THE AMERICAL DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS AMERICAL DIVISION
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96374

AVDF-CG

27 May 1968

SUBJECT: Congratulatory Message

All Personnel of the Americal Division

It is with pride that I accept this opportunity to address you, the men of the Americal Division, on the occasion of the initial publication of our division's newspaper - "The Southern Cross."

You have compiled a most enviable record since the division came to I Corps Tactical Zone as Task Force Oregon last April. You have consistently met and defeated the enemy on the battlefield. Your aggressiveness and zeal have been proven time and again, and have added laurels to the heritage of the Americal Division.

"The Southern Cross" is intended to recognize and publicize your exploits and achievements. Read it with pride - pride in yourselves and in your Division's accomplishments.

I extend to you a hearty and sincere "Well Done", and for the future-Godspeed.

S. W. KOSTER
Major General, US Army
Commanding

Americal Infantrymen Make Historic Strides

CHU LAI — Vietnam's newest and only named division—the Americal Division—made historic strides towards the goal of peace in Vietnam during its first 13 months of operations.

The original Americal Division was organized for operations in the steaming jungles of New Caledonia in May, 1942.

The birth of Americal in Vietnam marked the beginning of many changes in the complexion of the war.

When the soldiers of the 196th Lt. Inf. Bde. landed at the Chu Lai airstrip April 20, 1967, they became the first Army combat troops in the I Corps Tactical Zone. Since these original "pioneers" arrived, the Army has gradually expanded its large-scale combat operations farther and farther north, and now has troops fighting right up to the demilitarized zone.

The original Americal soldiers were members of the 196th Lt. Inf. Bde.; the 1st Bde., 101st Abn. Div.; and the 3rd Bde., 25th Inf. Div. (later redesignated as the 3rd Bde., 4th Inf. Div.), and were a part of Task Force Oregon, a force conceived by Gen. William C. Westmoreland, commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam.

The division is curretnly made up of the 196th, 198th and 11th infantry brigades, and is conducting three major, named combat operations—Wheeler/Wallowa, Muscatine and Burlington Trail.

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STILL READY—This Americal Division combat engineer might be taking a short break, but he keeps his grenade launcher constantly ready. (Photo by Sp4 Kevin Howe, 11th Inf. Bde.)

AMERICAL DIVISION
SOUTHERN CROSS

Vol. 1, No. 1 CHU LAI, VIETNAM May

Division Operations Locating Weapons

By PFC MIKE KELSEY
Staff Writer

CHU LAI — Americal Division soldiers, working in dogged pursuit and tedious clearing operations, have been routing the enemy from long-established "homes" and denying vital weapons and ammunition resupply in steady action throughout the division's area of operations.

As soldiers of the 11th Inf. Bde. were closing out Operation "Norfolk Victory" in the southern part of the division area with the largest weapons cache they have ever discovered, infantrymen of the 198th Inf. Bde. kicked off Operation "Burlington Trail," still in progress, by moving into areas that the enemy has held undisputed control of for years.

"Norfolk Victory" closed April 19 with a final tally of 45 Viet Cong killed and 120 individual and 12 crew-served weapons captured for the "Jungle Warriors."

The fighting soldiers of the division's newest brigade were also credited with the destruction of a large enemy base camp during the two-week operation.

"Burlington Trail," which has as its objective the opening of a road between Tam Ky west to Thien Phuoc, a Special Forces base and district headquarters in Quang Tin Province, was started in mid-April.

For more stories and pictures of recent Americal operations, turn to page 6.

South Vietnamese convoys had made the ground journey by May 8, though more engineering and mopping up activities were expected to continue for several days.

"We started Burlington Trail with combat assaults into the area and then conducted reconnaissance in force missions," said Lt. Col. William D. Kelley, commander of the 198th forces in the operation.

In addition to Kelley's 1st Bn., 6th Inf., soldiers from Co.'s B and D of the 1st Bn., 46th Inf. are participating in the action.

In the first few days of the operation two large enemy ammunition and weapons caches were captured in the Viet Cong-infested valley northwest of Chu Lai.

"What we uncovered in those first few days would be enough to equip an enemy regiment for at least a month," said battalion intelligence officer Capt. Francis X. Brennan.

The caches included 21,000 AK-47 rifle rounds, 10,000 rounds for 50 cal. machineguns, 6,000 rounds of 7.62 mm ammunition and 224 rounds for 60 mm mortars.

Totals for the operation as of May 8 were 303 Viet Cong and eight North Vietnamese soldiers killed and 70 individual and 26 crew-served weapons captured.

Westmoreland Praises Amcal Combat Record

CHU LAI—The commander of United States forces in Vietnam said in ceremonies here recently that the Americal Division has "one of the most impressive records of any unit in my command."

Gen. William C. Westmoreland, who is scheduled to depart shortly to become Army Chief of Staff, praised the fighting soldiers of the Army's only named division during Organization Day ceremonies last month.

He also presented awards to six of the division's soldiers.

Included among the awards was a Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's second highest decoration for valor, presented to Capt. James Taylor. The Riverside, Calif., native was cited for "performing repeated heroic rescues" during a nine-hour period last November.

Taylor is a troop commander with the division's 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry.

Westmoreland also presented the 1st Oak Leaf Cluster to the Bronze Star Medal for service to MSgt. Mike Hofer, of Olympia, Wash., who served with both the original Task Force 6814 in New Caledonia during WWII and Task Force Oregon, the forerunner to the Americal Division in Chu Lai.

Task Force 6814 was redesignated to become the "original" Americal Division.

Hofer's friends had dubbed him "Mr. Americal."

Combat Ready

Two Battalions Arrive

CHU LAI—The arrival of two infantry battalions from installations in the U.S. has bolstered the Americal Division's strength by more than 1,400 men.

The 5th Bn., 46th Inf., assigned to the 198th Inf. Bde., and the 4th Bn., 21st Inf., with the 11th Inf. Bde., joined the division last month.

RECEIVE INSTRUCTION—Newly-arrived soldiers of the 5th Bn., 46th Inf. receive instructions on booby traps at the Americal Combat Center. (Photo by SFC Snow L. Wilson, 198th Inf. Bde.)

The soldiers of both battalions were immediately moved to the Americal Combat Center, where they were given a week-long course on booby traps, map reading and characteristics of the Viet Cong to supplement the training they had received in the states.

The 4/21 Inf. "Gimlets" arrived in Chu Lai from Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, and the 5/46 "Professionals" had been in training at Ft. Hood, Texas, prior to their movement.

The new 198th Brigade soldiers are currently engaged in the defense of the Chu Lai complex, while the "Gimlets" are engaged in combat operations in the Duc Pho area.

Lt. Col. James E. Armstrong heads the "Gimlets," and Lt.

Turn To Page 8

Lawyer's Corner

GI Bill Outlined

By CAPT. SALIM J. BALADY, JAGC
Legal Assistance Officer

CHU LAI—"The soldier home from the war...the sailor home from the sea."

That liberal paraphrase of an old poem poses a serious question for today's serviceman. What does he DO when he comes "home from the war" or the sea?

In former times of our American history, the answer to that question may well have been: "Sufer poverty." Fortunately, those times are far behind us. The American public, through the Congress of the United States, has recognized its responsibilities toward its returning servicemen and has done quite a bit about them.

Most recent of these "doings" are the Veterans' Readjustment Benefits Act of 1966 and the Veterans' Pension and Readjustment Assistance Act of 1967 which provides additional benefits to the veteran of the Vietnam era.

Note the word "era," not "war." A serviceman need not have directly participated in the Vietnam conflict to receive benefits under the two acts mentioned, provided that he meets the other requirements for eligibility.

The two acts provide principally for veterans educational assistance and loan guarantee benefits.

They also provide for a long list of other benefits, the most significant of which are a non-service-connected disability pension, service-disabled veterans insurance, and non-service-connected death pension for widows and children of qualifying veterans.

To be eligible for veterans educational assistance under the Acts, the serviceman must have served at least 181 days of continuous active duty, any part of which occurred after January 31, 1955, or have been released from active duty after January 31, 1955, for a service-connected disability.

Religion And You

Joy Of Dicsovery

By CHAPLAIN (LTC) FRANCIS LEWIS
Americal Chaplain

I'm sure all of us have come to the place where we despair of the blinding character of words and more words which shut out so frequently the reality of life they were originally coined to disclose.

How perilous the tendency can be in religion, where theological exercises become substitutes for the religious spirit.

If you and I might only have the joy of initial discovery, of genuine insight, of actual encounter with God wherein our language and our argument serve merely as vehicles of expresion. Such a possibility may be had by any seeker. Such is the joy of religious discovery.

To find in the order of the universe the steadfastness and dependability of God's purpose in the world. To find in that creativity of God at work in the nature of things and one's own being the affirmation of God's perfection. To find in one's moral restlessness the eternal call to turn one's own creativity into the same love for all created beings as was manifest in the initial act of creation.

All this is not only to have found God in a significant sense, but to have entered upon a cosmic adventure for which there is no forseeable end.

Thus, the gentle persuasion of God's creative act speaks to us from every existing thing before which we must bow in glad obedience, asking only for light by which to live.

AMERICAL DIVISION
SOUTHERN CROSS

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Major's Curiosity Leads To Conquest Of Challenge

By PFC DAVE MCGOWN
Staff Writer

CHU LAI—In 1948, 17-year-old Roy Knight joined the Army with less than a seventh grade education.

Today, Maj. Roy Knight holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Omaha and is the executive officer of the Amercial Division's 523rd Signal Battalion.

The 20 years between have been both challenging and rewarding for the major. He has served in Korea, Thailand, Turkey, Panama and "all over the United States." Besides 17 years in signal units, he has also been in infantry, armor and artillery outfits.

In 1956, while serving his "first tour" with Americal, at Ft. Clayton in Panama, 1st Sgt. Knight of the 123rd Signal Company was awarded a direct field commission. It was an exceptional peacetime promotion.

But his most outstanding story is his conquest in the struggle for self-education.

"The Army will help anyone who helps himself," he said.

Helping himself to General Educational Development correspondence courses and evening classes, he earned his high school diploma in 1952.

Transfers and temporary duty orders often meant interruptions and discontinuations, but he was never discouraged.

"I'm curious," explained Knight. "I want to be able to understand things around me."

His curiosity eventually led him to begin working towards his college degree in 1957. He accumulated credits from the University of Maryland, the University of North Carolina, Louisiana State and Oklahoma State.

With 136 semester hours behind him, he still needed several on-campus credits to qualify for a degree. The Education Office at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina, steered him toward the Army's Degree Completion Program which allows senior servicemen to live on campus for as long as necessary.

From July 1967 to January 1968, Knight attended the University of Omaha, earned all A's and B's, and received his degree.

"Learning is never ending," commented the major who plans to work for a master's degree in electronics engineering.

MAJ. KNIGHT

Soldier Adds Up Shadows, Comes Out With Trouble

LZ BALDY—An alert young infantryman made a quick count of the shadows around his moving night patrol and came up with a Viet Cong trying to slip out of the column. Sp4 Michael Kryder, of Pittsburgh, Pa., with the 196th Inf. Bde., was part of an ambush patrol when he noticed the shadows cast by the full moon.

"When the count reached 16, I stopped and kept on walking. Then it struck me that one of the guys had gone on R&R and there were only 15 of us out that night."

When Kryder mentioned the shadow to PFC William Emely, of Rochester, N.Y., he too began to count.

"Both of us noticed one of the shadows moving off at an angle. We turned and charged then," Emely said.

A startled Viet Cong froze in his tracks at the sight of the two charging infantrymen and was taken without a shot being fired.

"Why I started counting those shadows, I'll never know. But it might have saved us from being trapped when we set up our ambush," Kryder commented.

Ambush Was Well Worth Waiting For

LZ BALDY—"It was a sweet little ambush—one well worth waiting for," was the verdict of a beaming commander working with a battalion of the 196th Inf. Bde.

Capt. Bruce Bourgault, of Seattle, Wash., commander of Btry. C of the 3rd Bn., 16th Arty., was describing an artillery ambush recently completed by his 155mm howitzers.

The men in "one of my observation posts had found a small island of woods at the junction of two trails. The enemy had often evaded and hidden in this woodline before," he said.

One afternoon, three of the howitzers pumped a couple of rounds into the area, finding the target. The settings were marked on the guns, and the day went on as usual.

At mid-afternoon, the men in the OP reported 25 Viet Cong in the area.

The big guns boomed, then things quieted down as their crews waited for word from the men at the OP.

"They said we had put every round on target and the entire woodline was burning. No one was seen coming out in either direction," Bourgault said.

LUNCH BREAK

During a refugee move, this young lad takes time out to cook up a small lunch. (Photo by PFC Bill Guerrant, Photo Editor)

In Project 'Jamboree'

Military, Civic Action Joined

DUC PHO—Soldiers of the 11th Inf. Bde. gave a new twist to old ideas recently by combining military and civic action operations in one day-long affair.

Dubbed "Project Jamboree" by the "Jungle Warriors," the operation coupled a thorough civic action program with a complete cordon and search of a small village north of here.

Its effects were multifold: the village was thoroughly searched and at the same time the entire village population was screened, interrogated, fed a hearty meal and given medical attention.

More importantly, each villager was given a first-hand opportunity to experience the benefits and observe the value of the allied cause in South Vietnam.

"Project Jamboree was a success," said Capt. Donald Keshel, brigade civic action officer.

"It layed the cornerstone for projects of this kind in the future."

In the early morning, elements of the brigade's 4th Bn., 21st Inf. surrounded the village and occupied cordon positions. Then a team of Vietnamese Revolutionary Development cadre, accompanied by one platoon of the battalion, entered the village and escorted all villagers to a pre-arranged site just outside the town gate.

There, they were divided into two groups. All military-aged males were isolated, and the others brought to a common area and told of the cordon and search.

When the people had been assembled and briefed, men in the Military Intelligence section began screening and interrogating each villager.

At the same time, battalion cooks set up a field kitchen and, with the help of villagers, prepared a Vietnamese lunch of rice with sauce, bread, rice cakes, cookies, hot peppers and Vietnamese tea.

Sanitation facilities were established, and the battalion medical civic action team began treating villagers in need of medical care.

After the village had been thoroughly searched, a team of engineers surveyed the hamlet with the area chief to determine future civic action projects to help the villagers.

Throughout the day the people were entertained by the 11th Bde. band and given candy, soap, combs and souvenir prizes while U.S. and Vietnamese psychological operations personnel stressed support of the Vietnamese government, the volunteer informant program and the Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) program.

In the evening, the villagers returned to their homes while those who desired remained to enjoy movies provided by the brigade civic action section.

Financial Aid Given To Pupils By196thBrigade

CHARGER HILL — High praise and warm smiles accompanied ceremonies recently as 42 Vietnamese students in the Southern I Corps area were presented scholarships by the civil affairs officer of the 196th Inf. Bde.

Maj. Robert Pugmire, of Pocatfillo, Idaho, made the presentations during ceremonies at the Binh An village headquarters and at the Thang Binh High School.

At the village headquarters, grants were given to 26 pupils as parents, relatives and government and school officials looked on. Pugmire, Tran Thanh, the village chief, and other dignitaries spoke at the ceremony.

Each recipient at Binh An was awarded 450 piasters a month for the six-month period.

Sixteen high school students were awarded scholarships of 500 piasters each for the same period at the Thang Binh High School.

"This is the same school that was blown up by Viet Cong terrorists in early February," Pugmire commented.

Brigade soldiers are also engaged in repairing the building.

The money for the grants came from III MAF, which established the General Walt Vietnamese Scholarship Fund to aid needy and deserving students.

"We present this financial aid to Vietnamese children who might otherwise not be able to stay in school," Pugmire said.

11th Brigade Sponsers Fair For Townsfolk

By PFC LARRY MOLLNER
11th Inf. Bde.

DU PHO—The citizens of Duc Pho set aside their Oriental customs and turned out one Sunday for an old-fashioned County Fair complete with surrey and music presented by the 11th Inf. Bde. civil affairs section.

The fair was organized to give the Vietnamese a chance to receive medical treatment in a central area, to gain good will and to promote the activities of the South Vietnamese government.

The festivities began with the brigade band playing "Won't You Come Home, Bill Bailey" and other American favorites.

Although the rain made it a little uncomfortable, Tony Gaye, of the brigade's intelligence detachment, sat on the wet ground and people gathered around him to hear him play the guitar and sing American folk songs.

"I enjoy playing for the people. They don't have to understand the words to get the feeling from the melody," Gaye commented.

As Gaye entertained, Vietnamese interpreters passed out candy and a letter to the Viet Cong from Prime Minister Nguyen Van Loc, which urged the enemy to cooperate with the government so the fighting could end soon.

The most popular attraction at the fair was the medical units set up by brigade medics.

"We gave thorough medical aid to about 70 townspeople. If they needed further treatment, we urged them to come to the Duc Pho hospital," said Sgt. Jack Wallace.

A ride in the 6th Spt. Bn. surrey was the fair's biggest attraction for the children.

"The surrey was consfructed by the men of Co. B, from an old mechanical mule they found in a junk yard. The kids got a big thrill out of riding over the bumps in it," WO Carlen Rhodes, the surrey driver, said.

SEARCH AND TREAT—Sp4 James House (left), a medic from Louisville, Ky., and Sp6 Glen Howlett, of Coleman, Mich., both with the 11th Inf. Bde.'s 4th Bn., 21st Inf., treat a woman's infected foot during "Project Jamboree." (Photo by Sp4 Bernard Gmiter, 11th Inf. Bde.)

Seeing Is Proof For Vietnamese

CHU LAI—Americal Division civic action soldiers have employed the old "seeing is believing" adage in their war on Viet Cong propaganda.

"Often after one of our infantry units has taken control of a village from the enemy, we move in and find that the VC have the villagers believing that they control many areas that are actually controlled by American forces.

"To counteract this propaganda, we have started arranging 'sight seeing' tours for villagers, to prove to them that American forces do control certain areas," said Maj. Robert M. Pugmire, civic action officer of the 196th Inf. Bde.

The civic atcion soldiers have dubbed the visits "I see picnics." Several U.S. soldiers, an interpreter and the villagers go through areas the villagers thought the Viet Cong controlled, and over some soda and a case of C rations, the villagers are shown the U.S. activities and installations.

After the "picnic," the "tourists" are taken back to their villages to tell their friends what they have seen.

Hospital Treats Numerous Civilian Patients Monthly

CHU LAI—Medical treatment for civilians ranging in scope from patching up minor cuts to emergency amputations is being provided by a medical company in the 198th Inf. Bde.

"We asked to assume the added mission of treating Vietnamese civilians," said Capt. Joel M. Linford, commander of Co. C of the brigade's 9th Spt. Bn., the company which has thrown the doors of its hospital open to any Vietnamese needing help.

"It was the absence of existing facilities we found when we arrived that prompted us to request the job," added Capt. Walter M. Kemplerer, company executive officer.

Since the hospital initiated its civilian treatment program last November, its staff has treated more than 1,300 patients.

The hospital also handles American war casualties who are not seriously wounded.

To support its activities, the hospital staff takes and develops some 84 X-rays a week, makes more than 400 blood tests each month, provides ambulance service, supplies battalion aid stations and carries its programs directly out to the villagers.

WARY PATIENT

This young Vietnamese patient regards his 11th Inf. Bde. doctor a little warily during a check-up held by the brigade recently. (US Army Photo)

Division's First Year In Vietna

Continued From Page 1

Operation Wheeler was launched by the 1st Bde., 101st Abn. Div., before the paratroopers departed the Americal for the II Corps Tactical Zone. The fighting was directed at the elimination of the 2nd North Vietnamese Army Div., which had been using the area in the highlands northwest of Chu Lai at will for years.

The 3rd Bde., 1st Air Cav. Div. launched Operation Wallowa some three weeks after the initiation of Wheeler, and the two operations were combined on November 11, 1967, making Wheeler/Wallowa one of the longest running operations being conducted in Vietnam.

The "Gary Owen" skytroopers met and badly defeated elements of the 2nd NVA Division in action in the Que Son Valley shortly before they left the division last January.

With the departure of the original brigades, the operation was taken over by the men of the 196th Inf. Bde.; 3rd Bde., 4th Inf. Div.; and 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav. It is now controlled by the 198th Inf. Bde.

Wheeler/Wallowa has been the leader of the division's combat operations and is perhaps typical of their pattern.

The fighting is steady, with U.S. soldiers working doggedly to rout a well-entrenched enemy from positions he has regarded as "home" for years. It has been basically unspectacular, but the enemy is gradually becoming dislodged and the area is becoming more secure.

As of May 8, Wheeler/Wallowa forces had accounted for 3,396 North Vietnamese Army and 4,335 Viet Cong soldiers killed.

Operation Muscatine, a multi-battalion operation in the northern district of Quang Ngai Province, was launched in early December by the 198th Inf. Bde. with one battalion of the 3rd Bde., 4th Inf. Div. placed under the brigade's

Occasional Ceremonies . . .

VISITING DIGNITARIES—Gen. William C. Westmoreland, Lt. Gen. R.E. Cushman Jr., Lt. Gen. Lam and Maj. Gen. S.W. Koster review troops during organization day. (Photo by PFC Bill Guerrant, Photo Editor)

HEADQUARTERS
III Marine Amphibious Force
Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
c/o FPO San Francisco, California, 96602

41:CCD:tgf
5721
6 Feb 1968

From: Commanding General
To: Commanding General, Americal Division

Subj: Congratulations to Americal newspaper, "Southern Cross"

1. Please pass the following message to the officers and men of your Division:

On the occasion of the first issue of your new newspaper, "Southern Cross," I extend my best wishes and personal thanks to the officers and men of the Americal Division for the splendid job you have done since you originally came to I Corps as Task Force Oregon. Your Division has long enjoyed a superb reputation among fighting men, and your actions in I Corps have added to the luster of that reputation.

R. E. Cushman, Jr.

R. E. CUSHMAN, JR.

. . . Tedi

AT REST—This helicopter is at rest, l maintenance chores. (Photo by Capt. De

m Provides Varied Experiences

operational control.

The division's third assigned maneuver brigade, the 11th Inf. Bde., arrived from Hawaii on December 20, and lost little time in becoming an effective fighting force. The "Jungle Warriors" were placed in charge of fighting in the Duc Pho area and have since taken over Operation Muscatine as well.

Operation Muscatine elements had killed 1,040 Viet Cong and 11 North Vietnamese Army soldiers as of May 8.

Many of the battles of the operation have been joint efforts with the soldiers of the 2nd ARVN Div., which is headquartered in Quang Ngai.

The soldiers of the 11th Bde. recently concluded Operation Norfolk Victory in the mountains southwest of Quang Ngai. In this operation, they destroyed a major enemy base of operations and discovered a cache containing some 126 weapons and 1,000 pounds of raw explosives.

A total of 45 Viet Cong were killed in the operation.

Operation Burlington Trail was initiated in mid-April to open the road from Tam Ky to Tien Phuoc, a Special Forces camp and district headquarters in Quang Tin Province.

As of May 8, some 311 enemy soldiers had been killed by members of the 198th Inf. Bde. conducting the operation.

The communist Tet attacks launched throughout Vietnam were met with combined ARVN and Americal forces in southern I Corps, and the enemy was unable to make any significant gains in the area, though several cities and American base camps became targets for both mortar and rocket and human wave attacks.

In the past 13 months American and ARVN efforts, both individually and combined, have doubled the territory considered controlled by the Vietnamese government.

s Work . . .

not for long, as its crew prepares for nightly
s M. Ellers, 198th Inf. Bde.)

. . . Dangerous Work

MOVING UP—11th Inf. Bde. soldiers advance on the enemy during Operation Norfolk Victory. (Photo by Sp4 Kevin Howe, 11th Inf. Bde.)

HEA[illegible]ERS
UNITED STATES MILITARY A[illegible]STANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM
APO SAN FRA[illegible]ISCO 96222
Office [illegible]mation

My heartiest congratulations to the Americal Division for printing the first issue of its new unit newspaper, The Southern Cross. I can think of no better means to assist in maintaining the high morale and espirit de corps of the division than the establishment of a newspaper. I am certain that the Southern Cross, since it will support one of America's crack combat divisions, will meet the highest traditions of military journalism and prove to be a truly outstanding publication.

WINANT SIDLE
Brigadier General, USA
Chief of Information

TIRESOME JOURNEY—A radio telephone operator with the 11th Inf. Bde. shows his fatigue after winding his way through a valley during Operation Norfolk Victory. (Photo by 1Lt John Moody, 11th Inf. Bde.)

198th Drops In

'Cold' LZ Turns 'Hot'

By SFC SNOW L. WILSON
198th Inf. Bde.

CHU LAI—Thanh Phuoc (4) was a quiet little place until Co. A of the 1st Bn., 46th Inf. dropped in unannounced for lunch. Four hours later 27 enemy were dead and what remained of a main force Viet Cong company was dragging its wounded into the jungle.

But the battle was a surprise for both sides, as the reported "cold" landing zone turned "hot" when Lt. Col. William D. Kelley flew in low to mark it with smoke.

With Co. A's first lift of five helicopters coming in fast, there was no time to call in artillery or request machinegun fire as the infantry air-assaulted down.

SSgt. Gene Roper's second platoon leaped from its five aircraft into a rice paddy waist-deep in water to lead the attack. Close behind was his company commander, 1Lt. Bobby Thompson.

Thompson's company, "loaned" to Kelley's 1st Bn., 6th Inf. for Operation Burlington Trail, was supposed to have been a blocking force.

"As soon as I hit the ground I knew I had to change my plans," Thompson commented.

The new plan was simple—"Charge!"

Roper led the charge straight into the fire of the automatic weapons on a small hill.

The sergeant, of Kennewick, Wash., had just returned from R&R in Hawaii.

"All of a sudden the VC was right there in front of me, with camouflage all over him," he said.

"We must have seen each other at the same time, but I was quicker."

With the strong point eliminated, the rest of the aircraft moved in and soon all elements of Co. A were on the ground.

The sudden assault caught the enemy completely unaware. As they rushed back to their huts for weapons, the 198th Inf. Bde. soldiers were right behind them.

"It was a 'hootch' to 'hootch' battle," said 1Lt. Raymond J. Karnasiewicz.

"The choppers dropped us just right. Any further out and we never would have made it out of the paddy."

Going over the battlefield, the infantrymen discovered that the enemy dead ranged from 13 to 50 years old.

"Every one of them was loaded down with ammo, weapons and web gear," said PFC Bill Lehman, of Akron, Ohio.

GOING UP—Sp4 William Brennan squeezes out of a tunnel discovered by 198th Inf. Bde. troops participating in Operation Burlington Trail. (Photo by Sp4 Steve Marvin, 198th Inf. Bde.)

Initiative With Luck Lead 11th To Weapons

By SP4 KEVIN HOWE
11th Inf. Bde.

DUC PHO—A combination of hard driving initiative and sheer good luck brought to light the largest weapons cache ever uncovered by the 11th Inf. Bde. and destroyed a major enemy base camp during Operation "Norfolk Victory."

Ironically, the most successful single action in destroying enemy bases and sources of supply involved what was supposed to be the operation's diversionary force.

Two platoons of the 4th Bn., 3rd Inf. were operating on the fringe of a sweep by the brigade's 1st Bn., 20th Inf. through the mountains and into the Tra Khuc River Valley west of Quang Ngai.

The 4/3 "Old Gurad" company had assaulted across the river and swept up the valley north of the main force into the mountains, killing five enemy and detaining 12 suspects in an attempt to drive the enemy into the operation area.

As the soldiers moved forward, according to Sgt. Charles Akes, of Benton Harbor, Mich., "We counted 21 enemy soldiers in green uniforms running away from us up a hill, so we went up to check out the area they'd come from."

The first platoon moved into the area, and noticed several huts and an enemy weapon on the ground. A search revealed several tunnel entrances, and the platoon began investigating.

"Suddenly," said Sgt. Eddie Siminton, of Cleveland, Ohio, "people began pulling weapons out of everywhere. A lot of them were still wrapped in waxed paper. They hadn't even been issued."

"The place was bigger than we had thought. It looked like a major supply base. Instead of the usual tunnels, it was honeycombed with a series of caverns. They had sleeping quarters, a hospital, even offices with typewriters," commented SSgt. John Williams, of Buffalo, N.Y.

Sp4 Peter Rice, of East Chicago, Ind., thought it "looked like a training center. They had pictures drawn on the rocks with chalk, showing soldiers using bayonets, Huey helicopters, soldiers using rifles and many other things."

The final count was 126 individual and crew-served weapons, as well as hundreds of pounds of explosives, nearly 100 mortar and B-40 rocket rounds and thousands of rounds of small arms ammunition.

WEAPONS CACHE—This is a part of the largest weapons cache ever discovered by members of the 11th Inf. Bde. The find was made by soldiers working in Operation Norfolk Victory. (Photo by Sp4 Dean Pohland, 11th Inf. Bde.))

Army Medic Dedicated To Treating People In Need

By SP5 JACK LUTZ
198th Inf. Bde.

CHU LAI—With the experience of having been an Army medic on three continents, Sp5 William E. Haile, of Detroit, Mich., looked around at the people in need of medical care and went to work.

It was one of the many medical assistance visits conducted by the 198th Inf. Bde.'s 1st Bn., 46th Inf., and Haile was doing what he could to help the villagers of the refugee hamlet Ly Tra north of here.

Along with two other medics and civic action soldiers, Haile began treating minor bruises, and instructing the people on how to keep clean and avoid disease. At the same time he brought smiles to the faces of the children.

Haile enlisted in the Army to be a medic. He served in that capacity on tours in Germany, a short stint in the states and now in Vietnam. After seven months in Vietnam, he knows there is still a lot to be done.

"I know we can help these people if they learn to help themselves. I've seen it done," he commented.

Before coming to the 1/46 Inf. Haile served as a senior medical specialist with the 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav. He was in charge of seven medics.

With the "Professionals," he finds himself spending more time treating the local villagers—the refugees from the war who make their home in and around Ly Tra, the refugee hamlet supported by his battalion.

"Our primary job is to serve as kind of an intermediary between the GI who needs medical help and the doctor. If we can help, we do. If we can't, then the patient goes to the doctor. And if the doctor thinks it's necessary, then it's on to the hospital. It works much the same with civilians," said Haile.

"Keeps them busy, too," he added.

"I guess that it is really the kids that get to you over here. There was one little boy that I kind of adopted. A smart kid—he wanted to learn.

"It's in kids like him that you see the future of Vietnam. Right here in the middle of the war—and all that goes with it—is this kid who wants to learn. We help kids like that as much as we can. There are U.S. and government programs to see to it that they can go to school. It's a start," he commented.

"As a medic in the Army, I've worked in orphanages in Germany as well as over here. Kids are much the same the world over. Speaking of kids, today is my little girl Melissa's first birthday. I'm sure she would understand, if she were old enough, why I can't be with her today," he added.

Haile and the rest of the battalion medics have treated more civilians than any other unit in the 198th Bde. They are proud of their record.

But Haile isn't going to stop there. Intending to remain in the Army, after he returns to his wife and little girl, he's going to find some more people who need help—this time in the states. Having earned his combat medic's badge, he's going home to more of the same duty—but without the combat.

"I just like being a medic," says Haile.

And that about sums it up for him, and all the people, civilian and military, he's helped.

"It's a start," restated the soldier as he turned to get ready for another medical visit.

WORDY FRIENDS—PFC Ray Petty sits in the middle of the 50 foot letter sent to him by 40 friends. (Photo by PFC Bill Guerrant, Photo Editor)

Youth Captures Hearts And Minds At 11th Bde.

LZ BRONCO—A 14-year-old boy has reversed the standard process and captured the hearts and minds of the men of Primo Aviation, Ltd., the 11th Inf. Bde. aviation section.

Lony, the oldest of three boys in his family, was forced to discontinue his education to help his father support his brothers, so he came to Landing Zone Bronco looking for work.

He started to work for the aviation section, and the men in the unit were impressed by his command of English.

"We figured anyone that talented should have the chance to go far," commented Maj. Fred Smith, the unit commander.

The men unofficially adopted Lony and began a program to insure that there would be money available for his education. Thanks to their efforts, the youth will be able to continue his five remaining years of high school.

He had already finished the first six years of school, where he learned English and supplemented his education by attending a program of English instruction given in the Duc Pho school district by the 11th Bde. civic affairs section.

Lony, whose real name is Nguyen Ngoc Tien, loves to learn and hopes to be a teacher someday.

He explained how he was given his nickname:

"I have a friend who is a soldier. He has a brother named Lony. I told him that is not my name, but still he called me that. I like that name, so I am Lony, too."

Long Letter Tires Out Recipient

CHU LAI—PFC Ray Petty is one of the few soldiers in Vietnam that has ever had to rest before he could finish reading a letter from his friends.

The basic reason for his plight is that the letter to the Americal Div. chaplain's assistant was 50 feet long.

The long letter also took a long time to reach the soldier. The Bakersfield College Choir, of Bakersfield, Calif., of which Petty was a member, held a reunion last Christmas and decided to send their absentee alumus a friendly greeting.

The resulting marathon letter arrived in Chu Lai in time for Easter.

"I really don't mind the delay, as these things happen sometimes. My only complaint is that the letter was too big to read," Petty commented.

'Chargers' Find Hospital, Weapons

LZ BALDY—While an element of the 196th Inf. Bde. was searching near a hidden enemy hospital, revealed to it by a former North Vietnamese soldier, it uncovered the largest weapons cache in brigade history.

Co. B of the 4th Bn., 31st Inf., commanded by Capt. William L. Speer, of Ottawa, Kan., had been led to the well-camouflaged hospital by the soldier shortly after noon of the first of two days of uncovering weapons.

The find was made 10 miles south of An Hoa.

After his men had searched the hospital complex, Speer sent out squads to check the area surrounding the structures.

"I figured that if the enemy had such a complex hospital system here, there had to be some weapons in the area," he commented.

As the infantrymen scouted the area, they discovered three separate weapons caches within 50 meters of the hospital, containing a total of 225 weapons.

"They were found in camouflaged bunkers from five to 10 meters apart," Speer reported.

By the end of the first day, the Charger company had found 205 weapons. In a continued search, the soldiers found 20 more weapons hidden under a rock near a creek bed.

Speer said the only opposition they encountered during the action came when an alert pointman killed a North Vietnamese soldier who was attempting to ambush the U.S. troops as they made their way up a mountain trail above Antenna Valley.

In addition to the weapons, the company uncovered gas masks and medical supplies and textbooks in the hospital.

Some 200 articles of clothing were also found.

The previous brigade record for captured weapons was held by a company of the 3rd Bn., 21st Inf., which uncovered 140 last December.

Two Brothers Stretch Idea Bit Too Far

CHU LAI—Army SSgt. Cleve Watson, of Sikeston, Mo., discovered recently that "brotherly love" can sometimes backfire.

"What are you doing here?" he roared at his younger brother, Floyd, a Marine, when the two met in Da Nang.

"I volunteered to keep you from being sent," was the answer.

Each had volnuteered last summer to keep the other from having to serve again in Vietnam—but each kept the secret from his brother.

The secrets were kept so well, in fact, that neither knew the other was in the war zone until a sister-in-law casually mentioned it in a letter to Cleve.

"It's pretty funny now, but I was furious at Floyd for a while. He was kind of mad at me, too," laughed Cleve, a signalman with the 198th Inf. Bde.

Each had served a previous tour in Vietnam only a year ago.

Battalions

Continued From Page 1

Col. David K. Lyon is the commander of the "Professionals."

The arrival of the soldiers enabled both brigades to release their men to take on additional duties such as operations Burlington Trail and Norfolk Victory.

Their arrival also takes up some of the slack caused by the temporary departure of the 196th Inf. Bde., which is currently operating in Northern I Corps.

Both outfits had "sister" battalions already with the Americal Division—the 5/46 Inf. combines with the 1/46 Inf. and soldiers of the 4/21 Inf. can look to "fellow Gimlets" of the 3/212 Inf., from the 196th Inf. Bde., for guidance.

'Regulars' Score In Fierce Battle

By SFC SNOW WILSON
198th Inf. Bde.

LZ BALDY—In a ferocious four-hour battle just south of Hoi An, the "Regulars" of the 198th Inf. Bde.'s 1st Bn., 6th Inf. scored again in the type of action they are becoming noted for.

Fighting at close quarters of less than 10 feet, two platoons of infantry and cavalrymen killed 118 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong main force soldiers dug into reinforced concrete and timber bunkers in the tiny village of Ap Bon.

Not one American soldier was killed in the battle that netted more than 20 crew-served and scores of individual weapons.

Less than three months ago the "Regulars" killed 266 North Vietnamese regulars in a six-hour battle of the same intensity near Da Nang.

The battalion was operating under control of the 196th Inf. Bde. in the northern portion of the Americal area when the Ap Bon action occured.

Catching the communists setting a trap for his two platoons, Lt. Col. William J. Baxley—who is now the Americal Div. operations officer—turned the tables and hit the enemy from the rear with his infantry and cavalry teams while another battalion force pinned down the enemy from the front.

Moving in a bamboo shrouded area, less than the size of a football field, three-man teams of infantry destroyed the enemy with grenades and small arms fire.

Men became separated in the thick bamboo clumps and one, PFC Martin L. Caussex, stalked along through the enemy positions pitching hand grenades into bunker after bunker and dropping communists with his M-16 rifle as they popped up.

Others took command of small groups as they found them.

Another soldier, wounded when he charged forward to drop a grenade into a bunker, lay half in the hole with a dead enemy soldier in his lap and swatted enemy hand grenades to one side as they were thrown at him.

Soldiers Rescue Friends Through Hail Of Bullets

By 2LT PHILIP NIKLAUS
196th Inf. Bde.

LZ BALDY—A platoon sergeant with the 196th Inf. Bde. recently led a party of 12 volunteers through heavy enemy automatic weapons fire to help evacuate wounded members of a pinned-down platoon.

SFC George L. Fritz, of St. Joseph, Mo., and his rescue squad also counted eight enemy kills during their daring venture.

The action occurred when Co. B of the 3rd Bn., 21st Inf. made contact with a battalion of North Vietnamese regulars nine miles northwest of Tam Ky.

Soon after the company began receiving small arms and automatic weapons fire from an island, one platoon got pinned down among some huts in the middle of a rice paddy.

Company commander Capt. Robert E. Corrigan Jr., of Arlington, Va., asked Fritz to take an element to help the trapped soldiers.

"I asked for volunteers and the whole platoon stepped forward. I picked 12 men and we set out into a creek towards the men who had been trapped. The water, which was shoulder deep, gave us good cover," Fritz recalled.

The NCO placed six of his men on high ground to provide a cover fire while the other six began pulling out the wounded.

"Some of my men were hit while carrying out wounded, but we got several NVA too," he said.

At one point, Fritz noticed four enemy soldiers in a hedgerow about five meters above several U.S. troops.

"The GI's didn't know they were there and the NVA were about to open up on them. I yelled at the men to get down so I could shoot over their heads.

"My shooting seemed to startle and confuse the NVA. We dropped all four of them before they could get off a shot. The men didn't even then realize what we were shooting at," he said.

The sergeant praised his men for their part in the rescue.

"I had some wonderful people to work with. They've always done everything I've ever asked of them."

Carson Scout Locates Cache

LZ BALDY—A company of the 196th Inf. Bde. and a Kit Carson scout uncovered 10,000 pounds of enemy rice in a hidden cache recently in Antenna Valley.

The scout, Cao Tan Bon, obtained information about the rice from Vietnamese who had witnessed enemy activity. He then passed it on to Capt. Purless Merrell, of Downey, Calif., commander of Co. C of the 4th Bn., 31st Inf.

The captain turned the rice over to the Vietnamese Refugee Center at Duc Duc after it was removed from the area.

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Hollywood entertainer Melody Engle visited Chu Lai recently and took time out to extend this greeting to the men of the Americal Division ➡