Americal Division's 28th Anniversary

In 1942 a task force was formed to defend the island of New Caledonia. The organization, designated Task Force 6814, was under the command of Brigadier General Alexander M. Patch.

The troops trained on board ship and continued their training after their arrival at Nuoma Noumea, New Caledonia on March 12, 1942.

On May 27, 1942 the task force was reconstituted and organized as the AMERICAL DIVISION. The name of the new Division was derived from combining "American Forces In New Caledonia." The newly-designated division adopted a shoulder patch of four white stars on a blue field. The stars are in the form of the Southern Cross indicating organization of the Division south of the equator.

The division continued training until the 164th Infantry Regiment went into action on Guadalcanal on October 13, 1942. Americal was the first Army unit to conduct an offensive operation against any enemy in any theater during World War II.

The Americal soldier of World WAr II fought just as courageously and effectively against the enemy as the Americal soldier of today. The forbears of today's soldier earned credit for participating in the following campaigns:

Guadalcanal
Northern Solomons
Southern Philippines With Arrowhead
Leyte.

Their decorations include:

Presidential Unit Citation Streamer embroidered Guadalcanal
Philippine Presidential Unit Citation Streamer embroidered October 17, 1944 to July 4, 1945
Distinguished Unit Citation to Company E, 182nd Infantry Regiment, March 10 to March 11, 1944

The tradition of the Division won during World War II has been carried on today in the Republic of Vietnam.

In February, 1967 General William C. Westmoreland, then Commanding General Military Advisory Command Vietnam, formed a planning group to organize an Army task force to send to the troubled I Corps of South Vietnam.

Led by Major General William B. Rosson (later Lieutenant General) it become operational on April 20, 1967 under the control of III Marine Amphibious Force (III MAF). The main elements of the task force and their area of operations were: 196th LIght Infantry Brigade operating near Chu Lai, the 101st Airborne Division and the 3rd Brigade of the 25th Infantry Division. The 101st arrived at Duc Pho and began operations in the jungles west of there. The 3rd Brigade conducted search and clear operations in southern Quang Ngai Province.

Operation Wheeler was launched against elements of the 2nd NVA Division in the area northwest of Chu Lai. The starting date for the Allied offensive was September 11,

(continued on page 4-5)

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS AMERICAL DIVISION
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96374

AVDF-CG

TO: THE MEN OF THE AMERICAL DIVISION

May 27th is a special day in the history of the Americal Division. On that date 28 years ago the Americal Division was first designated as an Army Division.

Since that time, many soldiers have served under the Four Stars of the Southern Cross, fighting the enemy in the Pacific during World War II, and today from the rice paddies to the mountains of Southern I Corps in Vietnam. Although our task is not complete in this harsh struggle, it has been through the individual efforts and sacrifices of the Americal Soldier that significant inroads against oppression have been made.

Our achievements during the past twenty eight years are a matter of record and stand second to none. In every encounter, we have soundly defeated the enemy, from New Caledonia to Vietnam. Because of the men of the Americal Division other people are now able to live and work in a free environment. We can all take pride in the accomplishments, which are even now spelling the defeat of the enemy in Vietnam.

I wish each of you continued success and best wishes as we -- The Americal Division -- enter our twenty ninth year.

A. E. MILLOY
Major General, USA
Commanding

SOUTHERN CROSS
AMERICAL DIVISION

Vol. 3, No. 18 CHU LAI, VIETNAM May 22,1970

A crew member of this 105mm howitzer discards an empty casing during a fire mission at LZ Hawk Hill. The artillery men are part of the 3rd Battalion, 82nd Artillery who were supporting infantrymen of the 196th Infantry Brigade. (Photy by SP5 Herb Brady)

'Sharks' chew up 22 NVA on air assault

By SP4 Peter R. Sorensen

FSB BRONCO (11th INF BDE IO) -- Twenty-two NVA fell to the rocket and gun fire of the 174th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) as the "Shark" gunships turned a routine combat assault into a four hour airground battle.

Twelve of the company's "Dolphin" utility ships were lifting one battalion of the ARVN 4th Regiment and a rifle company of the 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry into landing zones 20 miles northwest of Duc Pho. A heavy fire team of three Shark gunships were providing cover and scouting for the operation.

"Cork Pass" with its mountains, valleys and triple canopy jungles is the naturally sheltered sanctuary of the NVA. "As expected from previous visual reconnaissance flights and intelligence reports, we found well used trails, fresh .51 caliber emplacements, bunkers and structures we think were rice collection points. We saw areas where the foliage had been cut to be used as camouflage. but, as on numerous other occasions, we could see no movement," stated Captain Stephen S. Riddle, Weaverville, N.C., Shark gun ship platoon leader.

Said Warrant Officer James E. Rich, Wilmington, N.C., "We hovered over a small river bed and began marking enemy positions with smoke. We spotted a NVA, fully equipped with an AK-47 evading and we killed him. Then we began to work the area over. Captain Riddle rolled in with rockets and machine guns. Then all three Sharks rolled in."

Captain Riddle continued, "When we started marking the rea with smoke, the enemy must have gotten excited and started to move. You could tell they were NVA because they were all wearing grey uniforms with cut-off pants, ruck sacks, camouflage and carrying weapons. They were well equipped; you could see entrenching tools sticking out of their packs."

"When myship rolled in, we killed three. On this pass we must have hit a command post because a company-size element panicked, split into large groups and ran," Captain Riddle added.

(continued on page 6)

Div. Recap: 5-46th nets 43 rockets

During the first week of May Americal Division soldiers accounted for 120 enemy killed in the Southern I Corps. Highlight of the week was the capture of 43 122mm rockets intended for use against Chu Lai.

Geneva Park

An element of B Company, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry opened up on five VC at close range with small arms fire on a dusk patrol 15 miles northwest of Quang Ngai. The infantrymen swept the area and found one dead VC and detained another. They found a pistol and a small quantity of ammunition and miscellaneous items.

In another incident Echo Recon, 1st Bn., 52nd Inf. killed two VC ten miles northwest of Quang Ngai in the same area where they had killed five VC a month earlier. The soldiers observed and engaged two enemy soldiers, killing one immediately. The second VC attempted to evade into a neaby woodline but was killed by an alert rifleman of the advancing column.

Responding to an early morning attack of Chu Lai the men of 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry captured 43 122mm rockets five miles southwest of Chu Lai.

After the dawn attack a platoon cobat assaulted into the launch site where helicopters had observed at least 20 rocket positions.

In two other incidents, the men of the 198th, killed three VC and captured two weapons. In the first incident, an element of A Company, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry received 10 to 15 rounds of fire from VC in action 15 miles northwest of Quang Ngai.

The company returned fire and killed two of the VC. An AK-47, a carbine and five CHICOM hand grenades were found with the bodies.

A recon element of 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry observed a lone NVA six miles southwest of Chu Lai. After a gunship run over the area, the infantrymen found the bodies of an NVA and a VC. A rocket sighting device was also found near the area.

The recon platoon of 1st Bn.,

(continued on page 6)

Part VI of special R&R series

Manila pulsates with a Spanish beat

If you want to relax on R&R and get away from it all then by all means head for the Republic of Philippines.

Where else but in the Philippines can you find 7,000 islands to content the combat weary soldier.

Almost completely devasitated by World War II, Manila once again claims her place as one of the most attractive cities in the Far East. You will find Manila an intoxicating mixture of Spanish and Asian cultures producing a comfortable atmosphere of friendly people.

At the R&R Center you must change your greenbacks to the local currency, pesos and centavos. The rate of the exchange flucuates from 3.85 to 3.90 pesos per U.S. dollar.

One of your first stops after leaving the R&R Center should be the modern, air-conditioned USO located in the world famous Manila Hotel, overlooking a captivating view of Manila Bay and the grandeur of this bustling city.

The USO will further assist you in getting acquainted with Manila. Take advantage of information and sightseeing tours, restaurants and accommodations as well as the discount tickets for the visiting serviceman.

One of the most popular services offered you through the USO is an invitation to have dinner, play a round of gold, go boating or swim as the guest of an American family living in Manila.

When you leave the USO and step out into the sun-baked streets of Manila you will find an abundance of buses and taxis to transport you around the city.

Hotel accomodations are excellent. Most of the hotels offer special rates to personnel on R&R. Prices range from $6 to $10 U.S. Highly recommended hotels are the Bayside, Nle and Sportsman's.

As night approaches, Manila is transformed from a city of concrete and steel into a bright galaxy of colorful neon signs flashing a welcome invitation to fun-seekers.

American singers, bands and other entertainment groups frequently perform in the better night spots. Several that host these entertainers are the Sky Room, the Champaigne Room, The Jungle Bar and the Key Club. Most of the large splashy clubs are located on Roxas Blvd. The have a cover charge of about $2.50 U.S.

In addition to the night clubs there are bars and more bars. It is possible there are more night clubs and bars in Manila than in any other city in Southeast Asia. There is no real closing time but most clubs tend to shut their doors around 3 a.m.

Pleasing your palate as well as your thrist is definitely part of R&R. And the cuisine of Manila will not disappoint you. Try some of the tempting dishes characteristic of Spain, France and the wide variety of Filipino dishes.

For camera bugs, Manila offers a photographers paradise. There are the names of many places that have found a permanent place in American history as a result of World War II. There is the sandy beaches of Batangas and Bataan, Intramuros, the Spainish walled city which now lies in ruins and of course the island fortress, Corregidor, at the entrance to Manila Bay.

Shopping in Manila is not as profitable as in most other R&R sites. This is because most of the larger stores carry articles that are imported from the United States. Naturally you pay more for these in Manila than you would in the United States. There are, however, excellent buys on many local products such as lace, fabrics and wood carvings.

As your R&R draws to a close, you will leave with many memories of the exciting city with its strong Spanish influence. Memories to cherish the rest of your life.

DD Form 1580 can save money

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO) – Some commercial airlines use DD Form 1580, Military Authorization for Commercial Air Travel to confirm a soldier's leave status and thereby entitle him to a reduced military fare

DD Form 1580 is also required for the serviceman's family if they wish to fly at a reduced fare to Hawaii for an R&R reunion. The form can be obtained from your company clerk or first sergeant and should be sent home with the R&R orders.

Soldiers flying commercially while on leave or within seven days of discharge from the service should arrive at the airport with at least five copies of the form and in uniform.

A soldier should request the person approving his leave to initiate DD Form 1580 if he expects to use commercial air line travel.

This applies especially to men returning to CONUS from the Republic of Vietnam.

Belief easy for believer

Belief seems to be so easy, so effortless says one who searches to one who believes. With faith we look at the creation and leap to the creator. We look at finite man and posit an infinite being - God. It's unthinkable that this world could exist without an infinite, perfect first cause. Its beauty, Its order, complexity and its simplicity all demand an infinite explanation. And yet we have unlimited suffering, we see misery, we see pain, we see ambition ruthlessly dashed and unfulfilled. How do we explain it?

Maybe God will speak. He may well defend His will. He may well explain things. But whatever He says or does, He will say that faith in Him, trust in Him, love for Him are the only things that make life meaningful. God is absolute. He explains all and only he can explain all.

VC lighters for sale

CHU LAI (Americal IO) -- If you find a lighter lying in the road, be careful. You might also lose something -- like your life.

The J2 Staff of MACV says that the Viet Cong are known to have about 2,000 plastique-charged imitation "Zippo" lighters set to detonate at the first turn of the flint wheel.

The enemy has packed enough explosive in the lighter to kill two people at close range.

The plan is leave the lighters along roads and establishments frequently visited by troops and where it will seem that the lighters have been left by accident.

If you find one of these lighters, leave it alone and call the nearest MP or EOD team. Best bet is to call the EOD unit, they are the guys equipped to get a bang out of this sort of thing.

Part II of Confuianism series

Chinese bring Confucianism to Vietnam

By SP4 Dan Swezey

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO) -- Although Confucius claimed only to be a transmitter of the wisdom of the past rather than an innovator, there was a "revolutionary" element in his thought. Confucius saw government as an ethical problem. He felt that rulers had a hereitary right to govern, but he believed that their primary responsibility was to provide a proper example for the people through good ethical conduct.

Confucius taught that the virtuous ruler could rule without force since the people would naturally obey him. The morally upright ruler who cared about the welfare of the people would gain their support and would not need an army to maintain power.

Besides arguing that the ruler had a moral obligation to his people, Confucius developed a code which laid down the specific duties of each person in society. He taught that there were five fundamental relationships in human society. These five relationships were reverence and a sense of duty between the ruler and the subject, father and son, elder and younger brother, husband and wife and friend and friend. Each relationship, except the last one, was an unequal relationship. The subject was to obey the ruler, the son the father and the younger brother the older brother.

Confucius viewed all social relationships in terms of family relationships. The relationship between the ruler and subject was the same as the relationship between the father and his wife and children.

He felt that the individual must subordinate his interests to the interests of his family. On a national level he must subordinate his interests to the interests of the ruler and state.

Confucius' ideal was the "gentleman" or "superior man". The gentleman was a man of virtue, education and wisdom who excelled in fulfilling his obligations to the family and the state. The gentleman was a man of moderation who did not go to extremes. Confucius felt that a ruler should be a gentleman. In addition he believed that other gentleman, such as himself, had the right to advise the ruler.

Confucius died disappointed because his ideas where were not adopted. However during the long regin of emperor Wu Ti Confucianism became the state philosophy for the Han dynasty Confucianism served the needs of the new Chinese dynasty. I justified the emperors' belief that his subjects should be loyal to him while it also gave the civil servants a justification for advising him.

The system of government that developed during the period of Chinese rule used civil servents who were chosen according to how well they performed in state examinations. These examinations tested the applicant's knowledge of the Confucian classics, four books that were supposedly written or edited by Confuius.

The reign of Wu Ti also saw the introduction of Confucianism into Vientam. When Vietnam was conquered by the Han Dynasty in 111 B.C., the conquerors brought the new philosophy from China and for the next 1,000 years Vietnam was ruled by China. During this long period of Chinese rule, Vietnam became a "Confucian society". It remained a Confucian society until the twentieth century.

Doctors' waiting rooms in Vietnam aren't much different than those in the States - the seats are still uncomfortable and the magazines are old. These soldiers of the 198th Infantry Brigade are waiting to go on sick call and be treated by their battalion surgeon. (Photo by 1LT Robert R. Kresge)

SOUTHERN CROSS
AMERICAL DIVISION

THE SOUTHERN CROSS is an authorized periodic publication of the Americal Division Information Office for division units in the Republic of Vietnam. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army. Contributions are encouraged and may be sent to the Information Office, Americal Division, APO 96374. Tel: Chu Lai 2414. The editors reserve the right to edit all contributions.

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Hoi Chanhs given new life

SP5 Richard Merritt

LZ HAWK HILL (196th INF BDE IO) – Mr. Bi Bui Dinh Que eased back in his wooden armchair and spoke cautiously.

"When a rallier comes to us, he feels he is surrounded by enemies." He gazed into the courtyard from the open office where he sat. "He has been told that we are demons and evil. He is frightened."

Mr. Bui looks anything but frightening. He is a neat solemn man. For six months he has been director of the Hoi Chanh Center in Tam Ky, a coastal city 20 miles south of Da Nang.

The Center has helped to repatriate 4,200 Hoi Chanhs and their families since 1963. The majority of the ralliers are Viet Cong from the 196th Infantry Brigade's area, which includes a large portion of Quang Tin Province. Tam Ky is the province capital.

The aim of the Center is re-education of the former enemy soldiers, orienting their return to Vietnamese citizenship. The pink and white stucco classrooms have never been empty since their construction in June 1966.

Mr. Bui heads a staff of six instructors who trained in Saigon; classes vary in size and subjects taught. There is even special instruction for women. Mr. Bui questioned a petite beauty seated in a sewing class as several other women stiched on the whirring machines.

"She led a VC guerilla platoon," he related. The girl, no more than 20, stopped sewing and smiled uncertainly. She had been there one week.

Altogether there are approximately 100 families, 600 men, women and children, housed at the Center. The undertaking is supported by the South Vietnamese government and lodging is free. Some of the families stay here as long as six months living in the rows of airy stucco dwellings covered with aluminum roofing. There are grassy lawns, cement sidewalks and old women in stalls selling cool tea and popsicles in the Center.

When their courses are finished the families go to any of several places. Some choose to return to their homes with their families and work for the village defense. Since January nearly 200 have done this, training for Popular Force service.

These women are enjoying their lunch at the Hoi Chanh Center in Tam Ky. (Photo by 523rd Signal Battalion)

Island of patients, a doctor's dream come true

SSG Vern Kaiser

CHU LAI (DISCOM IO) – "Having an island to practice medicine on, is something I've always dreamed about," commented Doctor (MAJ) Bruce Usher, from Bennettsville, S.C., during a recent Support Command MEDCAP.

"It's really something to be the only doctor for an island even though it is in Vietnam," the doctor added.

Doctor Usher, who is assigned to the 91st Evacuation Hospital and until recently was assigned to the Command's 23rd Medical Battalion, volunteered for the bi-monthly trip to Ky Xuan Island.

By the time the helicopter had landed, a number of curiosity seekers had already gathered. Within minutes the signal, three shoots fired in the air, was relayed throughout the island and the Medical Civic Action Program (MEDCAP) was underway.

The village headquarters located in the center of the island was used as an out-patient clinic. Ky Xuan Island, which has a population of more than 3,800 people, is located just off the coast of Chu Lai and is a Support Command civic action responibility.

By noon Doctor Usher and his medical assistants had seen more than 200 patients most of whom were women and children. "You get a very good idea of what it is like to be a country doctor out here. Treating so many people for so many different things is a unique experience," the doctor remarked.

This MEDCAP was unique in another aspect too. It combined nurses recently trained by the Command's Medical Battalion and American medical personnel.

Throughout the mission, the four MEDCAP members and four nurses painstakingly explained to each patient how to take the medication prescribed and made sure that they understood not to take the medicine all at one time.

Waiting for the helicopter and the ride back to ChChu Lai, Docotr Usher, who has also volunteered for additional MEDCAP trips said, "I believe that my work here is every enlighting and most rewarding. Doing what little I can for these people is very satisfying. And they are so appreciative."

MEDCAP aids refugee

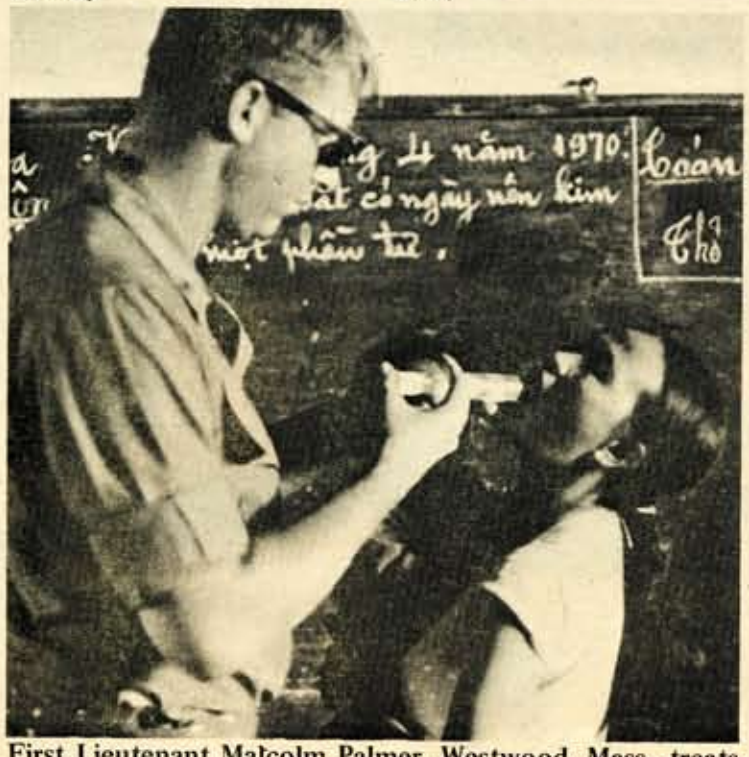
CHU LAI (Americal IO) – They came with hope and confidence lighting their faces. Most of them left with the happy knowledge that they would soon be better.

The Medical Civic Action Program (MEDCAP) team set up quickly in Binh Son District's crowded An Chau refugee camp. The medical staff from the Division's 27th Surgical Hospital worked closely with personnel from the 198th Infantry Brigade's 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry.

Of the 1,600 people in the village, the team treated 150; a small percentage but a high volume for the few hours the mission was able to be in the village.

Earaches, sore throats, irritated eyes, stiff, thritic limbs, as well as serious infections, wounds and the ever numerous skin diseases taxed the knowledge and the versatility of the small medical group members.

Supplies gone the team must leave.



First Lieutenant Malcolm Palmer, Westwood, Mass., treats a patient during MEDCAP mission. The woman and her child were among 150 patients treated during the visit. (Photo by SP4 James Majerus)

Captain Luis Oliver, Puerto Rico, examines a patient during a MEDCAP mission to the An Chau Refugee Camp outside Binh Son. The medical program is sponsored by the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry. (Photo by SP4 James B. Majerus)

Mr. Thanh builds a better Vietnam

SGT Dave McKeon

LZ CENTER (196th INF BDE IO) – It is a sunny day in the remote Vietnamese village. Several American officers and NCOs are conferring with the local Vietnamese officials beneath a thatched roof. One, Mr. Thanh, begins to speak.

Mr. Thanh lives in Nui Lac Son a fertile government protected area 16 miles northwest of Tam Ky. He is the key link between 196th Infantry Brigade soldiers and the local Vietnamese Popular Forces (PF).

This diminuitive Vietnamese shoulders a heavy load of responibility. He serves as PF psychologoical operations officer, as interpreter and as the village chief's liason with the brigade.

His duties with the psychological section require him to go out on PF patrols frequently to investigate likely Viet Cong infiltration points. Later he will coordinate areial "Cheiu Hoi" broadcasts over these same points. These broadcasts, made with the brigade's "Early Word" Light Observation Helicopter, urge the local Viet Cong to rally to the Government of Vietnam.

"The Chieu Hoi rate in the contested areas bordering Nui Lac Son has been high for quite some time," says First Lieutenant Don Bernard, Itasca, Ill., who is the brigade's psychological operations officer. "Many of the ralliers have said that our aerial broadcasts were instrumental in inducing them to rally."

Mr. Thanh helps to promote better cooperation between the local Vietnamese and soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry. His skills as interpreter aids him in this activity.

"We work very closely with Mr. Thanh because the people trust him," says Staff Sergeant Waymon Young, Buffaloe, N.Y., one of the battalion liaison workers who serves as advisor to the PF. "Without him our task would be much more difficult."

"Vietnamese and Americans had a lot of success working together in this area," says Sergeant Young. "Continued success will depend upon continued cooperation."

With men like Mr. Thanh around there should be little problem.

Americal Division, the one ca

The Americal soldier fought across the Pacific to Japan during World War II. These infantrymen are about to charge the base of the large Banyan tree which is being used for protection by the Japanese.

The Americal soldier of World War II would recognize the terrain faced by the men fighting in Vietnam today.

These and the preceding picture are from the same action. Here the men are stringing wire for a defensive perimeter after they captured the hill. The action took in an area that was called Bloody Hil 260; the soldiers killed 570 Japanese.

Moving cautiously across an old bridge are these men known as the "Charlie Tigers."

lled for war, from New Caledonia to I Corps

(continued from page 1)

1967. On September 22, Brigadier General Samuel W. Koster assumed command of the task force succeeding Major General Richard T. Knowles.

A rapid chain of events was to follow culminating in the Americal Division's colors being unfurled on Vietnamese soil. First the task force was reconstitituted and redesignated as the Americal Division consisting of the 196th, 198th and the 11th Light Infantry Brigades.

On October 22, the 198th LIght Infantry Brigade arrived in Vietnam to become part of the Division. The 198th deployed initially to Duc Pho for complete combat training. Upon completion of the training, the 198th moved to the Chu Lai area and relieved the 196th Brigade in place. The 196th then assumed the responsibility for the operational area of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division; the Brigade departed and moved to the II Corps Tactical Zone.

An official change of colors ceremony was held on October 26, and the Americal Division became the seventh Army Division striking blows for freedom in Vietnam. On the same day Brigadier General Koster was promoted to Major General and named as the Commander of the Division.

The 11th Light Infantry Brigade arrived in Vietnam on December 20, 1967. Upon completing their training at Duc Pho, the 11th Brigade "Jungle Warriors" took over Operation Muscatine from the 198th and units of the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division.

Operation Wheeler/Wallowa, a combination of two former operations, became the responsibility of the 196th Infantry Brigade and the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry. The 1st Cav unit had been operating in the general area since September, 1967 and officially became part of the Division on January 10, 1968. The 198th Infantry Brigade remained responsible for securing the area around Chu Lai.

Task Force Miracle was formed in February during the enemy's Tet 1968 offensive. The city of Da Nang was threatened by 60th Main Force Viet Cong Battalion; the 1st Battlaion, 6th Infantry and 2nd Battation, 1st Infantry were sent to the city to save it and the Marines. After four days of fierce fighting the threat was obliterated and the task force deactivated. From January 25 to February 15 the ill-stared enemy lost 1,407 men.

Operation Norfolk Victory was launched by elements of the 11th Brigade on April 8, 1968 in the mountainous terrain southwest of Quang Ngai City. By its conclusion a major enemy base of operation had been destroyed, an enemy weapons cache containing 126 individual and crew served weapons was captured, munitions destroyed and 45 Viet Cong killed.

On the same day Operation Norfolk Victory started, the 39th Engineer Battalion and units of the 198th embarked on Operation Burlington Trail. Their mission was to open a road from Tam Ky to Tien Phuoc, a Special Forces outpost and the district headquarters.

The Americal Division has the largest area of operations of any unit in Vietnam. In April the 198th was sent to the northern portion of Quang Tri and participated in fighting near the DMZ. At this time the brigade was under the operational control of the 3rd Marine Division; upon completion of that mission one company was rushed to the aid of the besieged Special Forces camp at Kham Duc. Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry was the unit and they were instrumental in the successful extraction of the personnel at the camp.

The Tet 1968 Offensive was a major enemy thrust throughout Vietnam. Americal Division soldiers were called to hold and defend the city of Da Nang.

On May 24, 1968 General Koster was appointed by President Johnson to be the new Superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y.

On June 23, Major General Charles M. Gettys assumed the command of the Division following interim commander Brigadier George H. Young, Jr.

After a midsummer lull activity picked up when the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry teamed up with elements of the 11th and 196th Brigades to engage regulars of the 2nd NVA Division about five miles west of Tam Ky. During the three day battle, August 24-27, 548 NVA gave their lives to the Communist cause.

Action again flared when the 2nd ARVN Division and the 11th Brigade forces to spoil an enemy attack on Quang Ngai City. The Allied force accounted for 422 enemy killed and 93 small arms captured.

In September Operation Champaign Grove successfully relieved pressure on the Ha Thanh CIDG camp. During the operation, the 11th Brigade, 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry and 2nd ARVN Division soldiers killed 323 NVA.

Late in the month in Operation Burlington Trail, units of the 1st Cav. F Troop, 8th Cavalry and the 4th Battalion 21st Infantry joined forces to kill 92 NVA on September 24 and 300 more on the September 25 and 26.

In November the two longest running Americal Operations,

(continued on page 8)

These men are on a search and clear operation and have found a small stream in their area. The water becomes a cooling pause that refreshes the men and provides a brief break from Vietnam's broiling tropical sun.

Americal Reports: Action higher throughout AO

(continued from page 1)

52nd Inf. observed and engaged one VC 12 miles northwest of Quang Ngai and wounded him with small arms fire. They also captured the wounded man's SKS and a small quantity of ammo. The platoon then called a Medevac and sent the wounded VC to Chu Lai for medical treatment.

Iron Mountain

Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry killed one VC in the lowlands four miles northwest of Duc Pho. Another VC rallied to the unit.

Bravo Company, 1st Bn., 20th Inf. killed one VC in the lowlands four miles north of Duc Pho. An AK-54 pistol was confiscated. Delta Company, 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry killed one VC in the lowlands four miles north of Duc Pho.

Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry discovered a 60mm mortar tube and four B-40 rockets in the mountains 18 miles northwest of Duc Pho. Charlie Company, 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry found one NVA which Primo Aviation had killed the previous day.

The recon element of the 1st Bn., 20th Inf. killed one VC in the lowlands 14 miles north of Duc Pho. Bravo Company, 4th Bn., 21st Inf. uncovered an AK-47 rifle in the lowlands three miles south of Duc Pho. Four miles north of Duc Pho, B Co., 1st Bn., 20th Inf. detained 28 suspects.

B Co., 1st Bn., 20th Inf., engaged one VC and killed him in the lowlands three miles north of Duc Pho. One carbine and two hand grenades were confiscated.

Frederick Hill

Ninety NVA/VC were killed by the 2nd ARVN Division supported by an aero-scout company of the Americal Division 123rd Aviation Battalion.

After fighting for two days, the ARVN unit reclaimed the village of Hiep Duc from the NVA, killing 44 of the enemy according to the ARVN report. Approximately 15 per cent of the village had been destroyed by fire and several civilians had been killed by the enemy.

The American aero-scout company supporting the ARVN attack accounted for 46 enemy kills. The aero scouts also silenced two crew-served weapons and recoilless rifle positions.

There had been 42 of the enemy killed during the previous day's activity.

Clearing an area struck hard by division gunships Co Co., 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry found three NVA killed by F Troop, 8th Cavalry, Blue Ghost gunships. Later they found two more NVA loaded with ordnance also accredited to F Troop gunships. The finds were made 23 miles west of Tam Ky. On the bodies were 150 rounds of machinegun ammunition and 35 CHICOM grenades.

Combined operations of A Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry and a Popular Forces platoon brought down six VC and captured two AK-47s seven miles northwest of Tam Ky. A Co. swept the area as the PFs set up a blocking force 400 meters away.

Action continued 18 miles southwest of Tam Ky as soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry killed three VC in two separate incidents. The recon platoon while approaching a suspected VC command post, engaged four VC resulting in one enemy killed, while the others successfully evaded. A search of the area revealed 35 pounds of rice and 30 pounds of potatoes.

In other action, elements ot the 1st platoon, C Co., 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry, while conducting a saturation patrol surprised two VC near a shelter nestled in thick underbrush.

One VC darted out and was dropped immediately by weapons fire. The first squad then surrounded the shelter. Several members of the squad heard movement from an opening of the tunnel. They threw a grenade inside and killed the hiding communist.

Elements of 4th Bn., 31st Inf. while searching an area near Hiep Duc, 22 miles northwest of Tam Ky, found the bodies of seven NVA killed by an earlier artillery strike.

An infantry company, while in their night defensive positions two miles northwest of Tam Ky, observed a lone enemy moving in the brush near their perimeter. M-60 fire brought the enemy down and soldiers later retrieved the AK-47 he was carrying.

Units on patrol in the bushy hills near Hiep Duc discovered the bodies of three more NVA killed by an air strike in earlier fighting.

The 1st Bn., 46 Inf., while on a search and clear mission 20 miles southwest of Tam Ky, located a concealed enemy hootch area. In one of the shelters an alert "professional" located a new SKS rifle.

C Battery, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Artillery slammed artillery into an enemy mortar position near LZ Siberia, 25 miles west of Tam Ky. Four NVA were killed and the mortar setup was destroyed.

Eight miles southwest of Tam Ky, B Co., 1st Bn., 46th Inf., found four VC graves that were about three months old. The kills were attributed to Bravo Battery, 3rd Battalion, 16th Artillery.

The recon element of 1st Bn., 46th Inf. with the aid of a Kit Carson Scout, surrounded a group of hootches and brought six suspects under government control.

Hearing movement outside their night defensive position, 22 miles northwest of Tam Ky, alert 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry, blew their claymores and opened up with small arms fire.

A check of the area in the morning found the bodies of two NVA, a partially constructed litter, and numerous blood trails.

Men of the 4th Bn., 31st Inf., moved in to check an area they had been in contact in the day before. The company had taken small arms fire and was aided by firebird guships form the 71st Aviation Company in repelling an attack near Hiep Duc, 22 miles northwest of Tam Ky.

This squad leader from the 11th Infantry Brigade - "Jungle Warriors" - takes cover in a bomb crater as his unit makes contact with the enemy. The action netted a VC killed and an AK-47 rifle. (U.S. Army Photo)

Combat Trackers uncover cache

SSG Vern Kaiser

CHU LAI (DISCOM IO) – A Combat Tracker Team from the 63rd Infantry Platoon (Combat Tracker) working with the 196th Infantry Brigade's "Gunslingers" accounted for a squad size cache and one enemy KIA this week.

Sergeant Albert King, Thigodaut, La., team leader said, "We were inserted in the middle of a rice paddy early in the morning during a driving rain storm. I thought it would be tough to find a trail due to the rain, but we did and it led us to an area where a squad had a apparently been taking a break."

Working with Company A, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry approximately 11 miles southwest of Chu Lai the men found a cache which included: a complete barber set, a diary, pictures, about 50 pounds of rice and several articles of clothing.

"The unit must have left in a hurry because they left everything except their weapons and ammunition," Sergeant King added.

The KIA came just before dusk and the final phase of the mission while working hedge rows. "He was lying in tall grass, sound asleep. When we got to within five yards of him, he woke up and started running," Sergeant King said. Papers found on the body indicated that he was the Executive Officer of the 48th NVA Regiment.

Shark gunships put bite on enemy

(continued from page 1)

It was now that the gunships tool full advantage of their fire power.

Debris and shrapnel splattered into the air, as the gunships made successive dives.

Piloting the Air Mission Control helicopter over the battlefield, was the commanding officer of the 174th Aviation Company, Major Fredrick G. Blackburn, Kansas City, Mo., "There was superb coordination between the gunships and the ground troops. The commander of the 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry, Lieutenant Colonel Roger A. Culbertson, Longview, Wash., who had just assumed command of the battalion, was far sighted and flexible enough to change his troop landing zone in view of the enemy situation and deploye a reaction and blocking force."

Continuing Major Blackburn said, "Seeing the smoke from the air, Colonel Culbertson was concerned about the welfare of his men in that their positions were being lost form view. But enemy positions and escape routes were well marked and a gunship was on hand to at tree level over our men."

In a war that often boggs down into a routine of hide-and-seek and blind man's bluff, it is a tribute to the pilots and men of the 174th Aviation Company who continually maintain their high level of flying and fighting ability patiently waiting for the enemy to make that final fatal mistake. Twenty-two confirmed dead can forget. But many more NVA must live with the sight of smouldering scorched earth, a grey pall in a sunless afternoon, a sickening panic and the gleaming white Sharks teeth diving through the murk spitting rocket and machine gun fire into his once secure world.

These choppers from 174th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) turned a routine air assault into a four hour air ground battle in which 22 NVA lost. The ships were lifting one battalion of the 4th ARVN Regiment and one company from the 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry into landing zones northwest of Duc Pho. (U. S. Army Photo)

This lovely lass left her lagoon to tell you something

The mailing of contraband items from Vietnam has become a matter of grave convern. Recently numerous incidents have occured in the United States involving explosives and weapons sent to CONUS from Vietnam. One of the most tragic occurred when five children were killed by an exploding 105mm artillery round. Believe it or not the round was mailed from Vietnam. The Commanding General, USARV, has been advised that if the mailing of contraband continues, the privileges of mailing parcels from Vietnam may be withdrawn.

In conjunction with this situation, more stringent controls have been placed in effect for the mailing of parcels. Parcel postal clerks are now required to verify the identy of personnel mailing parcels. Postal officers and customs officials, through the use of mine detectors, fluoroscopes and "narco" dogs will inspect all parcels mailed for contraband. Additionally, a high percentage of parcels will be opened by the postal authorities for physical inspection while they are in the mail system.

Parcels containing restricted items are turned over to the proper law enforcement agency for prosecution to the full extent of the law.

Contraband items may kill or injure a person, damage mail, property of just be plain undesirable.

There is a new Americal Regulation currently being staffed for distribution establishing tighter mailing control procedures in accordance with directives issued by the Commanding General, USARV. The new Americal Regulation has one major change. That being that a customs declaration tag must be now be made with all articles being mailed under Public Law.

According to Public Law, a person could previously ship home free of customs and without a customs tag if he was on PCS orders. That free shipping will still be allowed but the package must have a customs declaration tag attached to it. This requirement has recently been added for all Americal personnel.

Now, even though your parcel is shipped under PCS orders, customs tags are required. This is just one of the attempts to control the contraband problem. The only other solution to the problem would be to not require a customs declaration and just open every package.

"The way we are doing it now," remarked a local postal officer, "we still have time to concentrate on the suspicious looking parcels."

The contraband problem is causing quite a bit of concern. The recommendations sent to USARV stated that the next step would be to withdraw the privilege of mailing parcels from Vietnam.

The further your package gets down the line towards its destination the more sophisticated the inspections become. In many cases mine detectors are used to detect any metal and this starts a more through search. A fluoroscope will show the shape of any weapon you may try to sneak through. Since marijuana doesn't contain any metal, the customs officials have employed "narco" dogs to sniff out the marijuana and other drugs that soldiers try to mail home.

If you are caught trying to send illegal materials home in the mail, you aren't just reprimanded and released to make another attempt. The punishments are serious and long.

You are not only voilating the Uniform Code of Military Justice when you send illegal material home but you are in violation of the federal regulations also. Even if you have returned home to ETS before your package is discovered, you will still be punished by the federal courts. You can't win either way, not when the maximum punishment for shipping contraband is a $10,000 fine and ten years in prison. There are even more severe punishments involved when the mailing of drugs is the crime. There is a list of laws longer than I can mention that you have catagorically broken.

The worst punishment of all may come in another way. Like when the five children were killed by an exploding 105mm artillery round mailed from Vietnam. Some war trophy for that hero!

Americal Division History

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Wheeler/Wallowa and Burlington Trail, were completed. The former, which was primarily conducted by the 196th Infantry Brigade, accounted for 10,020 enemy dead and 2,053 captured weapons during its one year existence. Operation Burlington Trail accounted for 1,948 enemy and 545 weapons captured.

One of the largest operations conducted in Vietnam to date is the Americal Operation Russell Beach. It was iniated January 13, 1969 on the Batangan Peninsula eight miles northeast of Quang Ngai City. The operation was a massive effort to win the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese by moving all civilians from the peninsula and isolating the VC units and members of the Viet Cong Infrastructure.

The combat phase of Russell Beach ended February 9 and accounted for 210 VC KIA, 15½ tons of salt, two tons of corn, 13 tons of rice, 59 individual weapons and six crew served weapons. Twenty-three sampans were destroyed as they tried to evade Navy Swift Boats off the Batangan Peninsula.

On March 18 Operation Frederick Hill was initiated in the northern sector of the Division's area by the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry and the 196th Infantry Brigade. The 5th ARVN Regiment also participated. Operation Geneva Park was started in the central area of the Division's region with the "Brave and the Bold" of the 198th Infantry Brigade. The 6th ARVN Regiment assisted. The Jungle Warriors of the 11th Brigade handled the southern regions with their operation, Operation Iron Mountain. The 4th ARVN Regiment participated too.

These three operations are the main ones that the Division is operating under today.

On June 1, 1969, Major General Lloyd B. Ramsey, former Deputy Commanding General of the 1st Logistical Command, assumed command of the Division replacing General Gettys.

On July 21, the division concluded Operation Russell Beach on the Batangan Peninsula. The massive pacification effort was concluded with the resettlement of more than 12,000 refugees on the peninsula after it had been cleared of enemy bunkers and sanctuaries. The overall pacification effort continued as a massive drive to upgrade the small hamlets and villages north of Quang Ngai City was initiated.

As the effort increased, intensive Communist pressures were beginning to be felt in the Que Son and Hiep Duc valleys 30 miles south of Da Nang. The Hiep Duc Refugee Center and two Americal fire support bases, LZ Center and LZ West, were believed to be the prime targets for the 2nd NVA Division. In early August elements of the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry beat off a ground attack at LZ West killing 59 enemy soldiers.

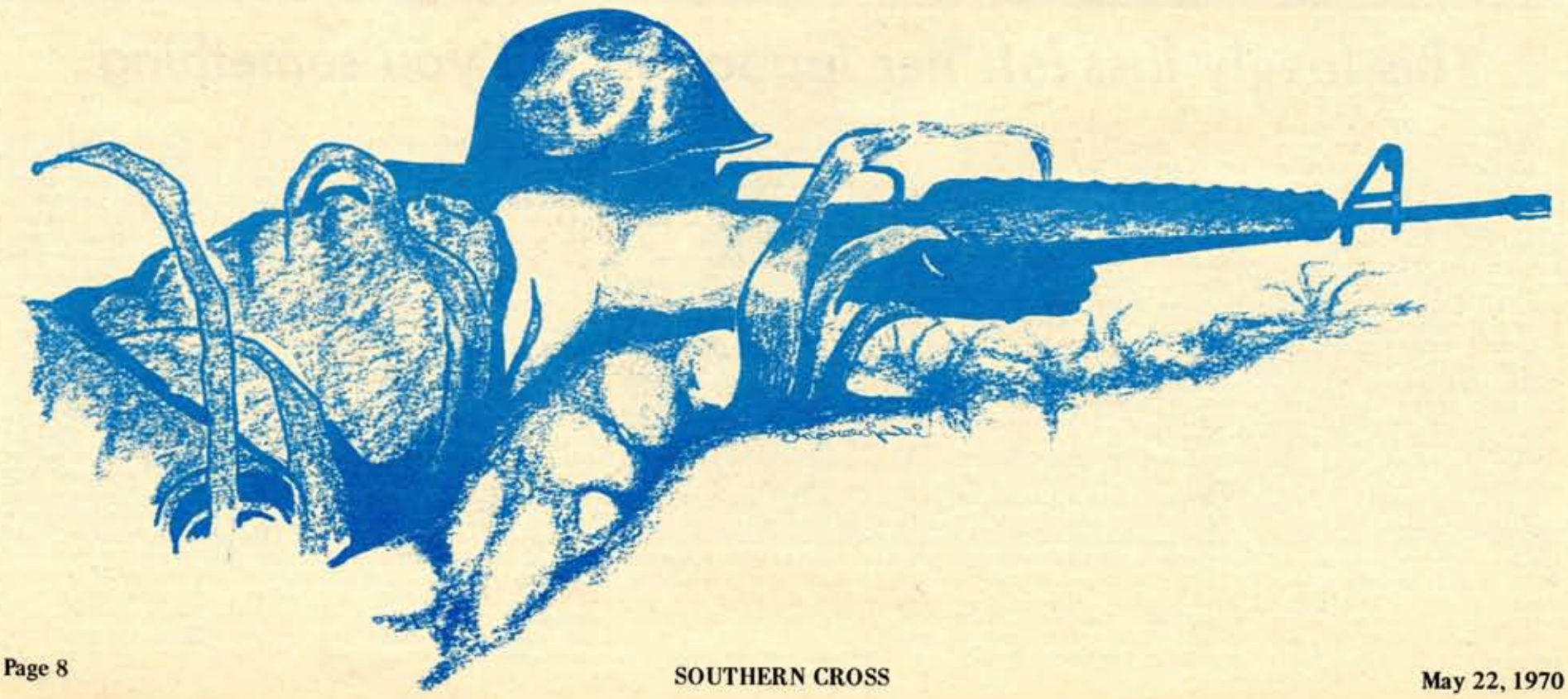
August 18 196th Brigade infantrymen began a battle which killed more than 312 NVA soldiers in 72 hours of fighting in the blistering heat on the Que Son Valley floor. Three days later 103 more enemy were killed by artillery and air strikes as the battle of the Hiep Duc and Que Son valleys erupted. Their enemy was the well-entrenched 2nd NVA Division's 1st Regiment.

The fighting calmed as quickly as it erupted and as elements of 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry and the 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry swept the valley floor in the closing days of August, little resistance was met.

During the two weeks of August fighting, Americal soldiers and Marines killed nearly 1,000 NVA soldiers.

Throughout the year the Division practiced a vigorous rice denial program to frustrate the enemy's cooks.

On March 17, 1970 the command and control UH-1 of Major General Lloyd B. Ramsey suffered mechanical failure and crashed in very thick jungle seven miles west of Chu Lai. Immediately Army and Air Force rescue units sprang into action to rescue the General and members of the crew and staff. A company sized element of the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry was inserted to within two miles of the crash site Tuesday but it was no until Wednesday morning that visual contact was made with the fallen craft. The survivors were medevaced by helicopters of the Air Force's 37th Air Rescue Detachment to Chu Lai.

Because of injuries, General Ramsey was hospitalized and Major General A.E. Milloy of the Big Red One became the next Commander of the Division. General Milloy assumed command of the Americal on March 22.

Today the Americal Division is the largest Army division in the world; it is fighting in the largest tactical combat zone, it is fighting under a variety of conditions ranging from delta swamps to costal sand dunes to dense jungle valleys and from dry season dust storms to drenching mud making mosoon rains. It is fighting and winning today in Vietnam as the Americal soldier did from Guadlacanal to Yokohama, Japan in World War II. Americal Division, the division that America calls upon only in time of war.