LOHs turn 'dust-off'; rescue 15

LZ HAWK HILL (196th INF BDE IO) – It was an occasion for field expediency, turning a Light Observation Helicopter (LOH) into a "dust-off" chopper.

During a series of heavy firefights in Hiep Duc Valley, two pilots flew their small craft into landing zones too small for Huey Medevacs and evacuated more than 15 American soldiers.

Chief Warrant Officer Carlos Quintero, Tampa, Fla., was flying the command and control helicopter for Lieutenant Colonel Richard Carvell, Virginia Beach, Va., commanding officer of 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry, 196th Infantry Brigade, off Landing Zone West, overlooking Hiep Duc Valley, 22 miles northwest of Tam Ky.

In the valley an infantry company needed help. Private First Class Kenneth Lyon, Tulsa, Okla., a crew chief flying his first mission, explained the situation. "We went in seven or eight times to the company. They were set up on a small hill covered with waist-high grass and huge boulders. We picked up three heat casualties and ran some resupply–ammo, cigarettes, and food."

In mid-afternoon, the company came under heavy fire from an NVA unit. Two Americans were wounded and a "dust-off" medical evacuation helicopter was called.

"The dust-off couldn't get in," explained Chief Warrant Officer Quintero. "The landing zone was too small for the Huey to maneuver into and it was hot–the bird took at least three hits."

Chief Warrant Officer Quintero thought the smaller, more maneuverable LOH could get in. It did.

"We went in and they were shooting everything," he said, "30 caliber, automatic, small arms fire, but no hits."

Hovering three to four feet above the high grass and rocks, Chief Warrant Officer Quintero held the chopper steady while Colonel Carvell and Private Lyon helped the wounded get on board.

"I don't know how he held it," recalled Private Lyon. "People jumping on and throwing packs, it's hard."

Safely gaining altitude, the patients were extracted to Landing Zone West. The LOH was soon back to the action.

This time for another wounded–an NVA. Again he hovered precariously over the tiny LZ, secured the load and returned to the fire support base.

Chief Warrant Officer Quintero then took the craft up for a final time.

"When we finished getting the people out, we went out to spot NVA and mark their positions for Blue Ghost and Firebird gunships to fire up."

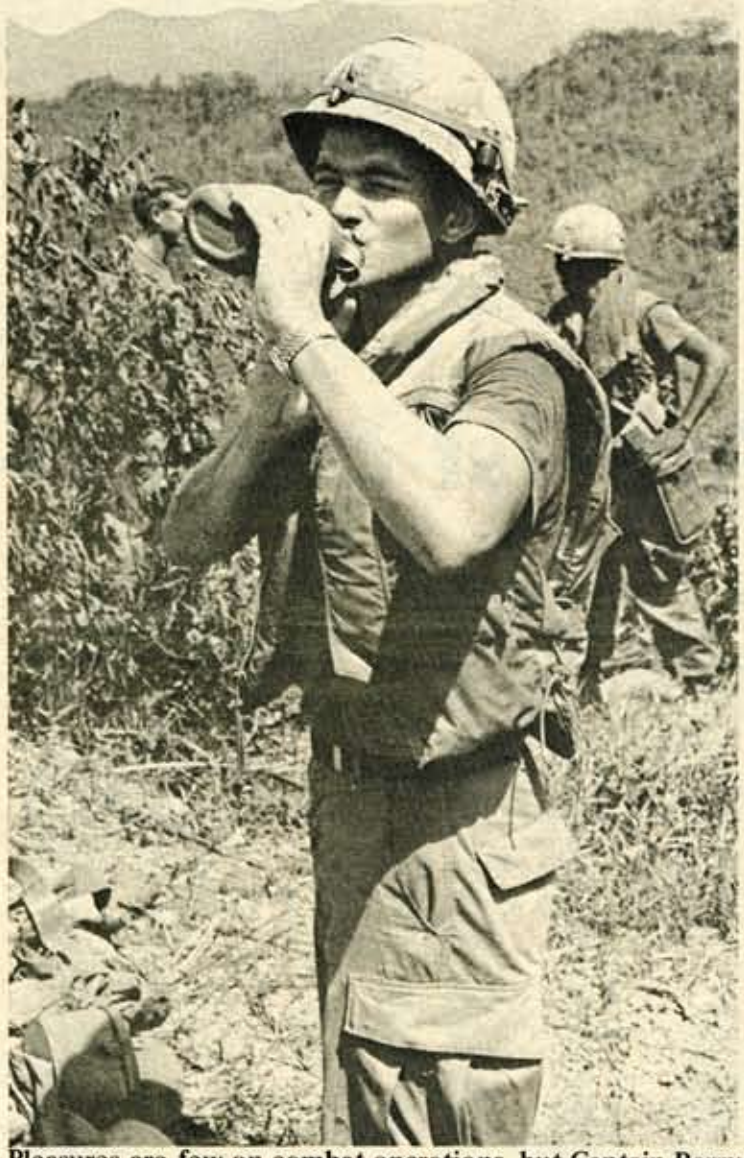
Three days later, another LOH pilot, First Lieutenant Patrick Hadfield, Honolulu, also turned his craft into a medical evacuation chopper in Hiep Duc Valley. Lieutenant Hadfield explained, "I was going out to LZ West to fly the command and control chopper for Colonel Carvell, but when I got out there I heard there were some wounded where a dust-off couldn't get in."

Lieutenant Hadfield and another LOH flying as an artillery observer volunteered by fly the medevac mission.

A string of Blue Ghost Cobra gunships, F Troop, 8th Cavalry, flew along to provide overhead security.

Alone in his craft, Lieutenant Hadfield flew into the tiny landing zone five times to pick up the wounded.

"There was some incoming," he recalled with considerable understatement. "They'd put on two or three wounded at a time while I was hovering. I guess I picked up 10 or 15 men altogether."



Pleasures are few on combat operations, but Captain Barry McCoy, San Pablo, Calif., appears more than satisfied by a drink of water from his canteen. Captain McCoy is commanding officer of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, 196th Infantry Brigade.

(Photo by PFC Richard Campbell)

SOUTHERN CROSS

AMERICAL DIVISION

Vol. 3 No. 29 | Chu Lai, Vietnam | August 7, 1970

4th-31st thwarts sappers

LZ SIBERIA (AMERICAL IO) – In the early morning hours a suspected platoon-size element of near-naked NVA sappers launched an attack upon LZ Siberia, the remote mountaintop firebase of 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry. The clash resulted in the death of ten NVA, and the capture of three AK-47s, three RPG launchers, over one hundred unexploded CHICOM grenades, and numerous RPG rounds, B-40 rounds and satchel charges.

"It all started about one o'clock in the morning," recounts Sergeant Bob Davis, Wilmington, Delaware, who was serving as platoon sergeant of Delta Company's first platoon–the element on the hill that night.

"We had a report of some movement in front of a bunker," recalled Sergeant Davis. Responding to the message, Sergeant Davis and First Lieutenant David Blum, Mora, Minn., the platoon leader, rushed to the bunker to investigate.

"Shortly after we arrived the CHICOMs started flying in," Sergeant Davis continued. "Then the RPG round hit the bunker."

Sergeant Bob Delzell, Glendale, Calif, a squad leader with the platoon, described the ensuing action; "It looked like there were several of them already through, and more still in the wire."

Sergeants Davis and Delzell, acting together, directed a heavy volume of retaliatory fire on the aggressors and managed to silence the incoming grenades and AK fire.

"I still saw a moving shape very close to the bunker," recalled Sergeant Delzell. "I couldn't believe it was a sapper, it was too close!"

Continually pouring M-16 fire at the shape, Sergeant Delzell saw it repeatedly dive into and rise up from a depression in the "no-man's land" area between the bunker line and the wire. "I figured he was using a grease sump we have out there for cover," said Sergeant Delzell, "so I started lobbing frags into it – I didn't see any movement after that."

A first-light inspection revealed the ten enemy bodies, each heavily camoulflaged.

"They had on these basket-like belts used to carry in the CHICOMs said Sergeant Davis.

The attack, though unsuccessful, initiated a three day battle throughout the entire Hiep Duc Valley which was described by Commander of the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry, Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth Skaer, as the heaviest fighting ever recorded in the battalion AO.

122 enemy fall

Div Recap: Week's action increases

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO) – ACtion in Southern I Corps saw a slight increase over the previous week's action as the soldiers of the Division accounted for 122 enemy killed. In Operation Frederick Hill the "Chargers" of the 196th Infantry Brigade killed 43 enemy, confiscated 17 individual weapons, and uncovered an 18-bed hospital and dispensary. Elsewhere in Operation Geneva Park the "Brave and Bold" of the 198th Infantry Brigade accounted for 20 enemy killed. Operation Iron Mountain saw the "Jungle Warriors" of the 11th Infantry Brigade kill 28 of the enemy and detain 22 in increased action for the week.

Frederick Hill

Continuing their mission at Kham Duc, in the mountains 35 miles west of Tam Ky, the 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, inserted a platoon to search a suspected enemy location. The infantrymen soon found and engaged an estimated platoon of NVA.

In the ensuing firefight, supported by helicopter gunships, four NVA were killed, three AK-47 rifles and one light machine gun were captured.

Thynext afternoon, the 2nd Platoon of Delta Company made an important medical find, an 18-bed NVA hospital and dispensary. Inside were eight metal boxes containing medical supplies.

The following day, Bravo Company flushed two NVA out of hiding while on a sweep. Both enemy were killed and two AK-47 rifles captured along with 120 rounds of ammunition.

The "Gimlets" of the 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, accounted for 15 enemy killed in several scattered incidents northwest of Tam Ky.

In three days, Delta and Charlie Companies killed six enemy. A six man recon patrol from D Company engaged and routed a squad of NVA, killing

(continued on page 6)

'Professionals' nab 15

LZ HAWK HILL (196th INF BDE IO) – In a tense firefight 23 miles west of Tam Ky, a Division company fought off an attempted encirclement by a large NVA force, killing 15 enemy in the process.

The infantrymen, from Company C, 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry, 196th Infantry Brigade, were supported throughout by helicopter gunships, airstrikes and artillery.

"We were on a search and clear mission and had stopped to set up day laagers to eat chow," said Captain David Sheehorn, Mesa, Ariz., commanding officer of Company C.

Captain Sheehorn had split the company into platoon maneuver elements and each was establishing a separate laager. After chow the Company was rejoining when the second platoon hit the NVA force entrenched in well camouflaged bunkers and spider holes.

"The terrain was very thick," said Private First Class Rich Hyland, Pittsford, N.Y. "We could hear the enemy and knew they were close."

The "Professionals" laid down an intense barrage of small arms fire and tossed grenade after grenade at the hidden enemy.

"It was on a little knoll, but the NVA were well dug in and the terrain was so thick we couldn't see where they were," said Private First Class Ronie C. Thompson, Milwaukee, Ore.

The larger NVA force made repeated attempts to encircle the infantrymen, but Company C managed to keep their freedom of movement. The infantry continued to return heavy fire through what little open terrain was available.

There was a clearing about five yards wide," said Private Hyland. "We placed two machineguns there and kept them firing."

Company C formed a perimeter and called in airstrikes.

A few days later, ARVN soldiers sweeping the area found 15 NVA bodies. Ten had been killed by small arms fire from Company C, and the rest by artillery and airstrikes.

Lady Luck and dud round help pointman win duel

By SGT Chuck Merdzinski

FSB LIZ (11th INF BDE IO) – A misfire by an NVA soldier's weapon saved the life of an infantrymen in a recent face-to-face duel, 15 miles north of Duc Pho in the 11th Infantry Brigade area of operations.

Private First Class Gary O. Mooneyham, Ashville, N.C., of the 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry was with an element providing security for the 26th Engineer Battalion engaged in a land clearing operation. "I like to check things out," said Private Mooneyham, a pointman. He set out alone along a trail leading from the beach to search the immediate area for enemy tunnels. He had gone about 200 yards when he hearrd voices coming from the woodline. Suddenly, an NVA soldier walked out of the thick brush from a hidden trail five meters away. They found themselves staring at each other.

"He acted like he owned the place and was on a Sunday afternoon stroll," exclaimed Private Mooneyham. "When we saw each other we just froze in our tracks. He was as surprised to see me as I was to see him," continued Private Mooneyham. "At first I thought he was an ARVN, but when I saw his pack I knew he was the enemy."

The NVA brought his weapon up before Private Mooneyham had made positive identification, but it misfired. He then dove into a ditch to escape, followed by 20 rounds from Private Mooneyham's M-16.

Private Mooneyham withdrew 50 meters and signaled for help. He then fired into the brush to discourage the other enemy soldiers he had heard talking from joining the action. A Sheridan Armored Assualt Vechicle came to his assistance and covered the area with its machine gun.

In the ditch the men found a new automatic weapon next to the dead enemy soldier. An examination showed that the firing pin had hit the round but failed to ignite the primer. "I'm going to keep the dud round for a souvenir and have it silver plated," he remarked.

The NVA was carrying a CHICOM grenade, canteen, flashlight and five magazines of ammo on his pistol belt.

4th-31st nabs 10

By SP4 Gerald Lamb

LZ WEST (196th INF BDE IO) – Aided by helicopter gunships, a 196th Infantry Brigade reconnaisance platoon recently fought off an enemy attack killing ten NVA in the process.

The action, which took place early in the morning, was part of the heavy fighting in Hiep Duc Valley 22 miles northwest of Tam Ky. Echo Recon, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry was moving to block retreating NVA as they attempted to leave the area.

The riflemen were moving up a trail in a hilly area overlooking the village when they started receiving sniper fire from their rear.

"We hugged the ground moving off into the brush and kept advancing," said Private First Class Greg Morfitt, Albert Lea, Minn.

"As we neared the top of the hill we discovered the NVA were there too. They were dug in and began throwing CHICOM grenades down on us," Private Morfitt said.

The infantrymen called for gunships. Although receiving heavy automatic weapons fire, the choppers kept hitting the enemy's location.

"After the gunships left we tried to reach the top of the hill again," said Private Morfitt, "but the NVA were still sniping at us."

Before the rearmed gunships could return the men peppered the area with M-79 grenade fire and had grenades.

Advancing again the infantrymen observed that one lone sniper remained. A burst of M-16 fire quieted him and Recon took the hill, finding the bodies of 10 NVA in the positions.

Elements of the 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, 11th Infantry Brigade, wade through mud puddles on the edge of a rice paddy. The men were providing security for a land clearing operation. (Photo by SP4 Herbert Brady)

Women help 2nd-1st grab 14

By PFC Richard Campbell

LZ HAWK HILL (196th INF BDE IO) – Vietnamese women may spend the majority of their time caring for their children and cooking rice, but they are also helpful in the war effort as soldiers of the 196th Infantry Brigade will testify.

Thanks largely to information obtained from friendly villagers, Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, killed 14 enemy and confiscated 2,250 pounds of rice on an operation five miles west of Tam Ky.

"This area was new to us," commented Private First Class Walter Hart, Durano, Mich., radio operator from the company. "Our interpreter talked to the villagers often and it helped us a lot."

Private Hart recalled one afternoon while on patrol, his platoon engaged several NVA who were running across a rice paddy into a woodline. He and his fellow soldiers saw one of the NVA fall to the ground after being hit by M-16 rifle fire. The Americans moved forward to check the area.

"We found a blood trail leading away from where we dropped the NVA, so we followed it," continued Private Hart. "We broke off several branches with blood on them and carried them into the village."

When they got to the village, the company's point element saw an old woman with an unusual look on her face.

"We showed her the bloodstained branches," remarked Specialist Four James Summerline, Goldsboro, N.C., "and she led us behind a hooch and pointed to a tunnel entrance." The NVA soldier was lying in the tunnel, near death from a chest wound.

"He just laid there in the tunnel looking up at us," added Specialist Summerline. "He had lost so much blood that he could hardly move. His AK-47 rifle was lying beside him but the NVA was just too weak to even pick it up." Despite efforts by the Americans to save him, the NVA died a few moments later.

As a result of Vietnamese information and combat intelligence, Company B also uncovered two small NVA bunker complexes in the area and a sapper training sight.

Well-used trails led to the training sight which consisted of three sections of barbed wire.

The majority of the rice found during the two-week operation was buried underground in two villages not more than 600 yards from each other. Questioning of the villagers revealed that NVA squads had forced them to prepare the food and hide it until they returned.

The rice and more than 150 pounds of potatoes which were also found were extracted from the area.

First Lieutenant Leland Klein, Desplaine, Ill., commanding officer of Company B, was pleased with the operation and commented that the information gathered from the village women was indeed helpful in making the mission of his company a successful one.

"We are not used to working that area," reported Lieutenant Klein, "but my men adjusted to it quickly, learned a great deal, and definitely did the enemy some harm."

Scout dog quiets mortar

By SGT Bob Nordyke

LZ HAWK HILL (196th INF BDE IO) – With the help of a scout dog team, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry, 196th Infantry Brigade, effectively silenced an enemy mortar tube by confiscating 42 mortar rounds.

The soldiers were on operations in the rugged mountains near LZ Professional, eight miles southwest of Tam Ky. For two days mortars dropped on Company B, each time late in the day when the infantrymen were digging in their night defensive position.

The third day Private First Class Dwane Knowles, Staunton, Va., and his gaunt German shepard, Duke, from the 48th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog) went to work with B Company to get the enemy mortar.

First platoon, with Private Knowles and Duke humped off the company's mountain to a laager at first light, slowly making their way through the thick brush.

Duke, walking third in line, paced from one side of the path to the other - suddenly he stopped and tensed, intent on some smell or sound that no one else was aware of.

Private Knowles passed the information up to the pointman.

The patrol moved ahead, now perceptibly slower.

A few meters ahead, the pointman found what Duke had sensed.

Hidden in the thick vegetation along the trail was a makeshift lean-to of bamboo, leaves, and grass. The patrol quickly set up security around the area to check out the lean-to.

"Inside the shelter was sort of a mat of leaves and weeds," recalled Private Knowles. "It covered a cache of 42 82mm mortar rounds and eight boxes of explosive charges.

The VC ammunition was confiscated by the "Professionals" and destroyed. Duke had helped neutralize the mortar, "the next best thing to getting the tube," as Private Knowles put it.

This man from Delta Company, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry, 196th Infantry Brigade, stands near a booby trap to warn other men from his company. The company is operating west of LZ West.

(Photo by SP4 Triburcio Sanchez)

SOUTHERN CROSS AMERICAL DIVISION

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1st-52nd Four Deuce best in division

By SP4 Thomas J. Neville

LZ STINSON (AMERICAL IO)–"Four Deuce" sounds like some sort of gamblers' jargon, but here on LZ Stinson the phrase refers to a well-trained and efficient mortar platoon, which does not rely on Lady Luck to carry out its missions.

The 4.2 inch mortar is the platoon's basic hardware, thus the term "Four Deuce." The unit is part of Echo Company, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry, 198th Infantry Brigade.

Staff Sergeant Michael Henry, O'Fallon, Ill.. is platoon sergeant and explained, "The function of Four Deuce is to protect the forward fire base in case of attack and also to provide support for maneuver companies which come within our range."

Sergeant Henry's duties include taking charge of the Fire Direction Control (FDC) section. The FDC bunker houses the "brains" of the operation and the men who work there are on constant alert, always ready to determine precise firing data.

Maximum security and precision firepower is the end result of four separate operations. Visual observance of the firebase's perimeter is maintained by "Roundeye," which refers to the electronic device.

Specialist Four Michael Nikula, Spokane, Wash., acts as one of the night watchmen. Although he is alone in the tower, constantly scanning the darkened countryside, he does not consider his job lonely.

In a small room at the base of the tower, another soldier maintains a silent vigil. He sits in front of a small box and watches electronic lines blip and bleep across a radar screen.

In the event of enemy movement, both Roundeye and radar telephone their observations and data to FDC. The brain of the mortar platoon swings into action. Two men wield protractors, compasses and other tools over a plotting board to determine the exact location of the target. Others maintain communication with Tactical Operations Control and the gunners outside.

Once clearance is obtained, the gunners train their sights on the target and Four Deuce commences fire.

Sergeant Henry has had a lot of experience with mortars, which includes service as an FDC platoon sergeant in the field; Proud of his section, he mentioned, "In a recent inspection we were told that our Four Deuce section was one of the best in the Division. We've always had a good reputation."

Sergeant Jerry Stephans, Munford, Ala., holds on to his helmet as Specialist Four William Thomas, Bartow, Fla., hangs one. The soldiers are part of the 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry, 198th Infantry Brigade. (Photo by SP4 Gerard Paulin)

A tale on the trail

By SGT Robert Daniels

FSB SAN JUAN HILL (11th INF BDE IO)–The sun radiates a harsh heat and no breeze stirs the heavy watery air; moderate, but lush, foliage and underbrush lends Alpha Company's first platoon a trail.

The unit, the 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry, slowly but adeptly progresses down the path, each man separated from the next by an imaginary "combat interval."

The 11th Infantry Brigade men are quiet. The pointman passes, eyes to the front, over and around the trail.

The platoon pushes on. Some are bent under the added weight of a radio or an M-60 machinegun or a few extra claymores.

In an instant the column is on the ground, eyes and ears strained to the foreign jungle. By some manner of communication, a combination of hand signals and a whisper, "movement to the front." was passed from the point. No immediate thoughts, just reactions.

Then the wait, "How many are there?" "Did we walk into an ambush?"

Those forward seek clues from the point's actions and signals. Further back, men wait for a clearance sign or the sound of gunfire. The column's rear is tense and looks down the trail in the direction from which they had just passed.

"It's only a deer," hop-scotches the relief-filed words spreads among the men.

Men sigh, smile, wipe their brows, all rise on the trail and readjust their packs and weapons for utility and comfort. Tensions are relieved and breathing returns to normal. The platoon, again moves out.

Part 2 of a 3 part series

Army's EM promotions explained

Your company, troop, battery or separate detachment commander has the authority to promote to grade E-4.

If the commander at the battalion/squadron level is a lieutenant colonel or higher he may promote to grades E-5 and E-6. Commanders of medical facilities may promote hospitalized personnel to pay grades E-4 through E-6.

A commander of an organization that is authorized a colonel or higher may promote to grade E-7.

Headquarters, Department of the Army makes all promotions to grades E-8 and E-9.

Promotion Selection

Before you can be promoted to grade E-5 or higher,you must first appear before a selection board. This is required to insure all personnel have an equal chance of being selected since commanders who have authority to promote to these grades usually do not know all of their men equally well. The board consists of officers and experienced noncommissioned officers who will interview you. You will be evaluated and, using a standard point system, ranked in relation to all others interviewed. The board will recommend to the commander those who should, and those

(continued on page 7)

Noting the grid coordinates of a suspicious location below, Captain James Clemons, plays an air-ground version of "Hide and Seek" with the enemy west of Duc Pho. Captain Clemons, a FAC, flies for the 11th Infantry Brigade. (Photo by CPT T.N.Thrasher)

Col Shumway takes over 523rd

By SP4 Ed Breidenbach

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO)–Lieutenant Colonel James D. Shumway III assumed command of the 523rd Signal Battalion from Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Bartos in a ceremony at the Headquarters Company area on July 14th.

Colonel Bartos has been assigned to the Pentagon, Washington, D.C.

The ceremony was attended by various dignitaries including Brigadier General Roy L. Atterbury, Assistant Division Commander of Support.

The new commander, a service veteran of 19 years was commissioned in 1956. He has served numerous tours in Europe, the Pentagon and other US posts and a tour in Vietnam.

The signal officer's last duty station was the Pentagon where he served as a manager in the satellite branch.

He has a Bronze Star, the Combat Infantry Badge, National Defense Service Medal, a Meritorious Service Medal and a Joint Chief of Staff ID Badge.

Colonel Shumway is married and has three children. He makes his home in Detroit.

In recent ceremonies at the 523rd Signal Battalion Lieutenant Colonel James D. Shumway III (left) Took Command, replacing Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Bartos. Brigadier General Roy L. Atterbury attended the ceremonies (right). (Photo by 523rd Sig. Bn.)

E Co, 26th Engineer's hour an a half

By PFC JOhn C. Hunger

CHU LAI (26th ENG BN IO) – Bridging projects can't get too much more difficult than what faced the 26th Engineer Battalion seven miles northeast of Quang Ngai City. The minesweeping by Bravo Company, 26th Engineer Battalion leading up to the bridge site and the land clearing project of the 39th Engineer Battalion to begin on the other side of the Song Hau Giang River were quite typical engineer projects. The unique and original part was the bridge built by Echo Company, 26th Engineer Battalion with some assistance by Bravo Company.

Using as support the foundation columns of an old bridge previously damaged by the Viet Cong, a 65 foot armored vehicle launched bridge (AVLB) was extended from the near bank across the columns. Then a 15 foot metal dry span bridge in conjunction with another expedient engineer bridge represents an engineering first.

An AVLB bridge is a two piece metal bridge which is transported in a collapsed position atop a tank chassis. At the bridge site, the tank projects the bridge from collapsed position out to extended position. The bridge then extends from the bank in front of the tank to a far support, which in this case was a bridge foundation column rather than the opposite bank. The tank is then detached and removed from the roadway. The operation is merely reversed to removed the bridge.

The 15 foot dry span bridge that was coupled with the AVLB bridge is a common expedient engineer bridge composed of, in this case, eight 15 foot sections of metal bridge balk.

Completed in roughly an hour and a half, the bridge was then used to deliver the five bulldozers of the 39th Engineer Battalion to their land clearing site immediately at the other bank of the river. Then the bridges were disassembled in what truly became a test of the statement made by the commanding officer of E Company, Captain Mark E. Bacon. He said, "There is no place in Vietnam thats too tough for my engineers."

The job of getting the heavy bridge and track equipment back out of the marshy site and through the rice paddies proved to be no small task. Before the day was out, the men were wading through waist-deep mud with heavy bridge components and praying that their efforts would soon bring an end to the engineering first which also turned into an engineering feat. With the successful completion of this project, Captain Bacon of Washington, D.C., has both the originality of his ridging first plus the very superb efforts of his hard-working engineers to be proud of.

The "White Lions" put the last four 15 foot sections of metal bridge bulk to complete the expedient bridge for the bulldozers of the 39th Engineer Battalion to cross to their land clearing operation site.

The first of the five bulldozers of the 39th Engineer Battalion crosses Echo Company's expedient bridge to the land clearing operation site. Immediately after they were across the bridge was disassembled.

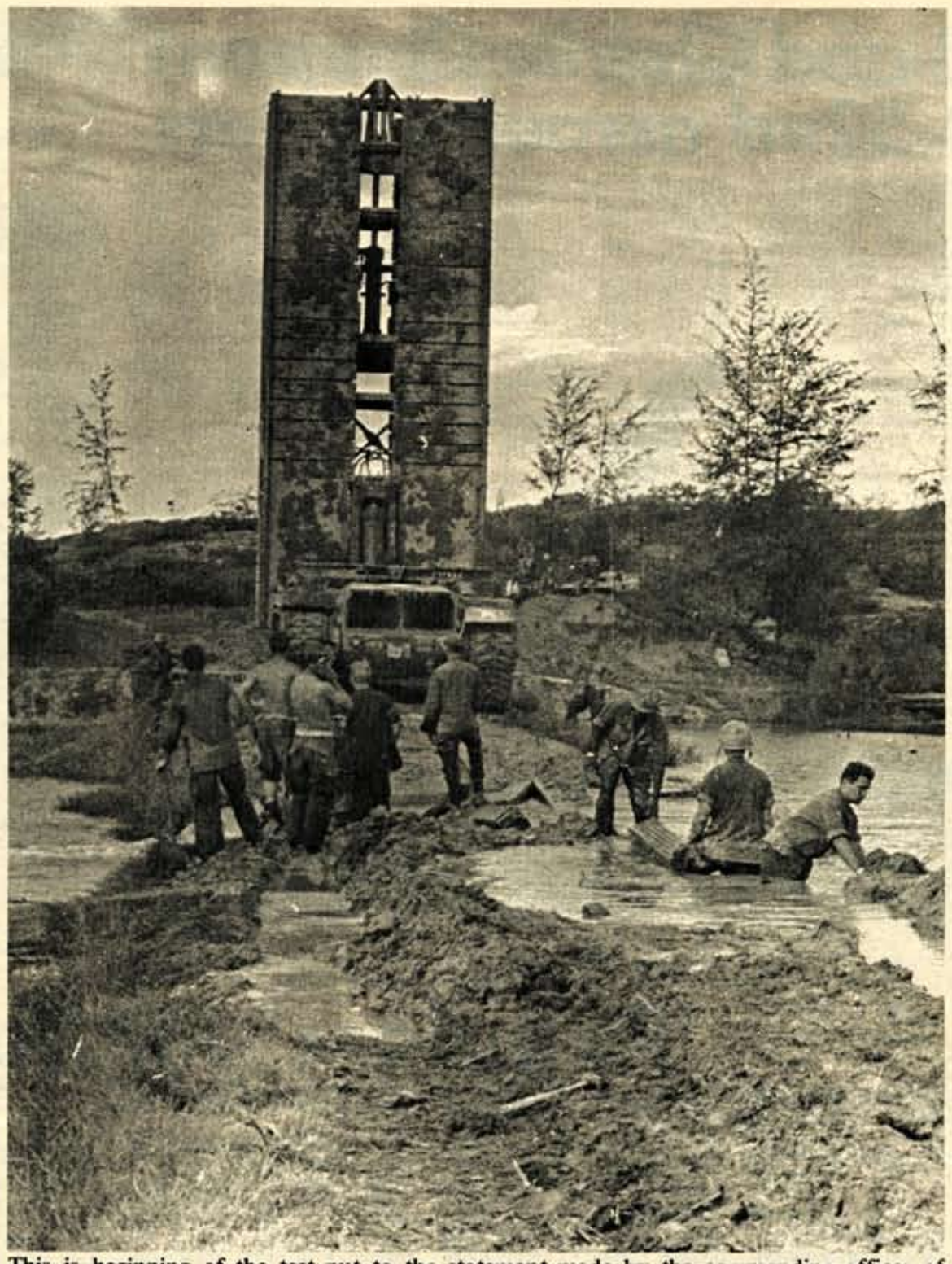
A little heave ho and a tug here and
Echo Company. The men are breaking

After the AVLB and 15 fo
are in place they must be
bridge only took an hour a

ridge

ere plus a lot of muscle to disassemble the feat of own the eight 15 foot sections of metal bridge bulk.

Photos and story by: PFC John Hunger



This is beginning of the test put to the statement made by the commanding officer of Company E, Captain Bacon as the "White Lions" start the job by taking up the AVLB and metal bridge bulk.

sections of metal bridge bulk chored down by stakes. The one half to build.

The "White Lions" are probably beginning to wonder if there is a dry place in Vietnam as they start digging and carrying the sections of metal bridge bulk out of the mud.

CO and Charlie Company 1st-52nd assault sappers

By SGT Thomas C. Elmer

TRA BINH (198th INF BDE IO) – A seldom used tactic was recently employed successfully as several infantryman assaulted enemy sappers outside the perimeter of a pacification hamlet. The tactic, used to defend the Tra Binh Pacification Hamlet, forced the sappers to evade quickly leaving behind one dead and several weapons.

"The first thing we heard was an aerial burst go off and almost simultaneously a green flare shot across the perimeter," said Captain Arthur M. Fritog, Ft. Cambell, Ky., company commander of Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry of the 198th Infantry Brigade. "It had to be a signal to start the attack because several incoming mortar rounds, RPG's and CHICOM handgrenades immediately followed the flare."

The attack on the hamlet, located ten miles north of Quang Ngai, intensified when, two hours later, another volley of mortar rounds pounded the perimeter and a bangalore torpedo exploded blowing a large hole in the wire. Realizing the sappers would attempt to enter, the company commander and several of his men rushed to cover the location.

"We ran to the hole in the wire," said Captain Frotoh, "and waited for them to come through. When they didn't enter, we decided to check any possible advance."

"After the bangalore torpedo ripped the hole in the fence," said Sergeant Jimmy Pagan, Sandersville, Va., "The CO, my platoon leader, a sergeant and myself slowly moved through the gap."

As they approached the outer strand of wire, Captain Fritog spotted two sappers lying in a depression. After both sides exchanged handgrenades, the VC began to retreat.

"When the sappers spotted us, they tried to run," said Sergeant Pagan. "They threw two CHICOM grenades in the midst of us as they ran. Then Captain Fritog and the lieutenant threw a couple of grenades at them."

"The CO hollered for someone to pop a flare," said Specialist Four Ronald Redwell, Los Angeles. "I saw a sapper running and killed him with an M-79 grenade launcher."

After the skirmish, the four men returned to the perimeter and from his command post, Captain Fritog received several reports of the sappers retreating.

"The assault must have convinced the sappers to evade," said Captain Fritog. "As soon as we assaulted the two, the others pulled back."

The infantrymen waited until first light to sweep the area and found the one dead sapper, several blood trails, 16 CHICOM handgrenades, two RPG rounds, one rifle, and one mortar round.

Looking a bit tired, this radioman from Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, 11th Infantry Brigade, moves with his company through an open field. The unit was on an operation south of Chu Lai.

(Photo by SP4 Herbert Brady, 523rd Sig. Bn.)

3 VC walk into 'Old Guard'

By SGT Robert Daniels

FSB SAN JUAN HILL (11th INF BDE IO) – Walking into an ambush set up by the Recon Platoon, 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry was their first mistake but playing possum for a "Primo" Light Observation Helicopter (LOH) from the 11th Infantry Brigade Aviation Section proved to be the clincher for three VC eight miles west of Duc Pho in the Song Ve River Valley.

"We were in an ambush site on the side of a hill overlooking a rice paddy and three VC just walked right into us," said Specialist Four Randolph Gordon.

"The careless VC blundered into a barrage of claymores and small arms fire. We hurried down to the old trail and spotted a VC dragging his comrade toward the high ground to the northwest," added Specialist Gordon.

On the trail the recon team found one dead VC and three hastily discarded packs containing food and other items. Then they moved out in pursuit of the two enemy soldiers.

Hearing movement to their front the recon team opened fire and called in gunships.

A few minutes later a LOH arrived and the machinegunner spotted two VC lying in an open area. They appeared dead but when the LOH went down for a close look one of the VC tried to get his weapon up. The machinegunner immediately opened fire on the two VC.

After the LOH pulled away the recon team moved up the hill to investigate the gunship damage and found two more dead VC. They also confiscated one AK-47.

'Regulars' hit hot LZ, kill 5

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one and capturing five packs, two large military radios, assorted communications equipment, and a small hand generator.

In scattered action the "Polar Bears" of the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry totaled 12 enemy killed and two large food caches confiscated.

Early in the week, 50 pounds of rice and 450 pounds of corn were discovered in a concealed shelter by the 1st platoon of Alpha Company on a sweep west of Tam Ky.

The following day nine more enemy were killed and a large rice cache was uncovered by the company.

In the middle of the week while working with a CIDG force, Company D uncovered a 4000 pound rice cache from large woven wicker baskets while sweeping across a small hill covered with heavy vegetation.

Geneva Park

During the week in light sporadic action the "Professionals" of the 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry accounted for seven enemy killed.

Early in the week Delta Company while maneuvering in the mountainous terrain west of Chu Lai discovered five freshly dug graves. The five kills were attributed to an action the company had several days prior.

Action for the "Ready Rifles" of the 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry, was very light in the past week's action as they accounted for two enemy killed and the capture of miscellaneous items.

Late in the week Echo Recon, while searching a village west of Quang Ngai City, found 600 feet of barbed wire, eight heavy metal tubes and seven canteens hidden within the structures. The company evacuated the materials.

In the lightest action of Operation Geneva Park the "Regulars" of the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry accounted for three enemy killed.

Late in the afternoon the next day Bravo Company met heavy enemy resistance as they were inserted into an area southeast of Chu Lai. "They took us under fire as soon as we hit the LZ," said First lieutenant Winston W. Moody, Houston, Tex., platoon leader. "We returned fire with small arms and machineguns and the VC evaded." The enemy evaded to a nearby location and the infantrymen re-established contact, killing two. A short time later, gunships, providing support for the company, sighted more VC and fired on them with automatic weapons and rockets to account for three more enemy killed. Bravo Company swept the area to find three field packs and three pistol belts.

Late in the week several Vietnamese turned over to H Troop, 17th Cavalry, four booby traps, one fragmentation grenade and twelve mortar rounds.

Iron Mountain

In moderate action the "Gimlets" of the 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry killed 14 enemy soldiers, detained nine and confiscated numerous miscellaneous items.

Early in the week Recon engaged an unknown size VC element in the early morning hours, killing four of the enemy. Nine VC were detained as they fled the area, adjacent to the South China Sea, south of Duc Pho.

The 1st Battlaion, 20th Infantry accounted for five enemy killed and 13 detained in the weeks action. The "Sykes' Regulars" combined with the 26th Engineer Battalion to give the enemy two set backs by uncovering as many caches.

Late in the week Company D made contact with an undetermined size enemy force on a mid-day insertion in the lowlands north of Duc Pho. As a result of the action three VC were killed and 10 enemy suspects detained.

The same day Company B and the 26th Engineers dealt the enemy two blows with out firing a shot during the day, while working in the Song Ve River delta north of Duc Pho. Company B found two Ak-47s while patrolling a treeline in the area. Later the combined elements uncovered a tunnel and bunker complex. One bag of explosives, one bandoleer of loaded rifle magazines, one bag of metal frag pieces, 25 pounds of corn, an assortment of booby-trap firing devices, and two CHICOM grenades were found in the complex, which was destroyed.

In light contacts throughout the week the "Old Guard" of the 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry killed five enemy soldiers and captured several weapons.

Late in the week D Company uncovered an enemy bunker complex while working in the mountains northwest of Duc Pho.

A door gunner on a 174th Aviation Company (Assault Helicopter) "Shark" gunship provide a steady stream of M-60 fire for flank security during a rocket run on a visual reconnaissance mission, five miles southwest of Duc Pho.

(Photo by SP4 Peter R. Sorensen)

Pleasant worldly sights like this may be in store for you if Tokyo's Expo '70 is on your R&R itinerary. Our photographer may have had to stand in line before getting this shot of Miss Universe's lovely "pavilion" but seeing architecture like this is well worth the effort. If it's in the stars, Miss Universe may have a galaxy of delights waiting for you when you get there. (Photo by 1Lt Joe Walker)

'Helix' divisions eye in the sky

By CPT T. N. Thrasher

FSB BRONCO (11th INF BDE IO) – The OV-10 "Bronco" dives toward the ridge and as it pulls off, a white smoke rocket slams into the hill side leaving a billowing marker. Immediately after, two F-4 Phantoms, bristling with bombs and rockets, dive at the smoke. The job of directing tactical air strikes in close support of Division soldiers goes to the Air Force Forward Air Controllers of "Helix" of the 20th Tactical Air Squadron. "We perform many tasks in support of infantry units. Because of our visual advantage," explained Captain William Allgaier, Goffstown, N.H., who flies for the 11th Infantry Brigade, "we can call in and adjust artillery fire, provide navigational assistance for units in dense areas, and relay radio messages when ground signals are blocked by terrain features. We also direct air strikes against pre-planned targets (enemy basecamps and resupply areas) and perform visual reconnaissance over the division area of operation."

When air support is needed, the ground commander can either call "Helix" directly if he is in the immediate area or make the request through his battalion, which forwards it to the brigade Tactical Air Control Party (TACP). The TACP relays the request to "Helix" over secure radio and at times notifies division TACP. From division the request goes to the Direct Air Support Center at Cam Horn, in northern I Corps, which gives final approval.

"The procedure sounds like it takes a long time to get jets," stated Captain James Clemons, Carthage, N.Y., "but it only takes about five minutes if there are aircraft in the air which can be diverted. If the jets have to be scrambled from Chu Lai it may take a little longer."

Captain Allgaier added, "It can get pretty hectic in that cockpit. There are three radios in the plane, linking the pilot to the man on the ground, the fighter pilots and the division TACP, and sometimes they are all talking at once. If you have got more than one set of fighters, you have to use those with the least "playtime" (available time over target) first. They are short on fuel so they have to drop their ordnance and run home."

A pilot must be fighter qualified and then attend the Foreward Air Controllers course at Elgin Air Force Base before coming to Vietnam as FAC. "After you get here an instructor pilot checks you out in the AO and then you can go to work," said Captain Clemons.

"From our vantage point in the air," stated Lieutenant Colonel Homer Pauley, Ft. Worth, Tex., division air liaison officer, "we can put the ordnance in the right spot with a maximum effectiveness against the enemy."

Promotions explained

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who should not, be promoted.

This recommendation is in fact a resume of your interview by the promotion selection board and is recorded on DA Form 3355-R (promotion Points Worksheet) and DA Form 3356-R (Board Member's Appraisal Worksheet).

Points are awarded based on your background, experience, time in service, time in grade, etc., and on how well you do in convincing the board you should be promoted, compared to your fellow soldiers. The maximum number of points that an be given is 1,000 points. You will be placed on the standing promotion list in order of merit based on the points the board gives you on the promotion points worksheet and the board member appraisal worksheet. There are 750 points possible on the promotion points worksheet.

Here are some highlights concerning the 750 points you can be given on the promotion points worksheet. Active Federal service is worth 100 points are given for every six months you have acquired above the time requirement but you lose one-half point for every six months under the minimum time as outlined in part one of this series.

Time served in current grade allows 100 points, 60 points for being in your pay grade the normal time. One additional point is given for each month surpassing the normal time and you lose one point for each month under the required period.

Civilian education provides for a maximum of 100 points. For each year of education, grades one through eight, you receive four points. Grades nine through twelve are worth seven points for each year. One-half point is awarded for each semester hour of college or higher education. If you take classes on your off duty time, two points are given for each semester hour.

Military education can give you a maximum of 125 points. A course or school must be successfully completed to receive credit. Attendance at the NCO Academy for four weeks or longer will give you 30 points. Army service schools or major command courses will give you one point for each week of instruction providing it pertains to your MOS. Two points for each week of instruction are given for Ranger, Airborne, Drill Sergeant and other special courses. Also, one-half point is awarded for each credit hour awarded for correspondence courses.

Review your DA Form 201 if you have worked six months or more in other MOS fields, to see if you have been awarded a secondary or additional MOS. You may get 10 points added to your score if you have 70 points or more in this area.

The Commander's Evaluation is worth a total of 100 points (a maximum of ten points in each of ten rated areas). This evaluation includes your duty performance, adaptability, attitude, initiative, leadership and others. In this area you receive seven points for "average" rating eight joints for "above average," nine for "excellent" and 10 for "outstanding."

You may earn a maximum of 250 points as a result of your appearance before the selection board.

Based on the overall evaluation of each man, the board will make its recommendation. If you are not recommended by the board, you will be informed by your commander why you were not recommended.

Duo, enemy play hide and seek

CHU LAI (DIVARTY IO) – Nineteen hours, a relatively short period of time, can become an eternity for a couple of men, especially when they are the objects of an intensive manhunt.

First Lieutenants Henry L. Battance Jr., Engelhard, N.C., and Peter R. Perez, Los Angeles, both assigned to Division Artillery, recently experienced such an ordeal.

Lieutenant Ballance, the pilot of an OH6 light observation helicopter and Lieutenant Perez, the air observer, were cast in their perilous predicament one afternoon, when their chopper crashed on the side of a mountain after taking enemy machinegun fire.

The incident, which claimed the life of the door gunner, occurred in the dense jungle north of LZ Siberia, an area still highly infested by the enemy.

"We came down about 100 feet above a river," Lieutenant Ballance recalled the outset of what was to become a determined struggle for survival.

Lieutenant Perez received a minor but painful burn on his right forearm in the brief flash fire that erupted in the crash. Lieutenant Ballance emerged from the wreckage with only minor scratches and bruises.

"We could hear the enemy laughing and jabbering below us and on the other side of the river," said Lieutenant Ballance, a 1968 graduate of The Citadel. "They began spraying the area with .51 caliber rounds, hoping that we would return the fire so they could locate us and move in on us."

The Lieutenants had only a few white phosporus and incendary grenades with which to signal rescue aircraft. They settled upon a hiding spot some 15 meters from a clearing that was a bomb crater.

"We figured that the crater would be an ideal spot for a rescue should a helicopter get to us before the enemy found us," said Lieutenant Ballance.

The next hours were to be the most trying ones ever experienced by these two brave young men.

The men were forced to lie on an approximately 60 degree slope to avoid detection. Capture and perhaps even death seemed inevitable.

"We could hear them rustling in the bushes all around us," said Lieutenant Ballance. It was the beginning of the search that would eventually bring one enemy to within only three feet of the two.

Darkness finally came, but it did not bring the relief that Lieutenant Ballance had first judged.

Shortly before dawn, the Lieutenants spotted an enemy soldier only 10 feet from their position. "He was wearing a black pajama top," said Lieutenant Ballance. "It was unbuttoned, and he was holding an AK-47. By this time I had already resolved that I was going to die. I only hoped that it would be a quick death and that they would not turtore me."

They were soon filled with revived hope, however, as from the distance came the sounds of helicopters.

Members of the artillery aviation section had volunteered to fly all the choppers available in hopes of finding their lost companions. Leaving the comfort of their beds, the pilots began their search at the first light of dawn. Their efforts may have made the difference.

Calling on their reserve strength, the two men stumbled toward the crater where they signaleed the choppers.

"A chopper passed over and threw us a first aid kit and seconds later a survival radio and a grenade launcher," said Lieutenant Ballance.

More than an hour later the CH-53 helicopter, more commonly known as a "Jolly Green Giant," arrived and hoisted the men to safety, but it was all anticlimatic as the gunships above provided the happy officers with more than ample firepower for protection.

Lying safely on the floor of the "Jolly Green" they could do no more than exchange smiles of relief.

What is marihuana?

Marihuana is Indian hemp (Cannabis sativa). The parts with the highest tetrahydrocannabino (THC) content are the flowering tops of the plant. The leaves have a smaller amount. The stalks and seeds have little or none. THC is believed to be the active ingredient in marihuana. Many other compounds are present in marihuana, but they do not produce the mental effects of the drug.

Does Marihuana vary in strength?

Yes. Some marihuana may produce no effect whatsoever. A small amount of strong marihuana may produce marked effects. The THC content from none to more than 2 per cent THC. Because THC is somewhat unstable, its conent in marihuana decreases as time passes.

The plant that grows wild in the United States is low in THC content compared to cultivated marihuana, or the Mexican, Lebanese, or Indian varieties. Climate, soil conditions, the time of harvesting and other factors determine the potency.

What is hashish?

Hashish (hash) is the dark brown resin that is collected from the tops of potent Cannabis sativa. It is at least five times stronger than marihuana. Since it is stronger, the effect on the user is naturally more intense, and the possibility of side effects is greater.

Enemy says hello, Rangers say good-by

By SGT Bill Lake

FSB BRONCO (11th INF BDE IO) – The friendly smiles and waves of a three-man NVA squad to an ARVN Ranger turned into a mad-scramble which left two NVA dead, one detained, and a 9 mm pistol and six CHICOM grenades confiscated. The melee occured 16 miles west of Duc Pho in the 11th Infantry Brigade area of operations.

"I sent out a recon team to check the north side of a trail," explained Captain Anthony Avgoulis, New York, company commander of Company G, 75th Infantry (Ranger). "The rest of us were acting as surveillance. The recon team had just returned when we spotted three NVA coming down the trail," he continued.

"At first the NVA waved and started to act friendly," said Sergeant Tom Meir, La Crosse, Wis. "But when they noticed Captain Avgoulis and me they were tripping all over themselves to get back up the trail. That's when we opened up, killing two and stopping the third,"

It was a short mission. The team had moved only about a mile from their insertion point and were extracted before noon. In the same length of time three NVA discovered that all who lurk in the jungle are not friendly – and only one lived to tell about it.

196th hits NVA enemy loses 18

LZ CENTER (196th INF BDE IO) – Soldiers of the 196th Infantry Brigade recently brought down 18 NVA in two explosive firefights 19 miles northwest of Tam Ky.

In the early evening hours a patrol from Company B, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry was returning to its night laager position. As the infantrymen walked into a clearing the point man spotted a group of NVA 500 yards away. The Americans opened up with M-16 rifle fire, killing four enemy. The patrol then returned to their laager position.

Shortly after nighfall 82mm mortar rounds began impacting around Company B's position. The Americans called in artillery, and Battery B, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Artillery, responded immediately. The 105mm shells whistled past Company B and soon the mortar position was silent.

"There must have been a lot of them out there," said Specialist Four Mike Newman, Sturgis, Mich., "but they got it too."

Sweeping the area the next morning, the infantrymen found six NVA killed by artillery. And this was not all. A week later Company A was sweeping the area of Company B's contact, and found the graves of eight more of the enemy.

A Division soldier is engulfed by the smoke he has put out to bring in a resupply helicopter. His company, Bravo, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, of the 196th Infantry Brigade was operating five miles west of Tam Ky. (Photo by PFC Richard Campbell)

Legionnaires surprise enemy

By PFC Richard Campbell

LZ HAWK HILL (196th INF BDE IO) – Alertness and the element of surprise are two things which an infantryman considers almost as important as his hand grenades and M-16 rifle. Recently a platoon put them all together and accounted for 10 VC killed.

Operating in a thickly vegetated area southwest of Tam Ky, Delta Company from the 196th Infantry Brigade's 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, had spent four consecutive days searching villages for VC and hidden supply caches.

"Some days we checked 10 or more villages without finding a thing," admitted Private First Class David Nichols, Marietta, Ga., "but you always have to be ready to handle any situation that might come up. Alertness is a must, and it paid off as we caught some VC completely by surprise."

Private Nichols and his platoon were on a search mission one afternoon, when they spotted a village in the distance. They advanced quietly to a small hill overlooking the village and observed six VC sitting in a circle. The first five men in the platoon crawled forward to within 50 feet of the little VC meeting place.

"Each of us got out a hand grenade, pulled the pin and waited for our platoon leader's command," recalled Private Nichols. "They landed right on target, and a few bursts from our M-16s finished the job." Five VC were killed, the other wounded.

Four days later, the platoon again used surprise to its advantage. While walking through dense undergrowth, the point element heard voices and quickly motioned for the patrol to stop.

Specialist Four Ernest Guthrie, Augusta, Ga., point man, dropped his pack and went on alone to see what was ahead.

"Five VC were relaxing in a clearing," said Specialist Guthrie. "I used the thick vegetation to hide myself as I watched them. Two were lying in hammocks, the other three were leaning against trees."

Specialist Guthrie beckoned for another man to join him. The two unleashed a barrage of M-16 fire on the unsuspecting enemy, killing two immediately and the other three as they were evading.

"Surprise is a big factor in fighting this war," concluded Private Nichols. "You must find Charlie before he finds you. And you can do that only if you're on your toes."