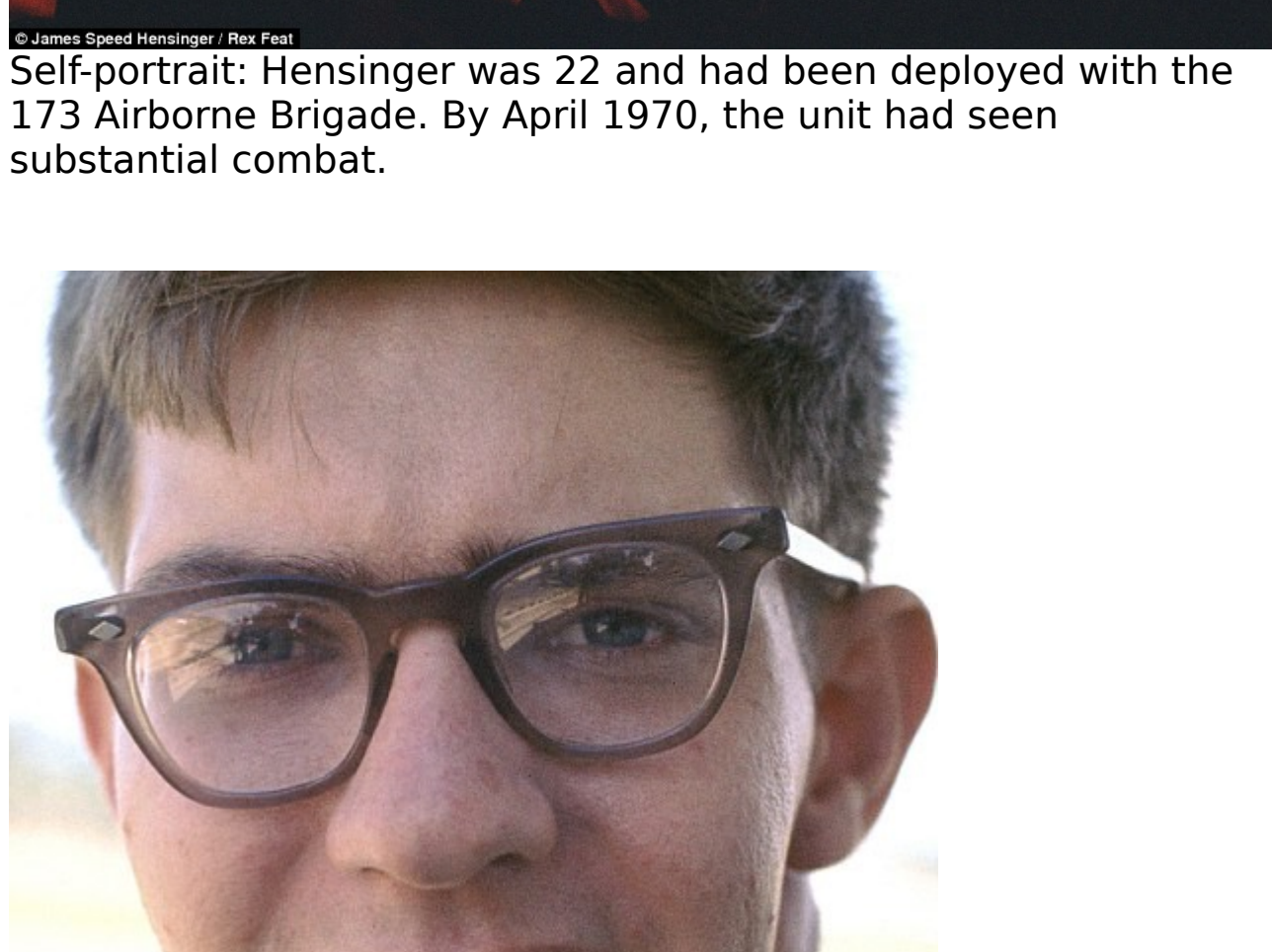
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Unleash hell: The hillside becomes a sea of fire when the big guns on the tank begin firing, in addition to the bursts from the three machinguns.



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A man is seen walking through a rice paddy in the South Vietnamese town of Phu Tai, where Hensinger was stationed.



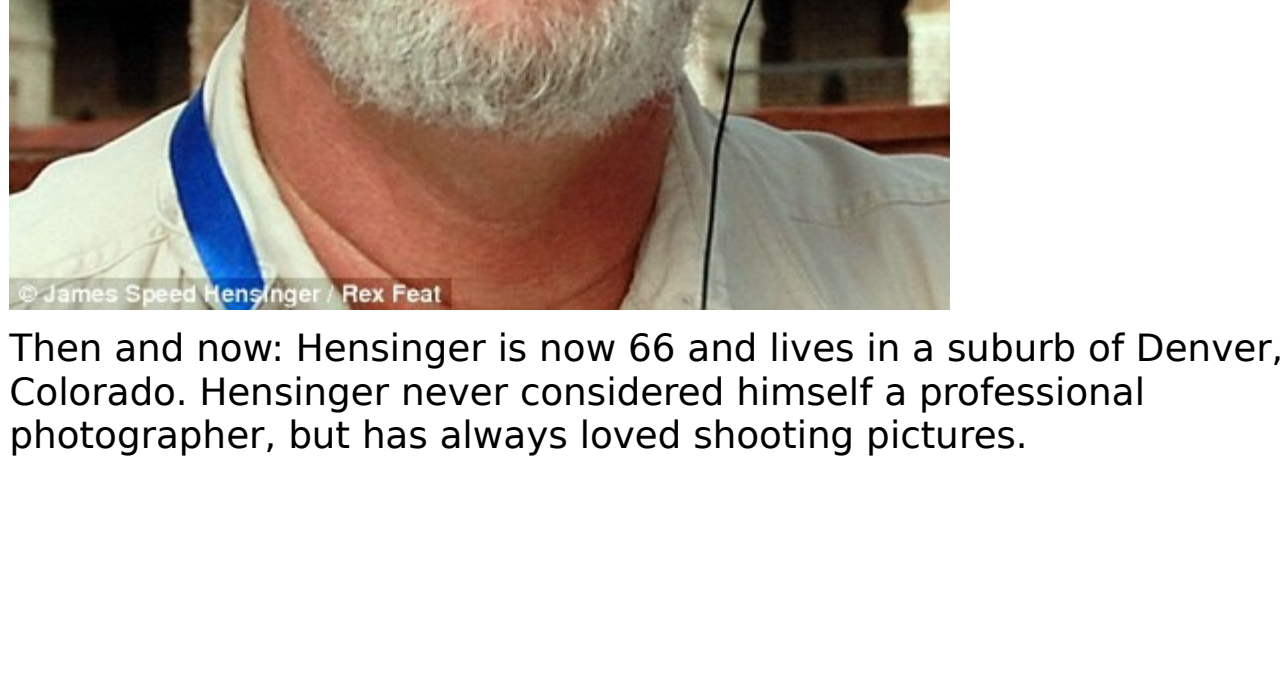
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Hensinger also captured the simple, agrarian beauty of the Vietnamese countryside.



© James Speed Hensinger / Rex Feat

Hensinger has never released his photos publicly until now. The frames from April 1970 capture a time near the end of the war.



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Self-portrait: Hensinger was 22 and had been deployed with the 173 Airborne Brigade. By April 1970, the unit had seen substantial combat.

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Then and now: Hensinger is now 66 and lives in a suburb of Denver, Colorado. Hensinger never considered himself a professional photographer, but has always loved shooting pictures.