SOUTHERN CROSS
AMERICAL DIVISION
Vol. 3 No. 30 | Chu Lai, Vietnam | August 21, 1970

These soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry, 198th Infantry Brigade keep a sharp look-out while crossing a river at Van Thien, 20 miles south of Chu Lai.
(Photo by PFC James N. Dunn, 523rd Sig. Bn.)

Shortimer instrumental in killing 17 enemy soldiers

LZ HAWK HILL (196th INF BDE IO) – During his next to last week in Vietnam, Sergeant Richard Anderson, Tacoma, Wash., 196th Infantry Brigade, was much too busy to count days. Within a seventy-two hour period the Division soldier was instrumental in killing 17 enemy soldiers.

Sergeant Anderson, a mortar forward observer with Company E, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, was stationed at a Vietnamese Popular Forces (PF) outpost nine miles northwest of Tam Ky. On two separate occasions he and a platoon of PF soldiers thwarted enemy forces that were planning attacks on the Vietnamese outpost.

"I have a lot of memories from being out there with the PF," reacalled Sergeant Anderson, "but the two nights that we stopped the enemy from hitting our camp definitely stand out in my mind."

At dusk on the first evening, sergeant Anderson and the PF platoon had set up a small observation post to observe enemy movement in the area. Soon one VC appeared about 1,000 yards away. Within ten minutes he was joined by 35 others. The enemy force appeared to be planning their night's activities. Reacting quickly, Sergeant Anderson called the montar fire direction center (FDC) on this firebase.

"We moved quickly when we got the call for fire from Sergeant Anderson," remembered Specialist Four John Riff, Lancaster, N.H., FDC man on duty at the time. "It was getting dark, and we wanted to begin the fire mission while there was still light enough for Sergeant Anderson to make adjustments."

He needed but one adjustment to bring the rounds crashing in on target; however, by the time the fire mission had ceased, darkness covered the target area. Before moving in to check the area, the sergeant requested that the 4.2 mortars provide constant illumination overhead. Seven bodies and numerous blood trails were found.

Intelligence reports indicated that there would be increased enemy activity in the area, so he and the PF continued their patrols. Two nights later it paid off as an NVA company was spotted at the edge of a woodline. Helicopter gunships were called in and accounted for three killed before the enemy force scattered.

Twenty minutes later, the PF walking point stopped suddenly and turned his head as if he had heard something. Sergeant Anderson heard it also–Vietnamese music coming from a radio several hundred meters ahead.

A heavy rain storm helped Sergeant Anderson's advance go undetected. He discovered eleven enemy soldiers sitting in a clearing and effectively positioned the PF for an attack. In the brief fire fight that resulted, seven enemy were killed, and another detained.

"I'm pretty sure they were sappers," he said, "because we found three satchel charges, one ten pound block of explosive, five NVA uniforms and several chicom grenades." It was later learned from reports that the sappers' mission was to attack the PF camp.

Even though he was soon leaving for home, Sergeant Anderson had mixed emotions about leaving the PF.

"During the three months I was there, I really got to know those PF soldiers well," he reflected. "I was sorry to leave them for we had been through a lot together."

"I really didn't think about going home that much while I was out there," he concluded. "I was there doing a job, and I did it the best way I knew. Now I am going home with a feeling of accomplishment."

Ploy nabs 4 officers

By SGT Robert Daniels

FSB SAN JUAN HILL (11th INF BDE IO) – On a day of small element ambush missions, an 11th Infantry Brigade unit netted six NVA and VC. Operating in the rough mountainous terrain six miles southwest of Duc Pho, the men of Company A, 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry, also confiscated four weapons and other items of enemy gear.

Early in the morning, the third platoon set up their site on a ridge line overlooking a well used trail. They were soon rewarded as two NVA walked into a deadly barrage. A search of the two enemy dead revealed that one was a company commander and one was a political officer for the area.

Confiscated in the action was an AK-47, two CHICOM grenades, and other military equipment.

After securing the gear, the platoon moved down the trail to set up another ambush position. And again they were successful as two more NVA walked into their waiting trap.

Said Private First Class Larry Toman, Reed City, Mich., "We cautiously moved toward the bodies and discovered that they were both officers."

"When we moved down the trail to set another ambush, we never dreamed that we would get two more officers headed to meet the two we had killed that morning," stated platoon leader First Lieutenant Gene D. Phillipson, Whitehall, Wis.

From this site the men confiscated one AK-47 and one 9mm Chinese pistol. "The officer carrying the AK was prepared–he had his weapon on full automatic and had a full banana clip in it," added Private Toman.

In the meantime the 81mm mortar platoon had been patrolling the area looking for a suitable ambush site when the pointman, Sergeant Alvis Humphries, Marion, N.Y., suddenly came face-to-face with an NVA coming down the trail from the opposite direction. Sergeant Humphries and the NVA were within 20 meters of each other when he opened up. Sergeant David Whalen, Rose Creek, Mich., opened up simultainously with his M-16. The NVA immediately dropped his SKS rifle and ran back down the trail. When the squad finally caught up with the wounded NVA he was already dead. A search of the NVA revealed 24 rounds of SKS ammunition in ammo pouches.

Late in the afternoon the first platoon got into the act when a VC stumbled into their position. "He was heading for a group of deserted hooches and looked like he didn't have a worry in the world," said Lieutenant Thomas Norton, East Orange, N.J. The deceased was found to be carrying two CHICOM grenades.

In the final action of the day, the third platoon again scored with its third ambush along the same trail. It was late in the evening when a single NVA came hurrying down the trail. "He was looking up and down like he was expecting something," stated Sergeant Jonny Roberts, Grantsboro, N.C., "when he walked into our kill zone."

With a pouring rain coming down, the men of Company A began heading back to their night defensive position to await a restless night and the warm sun of a new day.

Div gets 95

Div Recap: Action for week declines

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO) – Action decreased considerably for the week as troopers of the Americal accounted for 95 enemy killed. The heaviest action of the week saw "Chargers" of the 196th Infantry Brigade in Operation Frederick Hill kill 41 enemy soldiers and capture several weapons. In Operation Iron Mountain the "Jungle Warriors" of the 11th Infantry Brigade tallied 25 enemy soldiers. Elsewhere in Operation Geneva Park action continued at a light pace as the "Barve and Bold" of the 198th Infantry Brigade nabbed six enemy soldiers, and uncovered several bunker and tunnel complexes.

Frederick Hill

For a change of pace the "Legionnaires" of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry experienced the lightest action in the 196th AO in the week's action.

Early in the week a Recon team discovered a cache of tools, canteens, ruck sacks, and 600 rounds of SKS ammunition in an area near Kham Duc.

Daily enemy contacts marked operations for "Gimlets" of the 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry for the week.

Early in the week on a sweep Company A fired on four VC northwest of Tam Ky. A search of the area revealed blood trails. Before the day ended A Company discovered a fresh grave in the same area which contained a lone VC.

The next day Charlie

(continued on page 6)

Loaded down with field gear, men of Company C, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, 11th Infantry Brigade, prepare to move on with their mission. The unit was on an operation south of Chu Lai.
(Photo by SP4 Herbert Brady, 523rd Sig. Bn.)

Hiep Duc is test for Lieutenant

By SP4 Thomas J. Neville

LZ CENTER (AMERICAL IO) – Despite all of the leadership training a soldier undergoes, the final test of his character often comes suddenly on the field of battle.

For First Lieutenant Michael L. DeCoudres, Sandy Lake, Penn., final exam time took place during one of the fiercest battles ever encountered by members of the 196th Infantry Brigade. The action occured in the Hiep Duc Valley during the first few days of May.

Lieutenant DeCoudres was second platoon leader in Alpha Company, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry. On the first night of May, Alpha Company came into heavy contact with NVA forces. When an enemy mortar round struck the company's command post; the CO was injured by shrapnel and Lieutenant DeCoudres assumed leadership of the entire company.

"I took over as CO and I was pretty scared. I wasn't sure if I could handle it. I had been worried earlier because my CO had told me that if he ever got hit, I would have to take over," he reflected.

He did "handle it," however, and led his weary company through two days of rugged combat.

When the young lieutenant took command, the company was still under heavy enemy fire and two NVA soldiers were killed inside the perimeter. "Most of the men immeidately realized what happened and they gave me all of their cooperation," remarked the Lieutenant.

After the initial mortar attack, Alpha Company staved off a ground attack and several enemy probes during the night. The men were tense but, "but midnight everything was pretty quiet and I put the company on 50 percent alert with orders to go back to 100 percent alert at four o'clock the next morning," said Lieutenant DeCoudres.

Everyone in the company expected another attack the next morning. The men waited for it and at five-thirty in the morning, the NVA launched a second ground attack.

"When they started to hit us, they fired a flare and concentrated on one end of our perimeter," Lieutenant DeCoudres recalled. But artillery was called in from LZ Siberia and then gunships came on station. At this point the enemy fired another flare and started to pull back.

Alpha Company remained in the area that day, spent from many hours of anxiety and deadly combat. The company moved near the village of Hiep Duc that night and linked up with an ARVN battalion.

It was learned later that Lieutenant DeCoudres had led his men through attacks from a reinforced battalion-sized NVA force.

The men of Alpha Company had nothing but praise for him. Sergeant Stephen DeChellis, Mattapan, Miss., took over as second platoon leader. He said of Lieutenant DeCoudres, "He's a damn good officer...he did his best to get us the hell out of there and we finally managed to get what we needed," he added. He also said, "He is thought of as a good man in our platoon and all the platoons. Everyone knew that he was trying his best to get us out and we all had our fingers crossed that all would work out, which it did."

He has returned to his old job of platoon leader now and shortly before going out on another mission, he spoke again of Hiep Duc. "That was my first major contact and it was the type that usually occurs only once in a lifetime...I hope."

Lieutenant DeCoudres stated that taking over as commanding officer of Alpha Company gave him quite a bit of confidence. He added, "I also acquired quite a bit of respect for the infantrymen."

A trooper of Alpha Company, 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry, 11th Infantry Brigade goes out to meet the company's resupply chopper, a welcome sight for any infantryman.
(Photo by SP4 Herbert Brady, 523rd Sig. Bn.)

Day's work nets Old Guard 4

FSB SAN JUAN HILL (11tn INF BDE IO) – "We were just beginning to settle down into our day ambush position," recalled Sergeant Wayne S. Brown, Shelton, Wash., "when I heard someone detonate one of our claymores." Such was the beginning of a day's action which would net the 11th Brigade's Company A, 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry four enemy dead. The "Old Guard," working eight miles southwest of Duc Pho, did not let an initial victory slow their dogged pursuit of the enemy.

Continued Sergeant Brown, the third platoon sergeant, "We all ducked when we heard the blast but all kept at least one eye out because we were set up on a main travel route. Suddenly three NVA appeared in front of our position."

Added Sergeant John M. Roberts, Charlotte, N.C., "I glanced up just in time to see one of them not more than three yards from me." Sergeant Roberts immediately opened up with his M-16. After the first engagement one lay dead and another seriously wounded.

It wasn't a long walk on the trail before the platoon came upon a pile of equipment and two badly wounded NVA. "They did not drag themselves very far from our location. As we approached, one NVA with dying strength attempted to pull the pin on hand grenade which was lying next to him," reported Sergeant Brown. The platoon instinctively hit the ground and finished the aggressive NVA.

That afternoon, the third platoon of Alpha, following a trail from the initial ambush site, discovered a tunnel. Dropping a couple of hand grenades into the hole and checking it out after the blast produced another dead NVA.

'Ace of Spades' dealt to 5 VC

By SGT Chuck Merdzinski

FSB LIZ (11th INF BDE IO) – A fire team using a stacked deck recently dealt the "Ace of Spades" to five VC in a poker game along the coast of the South China Sea.

The squad from Company B, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, 11th Brigade heard chopping coming from a mangrove swamp while on an afternoon patrol. "At first we thought it was just bamboo trees knocking together in the wind," explained Sergeant Barry Gray, (Charlotte, N.C.), "but it kept up in a rhythmical manner so we investigated it."

They split into two elements and advanced into the area. Instead of moving quickly, the men of alpha fire team chose to take a quiet route through a swamp to avoid detection. It took half hour to move 300 meters, but their stealth enabled them to come within 35 meters of the enemy.

"We saw four VC playing cards and four others busily cutting wood," said Sergeant Gray. The surprised VC had little time to react. One of the players was killed instantly in a barrage of shooting and the others fled into the thick underbrush.

Bravo fire team joined in to look for wounded VC but found a booby trap that was guarding a trail into the swamp. With darkness coming on, the men returned to the scene of the fight and found a K-54 pistol, medical supplies, and food.

The following day a Popular Forces unit on a patrol through the same area found four dead VC and one seriously wounded. The detained VC confirmed that he and his dead comrades were the ones caught by Company B the day before.

"Sykes' Regulars" of Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry move across an open field near Duc Pho.
(Photo by SP4 Herbert Brady, 523rd Sig. Bn.)

Legionnaires close factory

By PFC Richard Campbell

LZ HAWK HILL (196th INF BDE IO) – Soldiers of the 196th Infantry Brigade recently closed down an enemy grenade factory 10 miles northwest of Tam Ky. In a day-long operation, Company A, 2nd Battlaion, 1st Infantry, killed two NVA, detained another and confiscated 60 pounds of explosives.

After crossing a river on a late afternoon patrol, Alpha's point element spotted three NVA running out of a village. A barrage of M-16 rifle and M-60 machinegun fire killed two enemy. The third was wounded but managed to escape. The infantrymen then arrived to search the village.

Sergeant Gerald Applin, Minneapolis, Minn., walking point for the company, was the first in the village. He headed toward the hooch from which the NVA had come.

"I expected to find a couple of packs and maybe a weapon or so," remarked Sergeant Applin, "but the grenade materials really shocked me. Completed grenades were lying on the ground, and there were several more near completion."

Explosive material was found in plastic bags inside two field packs. A large cement bowl and wooden mallet used to crush the explosives into powder were also discovered.

"It's obvious that they were crushing the explosive material when we approached the village, because there was powder in the bowl and three cans ready to be filled," reported Specialist Four Thomas Haslem, Philadelphia. "They must have run out of the hooch as soon as they heard us coming."

Also found in the hooch was re-supply list for the NVA factory workers. Blasting caps and 250 empty soda cans had been requested.

Alpha Company returned the next day to re-check the area. The Americans found the NVA soldier they wounded the previous day lying beside a rice paddy dike outside the village. He had crawled more than 100 yards from where he was shot.

The company's interpreter learned that the wounded NVA and his former comanions were supply specialists.

"Evidently the three had learned that an NVA unit which was to come through the area soon needed grenades," added Specialist Haslem. "And they were making them when we put them out of business."

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Major General A.E. Milloy . . . . . Commanding General
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First Lieutenant Robert Pennington . . . . . Officer-in-charge
Specialist Four Gary E. Jensen . . . . . Editor
Specialist Four Dan Swezey . . . . . Production Editor

Romeo-Tango-Oscar a special man

By SP4 Ron Adams

FSB DEBBIE (11th INF BDE IO) – "Five-two, seven-two, niner-two, zero-two, this is niner-four-november, over." "This is niner-four-november, send your papa limas to my location and have your people saddled up, ready to move in zero five!"

The Radio Telephone Operator (RTO), properly referred to over the field radio as the Romeo Tango Oscar, is much the same as any other infantryman humping the mountains and rice paddies. He carries an equal load, with the exception of a mortar round, M-60 ammunition, or a claymore but this extra weight is equaled with a 27 pound radio and numerous responsibilities. The RTO must be aware of all situations at all times. He must have equal knowledge and awareness of the company or platoon situation as his leader.

The responsibilities increase from the squad level RTO all the way to battalion. The squad RTO must keep constant contact with his senior platoon RTO, while the platoon RTO must coordinate with the company, and company with the battalion RTO. The RTO must keep all elements plotted on his map at all times, and have the ability to code grid coordinates quickly upon request for locations.

Most infantrymen avoid accepting the position, dreading the extra weight strapped to their back while patrolling or for fear of becoming a sniper's target with the easily seen antenna sticking up several feet above his head, but once the RTO becomes attached to his "horn," one could have a struggle detaching the pair.

To communicate with an RTO, you must first break his language barrier. They develope a language of their own, and while operating on their frequency, one must abide by their rules and follow their procedures. Unless you've been around a while, you'd be mystified by a command to "move your element into the Romeo Oscar November site, taking up the Whiskey sector.

Often you may hear the operators making routine "commo checks," of which normally result in "I've got you lucky chucky, hotel mile?" Translated meaning the receiving RTO can hear the other loud and clear, and wants to know "how me," or how the sender hears him.

Headaches and backaches accompany the responsibilities of the RTO. While pulling through triple canopy jungle, the hands of every vine and bush find the dials, antenna, and smoke grenades attached to his PRC-25. What's worse than fording a swift stream at neck level, you hands full holding your M-16 and hand set above you head, and the voice of the company RTO gurgles through the "squak box" asking for locations.

RTOs here in the 11th Infantry Brigade's, 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry, have been known to become very personal about their radio and the procedures used. One, overhearing unauthorized people talking freely over his company's frequency, immediately interrupted with, "break, break, break, keep the bravo sierra off MY push."

After a long 20 day mission, the RTO drops his heavy pack and radio for a few days rest atop a fire support base. This is when he usually removes his dirty boots, picks up the hand set, and announces, "all station approximately zero seven days".....OUT!

A Romeo-Tango-Oscar on his horn radioing in his company's night laager position. The RTO is a member of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, 11th Infantry Brigade.

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

198th gives rice

By SGT Thomas C. Elmer

LZ BAYONET (198th INF BDE IO) – Residents of several refugee centers and orphanages in the Division AO recently received nearly 23,000 pounds of rice after a unit of the 198th Infantry Brigade discovered a large rice cache in an area ten miles northeast of Quang Ngai City.

Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry, found the rice cache.

The rice, found hidden in false floors in hooches, buried underground and concealed in other buildings, was baggaed by the infantrymen, loaded on slings and extracted by Chinook helicopters to the resupply helipad at LZ Bayonet. From there the rice was loaded into trucks and jeep-drawn trailers and distributed to the An Chau Refugee Center, the Lien Tra Refugee Center, the An Tan Orphanage and the Binh Son Orphanage.

As the rice was being deposited on a wooden floor before the refugee center chief at Lien Tra, Sergeant Le Duc Tri, interpreter for the civil affairs section of the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry, explained the distribution process:

"The rice is brought here and one member from each family comes forward to receive his share. The rice is distributed equally among the people. Some of it is eaten and some of it is planted in the land surrounding the center, which is farmed by the refugees.

At the orphanages, the rice is brought in from the field and stored for consumption or used for planting.

"When the rice is brought in from the field to be distributed," said Sergeant Thomas L. Schober, Deterk, Wisc., civil affairs NCO of the Battalion, "We determine who it will go to. There is always a need for rice at the centers so we have little difficulty in putting it to use."

Two rally to marry

By 1Lt Mark Tucker

LZ BAYONET (198th INF BDE IO) – "Viet Cong nurse, young and pretty, seeks Viet Cong guerilla, young and handsome and willing to rally. Object matrimony."

With the efficiency of a stateside computer matching service, the civil affairs section of the 198th Infantry Brigade has enabled two young Viet Cong to make love, not war.

First Lieutenant Richard Greenhagen, Long Island, N.Y., civil affairs officer for the 198th Infantry Brigade, explained that the two Viet Cong recently rallied and are now preparing to be married.

"I'm sure they planned the whole thing in advance," Lieutenant Greenhagen said. "The girl, Nguyen Thi Dao, was a nurse with a VC battalion. The man Nguyen Ni, was with a local VC mortar company. They had been writing each other before they rallied and had probably decided to rally and then meet and be married."

The nurse had rallied with eight other VC. Just afterwards, her fiance rallied, after hearing a broadcast made by the civil affiars section urging members of his unit to return to the government.

"If we could convince more Viet Cong to exchange their web gear for wedding rings, we'd be doing alright," Lieutenant Greenhagen said.

Next best thing to being there

By SP4 Peter Sorensen

FSB BRONCO (11th INF BDE IO) – It might not be the Bell Telephone Company, but it serves the purpose. The men of Company C, 37th Signal Battalion, serving the 11th Infantry Brigade, prove everyday that their telephones are "the next best thing to being there."

"The Bronco switchboard here at Duc Pho handles 2,500 calls a day," states First Lieutenant Gaylord P. Avery, Redford, S.D., "The men of this platoon handle operations 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

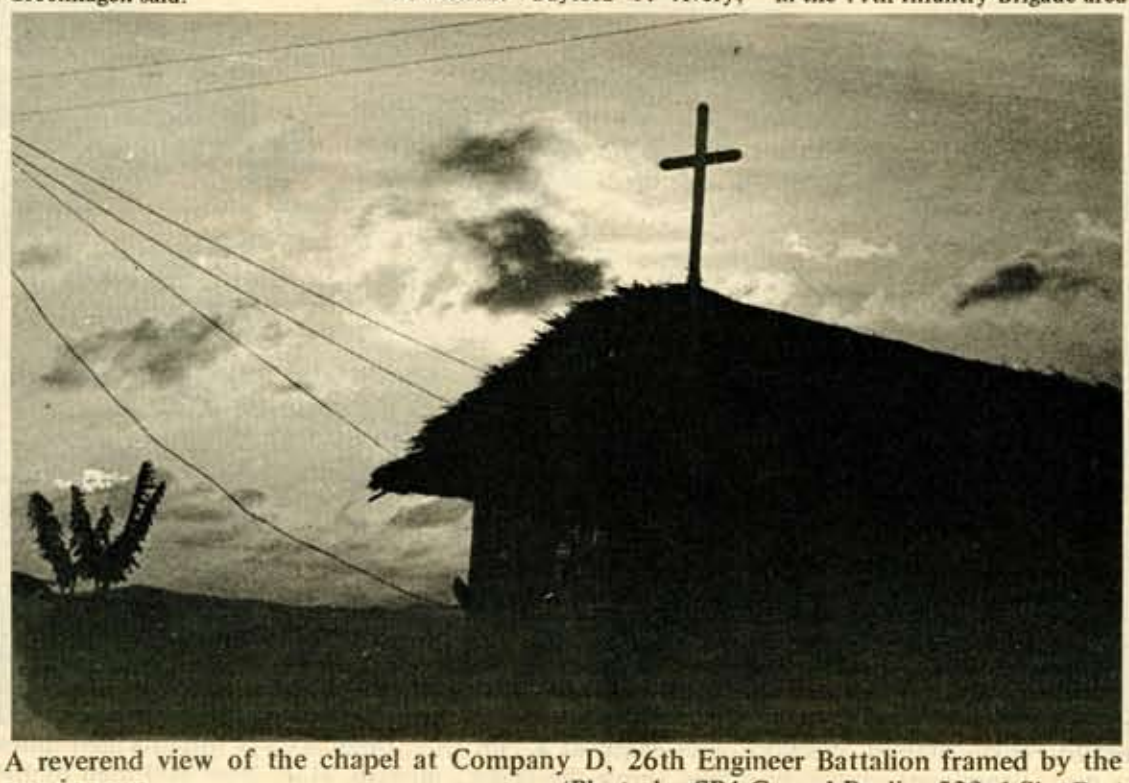
Thousands of calls everyday require many telephones and miles of communication wire. States Lieutenant Avery, "We have 132 local subscribers, 43 extentions and 33 trunk-lines." A "trunk-line" being a mainline between Bronco switch and the switchboard in Chu Lai, for example, or any of the firebases in the 11th Infantry Brigade area of operations.

Added Sergeant First Class Ben Williams, Walterboro, S.C., "There are six to seven miles of telephone cable within the Bronco perimeter." Local calls are made through these cables. "From Bronco we can call anywhere in Vietnam. These distant calls are relayed from the Bronco switchboard to a VHF transmitter located atop 175 foot Mount Montezuma, from there they are transmitted via radio waves to their destination.

"Our biggest problem with local calls is wet weather. Almost all our wires are underground and water sometimes hinders operations. Also, occasionally someone digs up our wires by accident," stated Sergeant First Class Paul F. Barron, Plaucheville, La., adding, "long distance calls are obstructed by bad weather and, at times, local air strikes."

The machinery which makes the telephone service possible is a MTC-1 switchboard. The switchboard and its three operators are housed in an eight by twelve foot water-tight, air-conditioned compartment. Reported Lieutenant Avery, "Each man can handle 15 calls at once. Therefore, it is possible to handle 45 calls at one time." Power for the operation is provided by three 10KW generators.

"We are also allowd to place 50 MARS calls, 25 during the day and 25 at night. We can place two calls at one," said Sergeant Norbert Nowacki, Jr., Albuquerque, N.M.



A reverend view of the chapel at Company D, 26th Engineer Battalion framed by the evening sun.

(Photo by SP4 Gerard Paulin, 523rd Sig. Bn.)

American and ARVN forces

Providing cover for the first allied troops assaulting the NVA on Kala, a Huey bellows its smoke-screen at tree-top level around the LZ. LZ Kala overlooks Kham Duc, the Special Forces camp overrun two years ago by an NVA division.

Model helicopters were am
near the runway at Kham D
instructional purposes by t

A wave of Hueys speed to their LZ high above the Kham Duc airstrip. These ships, part of a combat assault of 50 choppers, inserted more than 400 ARVN infantrymen in only 20 minutes.

Photos by SP5 A.C. Barnett

Leading the attack of allied forces on the old Special Forces camp of Kham Duc, these ARVN infantrymen quickly move into the brush around the perimeter of LZ Kala, the most prominent observation post above the camp's airstrip. More than 400 men of the 1st Battalion, 6th Regiment, 2nd ARVN Division, were inserted. Vietnamese and American airstrikes forced the NVA back into the triple canopy jungle that surrounds the camp.

retake Kham Duc and LZ Kala

ng the articles found by the infantrymen in an enemy cache
c. The model helicopters were believed to have been used for
enemy.

Just seconds from LZ Kala this CH-47 veers off under intense enemy fire. Moments later airstrikes made it possible for the chopper to return and lower the 105mm howitzer and 40 ARVN artillerymen safely to the hilltop. LZ Kala was the first allied target in the recent recapture of the Kham Duc Special Forces camp.

Unused ammunition still lies scattered about the runway at Kham Duc after American elements evacuated the Special Forces camp in 1968.

A cannoneer raised the first American flag in this old Special Forces camp since it was overrun by an NVA division two years ago. Sergeant Michael A. Ruibal Jr., Bellflower, Calif., was given the flag by his father when he learned his son was going to Vietnam ten months ago. "We had a big flag at our basecamp and I wanted to keep mine in perfect condition for the day when I go home, so I kept it wrapped up with my personal things," he said. "But when we were sent out here and there was no flag I felt the time and had come for me to put up my own." Sergeant Ruibal is a member of A Battery, 1st Battalion, 82nd Artillery, which was one of the first American units inserted into the recent battle that recaptured Kham Duc.

'It's a rice day' for the 'Gimlets'

Carefully inspecting around the corner of a hut infantrymen of Company A, 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry conduct a search in the "rice bowl" five miles southeast of Duc Pho. (Photo by SP4 Ron Adams)

By SP4 Ron Adams

FSB DEBBIE (11th INF BDE IO) – "Rice cache hunter" is not an accepted Army MOS but through "on the job" training, the men of the 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry have become professionals in discovering huge quantities of the enemy's food staple. Recently the soldiers confiscated over 100,000 pounds of rice in an area called the "rice bowl" four miles south of Duc Pho.

The initial find was made by Company D and the Recon Platoon of the 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry. "We were combat assaulted into the area," explained First Lieutenant Brian DeMary, Beaumont, Tex., recon platoon leader.

"After two days of looking and digging," added Staff Sergeant Bob Davidson, Kansas City, Mo., "We found and bagged 7,300 pounds. All of the rice was well concealed and buried several inches below the ground."

Next, Company B moved into the "bowl" to try their hand at the game. "After a day of tapping floors and walls of huts," commented Specialist Four William Scanlon, Los Banos, Calif., "we found ourselves with 23,000 pounds of rice."

"The rice was so abundant and hidden in so many different places," explained Specialist Four Larry Tamashino, Honolulu, "that it took us two days to uncover and bag the chache."

When Company A's turn came, a special method was developed to discover the rice. "The majority of the caches are sealed in plastic and buried several inches below the ground," said Specialist Four Bruce West, Fairburn, Ga., "So we drop a heavy wooden pole on the ground and listen for a hollow sound," he explained.

Private First Class David Gardener, Mt. Airy, N.C., continued, "When we hear a hollow thump, we carefully remove several inches of dirt and usually find a neatly dug hole lined with plastic and filled with rice." Using this method Company A found and bagged over 70,000 pounds of rice.

The infantrymen have become quite professional, and have divided the task into several specific jobs. "One man is the thumper, another does the digging, several do the bagging, while others haul away the bags, and of course others must pull security," explained Company A's CO Captain David Franson, San Jose, Calif.

"Finding caches is fairly easy," stated Staff Sergeant Marty Kristo, De Pue, Ill., "the time consuming job is digging them up, bagging, and hauling them away." Chinooks and Armored Personnel Carriers were used to transport the bagged rice from the field to warehouses on FSB Bronco, headquarters of the 11th Brigade.

"Just plain hard work and ingenuity has made this operation a success," commented Lieutenant Colonel Robert L. Harper, commanding officer of the 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry.

17th Cav gets 9000 lbs of rice

By SP5 Richard Merritt

LZ HAWK HILL (196th INF BDE IO) – The village was full of VC sympathizers, the Vietnamese Regional Force (RF) platoon evidently expected to find something and the bamboo mats were still green.

First Lieutenant David Miller, platoon leader from the 196th Infantry Brigade's F Troop, 17th Cavalry, ordered the mats ripped away, as the Lansing, Mich., native watched, more than 9,000 pounds of polished rice was uncovered before his eyes.

"We were moving down a trail through a village," said Lieutenant Miller, "struggling through a thick bamboo growth by a steam."

"We saw six NVA in green uniforms the day before," added Specialist Four Randall Carver, Three Oaks, Mich., "we fired, but they got away."

Those were food scroungers it was thought. So the Cav started their own hunt with a platoon of RF soldiers. They struck sunken treasure seven miles southwest of Tam Ky.

"The RF were going ahead of our tracks just outside the ville," said Specialist Carver, "and we were past the last house and moving up toward a little creek."

A Vietnamese soldier saw the carefully placed bamboo first. He motioned for his squad and the Americans. The pits were dug near the bank of the stream, reinforced like fighting bunkers and topped by thatch.

.51 Cal silenced

By 1Lt. Michael Simmons

LZ HAWK HILL (196th INF BDE IO) – Recently "Chargers" using the technique of "overwatch," silenced a .51 caliber machinegun.

Company A, 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry, was on a search mission in Hiep Duc Valley.

"Our mission was to search the valley floor for the .51 cal position and also to find a suitable site for a landing zone from which we could be extracted," said Staff Sergeant Richard L. Golleher, Texarkana, Tex, first platoon leader.

The infantrymen were using a tactical technique known as overwatch.

"Over watch involves having the platoons cover for each other," said Sergeant Rich Karstedt, Hamburg, N.Y., second platoon leader. "One platoon moves forward while the other two cover and then vica versa."

"We knew we were in the vicinity of the enemy position but didn't know exactly where it was," said Sergeant Golleher.

As the "Professionals" scanned the woodline across the rice paddy, one of the men spotted an NVA sniper climbing a tree. The enemy was ingaged with machinegun fire as the second platoon moved up to help cover.

Sergeant Golleher asked for two volunteers to maneuver across the rice paddy and check out the other side. The pointman and another soldier began to moved across the paddy, with Sergeant Golleher.

"As the pointman reached the other side we saw a CHICOM grenade come flying through the air at us," Sergeant Golleher said. "We hit the dirt and opened fire. Then the .51 opened up on us."

"I could see the red flashes from the .51's muzzle," said Sergeant Karstedt.

White the three soldiers were maneuvering across the paddy, the second platoon and been receiving sniper fire from its flank. Small arms fire was returned, and the enemy was kept pinned down while the .51 caliber position was engaged.

As soon as the bunker containing the .51 was spotted Sergeant Golleher directed heavy small arms fire into the area.

"One of my men picked up an M-79 grenade launcher and began pumping round after round into the bunker," said Sergeant Golleher. "We could see the bunker and that the grenadier was right on target."

The bunker position was silenced, which provided the opportunity for the infantrymen to grab LAWs from their packs and completely destroy the enemy position.

Week's action decreases

(continued from page 1)

Company found Charlie's home away from home. A tunnel complex containing seven structures was uncovered by the "Gimlets", with bunkers and a mess hall furnished with chairs and a class room with benches.

This soldier keeps a sharp eye to his side as he emerges from high brush during a patrol. His unit is Company C, 1st Battalion, 20 Infantry. (Photo by SP4 Herbert Brady, 523rd Sig. Bn.)

Action continued as the "Professionals" of the 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry killed three enemy soldiers in as many contacts during the week.

A final tally for the "Polar Bears" of the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry with seven enemy killed for the week.

Four VC were killed and one detained as Bravo Company struck early in the week while on a sweep northwest of Tam Ky. The detainee was extracted to LZ West.

Company A also accounted for two NVA dead while on a sweep northwest of Tam Ky.

Company D late in the week discovered four VC killed by gunships northwest of Tam Ky.

The finale came for the "Chargers" when a brigade LOH confirmed eight NVA dead and four packs confiscated which contained food and medical supplies. The LOH was on a visual reconnaissance south of LZ Center.

Iron Mountain

In the largest single contact of the week in Operation Iron Mountain the "Gimlets" of the 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry killed six Viet Cong.

While working in the lowlands south of Duc Pho, Recon uncovered a bunker complex which was two stories high in places. In the process of searching and destroying the complex the "Gimlets" killed six VC.

The "Always First" of the 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry netted five VC in the weeks action.

In the middle of the week while working under "Shark" gunships Bravo Company killed one VC and detained another. Later in the day the infantrymen uncovered a tunnel which revealed three dead VC.

Very light action for the week was the rule for Delta Company of the "Old Guard" who accounted for one VC killed while on patrol in the mountains southwest of Duc Pho.

"Sharks" of the 174th Aviation Battalion and "Primo" Aviation teamed up on two different occasions during the week to kill seven enemy soldiers.

In the middle of the week two aviation units combined for two VC in the lowlands north of Duc Pho and the next day for five more while working near the Song Tra Khuc River.

Geneva Park

The "Ready Rifles" saw very light action this week as Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry engaged three VC northwest of Quang Ngai and killed one.

The 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry saw the most action in the 198th AO this week as the "Professionals" killed four enemy soldiers including one NVA officer, who was accounted for by Charlie Company.

Action for the "Regulars" of the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry was crowned by the uncovering of several tunnel and bunker complexes.

While maneuvering northeast of Quang Ngai, Echo Recon found nine bunkers under construction. The bunkers ranged in size from three to five feet in width. The next day the same element found one bunker large enough to contain eight to ten men. Within the bunker they found three artillery rounds and one 250 pound bomb. Both days finds were destroyed. To add to their finds for the week Echo discovered a small enemy aid station with several bags of medical supplies.

"Beach safety may not seem very important to you but the rules for conduct on Chu Lai shores are for your protection. Commanders responsible for the opening and closing of beaches do so after considering factors that will affect the swimmer. So don't assume beaches are closed in your area because someone likes to see you sweat.

The 16 days that built Alpha 3rd-21st

By SP5 Richard Merritt

LZ HAWK HILL (196th INF BDE IO) – When they moved back to LZ Center for guard duty, Alpha Company, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, had been humping for 16 days. Seventy percent of those tired men never saw Hiep Duc in May, the last big fight for Alpha, but those who did know more about combat than they might be willing to admit. Those 16 days brought together the old and the new--the veterans and the ''greenseeds''--and built something that Alpha could count on.

Specialist Four Steve Hoadley, who hails from Plainfield, Ind., and shoots a grenade launcher, can tell how it was in Hiep Duc.

"My squad was separated from the company," said Specialist Hoadley, and the mortars were hitting close. But they were real slow adjusting their fire. We could tell where the next round would hit by watching. Then we'd run about 50 yards up the trail to get out of range. Nobody was ever hit."

The soldiers struck back, killed a .51 caliber machinegun crew and took the gun. A confirmed 19 enemy were killed; one was the battalion commander.

After Hiep Duc, some of the veteran enlisted men in the company left for home or got jobs in the rear. But new people came in and most of the old platoon sergeants were still there to lead them. The executive officer led patrols for a week before a commander was found.

For Captain Ronald Zola, Hazelton, Pa., formerly intelligence officer for the battalion, it was a long-delayed reunion. When the spare blond officer left his staff post and walked out to meet his company they were on guard at LZ Center. Less than six months before he had commanded the first platoon.

"The company was mature," said Captain Zola. "They had time to breathe. That's how I handle a company. I want to be prepared, and I never rush anything."

Just doing their job shouldn't be too hard for an experienced unit. In mid-June, Alpha was encamped south of a brigade fire base about 20 miles west of Tam Ky City. An order came over the radio. An American company was under attack and needed help. Captain Zola informed his men and they packed their equipment to move the two miles to the fight.

Captain Zola stationed a platoon at their laager and split the other two platoons when they neared the trapped company. The first platoon mounted a small ridge overlooking the battle.

"As soon as incoming rounds hit us the men immediately returned fire," said the Captain. "I'm proud of them. Nobody froze."

The third platoon reached the embattled company and the two units moved back to the first platoon, which had called in artillery on the enemy left in the valley.

That night both companies had to march the two miles back to where the second platoon was waiting. The pointman was a platoon sergeant who volunteered because he knew the region.

A week later Alpha came back to the battalion fire base for four days of perimeter guard.

There are always some men who hump onto Center but don't leave it after the guard days are over. Some fly to a larger headquarters for dentistry work, records checks or any of a thousand tasks that cannot be resolved in the field. One tall radioman with a ruddy face and a college degree in music faced a somewhat puzzling duty.

"I'm going back to the rear to get a Bronze Star," he explained as he waited for a chopper. "But I don't know what it's for."

EOD on the job

By SP4 Peter R. Sorensen

FSB BRONCO (11Th INF IO) – A "lob bomb" is an enemy device composed of dud ordnance supported and aimed by a wooden trough and propelled by a secondary explosive charge placed behind the tail fins. The nose fuse well is usually dual primed. Recently, Company C, 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry had a 250 pound and 500 pound bomb lobbed into their perimeter. In both instances the missiles failed to detonate. In both instances, a call for an Explosive Ordnance Disposal team (EOD) went up to the 11th Infantry Brigade's tactical operations center.

Answering such calls for EOD assistance is an on-site team from the 133rd Ordnance Detachment. In the first five months of this year, the team has answered 244 requests for the removal or destruction of friendly or enemy ordnance in the Brigade.

Headquarters in Chu Lai, the ordnance detachment rotates two men a week to this firebase. Stated Staff Sergeant Edmond Kent, Paris, Tenn., "Believe it or not, our great love in EOD is to go out into the field.

Said Specialist Five Michael Beers, Nebraska City, Neb., "The on-site team is composed of a non-commissioned officer-in-charge and a demolitions specialist. Their job is to "blow in place" or defuse hazardous unexploded ordnance."

"We work," added Sergeant Kent, "strictly on unexploded ordnance which has been dropped, fired or placed. Vietnam is one of the few places in the world where ordnance may be blown in place. Seldom do we defuse explosives, but if it is in a location where detonation would endanger life or property we must defuse it or render it safe, 'as we say.'"

The EOD men are highly trained for their hazardous mission. Their education starts with two weeks at Ft. McClellan, Ala., progresses to Indianhead, N.D., for 19 weeks of Navy EOD school and is completed after a six week course in nuclear weapons disposal.

The Company C lob bombs were unusual both in their rarity of use and size. In the 11th Infantry Brigade since January, the 133rd EOD team has disposed of 14 and one quarter tons of ordnance including unserviceable friendly ammunition under more common but no less hazardous circumstances. In all cases, EOD training and experience has lead to successfully completed missions.

It's hot, dirty, hazardous work

By SP4 Peter R. Sorensen

FSB BRONCO (11th INF BDE IO) – It is hot, dirty and hazardous work, but the men of the 26th Engineer Battalion's land clearing platoon and a security platoon from the 11th Infantry Brigade's 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry tackle their land clearing mission, nine miles north of Duc Pho, as just another job. For three weeks, these Division soldiers have been hacking and bulldozing down the heavy brush and undergrowth which covers the landscape growing 100 yards from the South China Sea.

"Our mission is to level this area," stated First Lieutenant Neil H. Stadlman, Sac City, Iowa, land clearing platoon leader, "and remove enemy bunkers, mines and booby traps. We clear 400 to 500 square yards a day and so far have cleared about 400 acres. We've discovered 30 booby traps and about 50 enemy bunkers.

The mechanized hulks which break and tame the land are five D-7 bulldozers, one of which is equipped with a brush cutting Rome plow, and two combat engineer vehicles (CEV). On some occasions a 100 foot anchor chain, weighing 9,000 pounds, is dragged between two dozers to cut down foliage. This method, reports Lieutenant Stadlman, is also useful in "locating" mines and booby traps.

With a CEV bringing up the rear as a mobile command post, the bulldozers assault the hostile terrain on line. Dust fills the air. Debris flies in all directions. At times, the dozers break formation to singularly engage a tough patch of earth.

Security for the engineers is provided by a platoon from Company C, 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry. Commented platoon leader First Lieutenant Nick Prevas, Baltimore, Md., "The operation has been going real fine. We have had good cooperation with the engineer project." "The main problem is to adequately provide security around the machines without hitting booby traps. Daily we use mine dogs and so far we've been real lucky."

By day's end the engineers and infantrymen are tired. The engineers are stripped to the waist with rolled up pant legs. All wear powder brown masks of dust and sweat. Their faces bear darker brown trails where sweat has traveled from brow to chin. "It's not that bad. No cold beer, no clean clothes, no showers...but it's our job," commented Staff Sergeant Nathen Allen, Jr., Jacksonville, Fla., smiling.

Returning to their night defensive position on the shore of the South China Sea, Lieutenant Stadlman pointed out, "They're not done yet. Two hours of maintenance must be pulled on each vehicle." But like clearing land, maintenance is pulled automatically. Hot, dirty and hazardous. Yes, "but it's our job."

A D-7 bulldozer lumbers forward in search of another chunk of underbrush to munch on. The vehicle is being employed on the land clearing project of the 26th Engineer Battalion five miles northwest of Duc Pho. (Photo by SP4 Peter R. Sorensen)

Two "Jungle Warriors" of the 11th Infantry Brigade's Charlie Company, 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry survey the job site as they provide security for the 26th Engineers on their land clearing operation. (Photo by SP4 Peter R. Sorensen)

GI with bayonet detains 7 VC

By SGT Chuck Merdzinski

FSB LIZ (11th INF BDE IO) – Tipped-off by a Vietnamese boy, a "six foot eight" "Jungle Warrior" of the 11th Infantry Brigade armed only with a bayonet detained seven armed VC. They were in a rice hauling operation along the coastal area ten miles north of Duc Pho.

While transporting rice from a large enemy cache, a CH-47 helicopter received heavy sniper fire. Captain Edward J. Mullen, Youngstown, Ohio, commanding officer of Company C, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, directed the first and second platoons in a search of a dense mangrove swamp where the shots came from. "Shark" gunships of the 174th Aviation Company prepped the area with rocket and minigun fire before the advance.

Specialist Four Jimmie L. Dubose, Pachute, Miss., heralded as the tallest pointman in Vietnam, inched his huge frame through the thick vegetation and found a small hamlet. Immediately an eight year old boy began pointing at a fortified bomb shelter whispering "VC." Specialist Dubose called to Specialist Four Elwood Vincent, Sulphur, La., for assistance before checking the bunker.

With his bayonet drawn the giant soldier crawled into the bunker and retrieved a trembling VC.

He continued to cautiously search the area and came upon four 100-pound bags of rice. He sensed trouble and his suspicions were confirmed when his young Vietnamese friend began pointing frantically at another bunker.

When he bent down to peer into the bunker Specialist Dubose found himself face to face with an enemy soldier. The VC refused to surrender forcing him and Private First Class David L. Sowell, Sioux Falls, S.D., to toss three grenades into the hole.

Brandishing his bayoned once more he squeezed into the bunker for the surprise of his life. Inside were six armed VC soldiers who had been protected from the blasts by a grenade sump.

With as much bravado as bravery, he pushed the enemy from their hiding place into the surprised arms of his squad waiting outside the bunker. "It only took a few shoves and pokes from my bayonet to persuade the VC to leave," said Specialist Dubose.

Finding and detaining enemy soldiers is nothing new to Specialist Dubose. During his seven months in Vietnam he has personally detained six other VC for a total of 13–an unlucky number for the VC in Duc Pho district.

Tells it like it is . . . . . .

Is marihuana an addicting drug?

Marihuana does not lead to physical dependence. Therefore, it cannot be considered addicting. Chronic users become psychologically dependent upon the effects of marihuana. Thus, it is classified as habituating. The fact that a drug is not addicting has little relationship to its potential for harm, since dependence, whether psychological or physical, is a serious matter.

Is marihuana a stimulant or a depressant?

Because it affects the individual's self control, the effects of marihuana vary so widely that it can be either a stimulant or a depressant. THC is a strong hallucinogen with some sedative properties. Occasionally a person intoxicated with marihuana will become stimulated and overactive.

How is marihuana used?

In this country, it is generally smoked in self-rolled cigarettes called "joints." It is also smoked in ordinary pipes or water pipes. Marihuana and hashish can also be added to foods or drinks.

How does marihuana work in the brain?

This is not known. Studies attemting to clarify the question are underway.

Psyops has audience

By 1Lt. Michael Simmons

LZ HAWK HILL (196th INF BDE IO) – A 196th Infantry Brigade psychological operations team recently obtained concrete proof that its aerial broadcasts were being heard. The proof came in the form of a .30 caliber machine gun round ripping through the helicopter floor.

Flying at night in a loudspeaker-equipped Huey helicopter, the "Chargers" were making a routine aerial broadcast.

"The broadcast was directed at local force VC we thought to be in the area," said First Lieutenant William Lyle, Merritt Island, Fla.

Aerial broadcasts are one of the more effective ways to encourage NVA and VC to rally. Tapes are recorded in Vietnamese by an interpreter or, in some cases, a former VC who has rallied. These tapes are then broadcast through the helicopter's loudspeaker system over suspected enemy locations. Occasionally the teams have doubts as to whether their broadcasts are being heard. On this night, however, the doubts were quickly erased.

"We were flying along when we noticed campfires through the darkness," said Sergeant Randy Stockam, Boring, Ore. "We began the broadcast and were about half way through when they opened up. One round hit the helicopter, but we were still able to fly."

The helicopter returned to this firebase and after a careful check of the aircraft returned to the area and raked the suspected enemy location with machinegun fire. Four VC were killed.

Whether any of the surviving VC will rally on account of the tape remains to be seen. However, one thing is certain: this broadcast had an audience.