SOUTHERN CROSS

AMERICAL DIVISION

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Colonel James R. Waldie, CO, 198th Brigade, leads his staff and commanders ashore at Chu Lai in October, 1967. (Photo by SP4 Jack C. Andrews)

Americal marks third anniversary in Vietnam

By SP4 Thomas Neville

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO) – Exactly three years ago, September 25, 1967, the Americal Division was officially designated as the seventh United States Army division to serve in the Republic of Vietnam and since that time Americal soldiers have succeeded in securing one of the strongest Communist-infested areas in all of Vietnam.

Although the division was not re-christined 'Americal' until September the nucleus of the force had been serving in Vietnam since April, 1967, under the name of Task Force Oregon. General William C. Westmoreland, then commanding general of the Military Advisory Command, Vietnam, spearheaded the organization of the task force and deployed it to the troubled I Corps of South Vietnam.

Under the control of III Marine Amphibious Force, the main elements of the task force and their area of operations were: 196th Light Infantry Brigade, operating near Chu Lai; the 101st Airborne Division, which operated in the jungles west of Duc Pho; and the 3rd Brigade of the 25th Infantry Division, which conducted search and clear operations in Southern Quang Ngai Province.

A massive revamping took place when the Americal Division's colors were unfurled on Vietnam soil in the fall of 1967. The 196th moved northward to replace the 1st Brigade of the 101st Airborne, while the 198th Brigade moved from the Duc Pho area to Chu Lai, replacing the 196th. In December, the 11th Infantry Brigade arrived and assumed the responsibility of securing the area around and to the west of Duc Pho.

During the first year, the newly-christened division caused the enemy to undergo its own baptism by fire. The 11th Brigade took over "Operation Muscatine" from the 198th and the latter infantry brigade assumed responsibility of the Chu Lai area.

When the 1968 Tet offensive began in February, elements of the Americal Division were called upon to aid the Marines, who were under seige in the city of Da Nang. Task Force Miracle was formed and the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry of the 198th Brigade and the 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry of the 196th were sent to the rescue. After four days of fierce fighting, the 60th Main Force Viet Cong Battalion was turned back. From January 25 to February 15, the enemy lost 1,407 men.

Action continued hot and heavy in the spring of 1968. The 11th Brigade participated in Operation Norfolk Victory in the mountainous terrain southwest of Quang Ngai City. The "Jungle Warriors" destroyed a major enemy base of operations and deprived the Viet Cong of weapons and munitions.

The Americal Division has the largest area of operations of any unit in Vietnam and oftentimes large units would be rushed to various strategic locations to meet the enemy. This was the case in April, 1968, when the 198th was sent to Quang Tri to participate in fighting near the DMZ. When that mission was completed, Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry, was rushed to the aid of the besieged Special Forces camp at Kham Duc. Alpha Company was instrumental in the successful evacuation of personnel at the camp.

A series of major battles highlighted the waning days of the 1968 summer. The 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry teamed up with members of the 11th and 196th Brigades against regulars of the 2nd NVA Division about five miles west of Tam Ky. During the three day

(Cont'd on centerfold)

Crouched behind a rice paddy dike these 11th Brigade infantrymen wait for gunships to silence the sniper that forced them to seek cover. The "Jungle Warriors" later moved out to recover the bodies of the VC. The unit was operating northwest of Duc Pho. (Photo by Americal IO)

'Nighthawks' kill 49 enemy

By SP5 William Hayes

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO) – Working the same area two nights in a row, a double "Nighthawk" team from F Troop, 8th Cavalry recently accounted for 49 enemy soldiers killed during a total of five and one half hours of air to ground battle. The dead enemy were tallied with the aid of the gian searchlight on each Nighthawk aircraft.

The "Blue Ghost" ships, engaged a large enemy force near Ha Thanh 25 miles west of provincial capital Quang Ngai City.

On a night training mission when contact was established, some of the crew members of each ship had never seen night action.

The first night, a Nighthawk ship, commanded by Captain Larry E. Gallatin of Dayton, Ohio, took fire from two enemy on a sampan in the river.

Private First Class Gary S. Frakes, Fort Know, Ky., played the ship's searchlight on the small boat. Moments later, Specialist Four William R. Holden of Torrance, Calif., blasted them out of the water with minigun fire.

Believing his ship had been hit, Captain Gallatin returned to Quang Ngai to inspect the aircraft. Enroute, he requested a second two-ship team working further north to help work the area. After a brief ground inspection, Captain Gallatin turned his unscratched ship westward to rendezvous with Warrant Officer Joseph A. Petrucci, Fanwood, N.J.

Both specially equipped H-model Hueys and two additional standard H-model "chase ships" then rolled into the narrow valley and began a search pattern.

Within minutes, ground fire again shot up at the aircraft. Descending to low altitude, the ships deployed in an offensive tactic developed by Captain Gallatin, who guided the Nighthawk project at F Troop from its beginnings.

The searchlights revealed large numbers of enemy with packs and weapons running around in the area.

"They seemed confused and disorganized," said WO Petrucci.

"We spotted some by their muzzle flashes," Captain Gallatin added, "We were constantly receiving fire."

Both ships flew through the night sky, their searchlights and minigun flashes lighting up fragments of the valley with violent red and white bursts of

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Division recap

Action increases, 160 enemy killed

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO) -- Fighting increased in the southern part of First Military Region as the units of the Americal killed 169 enemy soldiers. The heaviest action of the week was in Operation Iron Mountain as the "Jungle Warriors" killed 53 enemy soldiers. The "Chargers" of the 196th Infantry Brigade in Operation Frederick Hill killed 30 enemy soldiers in sporadic contacts. In relatively light action the "Bravo and Bold" of the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry and gunships of the 176th Aviation Company combined to kill 15 enemy in Operation Geneva Park.

Geneva Park

The combination of ground and air units proved to be a devastating force in an area southeast of Chu Lai. First, a gunship crew observed one VC evading in the area and engaged the enemy to kill him. Later, the crew observed signs of enemy activity in a clump of rocks on the ground below, and saturated the area with automatic weapons fire.

Two platoons of Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry were then inserted and began sweeping through the area. As they maneuvered, the "Regulars" spotted one Viet Cong evading from the rock formations and fired on him killing him. As they continued the sweep they found five more VC killed by gunships and two rifles lying near the bodies.

A short time later, the gunships, working in the same general area, took enemy small arms fire and spotted 15 VC on the ground below. The crew fired on the enemy to kill five more.

The next day, Delta Company made another sweep through the area of the previous day contact and killed one VC.

Men of the 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry saw light activity during the week. The battalion killed four and captured one in scattered engagements with the enemy.

Light action also characterized the activity in the 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry. Bravo Company found a maze of 10 bunkers and hooches built

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Part 5 of R&R series

Bangkok offers excitement for R&R

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO) – The city is alive, pulsating with the movement of over 1,800,000 people and a myriad of darting vehicles. Man and machine merge profusely in this port city and flow in a thousand colorful directions. Intense colors, bright during day time, glitter at night as neon signs and brightly lit store-windows flash advertisements that capture the eye in a rainbow of color. This is Bangkok, one of the cities offered to you for your R&R.

An exotic city of lights and sights, a land where the ancient blends with the modern in a bustling metropolis, Bangkok is just a jet's jump away for the R&R bound soldier. For entertainment, sightseeing and shopping, there is no place in the world quite like it.

After you land in Bangkok and make a brief customs check on a bus destined for the R&R Center located downtown where you will convert your money and make hotel reservations. But first you are directed into a large conference-like room where a pretty Thai girl will show you slides on what you can see in the city.

Then you are given the opportunity to change your money and make hotel reservations. The exchange rate is approximately 20 Baht for one US dollar; one Baht equals a nickel. Under no circumstance may you cash a Treasury Check or personal check with a money changer, or make purchases with "greenback" on the economy.

Fine Hotels

Offered for your comfort are some of the most modern hotels in all Asia, with nightly rates that range from $6 to $12 for a single room and $12 to $16 for a double. All R&R Center recommended hotels, for $6 a night offer air conditioned rooms complete with bath and 24 hours room service. You have the option, however, to stay at whatever hotel you please, the only stipulation being that the R&R Center knows where you will be staying.

Now that you have settled into your room and changed into some light weight civilian clothes you almost forgot existed, you are ready to discover the allure of Bangkok.

Your first glance at the flow of vehicles outside the hotel may confuse you as you wonder which mode of transportation you should take. Buses and streetcars operate throughout the city but visitors tend to favor taxis. Taxi fares average about 25 cents a mile. Be sure you set a price before you start.

The Thais expect you to bargain, so do not accept the first price because it is usually to high. If you plan much traveling, a cab can be rented for the length of your stay for about $25.

Now that you have an idea on how to get started toward fun-time, the problem lies in where to go to have that fun. Numerous possibilities arise.

After a satisfying meal you are prepared to take in the night life, which will easily surpass your expectations of a swinging time. Nightclubs galore, in both eastern and western style, await you featuring music, dancing and other professional entertainment. Beautiful Thai girls will be your dance partner for about $2 to $4 an hour. The company of a hostess can be yours for the price of her drinks.

So as to not ruin your chance to cram activity into every minute, you would be wise to heed a few precautions. One is to remember that the tap water in Bangkok is unsafe for drinking. Your hotel will provide pitchers of potable water in your room. Another is to eat in the better restaurants and avoid food served by street vendors or in nightclubs.

Also available to you are PX facilities, including a snack bar and commisary, military medical facilities for routine treatment or emergencies are there as well.

CSM Copeland visits Division

By MSG William Turner

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO) – The third Sergeant Major of the Army (Designate) Command Sergeant Major Silas L. Copeland, now sergeant major of the 4th Infantry Division paid a brief visit to the division recently, before departing this month for his new office in the Pentagon.

He was escorted on his tour of the division by Command Sergeant Major Charles Hall, USARV and Command Sergeant Major Edward Wilson, XXIV Corps. Sergeant Major Copeland, a 50 year old combat veteran, visited Hawk Hill and LZ Center where he talked with members of the "Chargers," 196th Infantry Brigade. In the afternoon he toured elements of the 57th Transportation Battalion where he was escorted by Command Sergeant Major James K. Forman.

Returning to Chu Lai from Hawk Hill, Sergeant Major Copeland was honored with an informal reception and luncheon where he met 76 senior NCOs of the division and talked informally with those present during the luncheon.

After the luncheon Sergeant Major Darling presented the top Army NCO with the traditional Americal bayonet and cigarette lighter as a momento of his visit and on behalf of those present extended best wishes in his new assignment.

In his remarks to the assembled group, Sergeant Major Copeland said, "I am honored to be with you today and I'm equally proud to have been selected to represent the enlisted corps. You can be assured that I will represent you in the best manner possible and in return, I'm going to call upon you for your assistance. I'm going to need your help to get through this tour and I'm counting on each of you for your full support," he said.

Division Command Sergeant Major Fred E. Darling presents the newly designated Sergeant Major of the Army, Command Sergeant Major Silas L. Copeland with momentos of the Americal during a recent visit by the sergeant major. (Photo by SSG Tim Palmer)

Doughnut Dolly

Kate likes Americal

By SP4 Breidenbach

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO) – "I didn't join the Peace Corps because there's so much to do with America and its people." Katharine Elizabeth Beckwith is proving her statement very well by serving the men of the Americal through the Red Cross girls.

The petite 23 year old was born in Downs, Kan., near the old geographic center of the United States. Her family moved to San Antonio, Tex., where she was raised. At Southern Methodist University in Dallas she obtained a BA in English specializing in American authors.

"My mother told me about the Red Cross program," Kate said, "she's been in the Red Cross for 10 or 15 years and is presently in Saigon at the 3rd Field Hospital." Probably the only American mother-daughter team in Vietnam.

Kate has been stationed at Bien Hoa and Cam Ranh Bay. Although she has been in country eight months she has been here but a month and likes it best of all here. Two wishes she has are, "That I had more time to talk to the men and that there could be more girls in country to talk to the guys."

Kate has always liked to travel and work with people. A brief look at her volunteer work during high school and college prove it beyond a doubt.

Some of the outside work includes social work with juvenile delinquents, welfare projects in Texas, teaching English to Spanish speaking children and work in various mental hospitals.

She likes to think big on city planning and after finishing her Red Cross tour would like to attend graduate school in international business.

Promotion outlook dim for E-4 and 5s

By PFC Guy Winkler

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO) – The outlook for promotion to pay grade E-4 and E-5 is dim due to a 250,000 personnel decrease at DA level.

Captain L. F. Hinson, division personnel management officer, said that the decrease in promitions are all based on appropriations and projected strength of the Army. In other words, as the manpower decreases, promotion allocations also decrease.

"In Vietnam, however," Captain Hinson said, "it's easier to get promoted to E-3, E-4, E-5 and E-6 than it is in stateside assignments. The policies allow an acceleration of these promotions without regard to time in grade and time in service. On occasion, USARV promotes on a month to month basis 25% to E-4 and E-5 without regards to vacancy."

The new DA Promotion Points System adapted February 1, 1970 for promotion to E-5 and E-6 features several new additions for a higher possible point rating. The Awards and Decorations section allows a maximum of 50 points to be scored by the individual and 100 maximum points for Civilian Education Section. In addition, the individual may score as high as 250 points before the promotion board compared to the old 200 point system. And he can score as high as 750 administrative points.

Promotion allocations which are put out through the Department of the Army are determined by the number of qualified persons needed to fill the slot without regard to specialty or field grade MOS.

Jewish holidays to be observed

By SP4 Thomas J. Neville

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO) – Two religious retreats will be held at Da Nang's China Beach R&R Center for Jewish personnel in observance of the holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Rosh Hashanah is the celebration of the Jewish new year and begins at sundown, September 30 and continues unitl sundown, October 2. The second retreat will begin at sundown on October 9 and continue until October 11 in observance of Yom Kippur. Unlike the joyous holiday of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur is a very solemn "day of atonement."

Americal Division soldiers and personnel from other units in the XXIV Corps may attend the retreats. According to Sergeant First Class Douglas Kendall, Americal Division chaplain's assistant, "Jewish personnel can contact their unit chaplain to find out the procedures necessary to apply for an administrative leave in order to attend the retreats."

By obtaining in-country travel orders, personnel should be able to insure a reservation on a fixed-wing flight to Da Nang, according to Sergeant Kendall.

Rabbi Edward Kraus, XXIV Corps Jewish Chaplain, arranged the retreats and will conduct services during them. The first day of Yom Kippur is marked by a 24-hour period of fasting. "According to history and tradition, this is the Jews' day of judgement for the year. We fast and pray to God that we will have a good year and will be forgiven for past transgressions," noted Specialist Four Mark Vogel, who recently assumed duties as Jewish lay leader for the division.

About 300 persons are expected to attend the retreats. "We should have a pretty good turnout from the division," said Sergeant Kendall.

For those personnel unable to make the trip to Da Nang, Specialist Vogel will hold services in the division chapel during both holidays.

For further information about the services contact Sergeant Kendall at the Division Chaplain's Office, telephone Chu Lai 3541.

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

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420 Montagnards walk to LZ Mary Ann for freedom

By PFC Tom Niedfeldt

LZ MARY ANN (196th INF BDE IO) – Four-hundred and twenty Montagnards recently took a walk in the jungle–a walk for freedom. Behind them remained harassment which they had endured for years.

They suffered through those years, because unfortunately, their villages had remained situated between the course and destination of NVA supplies. The enemy forced them to carry weapons and ammunition along supply routes from Laos into the redistribution area of Old Hau Duc, southwest of Tam Ky.

Montagnards remain a relatively isolated race in the northwestern highlands of South Vietnam. These 420 men, women and children left their isolation to find sanctuary with 196th Infantty Brigade soldiers at LZ Mary Ann, fire support base for the 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry, southwest of Tam Ky.

The infantrymen did not receive the natives in a single group. First arrived a Montagnard father and his son as the initial "testing party."

Father and son received food, shade and medical attention. Then came the remaining 418 for their fair share. Many of them trudged into the camp weighted down by flapping chickens, squealing pigs and other personal items.

"It was like a scene out of the movies," said Specialist Four Frank Opheim, Minneapolis, Company C, 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry. "The women were bare-breasted and the men only wore loin cloths. Some of the men carried cross bows and spears."

After the long procession straggled into the perimeter, its members received more food and medical attention. "We walked among the people, and treated the worst cases first," explained Specialist Four William Petty Jr., Troup, Tex., head medic at LZ Mary Ann. "The people saw what we were doing and soon came to us for help on their own."

An American interpretor with the 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry, then learned from the Montagnards that the NVA had used the highland natives as guides through the complex jungle terrain; that the NVA had stolen rice and other foodstuffs from them while forcing the Montagnards to carry weapons and ammunition.

After getting over their initial fear of the Americans and their mysterious noise makers (artillery, helicopters and bulldozers), the people became increasingly friendly and talkative. "They are a very honest and shy people," said First Lieutenant Timothy Keating, Indianapolis. "If they said there was a cache in the area, it was there, and they led us to a number of valuable finds."

The children appeared well disciplined as evidenced by obedience to their parents. "As we passed out food everyone would wait until we got to them," explained "Doc" Petty.

After staying on LZ Mary Ann for a few days, the people were moved to the New Hau Duc resettlement area a few miles to the northwest.

This little boy gets his tonsils checked by Captain William J. Casper of the 6th Battalion, 11th Artillery as Sergeant Lam, the interpreter on the MEDCAP tells him to open wide. The people are from Twin Village, just out side of Duc Pho. (Photo by PFC Ron Mumford)

'Goodwill' team develops rapport

By SP4 Thomas J. Neville

FSB BRONCO (11th INF BDE IO) – An intimate rapport is blossoming between Vietnamese civilians from the coastal plains north of Duc Pho and soldiers of the 11th Infantry Brigade.

The cause can be defined simply as "goodwill." It comes from a Medical Civic Action Program (MEDCAP), which is being supported by a small group of men from the first platoon of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry.

Vietnamese flock to an abandoned hospital, about 10 miles north of Duc Pho, every morning. There, they are given medical attention for a variety of diseases and wounds.

"The people were scared of us at first but when they saw what we were doing, they started to come in droves," said Sergeant Ralph Cordes, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Spearheading the program is a young Vietnamese nurse named Nguyen Thi Huong. She finds time to spend two hours in the morning, six days a week, to treat the sick. According to Sergeant Cordes, about 60 persons are cared for every day.

The facility is an important cog in the pacification program in that area. "It makes the people realize that the GIs are on their side," explained Sergeant Cordes. He added that some of the villagers are beginning to turn in 50 and 60mm rounds, CHICOM grenades and other weapons to the Americans. "We pay them for whatever they bring in and it works out quite well, since it keeps those supplies out of the hands of the Viet Cong," noted the sergeant.

The first platoon secures the clinic and also conducts patrols of the area.

Adding to the friendly atmosphere of the clinic is the fact that the language barrier has been broken. The first platoon has its own interpretor–a 14 year-old boy.

The thin but sturdy youngster speaks excellent English, which he says he learned while in school in Duc Pho. When asked why he left his home to stay with Bravo Company, Joey quickly retorted, "I came to help the guys...I talk to the ARVNs for the guys."

Nguyen Thi Huong, the "pretty cute" nurse, the young linguist Joey and the men of the first platoon all make up a pretty good team. The results of their combined efforts are good–it's written on the faces of the people who leave the clinic in better health.

'Turtles' have a dinner party

By SP4 Terry Williamson

LZ BAYONET (198th INF BDE IO) – Somewhere in the Ky Tra Valley in the 198th Infantry Brigade there lies a quaint little dining spot which serves a succulent cuisine foreign to Vietnam, or at least that's the way it seemed when some infantrymen gathered for a semi-formal dinner party recently.

The mortar platoon of Bravo Company, 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry affectionately known as the "Turtles," recently staged the dinner party and the only things missing were the tuxedos and champagne.

The "Turtles" opened their evening repast with a choice of soups that would make your mouth water--green pea, vegetable beef or a delicious chicken noodle soup. Next came the fish course which also offered a selection. Available were bristling sardines, kipper snacks, herring bits or steamed clams. If your taste did not go for the fish there was a chicken spread available to satisfy your epicurian desires.

The main course consisted of a choice between a well-prepared turkey or a succulent roast pork. Of course, there was a delectable mushroom gravy to add spice. The gourmet meal was downed with 28 quarts of Kool-aide and topped off with a light chocolate pudding served with Swiss cocoa.

The gastronomical festival started when Private First Class Bob E. Sahadi, Brooklyn, N.Y., received three packages containing all this food from home. And all on the same day.

"I guess my mother thought we were all starving after some of the letters I've written to her about C-Rations," Private Sahadi said. "I just couldn't eat all of that without help, and I sure hated to carry around all that food."

When Bravo Company set up in a night defensive perimeter, the meal was prepared by the men of the mortar platoon, and served on ammo crates which were used for tables.

Another "Turtle," Specialist Four Monte L. Strouf, Lyle, Minn., said "It was sure a break from the normal everyday routine we experience around here."

One member of the mortar platoon was not quite satisfied, however. Specialist Four Don J. Neuwirth, Chicago, asked, "I wonder why his mother didn't include turtle soup?"

A Rome plow equipped D-7 bulldozer treads around to assault the undergrowth from a different direction. The land clearing project northwest of Duc Pho is being tackled by the 26th Engineers. (Photo by SP4 Peter Sorensen)

Engineers at Mo Duc humble dense jungle

By PFC John C. Hunger

CHU LAI (26th ENG BN IO) – Long hot days of diesel roar and the rip of sinewy green have brought the Mo Duc jungle to it's knees in the wake of C Company, 26th Engineer Battalion operations. They were aided by the land clearing platoon of the 39th Engineer Battalion in this part of the Mo Duc operation.

Early each morning the sun brought the dark, quiet bulldozers to a noisy awakening. A convoy procession of over 10 dozers was quickly off from the night laager defensive positions to a renewed attack on what jungle the previous day still left standing. The dozers together cleared area after area till the sun neared it's plunge into the mountains signalling it was time to return to the night laager position. One operator, after his dozer fell part way into a huge hole conceiled by the thick, dark green, commented, "This is the roughest area we've been in yet."

The Mo Duc area is seven miles east of Quang Ngai stretching some 16 miles down the seacoast. Some days the dozers were greeted with explosions of many mines and boody traps and on other days almost none. Everything from eight-inch artillery rounds down through 155mm rounds and CHICOM grenades were found. In all, 17 mines and booby traps and 20 items of ordinance were found.

As dozer operator Mike L. Jewell, Covington, Ky., puts it, "It makes it a helluva lot easier on the infantry, and we're destroying enemy supplies." The operators wielded their caterpillars over a total of 1060 acres of thick, spiny jungle to destroy 766 lineal meters of trenches, 114 bunkers, and 855 lineal meters of tunnels. Rice, hay and other food source caches were also destroyed.

Americal Division marks its thir

l year in Vietnam

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battle, 548 NVA were killed. Shortly after that action, an allied force of 11th Brigade and 2nd ARVN Division soldiers accounted for 422 enemy killed at Quang Ngai City.

In November, the two longest running Americal Division operations, Wheeler/Wallowa and Burlington Trail, were completed. The results were staggering. The 196th Infantry Brigade accounted for 10,020 enemy dead and 2,053 captured weapons during the one year existence of Operation Wheeler/Wallowa. Operation Burlington Trail accounted for 1,948 enemy and 545 captured weapons.

One of the largest operations conducted by the Americal Division in Vietnam was Operation Russell Beach. That operation involved two basic tactics of this war–combat and pacification. Initiated January 13, 1969, on the Batangan Peninsula eight miles northeast of Quang Ngai City, the operation was a massive effort to win the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese. All civilians were removed from the peninsula in order to isolate VC units and members of the Viet Cong infrastructure.

The pacification phase ended on July 21st and the effort saw the resettlement of more than 12,000 refugees on the peninsula after it had been cleared of enemy bunkers and sanctuaries. The overall pacification effort continued in the Americal but was soon to meet some stumbling blocks.

Intensive Communist pressures were beginning to be felt in the Que Son and Hiep Duc valleys, 30 miles south of Da Nang. The Hiep Duc Refugee Center and firebases LZ Center and LZ West were believed to prime targets of the 2nd NVA Division.

In early August elements of the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry beat off a ground attack at LZ West, killing 59 enemy soldiers. Later in the month, 196th Brigade infantrymen killed more than 312 NVA in 72 hours of fighting in the blistering heat on the Que Son Valley floor. Skirmishes in the two valleys continued through the month. At month's end more than 1,000 enemy had died in the area at the hands of Americal soldiers and Marines.

Pacification continued to be the name of the game in 1970. Americal engineers became involved in massive land clearing operations and resettlement villages sprang up everywhere.

The spring of 1970 saw a set back in one such pacification effort in Hiep Duc Valley when the NVA launched an offensive. Heavy fighting flared in the area but the enemy was soon stopped by 196th Brigade soldiers.

In July of 1970, elements from the 196th along with other Americal units recaptured the remote out post at Kham Duc. The former Special Forces Camp had been overrun in May, 1968, by the NVA but Americal and ARVN forces reopened the camp via a massive assault this summer.

Today, three years after its arrival in Chu Lai, the Americal Division is the largest Army division in the world. Its soldiers are fighting in the largest tactical combat zone in Vietnam and their main goal is to win the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people.

11th Bde soldiers find tons of enemy rice

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together in an area northwest of Quang Ngai. Inside the bunkers, the infantrymen of the "Ready Rifles" discovered five AK-47 magazines, two CHICOM grenades, five mortar rounds, one RPG with seven rounds and another antitank weapon. Also found were two VC bodies dressed in brown uniforms. It was determined the two VC had been killed by an airstrike earlier in the week.

Frederick Hill

After finding a basecamp early in the week Delta Company, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry spotted 10 VC. Delta engaged the enemy, killing three while the others fled into a nearby treeline.

Company A of the "Gimlets" did its share when it killed two NVA during a sweep of the double canopy jungle at the end of the week northwest of Tam Ky.

A daring day light raid by Recon platoon northwest of Tam Ky resulted in the death of two NVA.

A defensive position set up by Recon effected the deaths of seven enemy later in the week northwest of Tam Ky. The first of two encounters led the "Gimlets" to kill three NVA, in a thickly vegetated area.

"We counted four more VC killed late in the afternoon when they stumbled into our defensive position along a well used trail," said First Lieutenant Joseph D. Barrett, Burlington Mills, N.C., platoon leader.

Four NVA were killed and a basecamp destroyed by Recon, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry with the help of artillery at the end of the week in thick double canopy jungle terrain northwest of Tam Ky.

"Four NVA were caught unaware as they were moving out of ambush position by one of our patrols that was checking out an enemy laager site previously bombarded by arty," reported Sergeant Bill Milburne, Harriman, Tenn., squad leader.

Three of the enemy were killed in the encounter that followed.

The "Polar Bears" of the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry came into possession of two packs when they surprised and killed two VC northwest of Tam Ky early this week.

Iron Mountain

Early in the week while on a search and clear mission in the lowlands south of Duc Pho, Company A, 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry uncovered a 300 pound rice cache. The rice was found in a wooden box inside a small hut. It became apparant that Company A had broken up a VC rice carrying detail when a short time later, near the first cache, 15-100 pound bags and 18-55-gallon drums of rice was found lying in the open. The estimated three and one-half tons of rice was evacuated to LZ Bronco.

The next day at noon Alpha Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry discovered a 2200 pound rice cache in the lowlands northwest of Duc Pho. The "Always First" found the rice buried in a ditch. Later in the afternoon Company A uncovered another rice cache consisting of 1000 pounds. This cache was found buried in a 55-gallon drum.

Continuing their productive rice denial campaign in the lowlands northwest of Duc Pho, Comapny A uncovered 400 pounds of rice the next day. The rice was found in 55-gallon drums buried in a hedgrow. Four tons of rice had been uncovered by Company A in the last three days and found in four different caches.

In the middle of the week Company B, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry and Regional Forces had an estimated VC Company attack their night laager position in the lowlands northwest of Duc Pho. The enemy hit with CHICOM grenades and RPG rounds in the early morning hours. The attack which saw the enemy assault the "Jungle Warriors" position twice, both times being repelled, included five VC killed. The VC broke contact when Blue Ghost gunships arrived on station.

Late in the week Alpha Company, 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry saw action in the mountains northwest of Duc Pho when they engaged and killed four NVA. While checking out the area one more NVA was engaged and killed.

198th Brigade infantrymen keep spread out as they cautiously move down a trail in search of the enemy. The Delta Company, 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry soldiers were conducting a search and clear operation southwest of Chu Lai.
(Photo by SGT Thomas C. Elmer)

Gimlets kill 6 stubborn VC

By PFC Joseph Alward

FSB DEBBIE (11th INF BDE 10) – Six stubborn VC were killed recently when they ran afoul of an equally obstinate unit of the 11th Infantry Brigade in action near the village of My Trang eight miles south of Duc Pho.

Intelligence revealed the location of a pair of tunnels harboring armed VC soldiers. The reports were confirmed when the members of Recon, 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry and the battalion S-2 made a heliborne assault into a rice paddy neighboring My Trang.

Immediately after insertion the men proceded 100 yards to the bank of a winding stream where they discovered a small spider hole. "There were indications that it had been entered very recently," stated First Lieutenant Jerry Webster, Winston-Salem, N.C., "our interpreter made repeated attempts to urge any occupants to come out, but he received no response so the decision was made to destroy the tunnel.

The explosion enlarged the opening through which Sergeant David M. Graff, San Pedro, Calif., entered.

"He slipped all the way inside and returned, dragging with him an AK-47 and a dead VC," continued Lieutenant Webster. A search of the tunnel uncovered AK-47 amuntion, blasting caps, and a pistol belt with four grenades on it.

The Recon element then approached an underground bunker located approximately 150 yards from the spider hole. First Sergeant Cecil Zachary, Kalispell, Mont., and Specialist Four Ronald Boisse, Woonsocket, R.I., moved toward the entrance and came face-to-face with a VC wielding a grenade. "I knocked him all the way back inside with several bursts of fire from my M-16," said Sergeant Zachary.

A grenade was then thrown into the bunker, collapsing the walls and ceiling and exposing a tunnel entrance within the bunker.

"The interpreter again asked any remaining tunnel inhabitants to surrender," explained Lieutenant Webster, "but no response was received so we placed claymores on top of and inside the bunker."

After the explosion sergeant Graff squirmed through an opening in the rubble. "I slipped in up to my waist while Specialist Boisse held onto me by my belt. When I looked in I saw five dead VC."

'Nighthawks' pursue enemy

(continued from page 1)

light. When both ships' miniguns expended, the pilots teamed up to provide each .50 caliber machinegun with illumination from the other ship's searchlight.

The .50 on each ship tore into enemy bunkers and fighting positions. When the heavy guns paused for reloading, free M-60 machineguns on each ship maintained a base of fire to keep the enemy from establishing fire superiority. As the .50 caliber guns resumed firing, the free gunners fired in short bursts to provide additional supressive fire to the flanks.

All the while, the two chase ships stood by at higher altitude, ready to assist if needed.

After an hour and a half of continued contact with the enemy force, the ships broke station with 16 enemy dead left in the area.

The next night, both teams returned to the same area, ready for trouble. They found it. This time, the enemy was ready with more automatic and small arms fire and fought from more and better postions in the same area.

Passing over the river valley, both ships took small arms fire. The minigunners returned fire immediately, killing one enemy in his ground position.

The two ships resumed tactics similar to the previous night's, working their way downstream.

The enemy, applying the previous night's experience, fired from strong concealed positions.

Despite the well-prepared enemy, both ships were credited with an additional 33 condirmed enemy dead in four hours.

During the action, both Nighthawks had broken station once to refuel before returning to the Ha Thanh area.

After what might have been a heady victory, the pilots and crew members maintained a healthy respect for the enemy in the area.

In an interview the morning after the action, Captain Gallatin explained: "You can't underestimate him. If you do, you're finished."

Men of C Battery, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Artillery, fire a 105mm Howitzer at enemy positions one mile west of Hiep Duc. (Photo by SP4 Triburio Sanchez)

Here is a reminder that it is already the 25th of September and the Fall general elections on November 3rd are fast approaching. So act now to have your absentee ballot in time to get your ballot cast. Absentee ballots may be obtained through your county auditor. Remember your vote counts.

Div's Own Rock Group Plays Throughout AO

By SP4 Ed Breidenbach

CHU LAI (AMERICAL 10) – Did you know that the Americal has four Joint Chiefs of Staff? And they are all enlisted men at that.

Actually the Joint Chiefs of Staff are the Americal's own band operating for the entertainment of troops all over the AO at their firebases.

The group consists of Sergeant Wayne E. Hart, Tacoma, Wash., formerly of Echo Recon, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry who plays organ. Specialist Four James V. Satokoski a medic from 14th Combat Aviation Battalion and his home is in Laport, Ind., on drums. Specialist Four David C. Nealis a Chicago bass player formerly of the 23rd MP Company and Private First Class Donald E. Russell, Phoenix, Ariz., previously assigned to the 132nd Helicopter Company on lead guitar.

In charge of the band is First Lieutenant Chuck Leary a former tour manager of the Bee Gees and co-owner of Northern Artists Limited, a recording company in New York City.

Headquarters for the music makers is the Americal Amphitheater and Birthday Sound Studios. Birthday Sound Studios consists of two acoustically tiled rooms complete with a separate sound and recording room. "We worked for four days and nights to get it done, but it was worth it," they commendted. The name came from the completion of the studio on the bass player's birthday.

A recording of 'Proud Mary' was given to Lieutenant Colonel James M. Eubanks, the Americal AG in appreciation for all the help given in getting the band together and equipped. It was the groups first recording and the first of many more to come.

The relatively new equipment is Jazzmaster amps guitars and speakers by Fender plus a Bogen amp. The 20 odd pieces weigh approximately 800 pounds. This equipment goes through pelting by rocks and dirt thrown up by choppers and constant moving that normal equipment would never have to face. "It's a hardship tour," Sergeant Hart explained.

The band was formed on May 8th of this year. Specialist Nealis was the first member. After a couple days wait the rest of the group showed up and began to mesh, through Lieutenant Leary's direction, their different styles. It involved long 18 hour practice sessions in order to be ready for the deadline set to see if the group would stay in existence. They met it with flying colors despite having to work around Private Russell's country and western background, Sergeant Hart's acid music experience, Specialist Nealis' experience with the Mauds and Buckinghams of Chicago and 'Ski's' work with his hometown group. It was a real challenge.

An average day starts about six in the morning. Everyone gets up and assembles at the studio and begins packing the equipment from the night of practice onto the blue pickup. They crowd on and proceed to the 23rd S&T pad near the main gate and meet with the fast team which is there with their 201 Files of the host unit and the mobile PX conex.

When a Chinook finally comes the equipment is transferred to the waiting bird. On the journey to LZ Center which will be used as an example, some members of the band were bumped from the first flight and were forced to wait for another chopper that was not long in coming.

At LZ Center the equipment was waiting on the pad for the rest of the group to arrive only two had unloaded it from the first chopper. When the rocks and dust had settled from the last Chinook the large cumbersome boxes were packed in two jeeps with trailers along with the fast team.

The equipment was moved up then down the rutted road to a chapel. Here it was unloaded to the outside of the chapel until someone scrounged up a key. When that finally came the door was opened and again the heavy boxes were moved.

About as soon as everyone and everything was inside the group was informed that they must move to another part of the LZ so that a promotion board could be held in the chapel. The move was to be to the 'Gimlet Inn' where the door was opened and again the heavy boxes were moved.

Two moves were performed to the outside and to the jeep.

Tables and chairs were moved at the 'Gimlet Inn' so the equipment could be placed and more people could be squeezed in. Another blow was dropped. The mess sergeant made clear the group had to be out before noon so the individuals that eat there would be served on time. This meant the program was to be cut short by about 20 minutes. They had to wait for the fast team to finish so as not to detract their business. "It really makes us sad when we can't give the guys a show, but even half a program is better than none. So we give half a show," Specialist Nealis pointed out.

After changing into civies they use for the show, fianl tuning and tests were conducted. The show opened at 11 a.m. Real American music palyed and performed by professional American musicians. This group is not run of the mill. Every tune is polished. The routine and humor though is one thing that comes off the top of the head. It sure loosens the crowd up.

As the music went on the crowd grew larger and larger. People lined up on the poarch, then began sitting on the bunkers on both sides of the Inn. Inside they were crammed like sardines. One of the spectators even felt so moved he got up and danced during 'Midnight Hour." It was a time of release for some for others it was a somber moment during some of the wide variety of songs that brought back fond memories of home. In this particular crowd most were somber and thinking.

At 11:40 the guys completed their final song and began to pack up. The show had been cut short by 20 minutes. A move was made to the chopper pad, then lunch.

Two hours later, a Chinook landed but with a large number of people already on, only the equipment could be transferred to Hawk Hill. The band was rejoined with their equipment an hour later at Hawk Hill when another hot and tiring wait began. Two and a half hours this time. Chu Lai was a welcome sight.

On reflecting on the day, general consensus seemed to be that LZ Center was one of the longer days as far as moving and waiting went. But to them it was worth it because they guys had enjoyed it.

Viet family snatched from VC hands

By SGT Matt Gryta

LZ CENTER (196th INF BDE IO) – War may be hell, and contact a two word obscenity, but not every battle is won at the point of a gun. A 196th Infantry Brigade company recently learned this truth by way of an incident which touched the heart of every man in the unit.

Company A, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry operating northwest of Tam Ky rescued a Vietnamese farmer and his family from Viet Cong custody and did it without firing a shot.

A five man patrol, under the direction of First Lieutenant Ronald S. Epplin, San Diego, Calif., company commander, was searching an abandoned prisoner of war camp in "AK Valley." Late in the afternoon the infantrymen entered a hooch area.

"We went in just to get a little relaxation," Lieutenant Epplin explained. "We'd been on the move all day and needed a breather."

Though there were no Vietnamese males in the area, the Americans did find five children; a girl, aged eleven and her four brothers, ages three through fourteen.

"We played with the kids and gave them some candy and our Kit Carson Scout, The, got to talking to the girl," said Lieutenant Epplin.

As evening approached The came over to his company commander. The Kit Carson had an interesting story to tell. The girl's father had formerly been a Viet Cong, but had been trying to get his family into Tam Ky for some time. The VC were presently blocking his escape and forcing him to work for them.

The Americans moved out to their laager. That night the girl convinced her father that it was now or never.

Early the next morning The "had the feeling" that they could get some VC if they moved back into the location of the hooches. With that, the young company commander dispatched a patrol.

When another patrol entered the hooch the next morning, they found that her father and a young Viet Cong thug had gone into the hills a few hours earlier. The girl they had met the day before told The that her father had made up his mind and wanted the Americans to come back that evening to get him.

The Kit Carson Scout passed on the information to the Lieutenant.

"At that point I had a rough decision to make," noted Lieutenant Epplin. "Was the story straight or were we being set up for an ambush?"

That evening, after weighing all the factors and providing his troops with security from fighting positions set up on high ground, Lieutenant Epplin took a raiding party through a cornfield and and rushed the hooches.

"When we moved into the family's hooch the man immediately threw up his arms to surrender," Lieutenant Epplin related, "but the young Viet cong who had been sleeping there to watch over him darted outside and ran toward a nearby embankment and started crawling up the hillside."

A round from an M-79 went off near the VC stopping his attempted escape. He was captured and later found to be a former Hoi Chanh who joined the ARVN forces and then deserted.

The next morning the men of Company A helped the family load all their possessions onto a chopper which took them to LZ Hawk Hill.

"The father just couldn't stop thanking us before we loaded him onto the bird," remarked Specialist Peterson. "All the guys felt real good about the whole thing, just knowing that we had accomplished something, had put another dent in Charlie's armor, so to speak, without firing a single shot."

Two students repel out of a helicopter during training at the Company G (Ranger) 75th Infantry, Recondo Course. A three-hour block of instruction is given on repelling, using both the 65 foot tower and a helicopter.
(Photo by SSG Vern Kaiser)

LOH hovers without pilot

By SP4 Peter Sorensen

FSB BRONCO (11th INF BDE IO) – Another incredable page has been added to the "Believe It or Not" history of the Vietnam War by Primo, the 11th Infantry Brigade's aviation section. Those involved in the case of the light observation helicopter (LOH) that flew by itself termed the incident "wierd," "a chance in a million."

Recently, two LOHs were flying a last light visual reconnaissance in support of a 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry combat assault north of Duc Pho. Reported Chief Warrant Officer James M. Call, North Wilkesboro, N.C., "I was directing the ground troops into a location where enemy activity had been observed earlier. I was using my search light since it was getting dark. We were about to break station with the put down of the last lift when my ship took fire."

The Primo pilot continued, "The rounds passed through the bottom of the aircraft, through the fuel cell and struck our grenade box detonating a white phosphorous grenade. We were at about 100 feet at this time and I tried to make it to a rice paddy near friendly troops."

As the LOH began its descent the flames grew in volumn and intensity. Doorgunner Specialist Four Robert W. Jud, Dearborne, Mich., unsuccessfully attempted to unload the grenade. Moments later Specialist Jud jumped to the ground when CWO Call suggested that the situation was critical. Said CWO Call, "At 30 feet the plexiglass over-head bubble began to melt, I could smell aircraft fuel and the heat was becoming unbearable, then I jumped."

The pilot and doorgunner were air-lifted to this firebase, but CWO Call would soon have to return to the scene. The downed LOH was burning badly and sitting on the ground. Fifteen minutes later the Brigade Tactical Operations Center received word that the spunky LOH was hovering a few inches above the ground unmanned.

Commented Major James W. Searcy, Columbus, Ga., brigade aviation officer, "It was a change in a million.

The happening was interesting to CWO Call, but he was left with the even more interesting problem of shuting off the lively LOH as it hovered a few inches off the ground and rotated 360 degrees to the right. "I cautiously got as close to the ship as I could, and timed my attempt with the aircraft's rotation." CWO Call successfully charged the LOH and hit the emergency "full shut-off."

Reflected CWO Call, "The fires shouldn't have died down. The aircraft was covered with JP4 fuel. The LOH smoldered for a day after the incident. For that matter, it shouldn't have been flying. It was a wierd helicopter."

Private First Class George Coleman, Rainsville, Ala., and his unusual looking scout dog Cappy, take a break after completing a training exercise at the 57th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog) in Chu Lai. (Photo by SGT Thomas Elmer)

New breed of scout dog tried

By SGT Thomas C. Elmer

CHU LAI (198th INF BDE IO) – What may be the most unique scout dog in Vietnam has joined the 198th Infantry Brigade. The dog, "Cappy," a German Short Haired Pointer, evidently realized a bird in the hand isn't worth two in the bush and is now beating the bush looking for Viet Cong.

"I acquired the dog when I was with the 26th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog) at Fort Benning," said Private First Class George V. Coleman, Tainsville, Ala., the dog's handler now with the 57th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog) of the 198th Infantry Brigade. "The Army wanted to develope a better scout dog than the Shepard, so they decided to experiment with a bird dog. When the dog arrived, nobody wanted him. But I had always liked bird dogs and I took him."

Private Coleman trained the dog for eight weeks using a leash, teaching the dog basic commands and fundamental discipline. Following this period of training, he put the dog through another 12 weeks of "off leash training," teaching him to respond to the presence of the enemy, booby traps and punji pits while he leads his handler by several meters.

"Cappy seemed to learn fast," said Private Coleman. "It takes many dogs two years to train but we finished the course in 20 weeks. When Cappy was tested with 12 other dogs, he placed ahead of all the others."

Private Coleman taught his dog to sit when he detected the presence of booby traps and punji pits, and to point when he sensed enemy personnel.

"When he senses the enemy, he points as other bird dogs would point at birds," said Private Coleman. "He becomes rigid in his stance, his tail stiffens and he lifts his left front leg, pointing with his nose in the direction of the enemy."

The team trained another three weeks at Bien Hoa after arriving in Vietnam. After being assigend to the 57th Infantry Platoon, Private Coleman put his dog through additional training on their course in Chu Lai. Shortly thereafter, the team went to the field with a company of the brigade and performed well.

"We stayed on an OP for four days and Cappy seldom barked, thus eliminating a problem handlers often encounter with the German Shepards. On the fifth day we were mortared and later we moved out to search the area from which the mortars has been fired. When we approached the location, Cappy alerted. We didn't find the Viet Cong because they had already evaded, but the scent was still there causing the dog to assume his three legged stance."

The troops in the field like to work with the dog.