Primo Copters Support Infantry

SOUTHERN CROSS
AMERICAL DIVISION

Vol. 3, No. 11 CHU LAI, VIETNAM April 3, 1970

TWO DIVISION LOHs of the Aviation Section, 11th Inf. Bde. warm up and radio for flight clearance prior to an evening armed visual reconnaissance mission.
(Photo By SP4 Peter R. Sorensen, 11th Bde. IO)

Can't Fight On An Empty Stomach

Rice Denial Frustrates Enemy

FSB BRONCO – "Rice, rice, my kingdom for some rice," might be the beleaguered cry of an NVA or VC field officer as he steps before his men to tell them that their food ration has been cut by two-thirds.

Today, as in Napoleon's day, "an army moves on its stomach," and in southern Quang Ngai Province, Division soldiers are making sure that whatever movement the enemy plans will be made on an empty stomach.

"In 1969 the 11th Inf. Bde. denied the enemy 450,000 pounds of rice and in the first two months of 1970, 8,000 pounds have been confiscated," reported MSG Leonard E. Suhr of Brigade S-2 (Clintonville, Wis.)

SFC Dale C. Baker said, "The majority of classified information gained from agents, Hoi Chanhs and other sources, points out that the enemy is in a real bind for rice."

"From one of our last informants we learned that his unit which once rationed 900 grams of rice per man per day has cut the individual soldier's lot to 300 grams or about two thirds of a pound a day," added MSG Suhr. He went on to say, "The last large food cache was discovered by a company of 1st Bn., 20th Inf. northeast of Duc Pho; 20,000 poinds were confiscated."

The rice was stored in plastic bags underground and was so plentiful that the 11th Bde. soldiers nicknamed the area "Uncle Ben's Island."

Captured rice is further capitalized on the its is turned over to the brigade PSYOPS section for distribution to needy Vietnamese.

1LT Robert T. Cossaboom (Berea, Ohio), 11th Bde. PSYOPS officer said, "Captured enemy rice is given to battalions which employ it as of their pacification programs. In the past year, it was given to flood victims, pacified hamlets, as pay to civilian workers, Army sponsored civilian projects and in other such situations. Confiscated rice is stored in a warefouse on FSB Bronco.

"Presently we have about 1,000 pounds of rice and 2,000 pounds of salt on hand. We have had as much as five tons in storage here. Since rice is a seasonal crop, the amount fluctuates with the time of year. During planting and growing months we have to be careful about how much we parcel out," the PSYOPS officer concluded.

In the 11th Inf. Bde. area of operations a confiscated enemy rice cache presents a twofold advantage to the Allies. Militarily, the food loss inflicts a toll on enemy combat effectiveness, health and morale. In pacifaction program, the rice is turned to the South Vietnamese people either for the maintenance of a hamlet or emergency relief to victims of natural disasters. (11th Bde. IO)

Hilltop Relay Station Provides Link To Units

By SP4 Carl Ekengren

LZ HAWK HILL – Perched on top of a mountain, three Division artillerymen played a vital role in a recent operation near New Hau Duc.

PFC Ricard Magnusen (Box Hill, S.D.), PFC Ed Scheldrup (Blackduck, Minn.) and PFC Ronald Alexander (Decantor, Ga.) are cannoneers assigned to the 3rd Bn., 82nd Arty. They spent eight days on a mountaintop acting as a relay station back to Hawk Hill and also between the US and ARVN elements.

The three men situated themselves on a high mountain with their radios and acted as intermediaries between New Hau Duc and Hawk Hill.

Scattered throughout the New and Old Hau Duc Valleys were elements from the 1st Bn., 46th Inf., 196th Bde. and ARVNs from the 5th Regt., 2nd ARVN Div. They were working jointly to try to stem the flow of enemy supplies into the valley.

The little relay station kept the radios manned 24 hous a day. They retransmitted requests for resupply from the units working in the valleys below them.

It was the artillerymen's job to keep the line of communications open from the units in the field all the way back to headquarters. Their job was made necessary by the high mountains all around the valley which prevented the radios below them from transmitting over more than a short distance.

For the eight days, the three men lived like hermits–their only contact to the outside world being the muffled static sounds coming from their radios.

When their job was completed, the men returned to Hawk Hill. They received no medals but maybe to one or two of the infantrymen they might be remembered as the voices who helped get some hot food to the field. (196th Bde. IO)

By SP4 Peter R. Sorensen

FSB BRONCO – The variety of their missions is an indication of the versatility of their aircraft. The are the sports cars of the helicopter set, and are more elusive and pesky than the enemy they seek either by visual reconnaissance or armed confrontation. They are the men and Light Observation Helicopters (LOHs) of "Primo," the Aviation Section of the 11th Inf. Bde.

The Aviation Section is not merely one of location or paperwork–on the 28th of September, 1966, the brigade and Primo were activated in Hawaii, and December, 1967, both arrived in Vietnam. Since that time Primo has been providing tactical and administrative support to this brigade.

CPT Glenn D. Rickert (Souderton, Pa.), Aviation Section commander, stated, "Primo performs many types of tactical missions: armed visual and visual reconnaissance, security for mine sweeps, adjustment of artillery fire and mission over-flights for unit performing long range patrols. The LOH has the capabilities of flying up to 10,000 feet for and over-flight or a few feet off the ground for visual reconnaissance missions."

LOHs also help to fill in gaps which may arise in regular logistical lines. When needed, Primo flies ammunition, troop and food resupply missions. Their services are available to any who have emergency transportation problems which may occur pertaining to leaves, passes or R & R.

Daily, Primo affords the 11th Inf. staff a quick mode of transportation necessary for the administration of such a large unit. Officers and men can be flown anywhere in the area of operations in a matter of minutes.

On visual reconnaissance or security runs, the LOH hedgehops over and around trees, up and down mountains. "One night on an air security check of Bronco we spotted a fresh bunker. We just hovered over the bunker and dropped a handgrenade into the opening; two VC came running out, coughing and sputtering, with their hands up," recalled CPT Rickert.

The combination of an experienced pilot with sharp eyes and a hedgehopping LOH make it possible to spot many hazards from the air which would remain invisible on the ground.

CWO George P. Huggins (Philadelphia) related, "'Ambush Alley' on Highway One, a few miles south of Duc Pho used to be a threat to convoy traffic. The VC or NVA could lie hidden in ambush a small distance from the road and nobody could see them.

"Then a few months ago we were working security with gunships, spotted the enemy and a combination of tracks on the ground and gunships and Primo in the air killed 27. Now, we fly a visual reconnaissance of Highway One every morning to supply air intelligence and instant suppressive fire if needed."

Section commander Rickert emphasized, "The VC used to put up booby-trapped NVA flags every couple of weeks on Highway One. We'd spot them from the air and radio the location to the battalion concerned. They also used to put mounds of dirt every few feet on the road–some mounds were booby-trapped. Seeing this ahead of time we could warn the engineers, and they were also able to take the necessary precautions. One time we spotted a VC booby-trap marker which consisted of three rocks in a particular arrangement on a stump. In this situation, we either blow it in place from the air or warn the battalion in the area."

Although they took their name, "Primo," from a brand of Hawaiian bee, the pilots and crew take their flying seriously.

Day in and day out, the men and LOHs of Primo, render tactical and administrative support to the 11th Inf. Bde. Such a service is at once a luxury and a necessity, that may encompass flying an infantryman from the bush to a waiting R & R flight or taxi a field commander and artillery forward observer over a combat operation. (11th Bde. IO)

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Compassionate Assignments

If you're mad at the first sergeant, unhappy about your assignment or in debt because of mismanagement, don't ask for a compassionate reassignment to solve your problems.

But, if a member of your immediate family has a serious medical problem, there's been a death resulting in severe hardship which can be mended only by your presence, you may have grounds for such a transfer.

In 1969, nearly 9,000 enlisted men were transferred for compassionate reasons, 55% of the applications received. Thirty-six workers in the Pentagon devote full time to processing the 700 requests received each week. Every application is reviewed by at least three field grade officers, and the merits of each case are weighed individually.

The bible for compassionate transfers, AR 614-6 with changes, states that "consideration for reassignment may be given to cases of extreme hardship which can be alleviated only by an assignment to a specific area." They key words are "extreme hardship."

Of all the cases considered by DA last year, 43% were based on physical illness in the soldier's family, 17% claimed family mental illness, death in the serviceman's immediate family resulted in 14% of the applications, and only 10% resulted from marital difficulties.

The AR is specific in explaining what grounds justify compassionate transfers:

1. The problem must be such that it can be expected to clear up within a reasonable period of time – usually one year is maximum.

2. The problem can be alleviated only by the soldier being assigned to a specific locality.

3. The Problem did not exist or wasn't foreseeable when the soldier last entered active duty.

4. Leave, correspondence, power of attorney or assistance from another person would not alleviate the problem.

If the problem results from a condition of the serviceman's parents-in-law, they must be dependent on him for at least one-half of their support and no other family member is available to solve the problem.

Every application for transfer is a "special case" to the Compassionate Review Branch. Each is carefully considered on its own merits and a decision rendered accordingly. Granting or denying a compassionate transfer is not affected by the number of vacancies existing at the Army installation to which a soldier applies for reassignment.

How does the soldiers go about requesting a compassionate transfer? There's only one route and it's a fast one. Discuss your problem with the first sergeant, commander and personnel officer.

The AR explains in detail what documentation is needed to substantiate an application, and the paperwork must go through the chain of command. The DA Compassionate Review Branch reports that processing time from the soldier, through channels and return to him averages 30 days. And the request takes only five days to process at DA.

Telephone, elictric messages and airmail are used to speed the processing at every step.

Should a compassionate reassignment situation arise while you're on emergency leave or en route overseas, contact the Compassionate Review Branch, Washington, D.C., area code 202, OX 7-0621.

Don't waste your time by requesting a compassionate reassignment for loneliness, chronic illness, or problems which can be solved by leave or with the help of others. And requests based solely on threatened separation, divorce action or psychoneurosis resulting from family separation because of military requirements do not merit compassionate reassignment.

If your request for reassignment is based on medical problems which place an unusual and severe hardship on you or your family, evidence supporting the request will be referred to the Office of The Surgeon General for evaluation.

Religion And You

Fishman Of Faith

By Chaplain (MAJ) Charles Johnson
196th Inf. Bde.

If you do much fishing, you know that many people feel that the largest and best game fish are to be found in the deep water. Many artificial lures are designed so that, as they are retrieved, they dive into the depths.

It appears that Jesus believed this about fishing, too. In the fifth chapter of Luke, we read of when Jesus told Peter and his fishing partners to launch their boats out into the deep water and let their nets down for a catch. Peter and his friends had been fishing all night and catching nothing, and they were ready to quit. However, Peter said that if Jesus felt so strongly about it, and insisted on their doing it, they would take a chance.

Jesus must have known where the fish were. Peter and his friends had to call for help from another boat; their nets were so full that they could not pull them in alone.

There are some exceptions to the deep water fishing concept, such as the bonefish which is taken in the shallows and is a very rewarding game fish. But there are not many exceptions to the requirement for depth in our relationships with others and with God. If we want to enjoy the greatest rewards of both human and divine contacts, we must go below the surface, deeper than the "shallows" to which we restrict so many of our relationships.

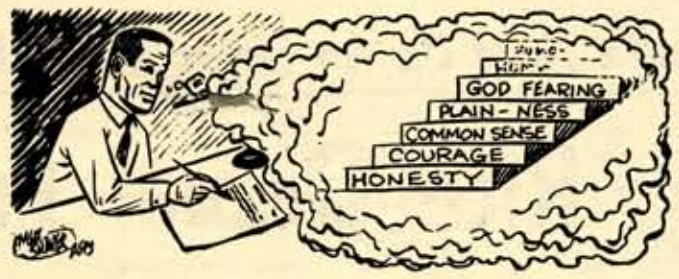
In order to protect ourselves from exploitation, to preserve our so-called dignity, to retain a status of authority, to gain an advantage and keep it, or for one or more of several other equally-doubtful motives, we are prone to keep our relationships with others and with God on a very shallow plane.

A man must invest faith in others if he is going to live below the surface, but we seem reluctant to do so. For some reason, we find it hard to believe that we can trust man or God. And yet, it is only when we add depth to our human contacts that we develop rewarding friendships. It is only when we add depth to our religion that we experience the full blessing of a friendship with God.

Stop worring about what others might do to you, and look for ways to do things for them. If you want to be understood, spend your time trying to understand others. If you would be heard, listen. If you would be loved, love. If you would be believed, put you faith in others.

"Do for others what you want them to do for you." (Matt. 7:12 TEV). Now, that is fishing in deep water, living below the surface of life!

My Hopes for America's Future



In its 1969 Letter Awards Program, the Freedoms Foundation selected Army Specialist 4 Peter Westover II as the top active duty winner, and Air Force Reserve Lt. Col. Ernest B. Henderson as the winner in the Reservists category. Each will receive $1,000 and a George Washington Honor Medal during ceremonies at Valley Forge, Pa., Feb. 22. SP4 Westover is serving with the 101st AG Admin. Company in the Republic of Vietnam. Colonel Henderson is assigned to a reserve unit at Edwards AFB, Calif.

Following are excerpts from their letters on the subject "My Hopes for America's Future."

Sp4 Westover: *"Honesty . . . Courage . . . Common Sense . . . Plain-ness . . . God Fearing . . . These are great traditions. They have been with us since even before Lexington and Concord. They have made America all it is. And, maintained, they will maintain her."*

Colonel Henderson: *"My greatest hope is that my beloved Country will return to the ways of God, the paths our forefathers trod and the spiritual concept in which our democracy was conceived. For then, and only then, can America truly reap the bountiful blessings of her Creator."*

(AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE)

VA News In Review

EDITOR'S NOTE: Veterans and their families are asking thousands of questions concerning the benefits their government provides for them through the Veterans Administration. Below are some representative queries.

Q – I receive 30 per cent disability compensation from the Veterans Administration. However, I will soon be 65 and retired. Can I waive my disability compensation and come under the VA pension program if it is to my financial advantage to do so?

A – In a word, yes. VA suggests you make application for pension. The VA will pay you the higher amount if you are eligible for two benefits.

Q – I have a rather large dividend accumulation on deposit with the Veterans Administration on my insurance. May I withdraw a part of the total amount?

A – Yes. You may withdraw all, or any part of your accumulated dividends.

Q – My husband receives a nonservice-connected pension from the Veterans Administration. If I start working, would it have any effect on the amount of pension he now receives?

A – No. In determining the veteran's income for a nonservice-connected pension, none of the earned income of his spouse will be counted as the veterans income.

Q – Can a veteran go to any school, or pursue any educational program he desires?

A – Yes, if the course or program given leads to a recognized educational, vocational, or professional objective, and is approved by the state-approving agency.

Proud Men Serve Our Army

SFC Edwin K. Crawley
Career Counselor
11th Inf. Bde.

By MSG H.A. Bonesio

Thirty-Six of the 46 soldiers reenlisting in the AMERICAL Division, during a one-week period, were in the First Termer category.

Division Troops was represented by MSG John R. Bayroth, HHC, Americal; SFC Masayoshi Tanno, 635th MI Co.; SGT Henry Sherwood, D Co., 26th Engr. Bn.; SSG Frank Bechtold, A Trp., and PFC James Glaser, HHT, 1-1st Cav.

Support Command had SFC Bobby Bramlett and SSG Gerald Mills, 23rd Admin. Co.; SGT Douglas Brooks and PVT Elton Parks, 23rd AG Repl. Co.; PSG Mitchell Lewis, HHC, 23rd S&T Bn.; SFC Lester Dunn, B Co., 23rd Med. Bn.

Division Artillery retains SP4 Jackie Riley and SP4 Francisco Lubin-Cazares, B Btry., 1-14th Arty.; SFC Harold Strawderman, HHB, 3-18th Arty.; SP4 George Green, B Btry., 1-14th Arty.

The 16th Combat Aviation Group keeps SP5 William Arrington, A Co., 123rd Avn. Bn.

The 11th Infantry Brigade reenlistees were SP4 Steven Foster, HHC; from 1-20th Inf., SP4 Hershel Weathers, B Co., PFC Frank Garcia, C Co.; from 4-3rd Inf., PFC Michael Kemper and SGT Martin Paterson, A Co., PFC Edward Lauver, C Co., PVT Robert Jones, E Co.; from 3-1st Inf., PFC Larry Flickinger, D Co.; from 4-21st Inf., PFC Howard Dehann, HHC.

The 196th Infantry Brigade re-upped PFC Paul Fredenburg, F Trp., 17th Cav.; from 1-46th Inf., PFC Lawrence DeLair, PFC Clair Gaskins, SP4 Thomas Blyth, all with B Co., PFC Steven Berrier and PFC Arnold Galacia, D Co.; from 2-1st Inf., PFC Jose Pizarro-Pizarro, C Co., PFC Stephen Lyon, D Co., PFC Larry Yeager, E Co.; from 3-21st Inf., PFC John Williams, C Co.

The 198th Infantry Brigade was represented by MSG James Courtney, HHC; from 1-6th Inf., PFC Robert Manna, HHC, PFC Thomas Spaulding, B Co., SP4 Samuel Parker, Co Co.; from 1-52nd Inf., SGT Paul Tittle and SP4 Galen Wanderschied, D Co.; from 5-46th Inf., MSG Arthur Newton, HHC, PFC Michael Somner, A Co.

SOUTHERN CROSS
AMERICAL DIVISION

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Col Tho: Remarks On Progress

TAM KY – COL Hoang Dinh Tho, province chief of Quang Tin Province and former commander of the 6th ARVN Regt., recently reviewed accomplishments of Allied Forces in southern I Corps during an interview at province headquarters in Tam Ky.

COL Tho compared conditions when the first American ground forces arrived at Chu Lai in 1965 to those of 1970 after five years of joint operations in the Quang Tin area.

When American troops first waded ashore at Chu Lai, COL Tho deployed his regiment to provide security for the assault, using one battalion and one reconnaissance element to secure high ground inland. COL Tho then deployed another battalion in the immediate area of the landing, securing about two kilometers of shoreline for the incoming Marines.

Before Allied operations began in the area, Quang Tin had fallen almost completely under VC control.

The Tam Ky area was also far from being under government control. "It was very bad at that time . . . we almost lost it," COL Tho said.

The VC often entered the city to terrorize and extort payment from the residents of the area, he said. The enemy sometimes came within close proximity to province headquarters before being turned back by government troops.

"The area was at that time very much under VC control," COL Tho said.

Hwy 1 was not secure. The surface was bad, and travel was risky. VC forces regularly disrupted travel with mines and ambushes launched from woodlines near the road.

"When Allied forces moved into southern I Corps, People's Self Defense Forces had not been formed. Outside the villages and hamlets, VC elements operated freely, generally working in company-sized units," he said.

ARVN operations consisted mainly of search and clear missions run with multi-company forces. RF and PF units operated at about 10 per cent of their present effectiveness, COL Tho said.

In spite of efforts made by government forces, the VC controlled about 85 per cent of all population centers, including nine out of ten coastal villages.

Even villages under government control experienced problems. "Pacification programs were small, and did not show much progress," he continued.

In attempts to protect the population from attack, government forces conducted security sweeps around the periphery of larger villages and cities.

These sweeps usually encompassed the land within two kilometers of the edges of the towns. Though they did not prevent all VC activity, the patrols prevented open enemy movement and the gathering of large enemy troop concentrations in the immediate area, he said.

During that period, the enemy that COL Tho and his forces faced consisted largely of VC regulars and irregulars, with relatively few NVA soldiers participating in actual combat.

VC tactics and morale were relatively good, COL Tho said. The high troop morale at that time enabled VC units, their NVA "advisors" and leaders to endure bad living conditions and protracted field operations.

The strength and effectiveness of enemy forces reached a peak just prior to the 1968 Tet offensive, according to COL Tho. However, the insurgent forces suffered heavy losses during the ensuing Allied counter-offensive, after which the nature of the enemy seemed to change.

NVA combat troops were being found more and more often in so-called "main force" VC elements. The hard-hit VC forces were apparently replacing many of their casualties with NVA troops.

During subsequent contacts with Government of Vietnam troops, many of the already-thinned hostile forces were decimated–some were virtually wiped out.

"Of those hostile elements still remaining, most are operating at about one half their former capability," COL Tho said.

One of the biggest projects now under way in the province is the resettlement of refugees who fled the hinter regions to live in relocation centers. Many of the areas they left are now ready for re-population, but the persons returning to their homes are badly in need of aid.

COL Tho said, "Basically, we wish to help them return to their normal way of life."

COL Hoang Dinh Tho

Numerous Viets Prosper From Civil Affairs Team

LZ HAWK HILL – Civil affairs workers from the Division's 196th Inf. Bde. are presently working themselves out of a job.

"There was a time when civil affairs workers of the 196th Bde. would, out of necessity, provide the local Vietnamese with materials, labor and whatever else they needed for their civic action projects," said MAJ Lee W. Tessmer (Minneapolis), civil affairs officer, 196th Bde. "Now we are showing them how, by going through proper channels, they can obtain this same support from their own government."

An example might help illustrate MAJ Tessmer's point. In early 1969 the village of Phu Phong, 15 miles north of Tam Ky, requested a school. Not only did Americans supply the materials, but the civil affairs team from the 196th Bde. actually got out and helped the local Vietnamese build the school.

Recently the village council at Hiep Duc, 22 miles west of Tam Ky, also voted to construct a schoolhouse. However, this school will be different. The materials will be supplied through Province Headquarters, Tam Ky, Quang Tin Province. The people of Hiep Duc will supply the labor and the American role will be strictly advisory.

The civil affairs team from 4th Bn., 31st Inf., 196th Bde., is helping the local Hiep Duc officials to properly fill out and submit the necessary paperwork to Tam Ky. Once the building of the school gets underway, A Co., 26th Engr. Bn., will furnish the villagers with whatever technical assistance they may need. But the materials and labor will be furnished by Vietnamese.

Throughout Quang Tin Province Vietnamese are being encouraged to seek assistance from their own government.

"The local villagers can still count on us for material support should the need arise," said CPT William H. Marty (Santa Cruz, Calif.), 196th Bde. "Our goal is to encourage the Vietnamese to first make every available effort to get support from the Government of Vietnam (GVN), and then assist them when the project is beyond their capability."

The Vietnamese development in Quang Tin Province is at the stage where the local villagers can go through their own channels. Also, the standard of living has risen considerably and the basic needs of the people are being met by the GVN.

Equally important is the security provided by soldiers of the 196th Bde. and of the 5th Regt., 2nd ARVN Div. Aside from keeping the VC on the run, the allies completely frustrated the two major offensive recently mounted by the NVA–at Hiep Duc in August of 1969 and west of Tam Ky during January of this year.

There are presently a few Class II projects underway in the province--such as the construction of a large fish market at Tam Ky–but generally Class 1A projects are the most popular. These projects are easy both to initiate and supervise and also meet the present needs of most rural villages.

The role of the 196th Bde. civil affairs teams is primarily to aid village officials in getting governmental support for these projects.

"As time goes by, the Vietnamese will probably need less assistance from us in obtaining aid from their government," said MAJ Tessmer.

Psyops Proves Worth

By 1Lt Robert R. Kresge

LZ BAYONET – Division PSYOPS personnel have been successfully convincing VC and NVA soldiers to rally to the government of South Vietnam in large numbers. The PSYOPS sections are generally not on the scene for the rallies and rarely receive ralliers themselves.

The 198th Inf. Bde. PSYOPS section is trying to change all that. Often when an enemy soldier rallies to the Government of Vietnam he may know the location of some comrades who would like to join him but who are afraid or do not know the correct procedures.

If trained PSYOPS personnel are on hand for the rally, they can exploit the information from a rallier and use him to attract other potential ralliers. For this reason, the 198th PSYOPS section has formed a "task force" to seek out these "potential ralliers".

"We have an interpreter in a loudspeaker ship who broadcasts the actual Chieu Hoi message," said 1LT Vern Christopherson (Salt Lake City), acting civil affairs officer for the brigade. "In addition, we have two LOHs, two gunships and a squad of infantry from D Trp., 1st Cav."

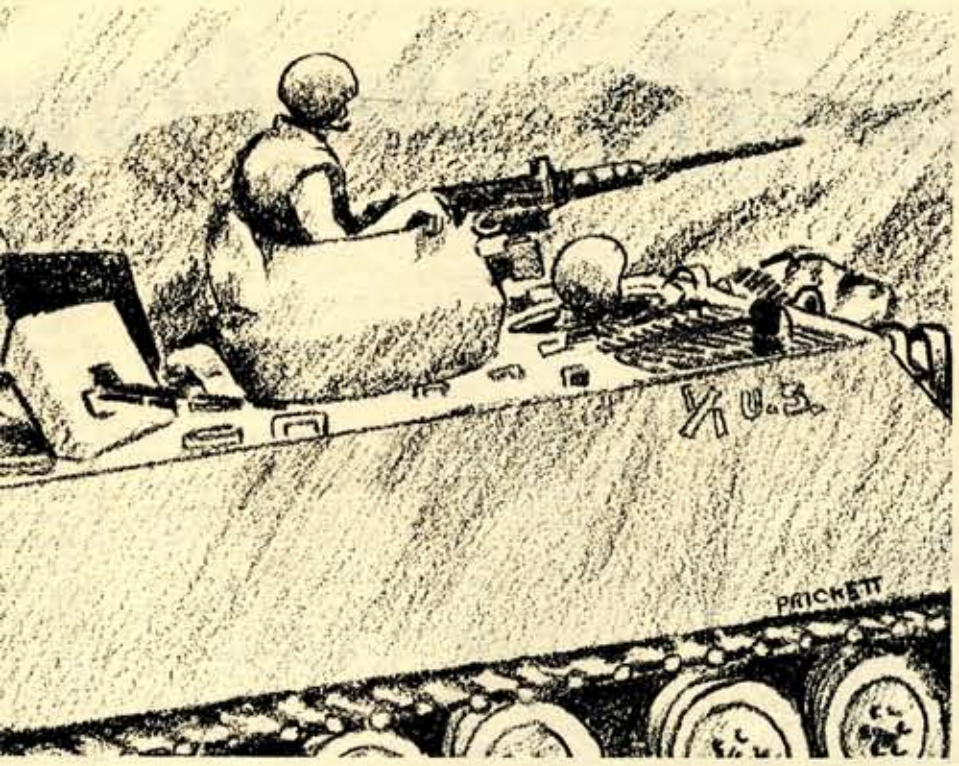
This team acts on intelligence reports or information from other Hoi Chanhs and flies to an area where they can expect to find potential ralliers. The loudspeaker ship starts broadcasting its message at about 1,500 feet over the area while the rest of the team flies higher and stays out of sight.

"When we spot somebody on the ground," continued 1LT Christopherson, "the LOHs go down to see if the area is dangerous. If they receive fire, then we insert the infantry squad. If not, then the loudspeaker ship lands and we pick up the rallier."

An unusual situation happened recently when 1LT Christopherson and his interpreter landed to receive Nguyen Tien Dung, a 20-year-old NVA soldier from Hanoi.

With these facts in hand, the PSYOPS task force will soon take to the skies again to search for more ralliers. Until them, the section can take pride in the fact that they have taken Nguyen Tien Dung out of the war and the enemy is that much weaker.

A 196th Inf. Bde. Civil Affairs worker and a Vietnamese youngster watch as a village chief, stricken with hepatitis, is rushed to a Medevac helicopter. He will be taken to Tam Ky Province Hospital, 16 miles southeast of his native village of Nui Lac Son.
(Photo By SP4 Richard Merritt, 196th Bde. IO)



Presidential Uni

CHU LAI – The 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav. and F Trp., 8th Cav. were awarded the Presidential Unit Citation during a colorful ceremony at 1st Sqdn. headquarters recently.

The units received the award for distinguishing themselves by extraordinary heroism while engaged in military operations against hostile forces in the Republic of Vietnam from January 31 to March 31, 1968.

During this period the units encountered aggressive, well armed and supplied NVA and VC units in company, battalion and regimental size. The 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav. supported by F Trp., 8th Cav. displayed exceptional courage and initiative in opposing a highly motivated enemy who consistently occupied heavily fortified bunkers and tunneled complexes with excellent fields of fire.

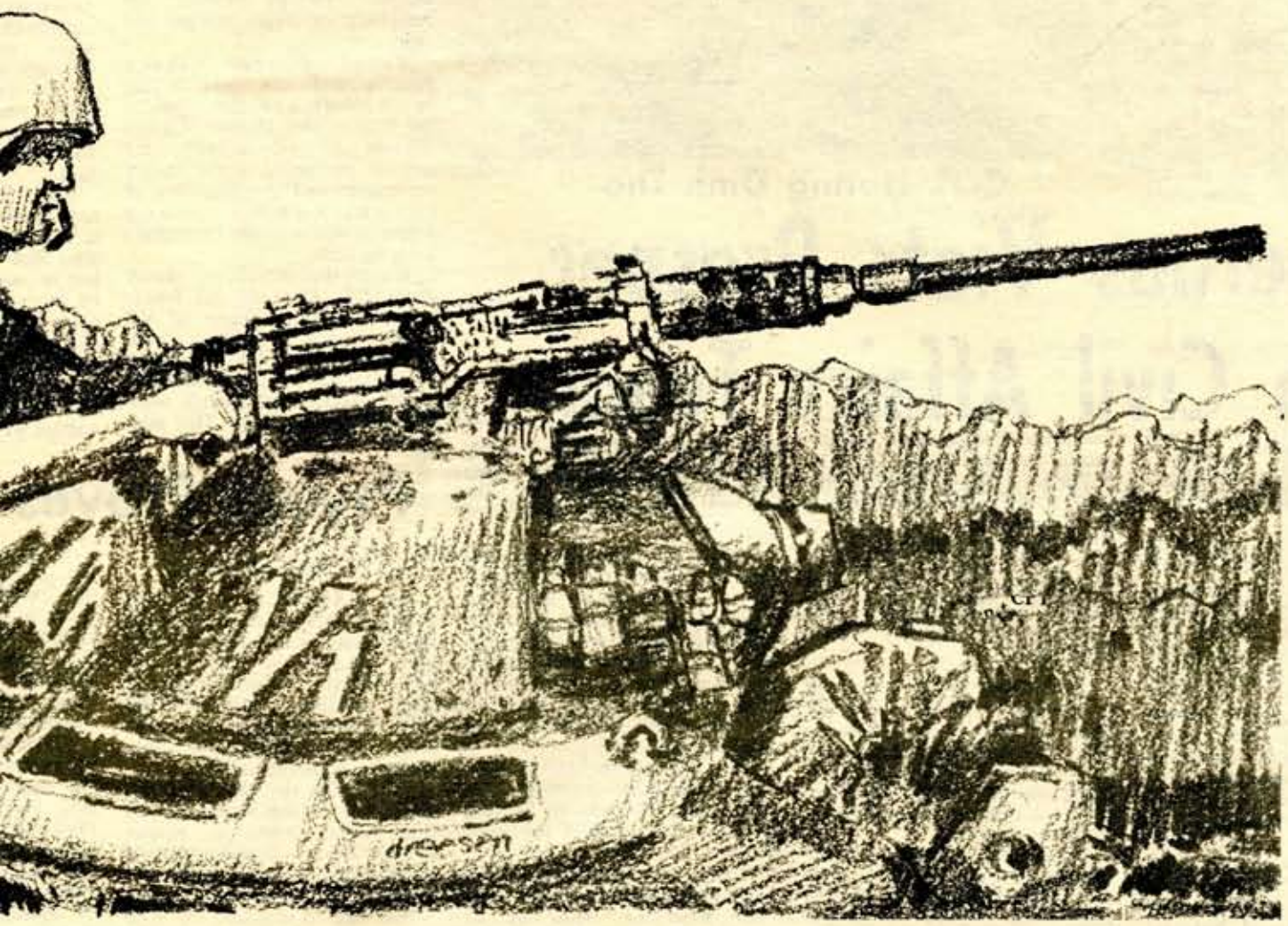
Operating independently, with attached infantry or in conjunction with ARVN forces, the units killed 1,046 NVA and VC in 217 seperate engagements while only sustaining 11 fatal casualties of their own.

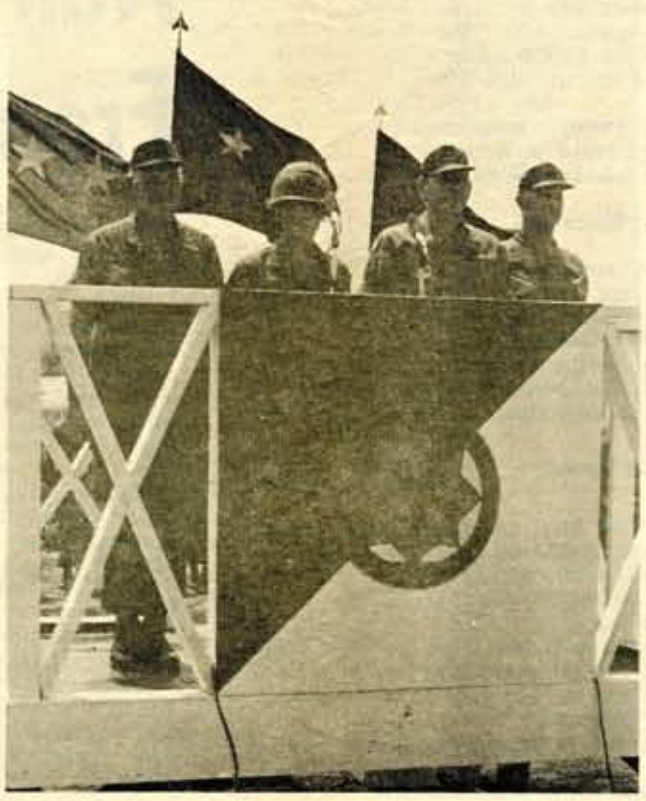
LTC Richard G. Graves, commanding officer of the 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav., accepted the award on behalf of both units. MAJ Charles E. Ivey, commanding officer, F Trp., 8th Cav., was present at the ceremony.

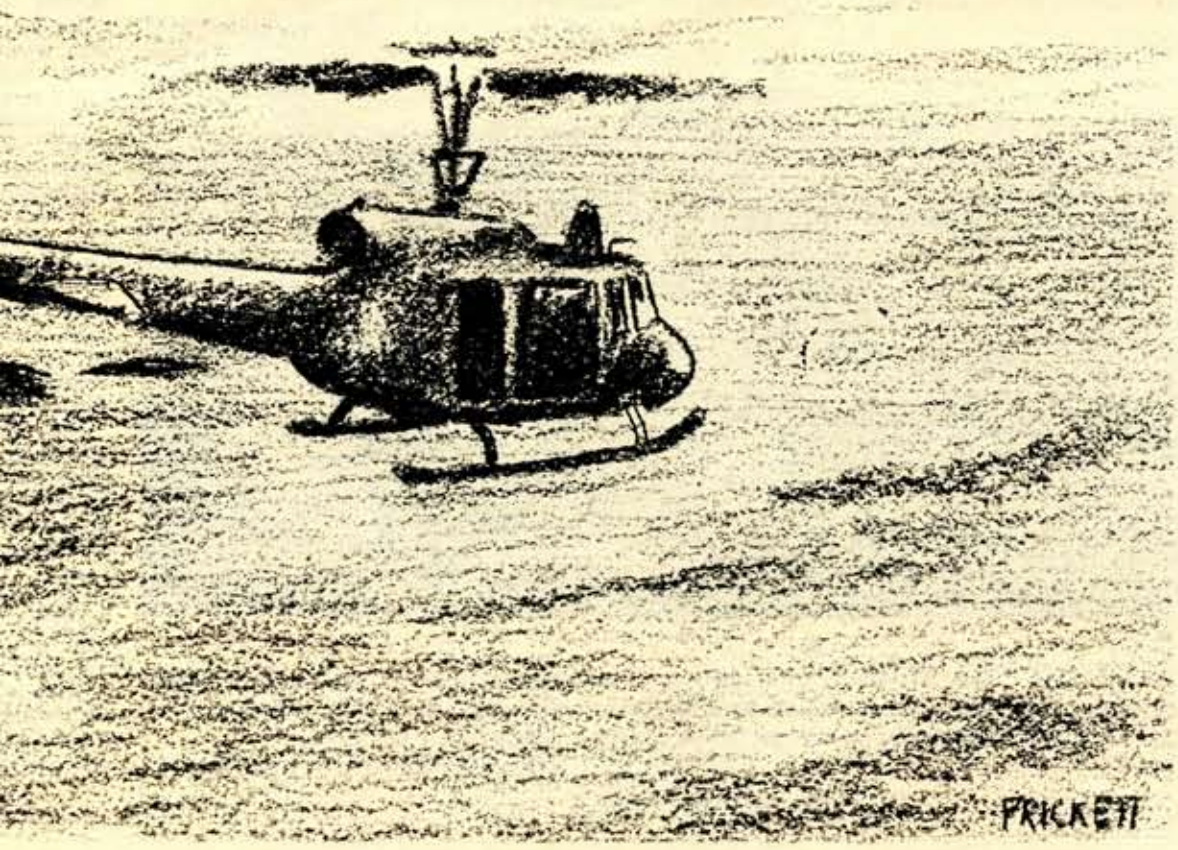
The guidon streamer was presented by GEN Creighton W. Abrams, CG, USARV.

Also present were LTC Melvin Zais, CG, XXIV Corps; MG Lloyd B. Ramsey, CG, Americal Division; BG John W. Donaldson and BG Edwin L. Powell, assistant commander, Americal Division. (Americal IO)

Art and Photos
By
Americal IO







l Unit Citation For Heroism

pendently, with attached tion with ARVN forces, the 'A and VC in 217 seperate only sustaining 11 fatal

aves, commanding officer of av., accepted the award on s. MAJ Charles E. Ivey, F Trp., 8th Cav., was present

ier was presented by GEN CG, USARV.
LTC Melvin Zais, CG, XXIV B. Ramsey, CG, Americal Donaldson and BG Edwin L. mander, Americal Division.

Photos

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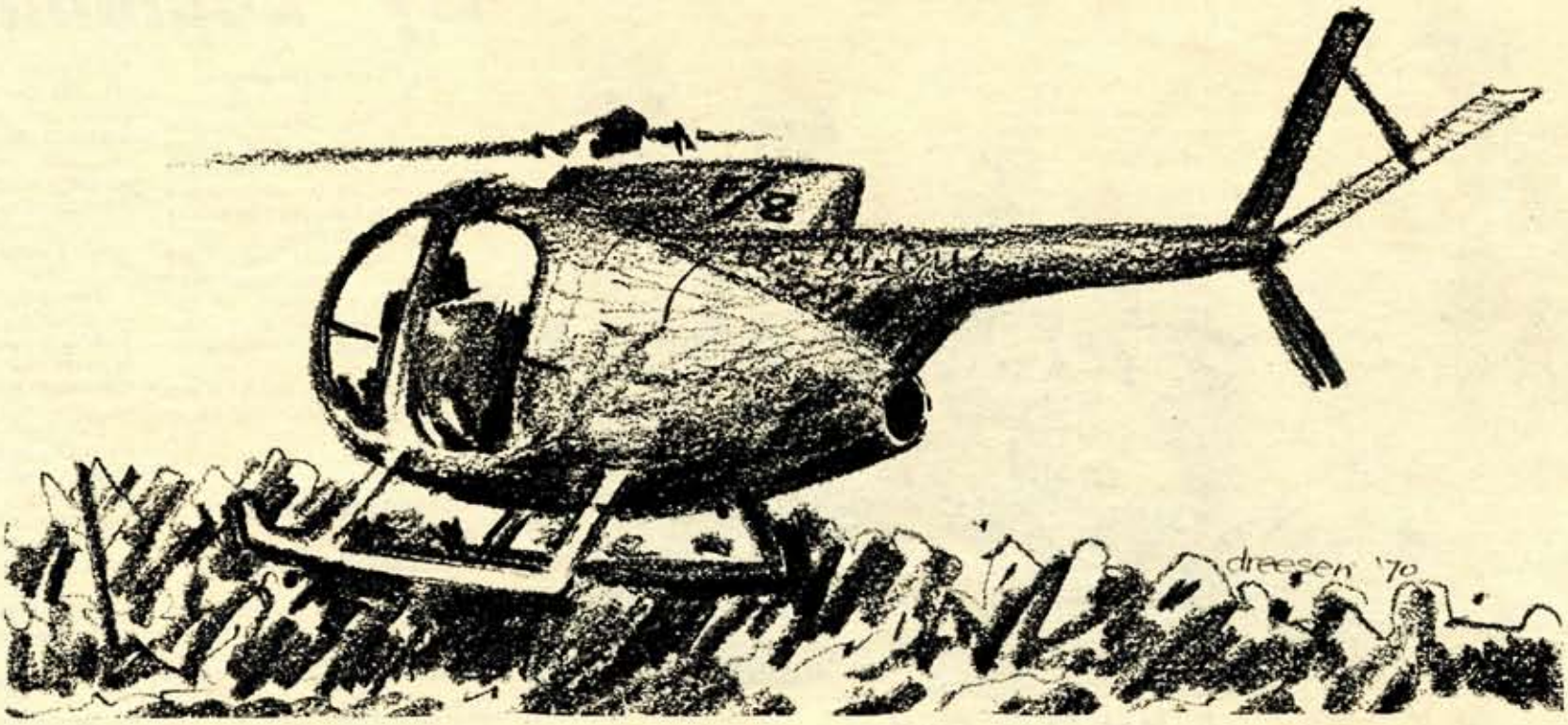
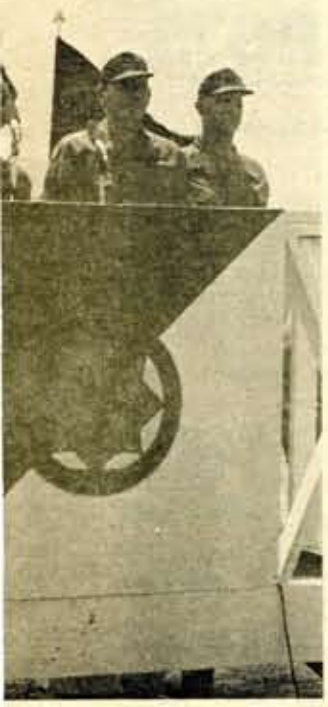
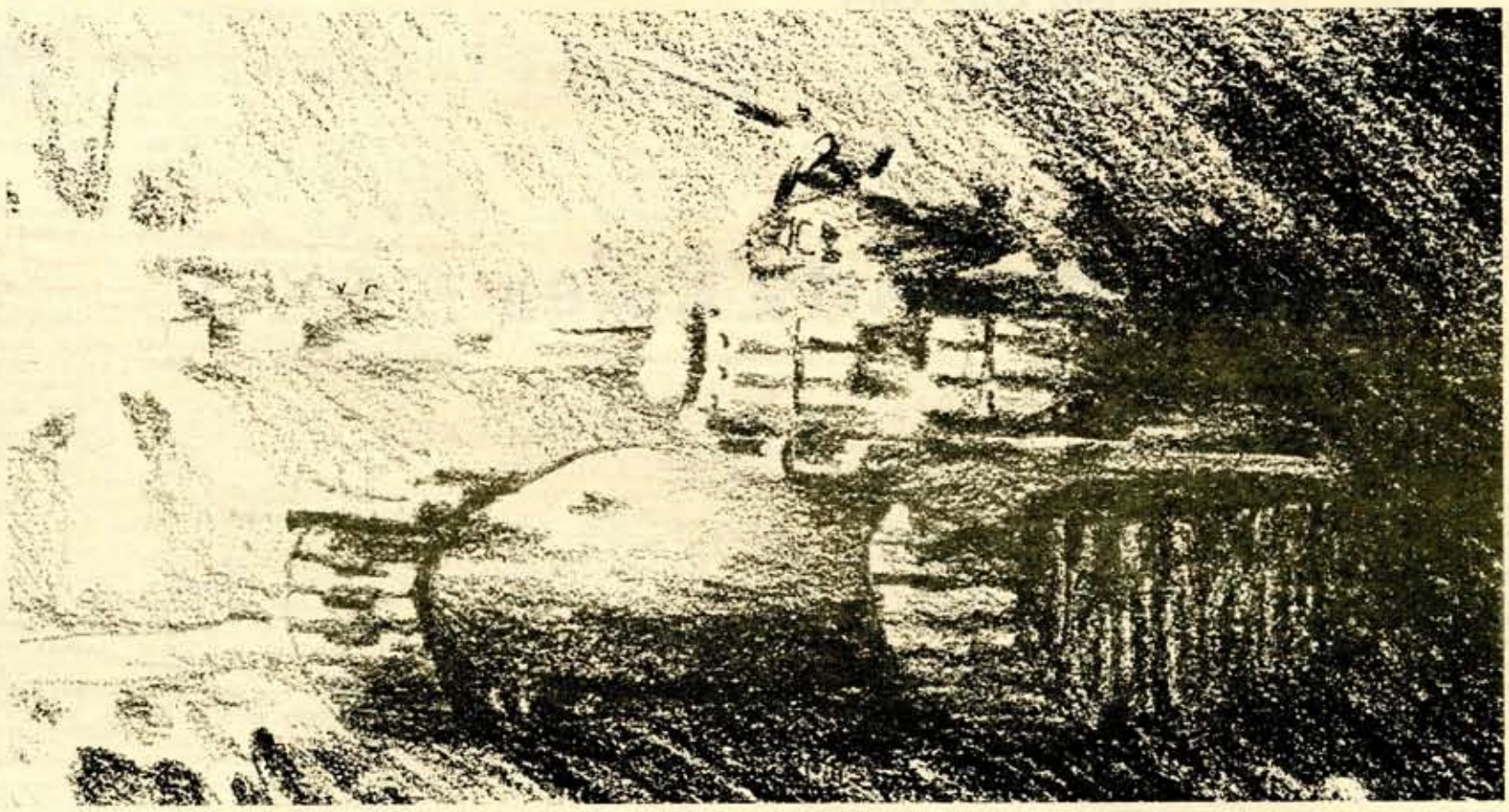
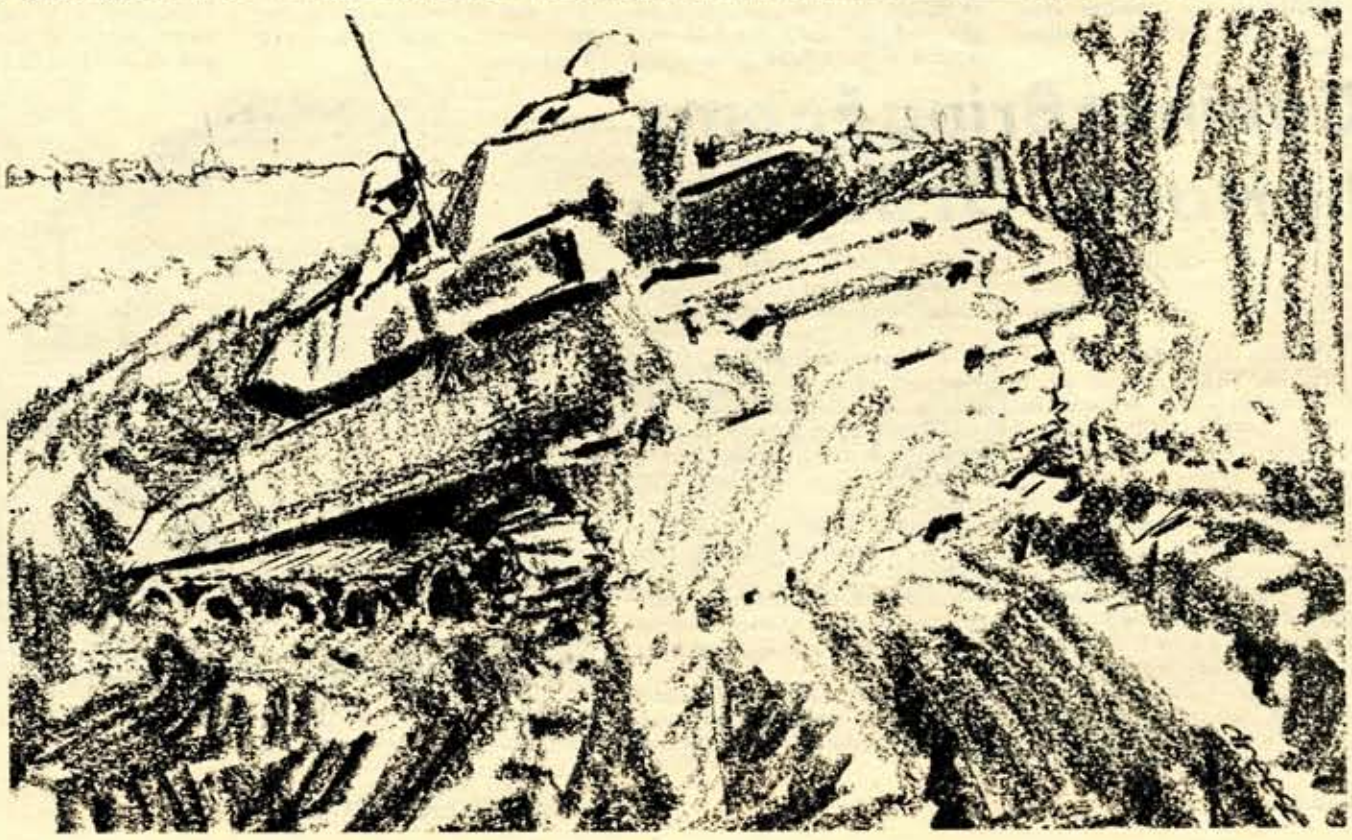
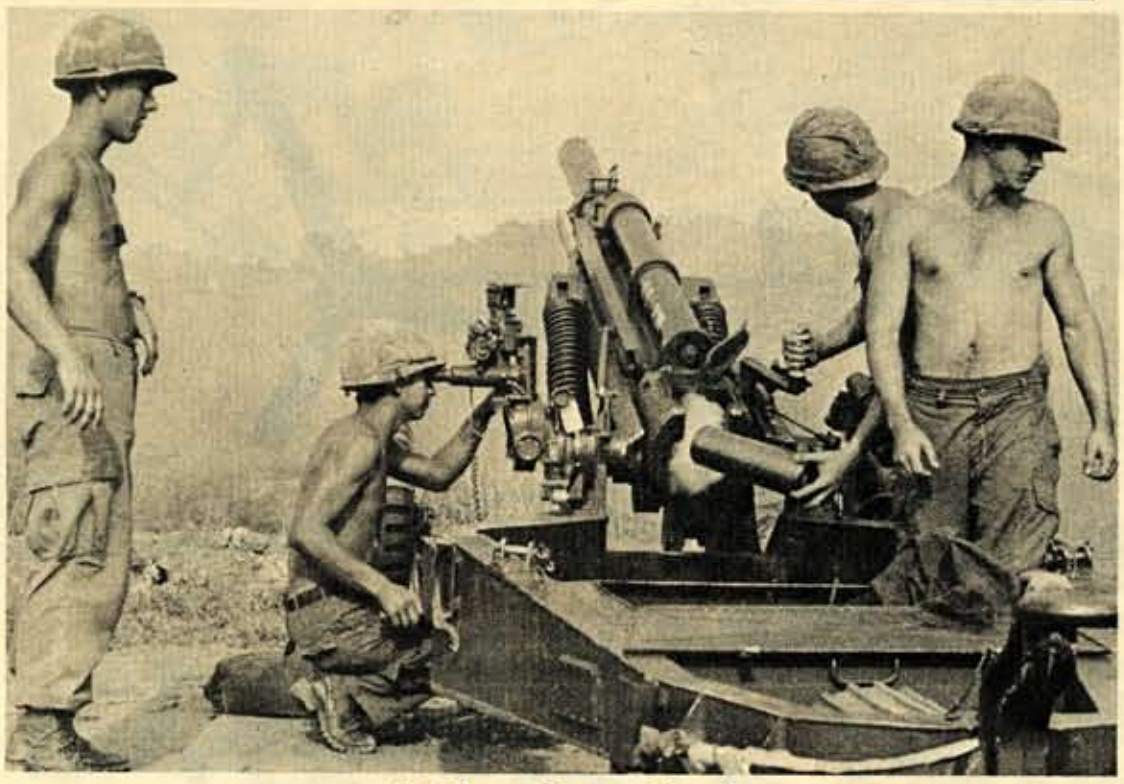








Combat In Review



A Hot One Out!

A Division artilleryman makes a sight adjustment on a 105mm howitzer as other members of his team prepare to fire another round during a mission on FSB Mildred. The 3rd Bn. 82nd Arty. soldiers were supporting division ground forces in the mountainous region west of Chu Lai.

(Photo By J.B. Majerus, Americal IO)

Live-Fire School

Troops Learn Arty Rules

By 1LT James P. Collins Jr.

FSB DEBBIE – An artillery battery is conducting a live-fire school for the infantry atop this 11th Inf. Bde. firebase.

The originator of the program, 1LT Mike O'Bryan (Greensboro, N.C.), forward observer (FO) for B Co., 4th Bn., 21st Inf. explains, "There was a real need to teach the men in the field how to properly call in artillery fire. Very often the men on patrol or observation post are in a situation where they must call in fire missions themselves."

As O'Bryan spoke, eight men from B Co. were just completing the four-hour course and preparing for a live-fire final exam with a 105mm howitzer battery.

"Each man will pick a target from the area down there," said A Btry. Commander, CPT Martin W. Sayne (Albany, N.Y.), pointing to a coastal plain bordered by mountains, "and then call in fire on it, adjusting when necessary."

When the sector chosen for the exercise has been marked off by smoke rounds, 1LT O'Bryan announced: "You've got a box with plenty of good targets in it. Go to it."

Each of the students began scanning the box for the rock, hill or tree cluster which would be the target. Visibility was excellent from the 250-foot high plateau.

The fire missions were called in smoothly and accurately by the men and soon the box was dotted with smoke trails from the impacting rounds.

"This class has really given me confidence in the artillery and in my ability to call it in," said PFC William L. Borben (Newbern, Tenn.).

Added PFC Mark Burke (Stevens Point, Wis.) "I've never realized how complicated artillery was. I think I learned enough here to call in a fire mission, though."

"Naturally we can't cover every aspect of the fire mission," concluded O'Bryan, "but as long as we can make the guys in the field realize that there's more to artillery than just aiming the tube and throwing a round out, our course is a success." (11th Bde IO)

Canines Bring Enemy In Hands Of Soldiers

CHU LAI – On the morning of March 3, a team from the Division Support Command's 63d Inf. Plt. (Combat Trackers) was requested to aid H Trp., 17th Cav., who had made enemy contact west of Chu Lai.

Tracker team leader, SGT Phillip E. Rouch (Columbus, Ohio) remarked, "When we arrived, the 'Cav.' asked us to make an area reconnaissance to search out enemy tracks."

After covering 300 meters, the visual tracker spotted 3 VC in a tree line. The enemy opened fire with small arms--three armored personnel carriers supporting the tracker team returned fire immediately. The VC broke contact.

The dog team tracked the VC for approximately one hour until they came upon a blood trail. The visual tracker followed this trail for 75 meters where he found a dead VC.

The tracker team continued area reconnaissance for three more hours. They spotted two VC who were leading seven women, bearing supplies, down a trail. When the VC saw the Division soldiers moving up on them, they ran for cover.

The support element from H Trp. flushed out one of the VC and took him into custody. Papers in his possession stated that he was a Viet Cong Lieutenant. This was confirmed by the Kit Carson Scout working with the team. (DISCOM IO)

Enemy Crippled By 'Legionnaire'

By SP4 Jim Tannesen

LZ HAWK HILL – The construction of a small patrol base atop a hill followed by a series of swift platoon-size strikes helped thwart the enemy in Quang Tin Province.

Working off of "OP Legionnaire" 12 miles northwest of Tam Ky, soldiers of the Division's 196th Inf. Bde. killed 68 enemy and confiscated 21 weapons.

"We knew that Hill 251 was critical terrain," said CPT James Gardner (Wellsville, N.Y.), operation officer, 2nd Bn., 1st Inf. "Both north and south of the hill lay two valleys leading from the mountains into the lowlands. With a patrol base on the hill we knew we could severely cripple the enemy's freedom of movement."

Construction Rapid

The plan being conceived, construction began immediately. Within days sandbagged fighting bunkers and hundreds of feet of concertina wire encircled the crest.

The patrol base was manned by B Co. and the reconnaissance platoon of 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., along with a liaison team from 3rd Bn., 82nd Arty.

OP Legionnaire was in full operation almost immediately, for tactical operations were conducted even while the base was being constructed.

Contact Frequent

Platoon size elements ranged into the lowlands and mountains, killing 37 enemy soldiers in a 30 day period.

"Almost every day we made successful contact with the enemy," recalled CPT Gardner. "We also had a very high kill ratio."

The 21 enemy weapons confiscated included a Rocket Propelled Grenade Launcher.

Mission Successful

Three high ranking officials were numbered among the enemy dead. One was a VC economic cadre, another was a master sergeant NVA advisor to local VC units and the third was a VC military security chief.

Enemy Denial

3rd Bn., 82nd Arty. and the mortar platoon of 2nd Bn., 1st Inf. working closely with OP Legionnaire accounted for 31 more enemy dead.

"OP Legionnaire denied the enemy everything he needed for a successful offensive," maintained CPT Gardner. "It cut off his supply routes, prevented his using the valleys both as staging areas and 'rocket pockets' and denied him use of the hill as his own OP." (196th Bde. IO)

Grenade Sparks Soldiers' Search

LZ WEST – "I was just sitting in the shade trying to cool off, when I spotted a Chicom grenade in a small gully below me," said SGT Andy Rowell (Birmingham, Ala.). The infantryman was describing how A Co., of the 196th Inf. Bde.'s 4th Bn., 31st Inf., happened on a 1,000 pound rice cache.

Before the day was over, the Division soldiers confiscated 2,000 more pounds of rice and captured two weapons while killing one NVA and detaining another.

The company was operating near hilly An Son Village, northwest of Tam Ky. When the men of A Co. searched the area around the grenade, they found, in addition to the 1,000 pounds of rice, 250 rounds of AK-47 rifle ammo.

"I sent a squad to look for a place to set up an observation position further up the gully," said CPT John Wilson (Carterville, Ga.). "They found another 2,000 pounds of rice up there."

The company set up a night defensive position overlooking the area. "It had just gotten dark, when we saw three of them coming up the trail," said SP4 Jim Logue (Clayton, N.J.). "When they were in the killing zone, we opened up with the machinegun."

The infantrymen checked the area and found the body of one NVA soldier and an AK-50 rifle. Following a blood trail, they came across a wounded NVA and an AK-47 rifle.(196th Bde.)

A Cobra gunship of F Trp., 8th Cav. takes off to support ground troops in a recent operation 10 miles northwest of Tam Ky.

(Photo By 2LT J.H. Walker, Americal IO)

Special Leave Policy Changed

It became effective Jan. 22, 1970, where an individual must agree, in writing, to serve in a hostile fire area for at least six months (exclusive of leave and travel time) beyond the expiration of a normal 12-month tour before being granted special leave. An individual scheduled for separation prior to completing a 12 month tour must extend, in writing, for the length of time required to serve a minimum 18 months in RVN to be eligible for special leave entitlements.

Army Sarge Skillfully Teaches English

LZ HAWK HILL – It would be hard to find a civil affairs worker with a more unusual job than SGT Preston Winkler (Baltimore). The duties of this Division soldier range from telling fairy tales to conjugating verbs.

SGT Winkler, a member of the 196th Inf. Bde.'s 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., teaches English classes at Ky Le, a Vietnamese settlement near Tam Ky. 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., has arranged to have these classes taught every Tuesday and Thursday.

SGT Winkler plans each lesson jointly with SGT Sang, a Vietnamese interpreter with the battalion. SGT Sang also aids his American counterpart during classes.

"If there is something I have trouble conveying in English, SGT Sang can convey it in Vietnamese," explains SGT Winkler. "The main problem is not understanding the words, but rather, the pronunciation."

On a typical afternoon of class, SGT Windler and SGT Sang drive down a rutted dirt road and then turn into a grassy courtyard. The two soldiers walk into a small masonry schoolhouse; 70 children are already seated and waiting.

"Good afternoon, SGT Winkler," intone the children. The American sergeant places his notebook on a shaky plywood desk and returns their greeting. The he begins the day's lesson.

"Many years ago," he reads, "there was a king whose doctor said: 'There is only one thing which will make you happy . . .'"

SGT Winkler pauses, glancing around to see if there any raised hands. Then he continues, speaking slowly and distinctly, "You must wear the shoes of a man who is never unhappy."

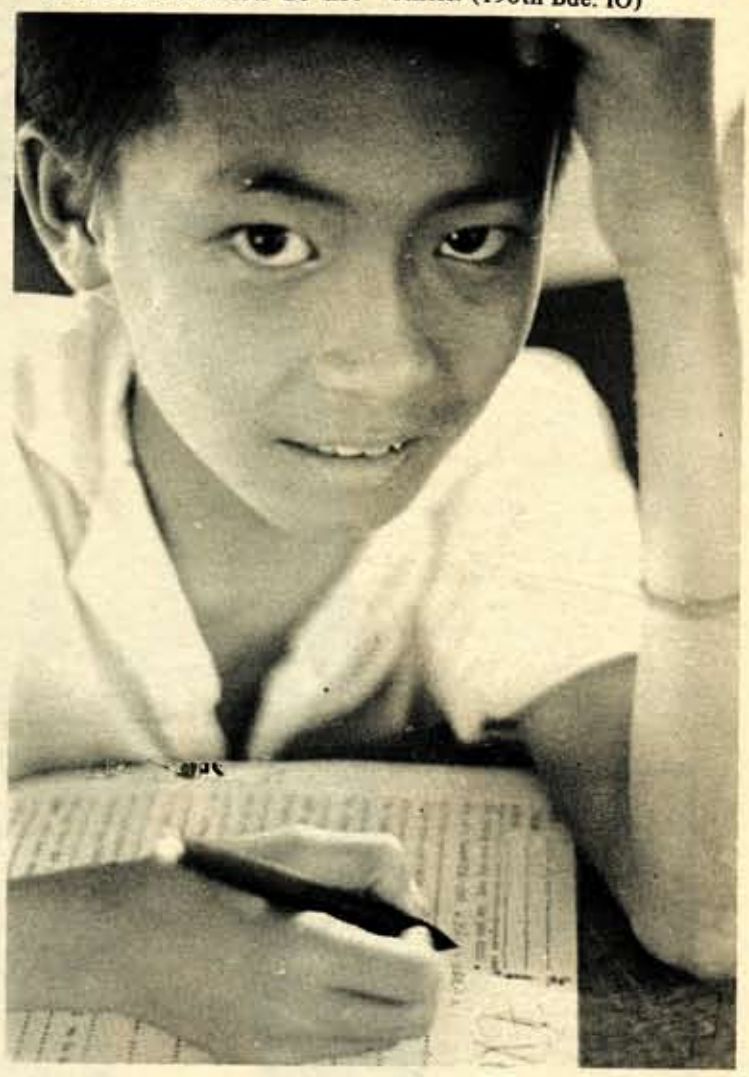
SGT Sang explains the story in Vietnamese. Then it is the students' turn to relate the tale in English.

The children are shy at first, but soon warm up to SGT Winkler's gentle prodding. He cups his ears–"I can't hear you", then in a flamboyant gesture, throws his arms above his head. The children laugh with understanding and speak louder.

The teacher's efforts do not end during recess. An improptu volleyball game rpovides the students a chance to deal with their instructor on a more informal basis.

The high-pitched yelling and frequent laughter shows that the 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., civil affairs worker is more than just and English teacher to the Ky Le students.

SGT Winkler feels that the children are progressing. However, some of his proteges required more patience than others. (196th Bde. IO)



Photos By PFC Laszlo Kondor

Troops Ideas Mean Money

When the soldier speaks, the Army listens -- that's the purpose of the Army's sounding board for the individual soldier.

The sounding board, a new program which encourages soldiers familiar with individual combat clothing and equipment to express their ideas about performance and improvement, has been set up at Fort Benning.

Consisting of eight men, the sounding board solicits, evaluates and acts on all suggestions from the field and may rely on other Army agencies to determine the value of suggestions.

The board's president, LTC Steve Himic, explained how the program works: "After the first screening, some suggestions will be returned to the originators if their ideas are obviously not practical, feasible or are already in use."

Ideas with merit may lead to an immediate product improvement or other action to get new items into the hands of using troops by shortcutting the developments cycle.

According to LTC Himic, "All suggestions to the sounding board which qualify for further development will be sent to the soldier's appropriate incentive awards board to be considered for a possible cash award."

LTC Himic suggested that soldiers shouldn't hesitate to send in improvement ideas no matter how insignificant they might seem. "I'll open 1,000 envelopes just to find one useable idea," he said.

Have some ideas on improving clothing or equipment? Send them to: The Army Sounding Board, USACDC Infantry Agency, Fort Benning, Georgia 31905.

Infantrymen Earn Awards

FSB BRONCO – On January 2 an 11th Inf. Bde. company repulsed an attacking NVA battalion in what was publicized as the most significant action of the new year.

At recent ceremonies here, 29 members of B Co., 4th Bn., 3d Inf. were decorated for heroism in that action.

Six Silver Stars, 20 Bronze Stars with "V" devices and three Army Commendation Medals with "V" devices were presented to the group by 11th Inf. Bde.'s Commander, COL Hugh T. Hoffman Jr. who remarked, "Because of your bravery we are one step closer to our ultimate goal–bringing peace to this country."

Twenty-nine enemy bodies were found at the scene of the midnight enemy mortar and ground attack. However, the citation adds, "Later intelligence from a detainee indicated that the enemy force had lost an additional ten men

Engineers Finish Improvements

Highway One Paved In Quang Ngai

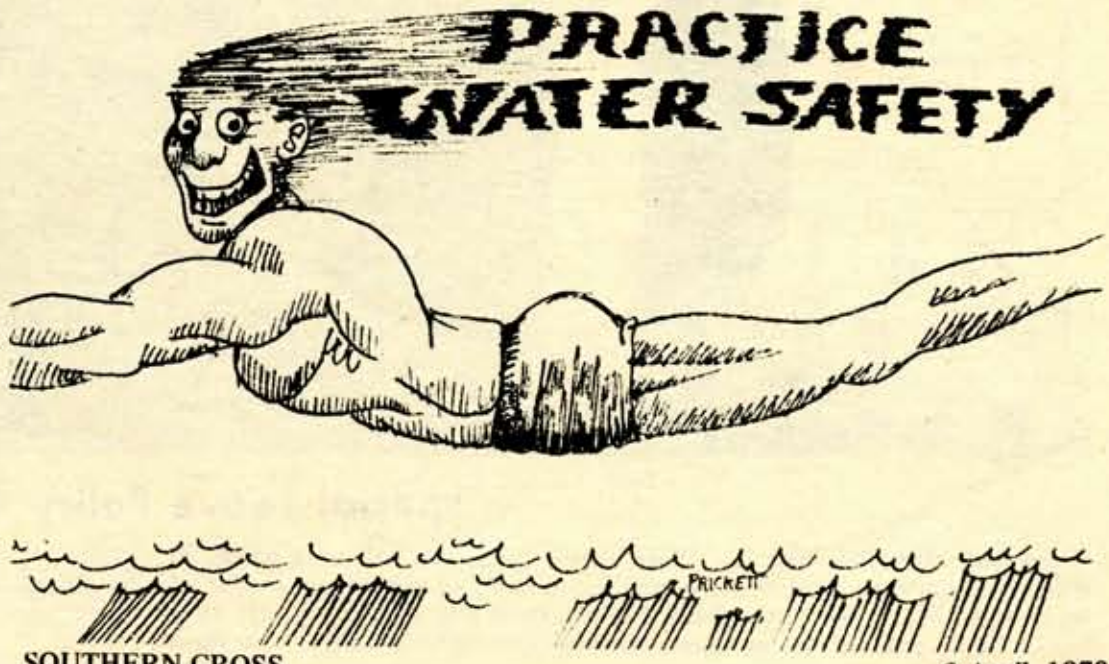
FSB BRONCO – A red and yellow engineer patch was painted across the newly-paved road and two posts firmly held a red ribbon in readiness for the dedication ceremony of the 30-mile stretch of Hwy 1 between this 11th Inf. Bde. firebase and Quang Ngai City. In front of this scene stood the U.S. and ARVN dignitaries flanked by members of B Co., 1st B., 20th Inf., members of the 39th Engr. B., and the Division band.

Twenty-seven of the 39th Engr. Bn. were honored for heroism and sacrifices made during the nine months of the road's improvement. Ten of the awards were the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry and were presented by BG Nguyen Van Toan, commanding general of the 2nd ARVN Division.

LTC Hugh G. Robinson, commanding officer of the 39th Engr. Bn., at the conclusion of his speech saluted the men of the 39th, saying, "It is your road; your sweat and blood have paved the way for the dedication today."

MG Lloyd B. Ramsey praised the men of the 11th Inf. Bde., by commenting, "I would like to point out the 11th Bde., who secured the road and who so ably worked with the 4th ARVN Regt. And the local RF and PF forces."

The general added, "I can see this road as one more step toward upgrading the Vietnamese economy and providing security for the Vietnamese economy."

With the band sounding a fanfare MG Ramsey and Quang

In attendance at the ceremony were BGs Edwin Powell and John Donaldson assistant Americal Division commanders and Henry B. Cushing senior provincial advisor. (11th Bde. IO)