SOUTHERN CROSS
AMERICAL DIVISION
Vol. 3, No. 39 Chu Lai, Vietnam October 23, 1970

These division armored personnel carriers from the 1st Battalion, 1st Cavalry, move in column across a small stream near Hiep Duc. (Photo by SP4 Herbert Brady, 523rd Sig Bn)

Division recap

Week's action nets 98 enemy soldiers

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO) -- Action decreased during the past week as division soldiers killed 98 enemy. Infantrymen of the 11th Infantry Brigade continued to force the enemy to tighten their belts as they captured several thousand pounds of rice. In unusually light action, the 196th Infantry Brigade killed 16 enemy soldiers. The 198th Infantry Brigade also experienced light action with 20 enemy killed.

Iron Mountain

While on a routine mission early in the week along the coast north of Duc Pho, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, found a small tunnel in the woodline. The infantrymen spotted one VC coming out of the tunnel and detained him. Moments later, the infantrymen observed more VC in the tunnel and engaged them with hand grenades. One VC was killed and two AK-47 rifles captured in the action.

Later, in the same area, Bravo Company uncovered 100 pounds of rice. The rice was found in a hole wrapped in platic bags.

The same day, artillery fire from Delta Battery, 6th Battalion, 11th Artillery, accounted for three VC killed in the mountains southwest of Duc Pho.

The next day, Delta Company, 1st Bn., 20th Inf., found 700 pounds of rice while on a mission along the coast north of Duc Pho. The rice was evacuated to Mo Duc. The same day, Alpha Company found 500 pounds of rice while on a patrol in the lowlands south of Quang Ngai City.

In the middle of the week, Delta Company, 1st Bn., 20th Inf., received enemy sniper fire after being inserted into the lowlands north of Duc Pho. The infantrymen engaged the enemy and killed two VC who were spotted evading 75 meters away. A short time later the infantrymen engaged and killed two more VC soldiers who were carrying packs. Found in the enemy packs were three hand grenades and medical supplies.

While on a patrol the same day in the lowlands south of Quang Ngai City, Alpha Company heard movement in the treeline across a river north of their positions. Upon spotting a group of enemy soldiers, the infantrymen opened-up with their M-16s killing two.

Frederick Hill

Early in the week, 1st Platoon, Company B, 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry, while on a search and clear mission west of Tam Ky engaged two VC

(continued on page 6)

Infantry, Artillery team up to kill eight

By SGT Thomas C. Elmer

LZ BAYONET (198th INF BDE IO) – Eight NVA soldiers were killed as a company of the division's 198th Infantry Brigade teamed up with the big guns of 1st Battalion, 14th Artillery in a recent action northwest of Chu Lai.

Delta Company, 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry, working in the Ky Tra area, engaged an enemy element at dawn and quickly organized a patrol to sweep through the area. The pointman discovered a blood trail and led the rest of the patrol into some dense vegetation.

"At first, the pointman had little trouble following the blood trail," said Corporal David Brown, Wellsburg, W.V., the patrol leader. "Then he lost it, so we stopped, set up in a five-man perimeter, and sent the rest of the patrol back to request a tracker team."

"Just before the helicopter arrived with the tracker team, we heard voices to the front of us and heard someone moaning," said Specialist Four Lavern Holler, Madison, Wisc., the machinegunner with the element. "Then we heard the helicopter come in and Corporal Brown went to meet the tacker team to tell them to advance quietly. Just a few minutes after he left, I saw an NVA coming toward me with a weapon."

Specialist Holler opened up on the NVA with his machinegun, killing him, and continued to saturate the area to his front for several minutes. Shortly, the tracker team and the remainder of the element arrived, and moved to sweep the area of contact.

"We found an AK-47 near the body," said Corporal Brown. "And then we moved up the trail and found that three more NVA had been killed, one lying near a crude litter.

Later that evening in the same area, the company called on the 105mm Howitzers of Delta Battery, 1st Battalion, 14th Artillery to fire on six NVA moving toward a bunker on an adjacent hill.

"We saw the NVA moving toward the bunker," said Corporal Brown. "The CO called artillery in on their position and the rounds landed right on target."

The next morning the company moved to the location where the artillery had been fired and found four more NVA killed.

Former Chu Lai Airbase becomes Army Airfield

By SP4 Steven L. Elschlager

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO) – The former Chu Lai Air Base officially became the Chu Lai Army Air Field recently–one of the largest U.S. Army airfields in the world. The change occurred when the immense airfield complex was transferred from the U.S. Marines to the Americal Division.

In a short ceremony, Colonel L. J. Stien, Marine air base commander, turned the "key" over to Lieutenant Colonel Jasper L. Myers, the new deputy airfield commander. The new airfield commander is Colonel B.S. Silver, 16th Combat Aviation Group commander.

Colonel Myers thanked Colonel Stien on behalf of the Americal Division for cooperation and assistance during the change-over period.

The 362nd Aviation Detachment, attached to the 16th CAG, will operate the complete base complex except air freight and the weather station, both the responsibility of the U.S. Air Force. Fighter support will come from other parts of the First Military Region.

The history of the air base goes back to March 1965, when the Marines landed on the Chu Lai beach and secured an area for the Sea Bees to build a runway that after completion, was 4,000 feet long. Since then, two more runways have been added and lengthened so that today, 240,000 feet of airstrip, taxiways and ramps criss-cross the Americal air base. The ample facilities, with the Americal man-power, should be able to handle the heaviest of traffic for the largest division in the Army.

Kham Duc operation successful

By PFC Richard Campbell

LZ JUDY (196th INF BDE IO) – Allied forces recently accounted for 250 NVA killed and disruption of enemy resupply routes in the six and one-half week Kham Duc operation west of Tam Ky.

"The blend and coordination between division units and the ARVN forces was excellent and was the key to the success of the operation," said Lieutenant Colonel Alton H. Coleman, Marina, Calif., commanding officer of 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, 196th Infantry Brigade.

"Besides killing 250 of the enemy, our allied forces broke an NVA resupply network used to transport food and equipment from Laos," continued Colonel Coleman.

Allied forces had not operated in the Kham Duc area for more than two years, following the pressured departure of Special Forces troops in May, 1968.

Four days after the division task force arrived this summer, the 5,000 foot runway was repaired to receive Air Force C-123 and C-130 aircraft with daily supplies.

One of the most significant results of the operation was the discovery by Companies B and D, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, of a main supply route running West to East, just south of the Kham Duc airstrip.

"This particular trail was not known about at the outset of the operation," commented Captain James Gardner, Eastchester, N.Y., 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., operations officer. "It was definitely the main resupply route the NVA had been using to bring their food, men and equipment into eastern portions of the First Military Region from the Ho Chi Minh Trail."

Infantrymen from the 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., also uncovered an 18-bed convalescent hospital for enemy wounded along with eight large metal boxes of medical supplies. A .51 caliber machinegun, complete 60mm and 82mm mortar tubes, a light machinegun, an RPG launcher, numerous AK-47 rifles, ammunition, clothing and bicycles were among the finds

"The performance of all the personnel connected with the operation was outstanding," concluded Colonel Coleman, "Efforts by 'dustoff' pilots, division aviation, support command, the engineers and the Air Force made it possible to go into the area, find the enemy's caches and base camps and deny him the use of the area. Information we gathered there will be highly instrumental for possible future operations."

Artillerymen of Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 82nd Artillery keep their 155mm howitzer smoking while taking part in the six week operation at Kham Duc. (Photo by PFC Ron Mumford)

Ghost town given breath of new life

By SP4 Thomas J. Neville

HAI MON(AMERICAL IO) – Through the past five years, the village of Hai Mon has been abandoned and reminiscent of a ghost town, but the past fews months have seen a rebirth of the once-flourishing fishing community.

Many of the original residents returned this summer from their forced exile with hope of beginning a new life. Located two miles northwest of Duc Pho, Hai Mon is appropriately named. The village name means "river's mouth" and Hai Mon lies on the southern bank of the Song Tra Cau River, where the river opens into the South China Sea.

The villagers were forced to evacuate when hostilities broke out in the region in 1965. But through the efforts of the South Vietnamese Government, American and ARVN troops, the area was reopened this summer.

Elegant homes once dotted the bustling village and a fleet of fishing boats was moored along the delta. The economy was fluid and the setting picturesque. But now the people are content with living in modest, although well-constructed mud hootches. Since the fishing fleet has not yet returned, the residents are also looking toward an agrarian existence and the rich alluvial soil promises excellent farming.

However, there are problems since the soil is in need of fresh water irrigation. Presently the salt water inlets seep into the surrounding earth and the people there are hopeful of building a dam, which would restrain the salty water and allow fresh water to flow through irrigation ditches. "If the dam develops, we can begin to provide pacification," said Captain Harrison U. Jacks, commanding officer of Charlie Company, 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry of the 11th Brigade.

To date, American assistance has been in the form of providing security for the fledgling village. "This is not a pacification area," noted Captain Jacks. He explained that there is room in the village for nearly 600 persons and once that population mark is reached, there will be relief for the crowded conditions along Highway One.

Only about 100 of the villagers have completely moved into their new homes. The rest are not yet permanent residents and many of them resemble commuters. They leave Duc Pho in the morning and trek along an American-built road to Hai Mon, where they work on their new homes. But when the sun begins to set they return to Duc Pho for the night.

"The people who lived here before really want to come back here–this is where their home is--but they have to have something to do," stressed Captain Jacks. Until the rice paddies begin to provide the people with a means of existence, Hai Mon will not grow.

Lonely dirt road leads into the village of Hai Mon, which lay like a ghost town for the past five years. A recent reconstruction project resulted in the rebuilding of the village but the populace cannot move in until surrounding fields are irrigated properly for farming.
(Photo by PFC Lee Habich)

Monsoons dampen division's AO

By SP5 William J. Hayes

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO) – As the autumn months slip into winter in Vietnam's historic Annam region, the land undergoes a change.

The region, often described as having the most diversified terrain in the republic, lies placidly beneath an atmospheric tug of war as the northeasterly winds fight those from the southwest, sometimes prevailing, sometimes losing, producing alternating days of sunshine and rain.

Finally, the moisture-laden northeasterlies prevail and rush landward, dropping their waters on the land and its people.

Mortar and artillery pits become rain-soaked, and baseplates and gun trails hack the earth with each round they fire. They may have to be reset in position many times a day.

Tracked vehicles become mired in fields and stream crossings. Armored cavalry elements resemble trains as they work their way through marshy areas with vehicles in tow.

The monsoons are a time for harder work and more suffering.

But the Infantry suffers most of all.

For them, grassy hills become slick-sided behemoths trying to shake them off to slide back to the valleys. Mountainous jungles spawn legions of leeches which attach themselves to footsoldiers' legs at every opportunity.

Rice fields become quagmires, with a foot of clinging, sucking mud lying beneath another foot of brown water.

And there's the rain. It's a cold rain, often driven by strong winds. High in the mountains the chill is numbing, but even in the warmer flatlands a day's exposure can be exhausting.

But the Infantry marches on, web gear and rucksacks weighted down with absorbed water, ammunition water-beaded, weapons rusting in a matter of hours.

At dusk, the infantryman can look forward to lying on wet ground or a wet air mattress if he's lucky, covered with a wet poncho liner beneath a wet poncho shelter, standing guard in a foxhole knee-deep in water.

The skin on his hands and feet wrinkles and sloughs away.

It's not just getting wet that's bad–it's never drying out that really makes it rough.

And it happens every day, until the line company goes back to its base to pull bunker security or returns all the way to Chu Lai for stand down–three days of floor shows, movies, barbecues and beer and soda and dry bunks under a dry roof.

For three days, the line soldiers visit the PX and concessions, make MARS calls to the States or visit service clubs at the base.

On the last night of stand down the activity reaches a climax, with the men often staying up far into the night talking, invisible except for the occasional red glow of a cigarette.

Their comments are punctuated with the PSSHHT of tapped beer or soda cans.

Around midnight, the rain begins to drum on the tin roof overhead, and the men know that it will probably be raining when they return to the field tomorrow. Some grow pensive.

"When I get out," one says, "I'm gonna love the rain."

"How's that?" another aks.

"I'll be able to come in out of it any time I want."

"There it is," says a third.

And there they are--soldiers in the rain.

Colonel Clark new Chief of Staff

By MSG Bill Turner

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO) – A veteran combat infantryman has been assigned as the division's new chief of staff. Colonel Alphus R. Clark, 50, a native of Baker, Ore., assumed his new post recently, replacing Colonel John L. Insani, who took command of the 11th Infantry Brigade.

Colonel Clark comes to the division from the Military Advisory Command Team No. 21 near Pleiku, where he served as the assistant deputy senior advisor. To this assignment he brings more than 30 years of valuable combat and staff experience to general and special staffs.

He began his military career in September, 1940, as an enlisted man with the 186th Infantry, Oregon National Guard, and received a direct commission as a second lieutenant in 1941. Shortly after receiving his commission, he served as a platoon leader on Guadalcanal and the Northern Solomons.

His assignments have ranged from the company level to the Pentagon and as an instructor at several service schools. His most significant assignments have been with the 25th Infantry Division in World War Two and Korea; USA Element Headquarters; United Nations Command and U.S. Forces, Korea; Office Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Washington D.C.; instructor at the Command and General Staff College; Plans and Operations Officer, Headquarters CONARC, Fort Monro, Va.; Chief Research and Development, Washington D.C. and Associate Editor of the Army Information Digest.

Colonel Clark is a graduate of the Command and General Staff College, Armed Forces Staff College and the Army War College.

In addition to his military schooling, the new chief of staff earned his bachelor of science degree from the University of Maryland in 1959 and a master of science from Washington University in 1965.

Among his decorations are the Silver Star; Legion of Merit; Bronze Star Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters; Purple Heart with one OLC; Combat Infantryman's Badge; Parachutist Badge; Army Commendation with two OLC; Air Medal with seven OLC; the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry and the Vietnamese Staff Service Medal.

24 months atop LZ Montezuma

By PFC Lee Habich

DUC PHO (AMERICAL IO) – Twenty four months ago Staff Sergeant Stephen Stearns, Lyman, Me., made his first trip up the steep weather-beaten road that burrows its way to the top of LZ Montezuma, the defense center for the division's 11th Brigade. At the time no one could have convinced him that he would still be there today. But he is.

Stearns, who came to Montezuma a specialist four, will have spent a total of 26 months atop the hill when he leaves this November. As would be expected, a lot of changes have taken place in the two years that the 23-year-old counter mortar section chief has been there.

Today, Montezuma, which towers above firebase Bronco, has an intricate network of defensive apparatus. "When I first came we had about 25 men and only three or four sections," Stearns reflects.

Having participated in the construction of just about every structure on top of the hill from the observation tower to the mess hall, Stearns' prize effort is the combination bunker-hootch that he shares with a couple of the fellows in the radar section.

The hootch, built in off hours, is just about as close to a penthouse as your're going to see in Vietnam. Nesting on the northeast corner of Montezuma, it has a commanding view of the Gaza Strip, Tripoli and miles of coastline in either direction. The view coupled with the wood paneling made from abandoned ammo boxes, give the hootch a homey atmosphere.

"THings have been pretty quiet for the past year," says Stearns, who has vivid memories of the 1968 Tet offensive. "Just about every night for a month or so we caught incoming from the rocket pocket southwest of here."

Even with its majestic view, 26 months on Montezuma is enough for anyone. When Stearns leaves this November, he will be taking a residency record with him that is unlikely to be topped.

SOUTHERN CROSS

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Walking point requires alertness and concentration

By SP4 Terry Williamson

LZ BAYONET (198th INF BDE IO) – "Walking point is kind of like putting on ear plugs and snowshoes and just start walking," said Specialist Four George W. Knuth, LaSalle, Ill., a pointman with Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry of the division's 198th Infantry Brigade. "Of course there are things you look out for, but it is the unknown that scares you."

The job of walking point is not new. Every maneuver element in every war has had pointmen. But, in this war, when the enemy plants booby traps like crops and hopes for a good harvest everyday, the pointman's job has become more important and exact and dangerous than ever before.

Just what does a pointman look for when he becomes the man out front?

"I look for markers," said Specialist Four Thomas J. Bean, Tulsa, Okla., a five-month veteran with Delta Company. "The VC will cross sticks or pile rocks up by a trail when it is booby trapped. If you watch for these signs, you'll stay out of a lot of trouble."

"You can't just watch the ground all the time," said Sergeant Jeffery Sanchez, Miami, Fla., once a pointman but now a squad leader with Charlie Company, 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry. "You have to scope out the entire area quickly and reliably."

It takes just a short time experiencing the position of point to realize there are places to avoid.

Another pointman, Specialist Four Keith E. Beach, Ekalaka, Mont., from Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry, said, "Trails are a major threat to any unit. It's best to avoid all trails, but if you can't, you should take it real slow."

Although the pointman seems to be in a world of his own when he is the man up front, he works closely with his slack man, the man walking second. Good coordination and cooperation between the two is important.

"I like to use a man with an M-79 grenade launcher behind me because if you make contact, you can have well distributed fires in any direction," said Specialist Beach. "Also, he can provide preparatory fires into dense areas you are about to enter."

But other pointmen prefer rapid fire to dispersion of fire.

"I prefer a man carrying an M-16 because if you run upon the enemy, our rifleman can provide a lot of quick firepower to back me up," said Specialist Bean.

All the veterans agree that the slack man provides the long range vision for the pointman. He can observe to the front and sides while the pointman concentrates on the ground.

Do the pointmen find many booby traps the easy way–by seeing them first?

"I found one once when I was entering a hedgerow," said Specialist Knuth. "I felt a trip wire touch my leg but when I looked down I couldn't see the wire. I bent down and felt it with my hand and then slowly backed up. We blew it in place as we do all the booby traps we find."

"I've found several booby traps but I remember one that was especially clever," said Specialist Four Paul Ayala, Windsor, Calif., with Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry. "It was a cigarette lighter just lying in the middle of a trail as though it had fallen out of the pocket of a U.S. soldier. But when I looked closer I saw it had a chain tied to it that was connected to a CHICOM grenade which was buried nearby. If the lighter had been picked up, the grenade would have exploded."

The key to walking point is mental alertness and total concentration on the job. "If the pointman has these two qualities," one company commander said succinctly, "he will keep the troops moving."

A division infantryman walks point through thick jungle growth in the mountains west of Chu Lai.
(Photo by PFC James Dunn)

Div soldier is a Pied Piper

By SP4 Terry Willaimson

LZ STINSON (198th INF BDE IO) -- A division infantryman has become the Vietnamese version of the famous Pied Piper of Hamlin much to the delight of the children in many hamlets and villages in the 198th Infantry Brigade's area of operations.

Sergeant Burt Imada, Honokau, Hawaii, Echo Recon, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry, "draws kids like flies," according to members of the recon unit.

Every time Sergeant Imada's unit moves through a small village, the children gather around the stout Hawaiian. He has the oriental features the children recognize but he is packed into a strong frame which is about six feet tall and close to 200 pounds. This makes him a little special in the eyes of the children.

Naturally, all the kids expect him to speak Vietnamese, and so Sergeant Imada felt an obligation to pick up as much of the language as possible.

"On my first tour in Vietnam, with the 5th Special Forces Group's detachment in Danang, I picked up quite a bit of the language. Now our Kit Carson scouts help me out when I need to know something," said Imada.

He enjoys being "special" to the children and he also enjoys spending his free time with them. Any time his unit stops in a village, it doesn't take long for the word to spread and a crowd of chidren forms quickly around the huge Hawaiian.

Although he is not able to spend much time in any one place, the kids remember him and he makes a pretty good Pied Piper, even though he never learned to play the flute.

Soldier has problem with teeth

By SP4 Terry Williamson

LZ BAYONET (198th INF BDE IO) – A soldier in the division's 198th Infantry Brigade is beginning to sink his teeth into the Vietnam War. It's about time because it's his fourth set.

Sergeant Lorin L. Stafford, Chatsworth, Ga., Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry, is having trouble keeping his teeth. He has gone through three sets of his upper front four and he is working on his fourth.

Sergeant Stafford had to have a new set made when he got in country because the set he had was too small and his gums were beginning to swell.

"I broke my second set in a fire fight," he said. "We got hit by a sniper and I had my teeth in my shirt pocket. When I rolled over to start firing, I heard that terrible breaking sound."

The third set also proved to be weak in combat conditions. Bravo Company had got caught in a sweeping fire on the side of a hill, and the teeth were in the same vulnerable shirt pocket. Sergeant Stafford was forced to discard his shirt in the path of the fire, and the flames claimed set number three.

"Everyone got so used to seeing me without my teeth that no one recognized me when I came in with the set I have now," he said.

"If this set doesn't last, I'm going to get to the point where I'm just going to give up on even having any teeth," he ended.

Mini vs maxi controversy rages in Division

By CPT David W. Owen

CHU LAI (16th CAG IO) – With the mini versus maxi controversy raging across the world, it is only natural that even in the remote corners of Vietnam the lines of battle be drawn and sides taken. In F Troop, 8th Cavalry (Blueghost) both sides are well represented by outspoken supporters who are experts in the field of minis and maxis.

"I'm definitely a mini man myself," declared Specialist Four Hector Mendoza when recently interviewed. "The mini is really a knockout."

"The mini is all right, but the maxi has got what it takes to make me sit up and take notice," countered Specialist Four Julio Betancourt. "Why I've seen it take out a .51 caliber machinegun from 2,000 meters away."

Take out a .51 cal from 2,000 meters away?!!

That's right. The mini and the maxi that Mendoza and Betancourt are talking about and, incidently, are experts on is the M-134, 7.62 automatic gun and the XM-35, 20mm automatic gun, the "mini" and the "maxi" respectively. Both weapons are standard equipment on the AH-1G Huey Cobras of Blueghost and both have repeatedly proven their value in the division area of operations.

The minigun, a six barrel gatling-gun type weapon that is mounted either in the turret or in pods on the stub wings, fires at either 2,000 or 4,000 rounds a minute and is extremely effective as a close support weapon.

The newest addition to the Cobra weapons subsystem family, the maxi, is also a six barrel gun. It is a slower firing weapon at 750 rounds a minute but has the advantages of a range of 4,000 meters and of firing an exploding round.

Chances are good that if the NVA and VC were canvassed in order to find out just how good they thought the weapons were and whether the maxi or mini was superior, one would be hard pressed to find enough survivors of encounters with the two weapons to make a good evaluation.

Loaded with rockets, a division Cobra gunship takes off from a fire support base. The miniguns or maxiguns can be mounted either in the turret beneath the aircraft's nose or in pods on the stub wings.
(Photo by PFC Ron Mumford)

General Toan thanks Div for gifts to Viet Children

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO) – The Americal Division was recently thanked for its generosity in giving gifts to the children of the 2nd ARVN Division in commemoration of the Vietnamese Mid-Autumn Festival.

Major General Nguyen Van Toan, commanding general of the 2nd ARVN Division, expressed his personal gratitude in a letter to Major General A.E. Milloy, division commanding general.

The letter read in part as follows:

"Dear General:

I sincerely express my personal warmest thanks and the heartiest thanks of all the children of the 2nd ARVN Division to you and to all servicemen and units at all levels belonging to the Americal Division for the gifts that you presented to the children during the Mid-Autumn Festival of Vietnam.

Your interest in the children's holiday has proven your love and your concern for the life of Vietnamese children in the present time as well as your relation with our country in the future."

They come in many shapes and sizes, b

A Huey Cobra gunship from the 123rd Aviation Battalion roars from its helipad in pursuit of the enemy. Choppers such as this fly missions near the division's Fire Support Base Bronco.
(Photo by SP4 Lou Pearson)

This light observation helicopter pilot may not be able to see the forest for the trees as he dips his craft down to tree level for a better view of the enemy. The chopper is from F Troop, 8th Cavalry.
(Photo by 1LT Robert Pennington)

A gigantic Chinook (CH-47) carries a load
The husky crafts transport supplies throughc

Dozens of Huey helicopters resemble rush ho
massive combat assault with troops from the 1

ut all provide mobility to the Americal

supplies to one of the division's firebases.
the divisions area of operations daily.
Photo by SP5 A.C. Barnett)

The "Flying Crane" is an appropriate nickname for this CH-54 which easily carries a heavy truck to LZ Stinson. (Photo by SP4 Gerald Paulin, 523rd Sig. Bn.)

raffic on a stateside highway as the choppers get set to embark on a
n Infantry Brigade. (Photo by SP4 Robert Spangler)

Much needed supplies are gently lowered to the Americal's new firebase LZ Melon by a Chinook. (Photo by SP4 Jim Logue)

Failure to Chieu Hoi is Fatal to 3 VC

By SP5 William J. Hayes

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO) – Three Viet Cong who opted to fight it out rather than rally to the Government of Vietnam were killed by troopers of the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry during recent action 25 miles south of DaNang.

Troop A, working through the area as part of Operation Rock Crusher, was operating with three independent platoons. The Third Platoon cordoned a small hilltop shortly after sunrise. The men were led to the hill by a young woman who said her husband and several other VC were hiding on the hill.

First Lieutenant James W. Pherson, Newcastle, Pa., and Sergeant First Class Raul Reyna, Refugio, Tex., led a dismounted party to begin a sweep of the boulder and brush-strewn hillside.

The VC were sighted within minutes, but eluded the cavalrymen in the dense undergrowth. Lieutenant Pherson requested a broadcast team to be inserted with his elements and within 30 minutes an American PSYOPS worker and a Vietnamese interpreter were in operation with the platoon. The young wife, her voice boosted by a portable amplifier, pleaded with her husband to rally so they and their young son could live in peace.

The interpreter explained to the VC how the GVN's Chieu Hoi (open arms) program works and guaranteed that the VC would be welcome to begin a new life of peace. The fugitives were offered medical treatment in case they were sick or wounded.

No reply came from the hill. After hours of broadcasting to all parts of the hill, the interpreter reminded the VC that if they rallied no harm would come to them, but if they resisted they would surely die.

As a final effort, SFC Ryan led a small party up a densly overgrown part of the hill to induce the VC to give up.

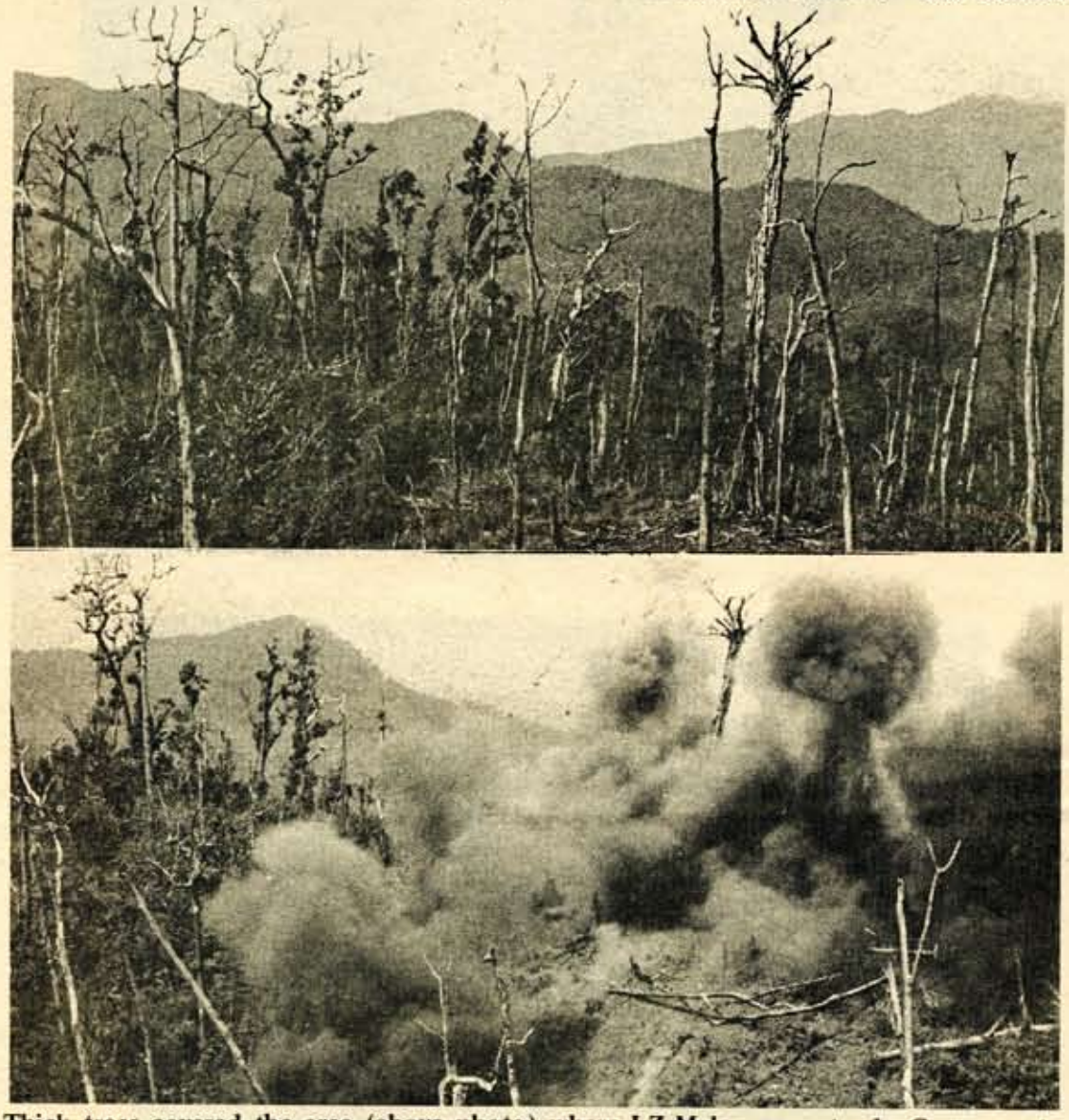
"We went up one trail and didn't find them," said Specialist Four David L. Bachemin, New Orleans. The men started back down to look for another way up.

Seconds later two grenades flew from behind a rock and landed near Private First Class Larry J. Davis, Knoxville, Tenn., but Davis was not injured from the blasts.

The VC had forfeited their chance to rally.

The three VC died under a hail of rifle fire.

Shortly after the action, the young wife identified her husband's body. She and her infant son were extracted from their tiny hamlet and admitted to a relocation center near Highway One, where the GVN would help them begin a new life her husband never knew.



Thick trees covered the area (above photo) where LZ Melon now stands. Company A, 26th Engineer Battalion did a quick landscaping job (bottom photo) and made the area adequate for the new firebase. (Photo by SP4 Jim Logue)

4th-3rd nets 3 VC in 3 separate fights

By PFC James Tabata

FSB SAN JUAN HILL (11th INF BDE IO) – Putting in a hard day working the mountainous terrain northwest of Duc Pho netted the 1st Platoon and CP of the 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry, three VC in as many incidents recently.

The first contact was made in the early morning hours when the men of Company C's First Platoon initiated an ambush. "We set up the ambush the night before on a well-used trail, which ran from the jungle into an open rice paddy. There were a lot of sandal tracks so it seemed like an ideal location for an ambush," reported Sergeant James Vanhoveln, Kankakee, Ill. It wasn't until early the next morning, however, that movement was heard on the trail.

"We waited quietly in the brush until we felt the enemy was directly in front of our position before we opened up with M-16s," said Specialist Four Onis Carpenter, Ragosa Springs, Colo. Moving out to check the trail the men found blood trails leading into the nearby bush. After following them the men found the body of a VC and numerous documents.

The platoon saw more action that evening. Moving into a new ambush location, the men of the First Platoon were setting up an ambush when voices were heard moving toward the element's location. The men quickly moved into the brush just off the trail. "We spotted two VC coming toward us," said Carpenter. "We waited quietly until the two VC were in front of us before we opened up with M-16s and the M-60 machinegun."

Moving out immediately, the element found only one body and a blood trail of the SKS carrying VC leading into the brush. A thorough search of the area was made but no trace was found of the wounded VC.

With darkness approaching another ambush was set up close to the dead VC and the men settled back to wait out the long restless night.

The CP and 81mm mortar platoon of Company C got into the action later that same evening when Private First Class Cornell Medlin, Louisberg, N.C., spotted one VC in the rice paddies 200 meters away from the element's location. "The VC looked like he was setting up booby-traps on the trail along the river, so I opened fire with the M-60 machinegun," said Medlin.

An element was sent out to check the area but with darkness already upon them no signs of the VC could be found. The next morning an element was again sent to check the area. At the site of contact blood trails were found leading to the enemy's body.

98 enemy soldiers killed during week

(continued from page 1)

with small arms killing one VC and capturing one AK-47 rifle.

Comapny A, 1st Bn., 46th Inf., found 16 enemy graves while on a search and clear mission. The NVA kills were credited to the "Professionals" for contact in Hiep Duc earlier this year.

Also during the week Company C of the "Professionals" engaged two NVA in heavy brush 30 meters from their location, resulting in one NVA killed. The second enemy evaded south.

Company D, 1st Bn., 46th Inf., while on a sweep southwest of Tam Ky observed three VC in the thick double canopy jungles. The "Professionals" engaged the enemy, killing one VC while the other two evaded.

2nd Platoon, Company B, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, while on patrol west of Tam Ky engaged three VC, killing one while the other evaded south.

1st Platoon, Comapny B of the "Gimlets", while on a sweep in double canopy jungles observed and engaged two VC. One was killed while the other evaded west.

Company C, 3rd Bn., 21st Inf., observed three enemy soldiers northwest of Tam Ky. The "Gimlets" engaged them with small arms fire killing one while the others fled.

2nd Platoon, Company A, 4th Bn., 31st Inf., while on an eagle flight observed one VC evading west. They engaged and killed the VC with small arms fire.

Geneva Park

While on patrol, Company C, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry, engaged one enemy soldier while sweeping an area of contact. Later the "Ready Rifles" received heavy small arms fire from a group of enemy soldiers in nearby hootches. Gunships from the 176th Assault Aviation Company came on station, and expended their munitions in the area of contact. Results of the entire action were two enemy killed by Company C and one detained. Four enemy were killed by the gunships.

Later, Company C, 1st Bn., 52nd Inf., found two 500 pound bombs while on a routine patrol. The "Ready Rifles" also found a booby-trapped 81mm mortar round in the same general area. They blew the booby-trap in palce. The next day a rallier turned himself in to Company C, He was evacuated to a nearby LZ.

Bravo Company, 1st Bn., 52nd Inf., found three hoothces ten feet long, twenty feet wide, and eight feet high. Inside the bunkers the "Ready Rifles" found 15 bushles of dried corn and 1,000 pounds of unpolished rice.

Two NVA soldiers were killed as they approached the night defensive perimeter of Delta Company, 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry, southwest of Chu Lai. The "Professionals" found two AK-47 rifles, a two pound bag of polished rice and two green uniforms.

An areo rifle platoon from F Troop, 8th Cavalry, observed one VC evading into a bunker. The "Blues" pursued and captured the enemy soldier, who was later taken to a nearby LZ. The areo platoon then continued toward the bunker and received small arms fire. They returned fire killing two VC. A sweep of the area revealed one hootch, and one booby-trap. The booby-trap was blown in place.

The Southern Cross camera caught SP4 George Johnson, Charlie Company, 4th-31st Infantry, 196th Brigade, going about his daily job. Watch this space weekly. Our man may snap your photo no matter where you are in the Americal Division's TAO and your face could very possibly be gracing this page in next week's issue.

Miss Leanna Johnson possesses a myriad of talents, which range from acting to performing as a contortionist. The blue-eyed lovely measures 36-24-36 and we're not quite sure yet whether it was her thespianic skill or her contorting that won her the titles of Miss Nevada-World and Miss All American Girl. But with all of her physical endowments, she probably would have won even without her talents.

'Caesar' the pig given to Vietnamese orphanage

By SP4 Thomas I. Neville

QUANG NGAI (AMERICAL IO) – They came to offer Caesar, not to praise him. The scene was not in a Roman palace but in a Vietnamese orphanage and the central character was a 300-pound pig named Caesar.

The stars included men from the S-4 shop of the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry, a Buddhist monk, Caesar the pig and a cast of hundreds of smiling war orphans.

The story began about a year ago when nine men from the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry decided to purchase a pet. They bought a piglet in the village of An Tan and brought it back to Chu Lai, where it was christened Caesar. Their mascot continued to grow and roam about the camp.

"Caesar would always come back to us, although we let him roam free," said Sergeant Thomas Jamison, Angleton, Tex., the NCOIC of S-4. Sergeant Jamison also said that the pudgy pet, "used to eat the banana plants in front of the orderly room until someone planted cactus. Then he stopped going there."

Since most of the original "masters" of Caesar were about to DEROS, the men decided to get rid of the pig. But nobody had the heart to butcher it. So, Chief Warrant Officer Martin Conover, Albany, N.Y., contacted G-5 and asked if there were any deserving organizations which could use the animal.

Colonel G.R.H. Johnson did a little research and came up with the name of the Children's Relief Center of Quang Ngai, an orphanage run by Buddhist monks and nuns.

The men of S-4 loaded Caesar into a truck and headed for Quang Ngai. They were met by the director and about 200 children Caesar was a bit reluctant to get off the truck and leave her friends, but with a little prodding, the pig jumped off the truck and lay in the middle of the courtyard.

While the children milled about examining the animal, the director of the facility explained that he would keep the pig a little while and fatten it some more. Then he said he would sell it and use the proceeds to support the orphanage.

The orphanage is home and school for nearly 400 youngsters. More children seek admittance everyday, but there is not enough room to accomodate many more and some are turned away. The children generally remain at the orphanage until they are 18 years old. They then go out into the world on their own.

There is presently construction going on at the six-year old orphanage. A Buddhist pagoda is being built within the compound so the children will not have to leave the area in order to worship.

Since the orphanage is constantly seeking funds from various social agencies, the donation made by the division soldiers should be a beneficial boost to the good work being accomplished.

Caesar the pig placidly catches a few rays after his arrival at the Children's Relief Center in Quang Ngai City.
(Photo by PFC Lee Habich)

'Cyclops' keeps eye on enemy

By SP4 Tom Mano

HAWK HILL (196th INF BDE IO) – Finding the enemy is the first step to combating them. One "eye" that never sleeps is the "Cyclops" of 3rd Platoon, Battery G (SLT), 29th Artillery, 24th Corps here on Hawk Hill.

Using the "Cyclops", a 23-inch searchlight, the men scan the perimeter of Hawk Hill, in search of snipers of a sapper attack.

"The enemy is deathly afraid of this light," said Sergeant Arthur R. St. Germain, Danielson, Conn., the section chief here for 3rd Platoon. "Try to imagine walking in complete darkness and then having 750 million candlepower open up on you. It's enough to temporarily blind and scare anybody."

"But after eight months in Vietnam my eyes are accustomed to the light," he continued. "I can see just about anything."

The "Cyclops" can reach five to ten miles when you have 100 percent visibility, but, "around here you usually reach two to three clicks (kilometers)," Sergeant St. Germain said.

Mounted on a jeep, the searchlight is powered by four volts off a 28 volt generator in the jeep. In three seconds the "Cyclops" can spread its beam over a four square mile area. A radio in the jeep enables anybody on the bunker line to call for the searchlight at anytime during the night.

Equipped with a NOD (Night Operating Device) which works by means of infrared light, the "Cyclops" can function without visible light.

"Scanning with infrared light enables us to see the enemy when they can't see us," said Sergeant St. Germain. "If I spot some RPG sites or significant enemy activity, I can locate their position with an azimuth scale and call in artillery and gunships."

"With sniper fire I first employ the infrared light and when I site the enemy, I turn it on visible light," he said. "This is safer and much more accurate than just firing blind into the darkness."

The infrared light can be used in conjunction with starlite scopes also. "If there were an absence of starlight or moonlight and we cordoned off an area with infrared light, all our men would have to do is set up starlite scopes and as the enemy walked through the infrared area, they could just pick them off," St. Germain said.

"The chief danger we have is that if one AK-47 round is properly placed, it can not only knock out the light but as a result blow the jeep to bits," he remarked.

"Sometimes they use these searchlights up by the DMZ to spot enemy helicopters," continued St. Germain. "Here on Hawk Hill we just use them to locate snipers and ground troops."

"I like my job because every night is different. You never know what will be at the end of the searchlight," Sergeant St. Germain concluded.

'Heavy' sounds heard at Sandpiper Club

By SP4 Steven L. Elschlager

CHU LAI (AMERICAL IO) – The group was called "Peace Pac". Their music was solid "hard rock"; music not usually heard in a war zone.

The place was the Sandpiper Club. Recently, the Sandpiper Service Club was opened to personnel in the Chu Lai area, and is equipped with a large number of recreational facilities.

Performing before patients from the 23rd Medical Battalion, the "Pac" blasted out songs by the Cream, Three Dog Night, and other "heavy" groups from "the world".

After practicing for just ten days, this was their second show of their 60 day tour. From the club, they were to tour some of the fire bases in the division area.

Their one hour show started out with an "ear popper" from the movie "Easy Rider", called, "Born To Be Wild". Other "mind blowing" tunes included, "The Pusher", "Feeling Allright", "Easy To Be Hard" and a host of others.

Specialist Five William Pratt of Huntington, West Virginia provided background with the organ and harmonized on a few songs. The pace of the beat was produced by Specialist Four James Thomas from Athens, Alabama on drums. Keeping the show alive and moving all over the stage was Specialist Five Tom Hendersen, harmonica and vocals, claiming Santa Barbara, California as his home. The man using the "fuzz pedal" was Private Ray Cadenas from Lodi, Calif., on lead guitar. He also sang a couple of "blues" songs. On the "thundering" bass, was Specialist Four Dan Gregory of Decatur, Ill. And the man on rhythm guitar and again a singer, was Specialist Four Jay Thomas, from Los Angeles, Calif.

Groups like "Peace Pac" are formed in MACV Headquarters, Special Services, Saigon. There are also other types of groups such as Country and Western and Soul.

An audition in Saigon is all that is required to enter this program.

Christmas mail deadlines announced by Post Office

The 1970 Christmas mailing period has been established for the Vietnam area to meet US Post Office Department requirements for delivery of Christmas mail in CONUS on or before Christmas Day. They are:

DEADLINE DATES

Fourth Class (Surface)	1 November 1970
SAM (Space Available, Air)	7 December 1970
PAL (Parcel Airlift)	10 December 1970
SAM Letter (Space Available, Air)	12 December 1970
Airmail	15 December 1970

Mongoose becomes combat vet

By SGT Thomas C. Elmer

LZ BAYONET (AMERICAL IO) – Few infantrymen are bitten by snakes while serving in Vietnam. But there is one division soldier who defies even this possibility by carrying with him the fastest snake weapon in the world–a mongoose, the King Cobra's natural enemy.

"We had moved to cordon and search a village in the morning when I came across the mongoose," said Private First Class George Melisi, Arlington, Mass., a machinegunner with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry of the 198th Brigade. "He was only a few days old and was still very weak."

PFC Melisi placed the animal in a small basket which he kept tied to his rucksack. Later, the mongoose, growing stronger left his basket to ride through the bush on the top of the rucksack.

"I named him Ralph and made him my assistant machinegunner," said Melisi.

For the first few days Melisi fed Ralph milk, made from the cream substitute distributed in C-rations. A few days later Ralph made it known that milk was not all he wanted.

"We stopped one afternoon to chow down. My buddy opened several cans of C-rations, left for a minute, and came back to find Ralph eating his dinner."

Ralph earned his Combat Infantryman's Badge his first day out with the company when the unit encountered sniper fire. He showed his loyalty by staying with the gunner. "He isn't much help as an assistant gunner, but he does help our morale," said Melisi.

Even though Ralph is not much help in a firefight, he may someday encounter and defeat an enemy which the infantrymen fear as much as bullets–the King Cobra.

(Illustration by PFC Ronald Howard)