SOUTHERN CROSS
AMERICAL DIVISION
Vol. 3, No. 38 Chu Lai, Vietnam October 9, 1970

Division recap

124 enemy killed as action decreases

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO) – Action decreased last week in Southern First Military Region as Americal soldiers killed 124 enemy. The week was highlighted by the uncovering of 9,000 pounds of enemy rice by the 11th Brigade's 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry.

Iron Mountain

Early in the week, Company A, 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry spotted two VC entering a tunnel while on a routine patrol west of Quang Ngai near the Tra Khuc River. The infantrymen engaged and killed the VC by dropping hand grenades into the opening causing the tunnel to collapse. Later in the day, they engaged and killed three VC after they were sighted carring packs twenty meters from their position.

The next night, Delta Company engaged five NVA in the lowlands southwest of Quang Ngai City. One enemy was killed and another was wounded.

In the middle of the week, while on a patrol in the mountains southwest of Duc Pho, Company C observed four enemy soldiers taking a bath. The patrol called in for artillery from Delta Battery, 6th Battalion, 11th Artillery. After the shelling, the patrol observed two dead enemy soldiers being removed from the water.

The following day, while on a patrol along the coast north of Duc Pho, Company D, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry found an area which appeared to be a prepared cache area. The first and third platoon found approximately 4,000 pounds of rice after searching the surrounding area. Later, they found another 4,000 pounds of rice distributed outside a hut in rice bins and boxes.

At the end of the week, Company B uncovered 1,000 pounds of rice near the coast north of Duc Pho to give the 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry a total of 9 000 pounds of rice.

Frederick Hill

Early in the week Company A, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, while on patrols northwest of Tam Ky, engaged and killed two VC. They also discovered one NVA killed by artillery. The kill was credited to Battery B, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Artillery.

While on a sweep northwest of Tam Ky, Company A of the "Gimlets" observed 10 NVA moving to their front. They engaged the enemy resulting in one NVA killed.

Company C, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, while on patrols this week came across three NVA graves. All three kills were credited to Battery B, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Artillery.

Recon of the 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, engaged three NVA while on a sweep northwest of Tam Ky. One NVA was killed while the other two evaded south.

While on a search and clear mission Company D, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, engaged and killed three VC. Three packs containing medical supplies were captured.

(continued on page 6)

An element of the 11th Infantry Brigade's 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry boards "Dolphin" utility ships of the 174th Assault Helicopter Company during a recent extraction from a hill-top five miles southwest of Duc Pho. (Photo by SP5 Peter Sorensen)

1st-52nd maneuvers to kill 5

By SGT Thomas C. Elmer

LZ BAYONET (198th INF BDE IO) – A company of the division's 198th Infantry Brigade on a recent operation in the mountains west of Quang Ngai, skillfully maneuvered to kill five NVA soldiers and capture one in two separate engagements. The action also resulted in the captured of several weapons and the discovery of a small enemy resupply station.

"We moved out of our night laager early to check out a trail," said Staff Sergeant James Eddes, Annapolis, Md., acting platoon leader with Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry. "As we moved we saw several places along the trail where the enemy had stopped to rest. When we had moved about 600 meters from the laager, we heard voices to our front."

Sergeant Eddes left two of his men at this location to cover the trail, and with the rest of his element he maneuvered off the trail to advance on the enemy. After moving several meters, they spotted several NVA standing near a well-camouflaged hootch. Sergeant Eddes then directed his machinegunner to move into position and fire on the enemy.

"When the gunner fired," said Eddes, "we saw three NVA run from the area and one fall to the ground. We then moved in to find one dead body and an AK-47 nearby."

Later, Sergeant Eddes heard his other element, which he had left covering the trail, firing, and he moved quickly to assist them. When he arrived with his element, they found the other three NVA dead on the trail.

"We heard Eddes' gunner fire," said Private First Class John Lee Smith, Brook Heven, Miss., one of the two riflemen left to cover the trail. "Then minutes later, we saw three NVA running down the trail toward us. We opened up with our M-16s and got all three of them."

Later, the platoon moved back to the location where they had first engaged the enemy, and found the hootch to be a small resupply point. Inside the infantrymen found one 9mm pistol, 200 pounds of rice, 10 pounds of salt, 15 cans of fish, several cartons of milk, five helmets, seven hammocks, 100 bars of soap, 40 to 50 metal wash basins and several other items.

Four days later, Alpha Company, working in the same general area, killed one NVA and captured one as the enemy approached their location.

"After the contact, we moved in to sweep the area," said Sergeant Eddes. "We found one NVA killed and captured another. Near one of the NVA we found an AK-47, and several blood trails leading into the undergrowth."

The company requested a tracker team, and the team, following the trail, found one 9mm pistol which had been tossed into some brush.

Rallier helps Americans and PFs kill 4 VC

By SP4 Terry Williamson

LZ BAYONET (198th INF BDE IO) -- Four VC were killed and one wounded as a rallier led a combined team of Americans and Popular Forces to an enemy way station in the division's 198th Infantry Brigade area.

Elements of Echo Recon and Bravo Company, 1st Battalion 52nd Infantry, teamed up with Popular Forces in a successful cordon and search of the hamlet Tay Khanh, northwest of Quang Ngai City, after learning from a rallier that VC were sleeping in the hamlet at night and moving to the mountains in early morning.

Sergeant Douglas C. Eldridge, Rollinsford, N.H., platoon sergeant with Echo Recon, said, "The rallier gave us all the information we needed. He told us exactly where the hamlet was and then showed us possible escape routes the VC might use. He was right about everything."

The combined force divided up into three groups with each group containing American and Popular Force soldiers. One element moved into the hamlet to search it and the other two elements served as a blocking force.

The search team received AK-47 fire while going into the hamlet, but the VC quickly evaded north toward the mountains.

"Three VC came running by our position, and we opened fire on them," said Sergeant Wayne Hallmark, Dallas, Tex. "They changed direction and ran right into our other blocking force."

Element of Bravo Company killed two of the three VC evading and wounded the other. "They came running right by our machinegun position," said Sergeant Donald H. Talberg, Jr., Houghton, Mich.

A few minutes later, Sergeant Hallmark changed the position of his men to get a better view of the trail. Two VC, carrying rice knives to cut their way through the vegetation, came bounding down the small trail and were killed by the blocking force.

"We had a good plan going for us in this cordon and search," said Sergeant Eldridge. "But even a good plan wouldn't have been enough without the information we had. And we got that information from the rallier."

Less than one second after the 8-inch mouth of Gun Two roars, these cannoneers turn to reloading the huge howitzer. The gun, part of Battery A, 3rd Battalion, 18th Artillery, is firing in support of infantrymen of the 198th Infantry Brigade. (Photo by SP5 William J. Hayes)

VA aids foreign study programs

By PFC Lee Habich

CHU LAI (AMERICAL I0) – Under the Veterans Readjustment Benefits Act of 1966, veterans interested in pursuing courses in universities abroad may be eligible for educational assistance, provided they show that they are pursuing courses vital to their long range educational goals in VA approved schools.

Since foreign secondary schools generally provide more specialized education than high schools in the United States, their graduates who enter a university are prepared to pursue advanced courses rather than those of a general introductory nature. The university program of studies and the level of work is, therefore, comparable in many respects to graduate study in the United States. For this reason, foreign universities generally prefer that American students seeking admission should have already received a bachelor's degree.

In certain cases, students with a minimum of two years of college work may be accepted, although some foreign schools will not consider any American undergraduates for admission.

In most cases, the American student does not study abroad with the intention of obtaining a foreign degree, but rather spends a semester or a year abroad with the idea that this time will make a valuable contribution to his overall program of study.

Any credit an American student will receive for his foreign work must be determined in advance by the United States university to which he hopes to attend.

A student contemplating a period of foreign study should consult with his faculty advisor regarding the acceptance of his study plans for credit.

Inquiries concerning approved universities in foreign countries should be addressed to the Department of Veterans Benefits, Veterans Administration, Washington, D.C., 20420. Additional information regarding specific universities can be obtained through the Institute of International Education, 809 United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y., 10017.

91st Evac HRC 'talks'

By SP4 THOMAS J. NEVILLE

CHU LAI (AMERICAL I0) – Communication is the name of the game and that's just what the Human Relations Council (HRC) at the 91st Evacuation Hospital here offers as a means to air grievances and to provide a sounding board for any member of a minority group.

Since its inception in January, 1970, the HRC has proved that racial tensions can be tempered, the flow of illegal drugs can be reduced and personal misunderstandings can be corrected before major disputes erupt.

The council was first initiated when a Department of the Army circular stressed the need for an organization to deal with equal opportunity within the Army. The 67th Medical Group in DaNang instructed each of its units to create a council.

Major Cora L. Burton, Philadelphia, Pa., was a likely candidate for the job of getting a council off the ground at the 91st Evac. She is black, serves as a surgical supervisor, possesses a degree in psychology and most important, has a keen ability to deal with human beings.

According to Captain Floyd G. Meshad, one of the two group advisors, "Major Burton organized the council, defined the problems and made sure the council was well-represented with a cross-section of persons from various ethnic and professional backgrounds.

The Human Relations Council at the 91st evolved into a highly active and popular agency. Monthly newsletters discussed problems within the unit and served as an educational instrument to define various ethnic terms, in hope of preventing misunderstandings and instilling pride among members of minority groups.

Captain Meshad played a major role in spearheading the overall program for the First and Second Military Regions. "Our psychiatric reports indicated that three basic goals must be met. They were: better communication between blacks and whites; establishment of open lines of communication with the heavy drug population; and solving problems which stem from the barriers between the men of the 'old army' and younger enlisted men."

An example of the difficult situations which simple communication can solve was reported in the minutes of one of Major Burton's council meetings. The report indicated that a white man at the 91st Evac referred to a black colleague as "boy." The black immediately took the reference as an insult and struck the white man.

When Major Burton heard of the incident and the ensuing legal consequences, she asked the commanding officer to bring the two men together. A meeting was arranged and peaceful dialogue was promoted. The white explained that he didn't consciously mean anything derogatory by using the term "boy." The black man admitted that he was wrong in striking the white. At the end of the meeting, both men shook hands and the incident was forgotten.

Although many successes have been achieved by the fledgling organization, the Human Relations Council is only at the threshold of its mission. Captain Meshad said, "...the council is not the final answer to the human relations problem in the Army. It is only a beginning–an attempt to formulate some means of communication and understanding among American soldiers."

The consensus of opinion among charter members of the council is that HRC in Vietnam and everywhere else in the world can be the beginning of a better functioning Army–the Army of the future.

SP4 Dennis Meyer, Huron, S.D., of Company A, 26th Engineer Baattalion, adjusts a C-4 charge during clearing operations at recently constructed firebase LZ Melon, west of Tam Ky. (Photo by SP4 Jim Logue)

They breathe fire

Viet children witness dragon slaying

By SP5 William J. Hayes

QUANG NGAI (AMERICAL I0) – The children gathered in the courtyard, pressed closer together and formed a solid ring around the ground which was shaded by the parachute canopy.

The deep rhythmic beating of the drums foreshadowed the epic that would soon unfold before them.

Sure enough, as the tempo of the drums increased, the giant-four-legged silk dragon slithered into the center of the ring of children, chased by two of the bravest, fattest, jolliest warriors in Southeast Asia.

Showing no fear on their colorful paper-mache faces, the two battlers challenged the fearsome creature with paper fans.

They stopped his threatening advance on the honored guests at the 2nd ARVN Division officers club. The guests were there to observe the festivities of Tet Trung Tu– Children's Tet.

A third warrior, perched on a tall pole high above the spectators, watched as the battle raged 12 feet below him. His pillow-stomach sagged, and as he peeked from beneath his mask to adjust it, a few of his schoolmates recognized him and called him by name. Brandishing their fans in time to the drum and gong, his fellows (who somehow looked like schoolmates of the pole-top observer) beat the dragon backward until he collapsed, exhausted.

Cautiously, they advanced to the dragon's cavernous mouth. The fattest warrior, the one with the orange face, poked the dragon's nose.

The dragon was only feigning! Up he leaped, knocking both warriors backward to the ground, threatening to gobble them up in a thrice.

Without warning, the dragon lurched, mouth agape, at the U.S. Army correspondent. The children screamed again. They knew the American was doomed. He stood his ground, but his small camera was no match for the large dragon. Only paper fans work against dragons. Cameras bounce off.

The third warrior leaped from his perch and dashed to the rescue. With expert fan-brandishing, he saved the correspondent's life. The American smiled his thanks and deployed a rapid-fire 35mm camera against the retreating reptile.

No sooner had the trio of nine-year-old ancient warriors routed the first dragon than another and even larger dragon entered.

A Moorish drummer, dancing wildly and striking a giant drum held by two drum-bearers, left his post to attack the dragon with a sword in each hand. He was soon defeated by the wily monster and a young Vietnamese warrior from some ancient age joined the fight.

He was armed with a staff, burning at each end. The young gallant was knocked to the ground, and only his agile writhing and swinging of his flaming staff saved him.

A third companion ran up to confront the dragon. He had a secret weapon-he breathed fire. From his mouth shot a fireball, growing as it rose until it blossomed right in front of the dragon's reared head.

Horrified, the dragon fell back. Again and again the fire breather released plumes of crimson flames, vanquishing the dragon. All three of the warriors (who looked like soldiers often seen around 2nd Division headquarters) teamed up to do the scaly beast in.

They were two ancient battles, re-enacted beneath a 20th century parachute canopy for the children of the officers and men of the 2nd ARVN Division.

The battles happened so far back in antiquity that historians often forget to mention them in histories of the Annam region of Vietnam.

But they will not be forgotten by the children, for they witnessed the epics in their entirity–right down to the magic fire-breather of Quang Ngai.

Communications specialists of the 523rd Signal Battalion lift together to raise a very High Frequency (VHF) radio antenna over-looking the Chu Lai east air facility. The antenna will provide communication for numerous elements of the Americal Division.

SOUTHERN CROSS
AMERICAL DIVISION

THE SOUTHERN CROSS is an authorized weekly 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 or of the editors. 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.

Major General A.E. Milloy . . . . . Commanding General
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Specialist Four Thomas J. Neville . . . . . Assistant Editor
Specialist Four Gary Jensen . . . . . Production Editor

Mobility and firepower mark the 'floating firebase'

By SP4 Thomas J. Neville
(Aboard USCGC Pontchartrain)

SOUTH CHINA SEA (AMERICAL IO) – When Americal Division soldiers call for quick artillery support, the devastating firepower from the big guns doesn't always come from a forward firebase on a Vietnam hilltop.

For the past three months ground troops in the southern part of the First Military Region have been receiving combat assistance from a "floating firebase." The United States Coast Guard Cutter Pontchartrain has provided intense gunfire support with her husky five-inch gun mount. Because of the mobility of the 255-foot long vessel, the Pontchartrain can quickly position herself offshore and engage the enemy with pinpoint artillery fire.

The ship's bell gongs general quarters in the early hours of the morning. The crewmembers scramble from their racks, dash up and down a maze of ladders, duck through bulkheads and man their positions. Quartermaster First Class George Blocher, Houston, plots navigational data and identifies the positions of the ship and the target. "I can plot the actual range in yards to the target and I give the info' to Combat Information Center in the next room," said Blocher.

An Army spotter plane circles over the target area and the pilot reports his observations to the men of the Pontchartrain's Combat Information Center (CIC). "We're flying over the target now, checking it out for you," crackles the pilot's voice.

A description of the target, including altitude, bearing and gun target line is relayed back to the ship. Before the gun fires, all of the data is cross checked and given to the ship's commander, who is the only person who can give the order to fire.

The forward gun mount is a beehive of activity. Sweat pours off the men who are preparing the heavy rounds for firing and the gunner await the command to commence fire.

Soon the word does come. "Three salvoes, fire for effect" is echoed from the cockpit of the observation plane, through the loudspeakers of the fire control center, the ship's bridge and ultimately inside the gun mount.

An ear-piercing THUD reverberates about the steel vessel as the first round flies toward the target. Once the round wends its way to the impact area, the pilot keeps a keen eye to the ground to spot exactly where it lands. He then feeds information back to the ship in order to correct the strike if necessary.

One of her biggest actions this summer took place on August 8th. Americal Division ground troops detected heavy enemy movement in an area south of Chu Lai.

Several hours and 184 rounds later, eight enemy soldiers were designated "confirmed KIA's."

In addition to raining artillery rounds on enemy troops, the Pontchartrain has also accounted for a lot of damage to enemy structures and fortifications. A barrage on August 11th knocked out five Viet Cong bunkers, one bridge, six structures and 40 meters of trenchline.

Commander LeRoy Reinburg, Jr., Washington, D.C., the skipper of the Pontchartrain, explained that his ship plays a variety of roles. He said, "Our basic mission is surveillance–to interdict the enemy's sea line of supply."

Also, the cutter has recently taken time off from her constant patrolling to engage in the pacification program. A medical team from the Pontchartrain has gone ashore to implement the Medical Civic Action Program (MEDCAP). On one recent sojourn into a coastal hamlet, 170 Vietnamese were treated.

The Pontchartrain has compiled an enviable record while serving in the Americal Division's easternmost perimeter. The sleek, sturdy ship is indeed a "talented lady."

Chu Lai fish pond to aid residents

By PFC Lee Habich

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO) – An unpredictable, often insufficient food supply is a major problem to the people of South Vietnam. Even with the introduction of new and better methods of rice cultivation, increasing attention is being given to the possibilities of introducing supplementary food sources.

First Lieutenant Douglas W. Dompier, Baraga, Mich., of the division's civil affairs section, is taking a novel approach to this problem. He is building the largest fish pond in the First Military Region.

The pond at Chu Lai is approximately one acre and three to four fee deep. It will be stocked with Tilapia, a member of the sunfish family. The fish, according to Lt. Dompier, can be harvested every six months.

The fish-pond project, which began in March, is part of a civil affairs program to acquaint the local populace with additional means of food production.

As Dompier is quick to point out, a self-perpetuating food supply would be of great value to the South Vietnamese people, especially those who live inland and are distant from the abundant shoreline fishing area.

According to Dompier, "Convincing the people to build the ponds is the biggest problem. They don't want to convert the land. So what we try to do is to get them to build the pond on land that they can't use for anything else."

In addition to one large breeding pond there will also be two smaller feeder ponds. In the second month after breeding, when the young fish are able to fend for themselves, the adults will be removed and put into the two feeder ponds according to sex.

At the end of the sixth month the breeding pond will be harvested with the use of seine nets. Again the adults will be allowed to breed in the larger pond, thus renewing the cycle. Life expectancy of an adult Tilapia is in the neighborhood of seven to eight years, thereby enabling multiple breeding by the same adults.

Separating the fish at the end of the second month prevents interbreeding which reduces the quality of the hybred fish.

Although this is the first project of its scale in Vietnam, Lt. Dompier, through his correspondance with the Tropical Fish Research Institute of Malaysia, estimates that a pond this size may produce as much as three quarters ton of fish a year.

Once the ponds catch on, the inland South Vietnamese will have not only a reliable source of food but a product to barter on the open market in exchange for other necessities.

The implementation of village-owned ponds will depend on the nature of the village and more likely on the aspirations of the local village chief. What is most important at this point is the success of the first ponds introduced. It will be the favorable reactions toward these ponds which will determine the overall success of the total program.

Children from the Catholic High School in Chu Lai operate a TV camera during a recent tour of Channel 13.

PFC Ed Query

PFC Bill Query

Twins answer 'query'

By PFC Guy Winkler

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO) – One face that is probably seen more than any other in the 523d Signal Battalion here is that of Privates First Class Ed and Bill Query, Poland, Ind. Why one face? Because Ed and Bill are identical twins.

Asked why they both joined the Army, Ed replied, "We didn't join. We were drafted." The question then immediately arises why they are both in Vietnam. "We volunteered for Nam so we could get a four month drop," says Bill. "We could have gone to Germany without the drop, but we turned it down and asked for Vietnam instead."

Since their induction in August, 1969, Ed and Bill have served their military obligation together on a more or less "buddy," or more specifically "Brother" system.

The two 20-year-old brothers attended basic training at Ft. Campbell, Ky., where they received different Military Occupational Specialities. For a while it looked as if the brothers would be separated for the duration of their time in service. However, the first sergeant of their company asked them if they would like to attend communications school together. The twins agreed and were soon off to Ft. Knox for their MOS training. They received additional schooling at Ft. Gordon, Ga.

The older of the two brothers by 30 minutes, Ed, says that their parents weren't exactly too enthusiastic about the twins' voluntary action. "But you know how mothers are," he said. "Besides, our older brother who had been here said that it wasn't as bad as people said it was, and it isn't all that bad."

The only distinguishable difference between the twins is a small mole on Ed's nose, which he vowed to have removed as soon as possible. "I'm just getting tired of everyone pointing at it and saying they can tell us apart by it," said Ed.

The brothers are looking forward to their discharge in April of 1971 so they can take advantage of the GI Bill and attend college.

Channel 13 gives Viet kids glimpse of western technology

By SP4 Thomas J. Neville

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO) – Forty schoolchildren from the Catholic high school in Chu Lai Village got an inside look at western technology when AFVN's Channel 13 television station here hosted the kids to a tour of the facilities.

From the clickity-clack of the teletype machine in the newsroom to the bright lights and television cameras in the studio, the curious youngsters received and interesting and fun-filled "course" in the miracle of television.

The children were separated into several small groups during the tour. The first group consisted of 11 bl group consisted of 11 blushing girls, dressed in pure white ao dais. Channel 13 news director Sp4 Bill Groody explained the operations of the newsroom as Father Tang acted as interpreter. The girls were asked if they had any questions and one shy young lady drew her courage and asked Groody "where do you live in the United States?"

That broke the ice a bit and the children began to ask more questions about the television station. Later in the tour the kids proved that they were really frustrated performers as they staged a dance and song in front of the TV cameras. Two of the girls performed a rhythmic dance and other children took turns singing into the microphones. AFVN personnel manned the cameras and the children were able to see their images on a monitor in the studio. The sight of seeing themselves on television brought giggles and broad smiles from the youngsters.

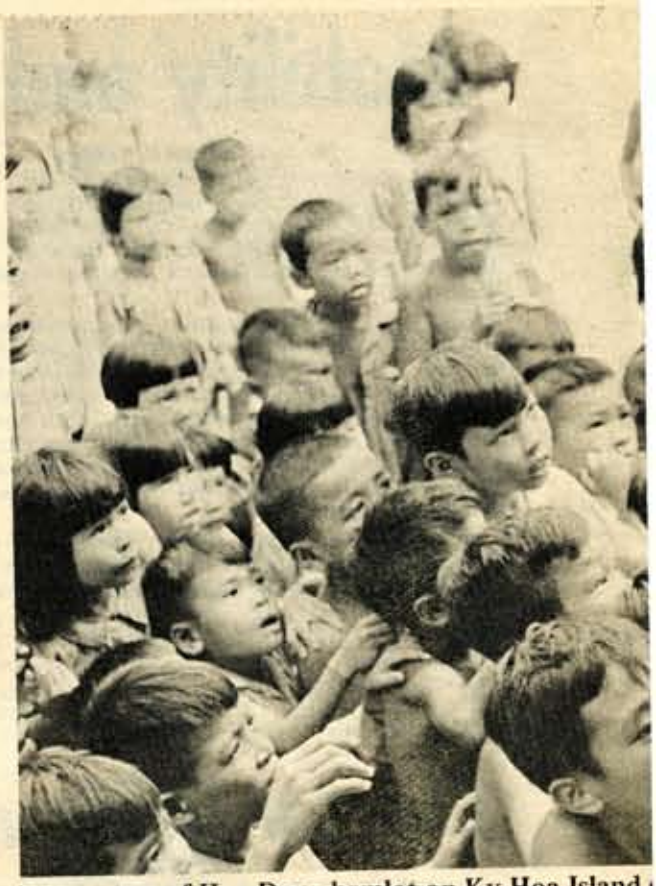
After the tour one 13-year-old boy was asked what his reaction was to the inside look at television. "I liked it because it produced many beautiful pictures."

After enjoying some Cokes, candy and cookies, the children were transported back to their school in Chu Lai.

The tour was arranged by Lieutenant Russel Wise, Channel 13's OIC, through the cooperation of Mr. Anh Nguyen Van, assistant civilian personnel officer.

There are 608 students in the high school and 1,100 children attend classes in the primary school at Chu Lai Parish. Father Tang expressed his gratitude and hope that more children would be able to make visits to Channel 13.

Members of the Americal Division Artillery Dental Cap party disembark their Vietnamese Navy vessel and board a smaller fishing boat as they arrive at Ky Hoa Island, just across the inlet at Americal headquarters in Chu Lai.



Youngsters of Hoa Dong hamlet on Ky Hoa Island
Dental Cap team prepare to distribute dental kit
program was arranged by the Americal Artillery's S

Photos by SP4

Vietnamese children flock to dental clinic at

The spirit was willing but this youngster's tooth was a little stubborn as Lieutenant Colonel Marshall M. Swain had to tug in order to extract it.

Old and young alike gather at the doorway of the building us
performs his duties. Col. Swain performed 22 extractions during

agerly stretch out their hands as members of the
, containing toothbrushes and toothpaste. The
5 Civic Action section.

ush Wood

Lieutenant Colonel Marshall M. Swain, commanding officer of the 437th Dental Detachment, probes into the mouth of an obliging Vietnamese child.

Ky Hoa Is.

ed as a dental clinic. Inside the dental officer busily
his two-hour clinic.

ARVN interpreter Master Sergeant Tran Tu jots down final notes while curious Vietnamese children from the hamlet of Hoa Dong supervise.

198th Bde 'Regulars' kill 19 foe in week's action

(continued from page 1)

Company D of the "Gimlets" accounted for five enemy killed while on patrols northwest of Tam Ky. They also captured four packs containing medical supplies, clothing and food.

Company D, 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry, while on a sweep southwest of Tam Ky found five enemy shelters. They recovered 475 pounds of wheat and 50 pounds of corn in the shelters.

The Recon element of the 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry, while on patrol fired on three VC in jungles southwest of Tam Ky. One was killed while the other two VC evaded to the north.

Geneva Park

In a day laager position southeast of Chu Lai, Company C, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry, engaged a group of VC at close distance. Four enemy soldiers were killed and one was captured. Also taken in the action were one AK-50 and four packs. The next day, C Company killed three VC while working in the same area. Captured were one AK-47, two magazines, two CHICOM grenades, three packs, and one 60mm mortar base plate.

In another action, Company C observed a group of VC in an

The next day, Company B, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry, swept the area of the previous night's contact, and found one enemy soldier killed and one pistol belt. Later that day, the "Regulars" found five 60mm mortar rounds lying on a trail. The rounds were blown in place.

Later in the week, Brave Company observed and engaged two VC carrying weapons and packs at a distance of 300 meters. One VC was killed in the action.

While in a night defensive perimeter in an area northwest of Chu Lai, Delta Company, 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry, engaged an enemy force of unknown size. Gunships from F Troop, 8th Cavalry, were called in support of the "Professionals." Delta Company killed four of the enemy soldiers while gunships killed two.

Company B, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry, engaged two VC with small arms fire at a distance of 30 meters in an area northwest of Quang Ngai. Both of the enemy soldiers were killed. One AK-47 and one AK-50 were captured. Later that night, Company B killed two more VC as they approached their night laager site.

While on patrol southwest of Chu Lai, Company A, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry, engaged and killed two VC at close range. Two packs were taken from the enemy soldiers.

Company C, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry, discovered a munitions cache in an area southwest of Chu Lai. The "Ready Rifles" found a hootch eight feet wide by ten feet long which contained one box of armor piercing rounds, 300 rifle rounds, 15 pounds of explosives, a home made bangolor torpedo, two satchel charges, and one RPG launcher. All the items were extracted to a nearby LZ.

Enemy markers lead Alpha, 3-1 to six ton cache of polished rice

By SP4 Gregory Wright

FSB 4-11 (AMERICAL IO) – Aside from being one of the most versatile foods in the world and a cornerstone of the Vietnamese diet, rice is used almost exclusively as a ration by VC and NVA troops in the field. Recently, the communist forces near this fire-base were undoubtedly tightening their belts, cursing "Lady Luck" and lamenting approximately six tons of rice lost to Alpha Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry of the 11th Brigade.

While making a routine recon of the terrain surrounding the village of Nui Tron, members of the 1st Platoon, Company A, decided to 'take ten' in the shade of a hedgerow. During their break several of the "Jungle Warriors" noticed that the area around them was covered with freshly dug earth and withering leaves. Brushing the dying foliage away and probing the ground underneath, the men discovered a 55-gallon drum of polished rice, carefully sealed and deposited under the hedge.

Said Sergeant Jackie R. Collier, Cordele, Ga., platoon leader, "We were really surprised to find that we were practically sitting on top of a rice cache. We immediately put a security force around the site and began a searching probe of the area. It didn't take long for our efforts to pay off in a big way."

Ironically, markers which the enemy had carefully erected to aid them in finding their rations made the job easier for the infantrymen. Private First Class Amby Sanchez. San Fransisco, commented, "I was searching slightly ahead of my squad when I noticed a small tree which seemed out of place. The bark was all white and the trunk itself was bent and twisted about four feet from the ground. We probed around the tree and found another 55-gallon drum of rice." The search continued, turning up an additional drum of rice marked in the same manner, and yet another hidden under the floor of an abandoned French villa.

On the third day of the search the 1st Platoon could find nothing new early in the day and set up a night laager position.

Once settled, the men again spotted the familiar tell-tale sign of fresh earth and dying vegetation. Beneath a leafy camouflage and dirt were bamboo mats and NVA ponchos, which in turn covered the entrance to a rice-filled bunker. Sergeant John Cartwright, San Fernando, Calif., who supervised security and sacking of the rice, was especially impressed with the construction of the bunker.

"This place was better than any enemy bunker I've ever seen," he said. "The beams were very solid and well placed, and the floor was equally good, having been made with doors from an old French church in the area.

One of the company's RTOs, who sampled some of the rice with his C-rations, commented, "This stuff isn't bad at all." The rice was sent to the Tu My relocation center for distribution to the Vietnamese people.

Division helicopters come in for a landing 10 miles north of Chu Lai in preparation for a combat assault with soldiers of the 198th Brigade's 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry. (Photo by SP4 Herbert Brady)

Musket gunships answer leg soldiers' call

By SP4 Robert A. Spangler

LZ HAWK HILL (196th INF BDE IO) – "Scramble" was the only word that could be heard echoing through the hootch as Captain John Wheeler, Canoga, Park, Calif., fire team leader of the Muskets, 176th Assault Helicopter Company, answered the telephone call.

The call was from brigade headquarters stating that Company C, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, was pinned down by sporadic small arms fire.

Captain Wheeler stayed on the phone to copy down the infantry company's radio frequency, their call sign and the grid coordinates. Meanwhile the rest of the fire team had hastily exited the hootch in hot pursuit of their gunships.

Warrant Officer Bob Sizemore, Panama City, Fla., lead pilot of Captain Wheeler's aircraft, was already in the process of cranking up the Musket gunship by the time Wheeler arrived.

As the Muskets arrived on the scene they were in direct radio contact with the infantry unit. After making their first run on the suspected enemy position, the gunship's radio crackled with the sound of the infantrymen's voice. "Excellent, excellent, just keep working out in that area. You're right on target."

The Muskets continued to work out on the enemy position, expending their load of destruction.

After firing up their load, the Muskets returned to Hawk Hill to reload for another run. While sitting in the hootch came a report that Company C had swept the area and found two VC snipers, killed by a combination of the infantrymen's and the gunships' fire.

The 176th and the 71st Assault Helicopter Companies both fly in support of the 196th Infantry Brigade.

The gunship fire teams are usually made up of two ships, each carrying a crew of four: aircraft commander, pilot, crew chief and door gunner.

The Muskets on this particular fire team were equipped with maximum firepower. The lead ship had two 159 rocket pods, with 24 10-pound rockets in each pod; two mini-guns and two M-60 machine guns.

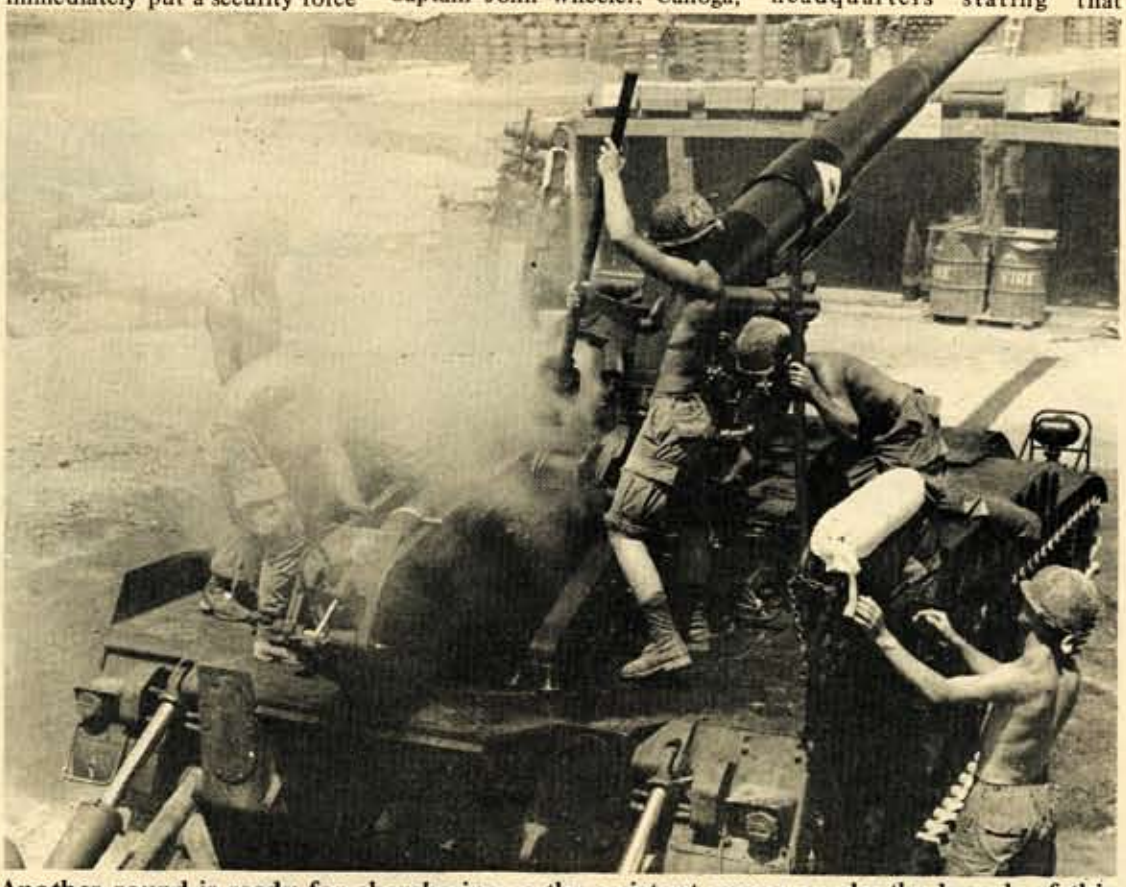
The fire power of the gunships is astonishing. The mini-guns pour out 4,000 rounds per minute while the two M-60 machine guns knock out 500 rounds per minute. All of this combined with the rockets and mobility of the gunships make them one of the most effective weapons in the U.S. arsenal.

The gunships fly three general categories of flights: dust off, escort for medevacs; contact missions, direct support of allied ground forces; and general escort missions for aircraft such as the Flying Crane, CH-54.

The general feeling of most groups served by the gunships is comparable to the reply of the infantrymen of Company C when the said, "Thanks a lot guys. You don't know how we appreciate it." This is the usual final radio message for the gunships as they leave the scene.

The reply from the gunship fire team is usually the same also. "We are returning to refuel and re-arm. If you need us again, just give us a call."

The gunship crews have a certain way in which they like to refer to themselves, "Death on Call!" Any infantrymen will agree with that.



Another round is ready for chambering as the assistant gunner swabs the breech of this 175mm self-propelled howitzer. The big gun is part of the armament of Battery A, 3rd Battalion, 18th Artillery. (Photo by SP5 William J. Hayes)

Letters, we get letters

Pen pals wanted!

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO) – The information office here and other information detachments in the division have received several letters from persons in the United States and in Canada who are interested in corresponding with American soldiers.

The first letter was passed on to us and we thought there might be some GI who would appreciate getting the address of a young Canadian lassie. The letter:

Dear Soldiers,

I am writing this letter to anyone who would like to write to me.

To start off, my name is Wendy Brydges. I am 14½ years old, soon to be 15, on October 19th. I am approximately five feet, seven inches. I am a brunette with brown eyes. My friends call me Wen, Wippy, Skinny and many more. Also I have glasses which I have had for four years. Also I have pierced ears.

You guys over there are brave to go and fight for your country. I like that kind. I would appreciate it if anyone about 16 up would write to me. I love writing letters to army boys. If you do write, please write to this address–

Wendy Brydges, 378 Talfourd Street, Sarnia, Ontario, Canda

With all my love,
Wendy Brydges

P.S. Please write soon.

Kind Lady

Recently a letter was received at the division chaplain's office and was then passed on here. The letter was simply addressed – "Letter to any serviceman not receiving mail."

The missive was from a kind woman in Roslindale, Mass., near Boston. She has four kids, ranging in age from 14 to 29. Her husband works for the Record-American, a Boston newspaper.

She explains how she read in the newspaper about a crippled woman who wrote service men over here who don't receive mail. This is where she got the idea to write this very touching letter.

She wrote in part, "There is so much turmoil and unrest and unhappiness all around and so little we can do collectively, that at my stage of life I try to do what I can–where I am."

"I would be very happy to correspond with any of your friends who receive no mail. Please, if you have time let me hear from you and you will be in touch with home again."

"God bless you and keep you and remember that there are many people who do care–you are always in our prayers."

The letter was signed by Mrs. William J. Hagan, 1024 South Street, Roslindale, Massachusetts, 02131.

Small fry write too

Although an information specialist is supposed to report the news and not make it, once in a while he finds himself in the middle of a story.

Specialist Four Terry Williamson, Snyder, Tex., from the Public Information Office of the 198th Infantry Brigade, recently received a collection of letters written by fourth grade students from his hometown. The style is not quite professional but the thought is often profound and the sentiment is always sincere. Here are excerpts from several of the children's letters, with as little editing as possible.

Peggy, a nine-year-old, knows what she wants to know and makes sure Specialist Williamson does too: "Dear Terry, I would like to know a little about what Viet Nam is like. And what it is like fighting. How is it in Viet Nam Terry?"

Ray, who will probably be a philosophy or logic major in about 10 years, writes: "Dear Terry, This is from Central (Elementary School). All of us is riting to you I hope you get to come home early cause I know you don't like the war so that's why I said that. Just like they say on T.V. war is nothing but a trobel. But some day there will (be) more peas (than) you can take and then you will be wanton war."

There are the children who let us know what's going on at home. Jay writes: "Dear Terry, We don't do much in school at play time we play foot in school. The girls play inside the gyn. I got daddy that a work on oil wills. I got a mother that sits around home."

And finally there's the cheery letter from Helen, who is undoubtedly a number one student: "Dear Terry, I am happy to write you this letter just to say that I hope you are fine because I am fine. I like school because I can learn to write letters and learn to spell words that don't know how to spell."

Art Linkletter, where are you?

Use ARC in emergency

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO) – Do you know and does your family know what to do in the case of an emergency? What is the fastest way your family can contact you if the need arises?

The following letter could be very valuable to you and your family and it would be worthwhile for you to write a similar letter to the folks at home.

"In the case of a serious illness of any member of our family, please contact our local Red Cross chapter. Give them all the information and the name of the doctor and the hospital. They will verify this information, obtain a doctor's statement, which is required by military authorities, and wire all the information to our local Red Cross field director here. The field director will contact the proper authorities and me and will assist in my getting an emergency leave."

"In case of death, the local chapter will also verify this fact and wire the information to me through the field director. Remember, however, that the leave decision is a military one and the Red Cross cannot approve or disapprove a leave request."

"Look up the location of our local Red Cross chapter and jot down their phone number. Stop in and talk to them and they will tell you the many services that they offer."

"Remember, through the local Red Cross chapter and the field director, I am only hours away from you in the event of an emergency."

This young lassie is surely a "joy to behold." Joy Dunleavy is her name and posing around Las Vegas swimming pools is her game. Not a bad way to make a living if you've got what it takes and she obviously has all the tools of the trade at her disposal.

MPs take to the air in new helicopter patrols

By SP5 William J. Hayes

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO) – The Division's 23rd Military Police Company, following the lead of stateside law enforcement agencies, recently began the first helicopter patrols in Vietnam along Highway One in Quang Ngai and Quang Tin Provinces.

The MP officer in the LOH isn't just looking for speeding military vehicles. As a pilot from the division's 123rd Aviation Battalion flies the aircraft, the MP can keep an eye open for persons in off-limits areas, spot sale or transfer of contraband goods in villages, or observe and control convoys anywhere between the sandy coastal areas of northern Quang Tin province to the rich rice fields of southern Quang Ngai Province.

The helicopter patrol concept, developed by Lieutenant Colonel Everett I. Perrin, division provost marshal, augments the company's combined and regular patrols along QL-1 through both provinces that make up the Division's area of operation.

To check vehicles' speeds along the highway, an MP officer in the observer's seat of the LOH times vehicles with a stopwatch as they pass painted markers a known distance apart.

If there is any question of accuracy, or if the violation is a matter of just a few miles per hour, the driver is given the benefit of the doubt.

"Our objective is not to see how many D.R.s we can write up, but rather to get our military drivers to operate their vehicles more slowly and more safely," said Captain Garrett J. Cumpson, deputy provost marshal.

"We've got to get them to slow down," said LTC Perrin. "With areas along the main highway becoming more densely populated, hazards increase right along with the number of persons living there."

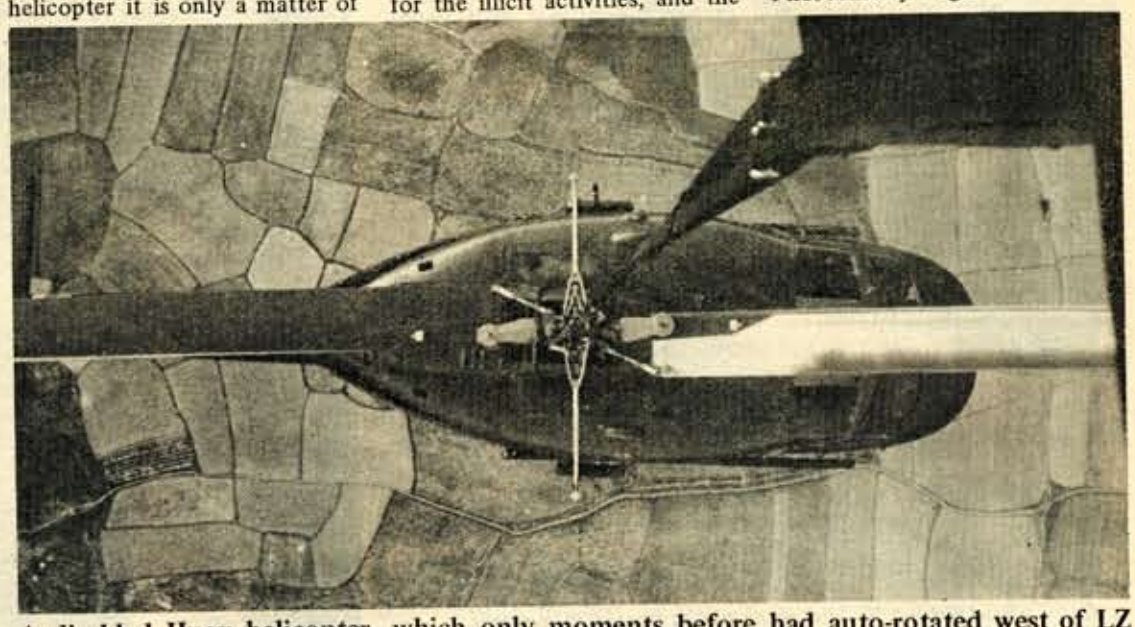
The secure areas along main lines of communication in the two provinces have become refuges for persons leaving insecure districts further west. Though the number of persons moving in is tapering off, efforts to develop safe villages between the highway and the South China Sea do not yet keep pace with the influx.

For the protection of the individual soldier, and to minimize the chances for sales of contraband material, all towns, villages and hamlets of the First Military Region are off limits to personnel who are not assigned to official duty there.

An AWOL or off-limits soldier evading a ground MP patrol can be spotted quickly from the air as he evades down paths, streets or alleys–or even fields and the wooded areas dotting the roadside.

If he chooses to lie motionless to avoid detection by the helicopter it is only a matter of minutes before the methodic search pattern of the ground unit turns him up.

With the 23rd MP Company sky patrol, hedgerows and sidestreets are no longer a screen for the illicit activities, and the vehicles along Highway One are slowing down. And slowing right along with them is the accident rate for the more than 90 miles between LZ Baldy in the north to the southern boundary of the First Military Region.



A disabled Huey helicopter, which only moments before had auto-rotated west of LZ Judy, is lifted back to Chu Lai airbase by a husky Chinook.
(Photo by SP4 Thomas J. Neville)

Recon unit in 'beehive' of activity

By SP4 Terry Williamson

LZ BAYONET (198th INF BDE IO) – A heavily armed enemy force launched a mass attack, resembling a human wave assault and an air strike rolled into one on a unit of the 198th Infantry Brigade, and the results were stinging.

Before artillery and gunships could be called in, however, it was determined that the enemy was a highly skilled squadron of bees.

"They were coming from everywhere," said Sergeant Perry D. Ensz, Sabina, Kan., a member of Echo Recon, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry. "There was just no escaping them."

The action took place in an area southwest of Chu Lai after Recon had just completed a combat assault into Happy Valley and was beginning to move into mountainous terrain. The infantrymen passed through a hedgerow and evidently disturbed the well organized armada which had set up a well concealed ambush position.

The last four men caught the brunt of the attack. All four were later extracted to Chu Lai for treatment of bee stings, carrying with them bright red momentoes of one of the few confirmed contacts with the nefarious Bee Squadron in this area.

Sergeant Joseph Pacolichi, Bay City, Mich., a squad leader with the unit and one of the victims of the barrage, said, "We were all calling for a medic and couldn't wait to get out of there."

The Recon platoon escaped further casualties by pulling a retrograde maneuver and continued stepping lightly out of the area until they could stop, consolidate their position and look after the victims of the attack.

Another member of the unit mentioned, "That's a tough story to beelieve, but it's true."

NVA troop learns Kung Fu the hard way

By SP4 Terry Williamson

LZ BAYONET (198th INF BDE IO) – When an NVA soldier recently tried his luck in hand-to-hand combat with an infantryman of the 198th Brigade, something they don't teach in basic training in Hanoi.

The NVA attacked Specialist Four Billy Cruz, Assan, Guam, of Echo Recon, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry, when the recon unit took the enemy by surprise while pulling an early morning raid on a small hamlet. The tables were turned, however, when the NVA turned from assailant to defender as he found out the hard way that Specialist Cruz was an expert in Kung Fu, the Chinese art of self-defense similar to Karate.

The Recon unit had received fire from the hamlet at early morning, and had used fire and maneuver to reach the first set of hootches. When the fire had ceased, checking out the area, and that's when Cruz met his over zealous opponent.

"He jumped me from behind a small hootch and landed on my back," Cruz reflected. "I just flipped him, but he wasn't ready to quit."

It didn't take long for the NVA to realize he had made a definite mistake. After a barrage of kicks and punches from his well-trained foe, the NVA gave up. The enemy was evacuated to a nearby LZ and later evacuated for further interrogation.

Cruz had been an instructor in the art of King Fu in Guam before entering the Army and the incident proved his mastery of the subject. When asked if his attacker scared him when he was [illegible] don't have time to be scared in a situation like that. I have been trained to expect the unexpected."

Sergeant Wayne Hallmark, Dallas, Tex., platoon sergeant for Echo Recon, said, "I don't know what that NVA was really trying to accomplish with all of us in that same general area, but I know one thing, he sure picked on the wrong man."

A soldier of D Company, 1/52 Infantry, 198th Brigade, keeps a sharp look out during a recent security operation 25 miles south of Chu Lai. (Photo by SP4 Gerald Paulin)

Smell of rice lures 2 Hoi Chanhs

By SP5 William J. Hayes

MINH THANH (AMERICAL IO) – As the evening deepened over the village within the crook of the Tra Khuc River, a vagrant breeze wafted the cooking smells of a thousand persons' food pots across the spare grazing land and dry gray soil of rice fields just to the north.

The villagers had left their homes to live for three days on a little green tuft of elevated ground where the Quang Ngai Sector Psywar Company set up a perimeter for a three-day "county fair".

But some of the villagers stayed away. Some were members of the local Viet Cong infrastructure, an undergound group attempting to control the village with a power structure paralleling the local elected village council.

Others were soldiers of the local force Viet Cong element, and they knew that to join their neighbors in the perimeter would be to invite capture.

As the fragrance of redistributed rice rose from the cooking fires and was carried on the wind to where the local VC were hiding, two of them reached the decision to rally under the GVN's Chieu Hoi, or Open Arms program.

When they turned themselves in, they were granted amnesty for past deeds, and through various government programs the Hoi Chanhs have a chance to begin a new life of peace.

Each of the two Hoi Chanhs had his own story to tell about the Viet Cong structure.

One, an extortionist who collected goods and money from the villagers, complained that the VC were corrupt, according to MACV officers at the operation site. The Hoi Chanh, who carried the legitimate–sounding title of "finance collector", said that money and property he collected did not always reach the intended recipients.

Another, a laborer for the local VC, was discontent because he was treated rudely by his comrades, who considered him a security risk. MACV officers said he had been captured and detained by the Allies in 1968.

Upon his return to the Viet Cong, he was assigned as a common laborer and subjected to frequent cross-examination regarding his activities, he said.

In addition to the two Hoi Chanhs, two members of the VC local force were detained and removed to Quang Ngai for interrogation. Eight members of the local VC infrastructure were detained trying to slip by the GVN interviewers from the Quang Ngai Sector Psywar Company.

Cooperative villagers showed the interviewers the locations of numerous booby traps set by the VC. Allied patrols in the area during the county fair turned up even more devices.

As more and more chips break away from the VC structure at Minh Thanh, the villagers may find it safer to walk along the trails around their homes, and more of their food may remain in their larders instead of being "collected" to feed the VC in the area.

By the end of the county fair, the VC movement in and around the village suffered blows from several sides and the villagers' sentiments turned more toward the GVN, and their desire to help that government overshadowed their fear of VC reprisals.