Talking At LZ Gator . . .

Signing Autographs . . .

. . . Dancing At LZ Liz.

(Photos by Sp4 Anthony J. Paul, 523rd Sig. Bn.)

Chris Noel In Chu Lai

CHU LAI—Chris Noel, famous "femme fatale" of the American Forces Vietnam Network, danced, talked, sang and autographed her way around various Americal Div. landing zones and fire support bases during a recent one-day tour.

Members of the 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav. appreciated her enough to make her a lifetime member of the squadron.

"Talking to you fellows in person has always been the highlight of my career with the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service," she said.

SOUTHERN CROSS

AMERICAL DIVISION

Vol. 1, No. 2 | CHU LAI, VIETNAM | June, 1968

Gimlets Crush NVA Force

LZ COLT—All that was left of the village Nhi Ha was a church bell, and the "Gimlets" kept that for a souvenir.

The soldiers of the 196th Inf. Bde.'s 3rd Bn., 21st Inf. recently wrapped up a 10-day operation just five miles south of the demilitarized zone by turning the village they had fought so hard to seize and hold back over to the Marines.

The battalion is currently back with Americal Div. Operation Wheeler/Wallowa forces after knocking heads with a determined, well-equipped force of North Vietnamese regulars in fighting which took place farther north than any other Army unit was operating at the time.

Its soldiers were credited with 579 enemy kills and 139 weapons captured in the action which centered around the small village Nhi Ha, which sits at the junction of vital American and enemy supply lines.

Americal's "Gimlets" were moved into the area after the Marines who had been defending it were called to battle an enemy buildup at nearby Dai Do.

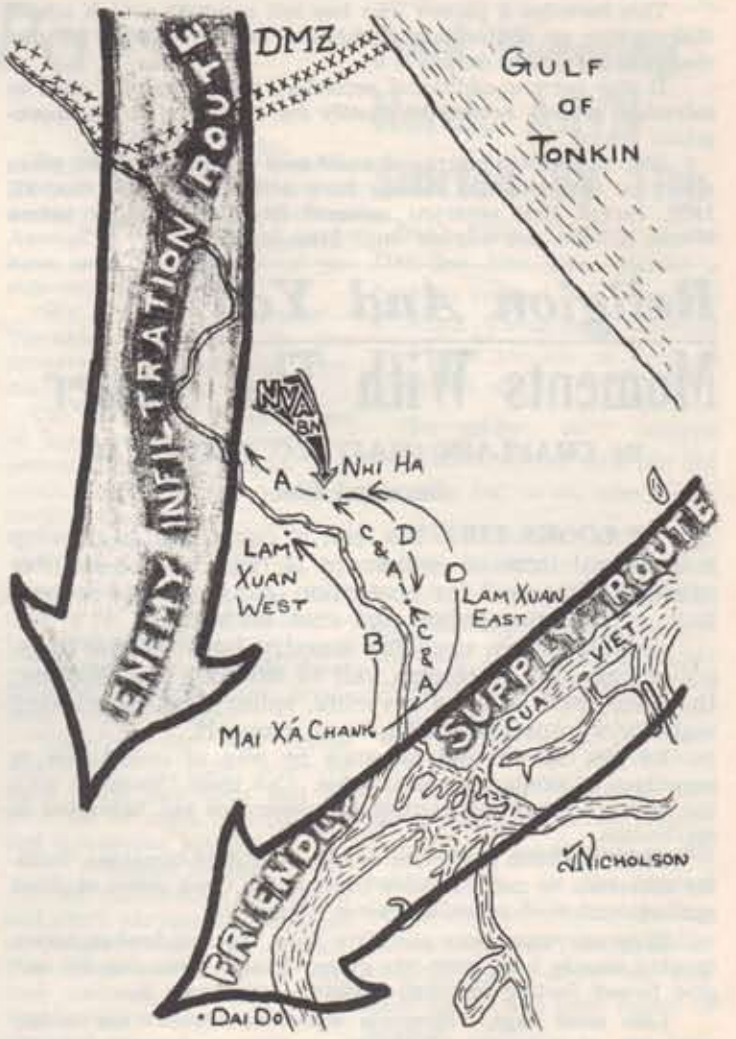
"...I could see the NVA and hear them talking..." SGT Charles Desmond tells of his ordeal behind an NVA night perimeter. See story on Page 8.

Because of Nhi Ha's strategic location, the American command considers it vital that friendly forces control the area at all times.

For much the same reason, enemy forces have always placed a high premium on the area.

Important American supplies are shipped from the South China Sea to points west along the Cua Viet River, which flows south of Nhi Ha, and the communists have long used the general area to infiltrate supplies and soldiers southward

(Continued on Page 8)



Hot Spot

Map depicts Nhi Ha in relation to supply routes and shows movement of 'Gimlet' companies during action. (Map by Sgt. John Nicholson, Staff Illustrator)

'Old Man' Is Smoke Bringer

DUC PHO—When the "Old Man brings smoke," it's a sure bet someone's in trouble.

The "Old Man" in this case was LTC James A. Franklin, commander of the 11th Inf. Bde.'s 3rd Bn., 1st Inf., and the person in trouble was a Viet Cong tax collector.

Franklin, of Plainville, Ga., was flying over the "Gaza Strip" area north of Duc Pho to mark a landing zone for a combat assault. As he prepared to "pop smoke," he saw a man on the ground trying to hide.

The colonel's chopper was flying at 600 feet when he threw the smoke grenade at the enemy tax collector and hit him on the shin.

Gelling, Waldie Follow

MG Koster Departs

MG KOSTER

CHU LAI—Three key Americal Div. commanders left the Chu Lai area at the beginning of the month.

The reassignment list was headed by MG S.W. Koster, who had commanded the Army's only named division for eight months. Colonels Louis Gelling and James R. Waldie, the top men at the 196th and 198th infantry brigades, were also reassigned.

MG Koster, of West Liberty, Iowa, has been named the new superintendent of the United States Military Academy at West Point, the school from which he was graduated in 1942.

The general had served with Task Force Oregon, before it was reconstituted as the Americal Div. in September of 1967. He is largely responsible for the reputation the division holds as a highly mobile and effective fighting force.

COL Gelling had commanded the "Charger" brigade since last November.

He went to the U.S. Army Combat Developments Command at Ft. Belvoir, Va.

COL Waldie, the first commander of the 198th "Brave

(Continued on Page 8)

Lawyer's Corner

Assistance Detailed

By CPT SALIM J. BALADY, JAGC
Legal Assistance Officer

ANY DISCUSSION of educational assistance benefits requires a thorough-going list of the programs in which the benefits may be used.

Under the new G.I. Bill, it is almost easier to list the programs toward which the educational assistance benefits may not be applied. The approved programs cover the entire gamut in the U.S., including any public or private secondary schooling and vocational, correspondence, business or flight training.

For those seeking academic degrees, assistance for programs of study at junior or teachers' colleges, normal schools, scientific or technical institutions, or any other institutions which furnish education at the secondary school level or above there are also benefits.

PROVISION IS MADE in the bill to accommodate those who wish to study outside the U.S., too, but there are limitations.

Study abroad may be undertaken only at an approved institution of higher learning.

In addition, the Veterans' Administration (VA) administrator may exercise his authority to deny or discontinue the educational assistance of any veteran in a foreign school if he finds that the veteran's enrollment there is not in the "best interest" of the veteran or the government.

The veteran or serviceman is entitled to one change in the nature of the program of study he has decided upon, if he finds the original choice did not suit his aptitudes or interests.

ONE ADDITIONAL change may be made with VA approval. This second change is not a matter of right, and is allowed by the VA only in special cases.

Note well, though, that a change from one program to another when the first is prerequisite to or generally required for entrance into the second (just as a college degree is generally a prerequisite for entrance to law school though the two programs may not necessarily be related, for example) is considered a continuation of a single program of study.

Under the new G.I. bill, every eligible serviceman or veteran is entitled to education assistance for a period of one month, or the equivalent in part-time training, for each month or part of a month he served on active duty after Jan. 31, 1955. Maximum assistance is 36 months.

There is an exception to the 36-month assistance limitation.

A VETERAN WHO must complete high school to qualify for higher education may receive assistance **without** a charge against his basic entitlement.

This includes a person who has not received a high school diploma (or an equivalency certificate) at the time of his discharge from active duty.

It also permits additional secondary school training such as refresher courses needed to qualify for admission to an appropriate school.

Eligibility for educational assistance terminates eight years after the veteran's last release from active duty after Jan. 31, 1955, except that veterans released from active duty before March 3, 1966, are eligible until May 31, 1974.

Holes In Helmet Help Sergeant See The Light

By SGT. FRANK ELSTON
196th Inf. Bde.

LZ BALDY—"When I return to the field, no one is going to have to worry about me wearing my helmet."

This was the recent promise of a platoon sergeant with the 196th Inf. Bde. who kept running his fingers through three holes in his helmet while he described the action in which he was wounded.

SFC Fred L. Chance, of Columbus, Ga., with Co. B of the brigade's 3rd Bn., 21st Inf., and his platoon were checking huts during a reconnaissance in force mission northwest of Tam Ky when they were attacked by an unknown-sized enemy force. The ensuing fight lasted nearly 10 hours.

"As soon as the mortars came in, I told my men to hit the ground immediately, and just as I did so, I felt something hit the back of my helmet.

"When I reached up, I felt blood and wondered how badly I had been hit. I touched my head and all I could feel was blood, but one of my squad leaders bandaged my head and told me that shrapnel had bored three holes in my helmet and I would be all right," he said.

Soldier Gets Real 'Bargain'

DUC PHO—Though street vendors selling souvenirs are anything but uncommon in Vietnam there is one 11th Inf. Bde. soldier who will long remember a particular woman and the "bargain" she sold him.

PFC Virgil K. Dennis, a switchboard operator with the brigade at Landing Zone Sue, recently purchased a cigaret lighter from a woman in Chu Lai.

"The little old lady looked innocent enough, and I got it for a good price."

"I was on duty at the switchboard at the 4th Bn., 3rd Inf. fire base when I decided to light up. As I lit the lighter, a call came through the switchboard, so I set the lighter on a table and took the call. When the call was completed, I picked up the lighter carefully because it had gotten hot from being lit for so long," he commented.

"It was so hot that I held it horizontally to light my cigaret. Suddenly, there was an explosion, and the upper part of my lighter blew off and took a chunk out of my cheek. The other fragments nicked my nose and cost me three stitches in my finger."

A charge of powder had been placed under the wick.

"I had never left the lighter lit long enough to get the charge hot enough to explode before then. It was a good thing I had the lighter pointed away from my face, or I could have been seriously wounded," Dennis said.

A military intelligence officer has taken Dennis to Chu Lai twice to look for the vendor.

"If I ever see her again, I will be able to identify her in a second," he said.

Religion And You

Moments With The Maker

By CHAPLAIN (MAJ) M.C. BROWN, JR.
Americal Div.

IT LOOKS LIKE the lead in our effort to develop a universal item of equipment is held by the humble sandbag. It's used for protection, construction, decoration, erosion prevention and roof anchorage.

Sandbags are used for laundry bags, grease rags, police call and at church call to take up the offering; they are used as head covering, splint ties, for making walkways, muscle-building—you name it.

I'd just like to call attention by way of comparison to something of similar universal value. Call them "Moments with the Maker." They are humble in appearance but unlimited in application.

THEY OFFER protection against whatever threatens, building materials to make a more liveable life, they serve as dikes against erosion of peace, character, integrity.

They can wisk away our dirty linen, bind up broken hopes, develop muscle tone, wipe our greasy hands, "keep our lid on," give firmer footing in tough walking—you name it.

Like sand bags, "Moments with the Maker" are widely available—in a breath of prayer, a glimpse at some familiar picture or symbol, a Bible verse remembered, a snatch of truth from some moving experience.

Imagination and need team up to discover where they can prove useful. Meanwhile, lay in a good supply, and maintain a recurring requisition.

PCS Leave Limit Is 30 Days

WASHINGTON (AFN) — **A new policy** which limits leave taken between CONUS and overseas assignments, and between overseas assignments, to 30 days has been implemented by the Department of the Army.

The new policy is aimed at curbing the loss of operational manpower resulting from personnel being carried on a travel status between duty assignments.

It also makes 30 days the maximum leave time for emergency, compassionate or reenlistment leaves.

Trainees Get 15

Trainees attending Vietnam-oriented basic combat training and advanced individual training courses are now authorized a maximum of 15 days preparation of replacements for overseas movement leave.

All personnel stationed in Vietnam and Korea and transferred to other Pacific subcommands will be authorized 30 days leave in their permanent change of stationed (PCS) orders.

Under the new procedures for PCS leave, any leave taken will be charged to the soldier's old organization, and no leave will be authorized in the actual PCS orders, except for the case noted above.

Don't Sign In

Personnel granted leave by their old organization will not return to it to sign in after leave, but will proceed directly to their new unit.

Commanders have been instructed to allow all personnel all leave they are authorized.

SOUTHERN CROSS
AMERICAL DIVISION

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Determined Villagers Stop Vicious 'Enemy'

By CAPT. DENNIS M. EILERS
198th Inf. Bde.

PHUOC AN—The household of Nguyen Chi sat astride the well-worn infiltration route, and every night the enemy would come through, destroying gardens, crops and the newly-planted rice.

Something had to be done, and Nguyen called upon the help of the 198th Inf. Bde. civic action officer, MAJ Federick W. Tonsing.

"We met with Nguyen and immediately drew up a battle plan," Tonsing said.

The next night the trap was set in a small open field a short distance from Nguyen's hut. At a nearby observation post Nguyen waited as the darkness of night crept slowly into the morning. His force of 40 villagers and three dogs lay at opposite ends of the field poised for the attack.

Silently they waited. Nguyen wondered if his enemies would come again tonight.

Then they came. First a rustling in the brush, then loud noises and grunts. They were falling for the trap.

Nguyen counted them—more than 10 in all, and two big ones. Could his lightly-armed force handle them?

He gave it a try.

He signaled the attack by slowly beating two sticks together. From the left stormed the dogs. From the right came the villagers, armed only with spears and clubs.

The battle was on. Screams, yells, grunts and barking shattered the night around this small hamlet.

The yelling and screaming villagers gained the initiative and the battle soon quieted down.

Dead on the battlefield lay five wild boars. Nguyen's crops were saved from another night of destruction.

VICTORS—Nguyen Chi (second from right) and some of his fellow "soldiers" pose with three of the unfortunate victims of the "war" that the villagers declared on the crop-destroying wild boars recently. (Photo by Capt. Dennis M. Eilers, 198th Inf. Bde.)

Children's Hands Hold Key To Understanding

DUC PHO—Tiny hands are reaching half way across the world to help create a better understanding between two nations.

The hands belong to 34 Vietnamese children in Duc Pho and the children of a first grade class in St. Louis Park, Minn.

Language is no barrier.

In describing the people, customs, dress and other aspects of each country, hand drawings by the children, condensed into scrapbooks, were exchanged between the groups.

All pictures were explained with English words and the Vietnamese children went one step further and put the Vietnamese translation under the English.

The exchange project was initiated by SP4 Howard Goldberg, who works with the civic action section of the 11th Inf. Bde. Goldberg teaches English to children between 7 and 11 years old at the Catholic orphanage here.

While thinking of ways to make the classes more interesting he came up with the idea of having each pupil make an individual scrapbook. He outlined his idea in a letter to Robert M. Dougherty, principal of St. Louis Park's elementary school.

Supplies were quickly donated and shipped to the soldier for his pupils.

196th Gives Protection To Local Rice Growers

LZ BALDY—A battalion of the 196th Inf. Bde. recently teamed up with Regional and Popular Force elements to protect the rice harvesters in the Antennae Valley, five miles southwest of Hoi An.

As a result of the four-day operation, the Viet Cong were denied the use of some 66 tons of rice, and the residents of the Duc Duc District were insured a food supply.

"My people and I consider this rice harvest a great success," said CPT Triem, district chief.

"I personally feel that joint operations like this one are the most effective way of defeating the enemy and bringing peace to my country. I enjoyed working with the 196th during the rice harvest and hope we can work together again soon."

During the four days, two companies of the 4th Bn., 31st Inf. secured the high ground around the valley while two Regional Force companies and five platoons of Popular Force Soldiers provided security in the valley and the road entering it.

About 200 Vietnamese from neighboring villages harvested the rice daily.

The operation was especially important because the enemy has used the area as a principle rice supply source in recent years.

Civic Action Section Finds That 'Advertising Pays'

CHU LAI — "Advertising pays" is an axiom of the business world which has been adopted by the 198th Inf. Bde.'s civic action office.

The only difference is in the currency of the payments.

Whereas businesses shoot for a monetary profit, MAJ Frederick W. Tonsing, brigade civic action officer, hopes his advertising campaign will pay off in better health standards for Vietnamese in the Americal Div. area.

'Inside-Out'

To push his idea he uses the fundamentals of advertising in a way not too many of Madison Avenue's "hidden persuaders" have discovered—a sort of "inside-out" advertising.

"We let our 'customers'—Vietnamese children—do the advertising to sell our 'product,'" he said.

The "product" is awareness of such things as sanitation, personal hygiene, disease prevention and clean homes and cooking utensils.

Contests Held

Contests were held in the primary schools for the best posters on any type of sanitation improvement.

"We gave the children three days to complete their drawings," Tonsing said.

"Choosing the best poster was really difficult. Most of them were well done and almost all of them had unusual and interesting ideas."

Winner Picked

After deliberation, hesitation and much excitement the panel of judges picked the winner. The theme was insects as disease carriers and the use of bug spray and mosquito netting.

"We believe this program has created a little more awareness of sanitation and hygiene," Tonsing said.

"I think we might have made some sales."

Engrossed With Gifts

These young ladies are engrossed with gifts presented to the An Tan Catholic Orphanage by members of the Korean Welfare Committee of Philco-Ford in Chu Lai. According to Heuisok Rhe, chairman of the committee, the gifts were presented to "promote good relations in the village and to prove that both the Koreans and Americans are working with the Vietnamese for common goals." (Photo by Sp4 Harry E. Ottey, Jr., 523rd Sig. Bn.)

Fund Honoring Heroic ARVN Started By 11th

DUC PHO—Soldiers of the 11th Inf. Bde. have started a fund to support the widow of a South Vietnamese sergeant who gave his life to save an American officer.

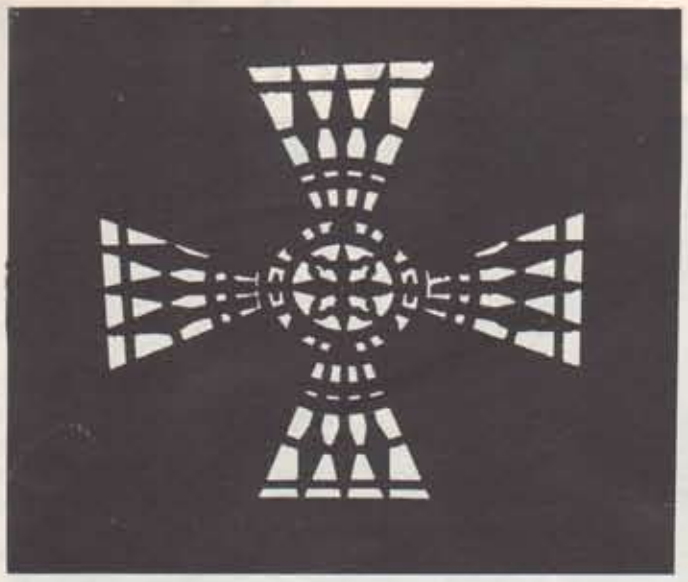
The soldier, SGT Nguyen Bien Minh, served with the 3rd Bn., 4th Inf. as an interpreter.

CPT (Chaplain) Robert H. Ackley recently returned from Saigon, where the widow and her four sons now live, to present the first 176,880 piaster installment of the fund.

SGT Minh and battalion intelligence officer CPT Michael D. Haynes, of Columbus, Ga., were with a Viet Cong suspect who was leading them to enemy spider holes. As the suspect reached down to lift the top off one hole, SGT Minh yelled "booby trap" when he saw that the lid had been rigged to explode.

Without hesitation, the tiny ARVN sergeant threw himself over the hole, his body absorbing most of the blast of the explosive.

Standing Out In War Zone



QUANG NGAI—After two major setbacks, construction on a huge cathedral here is once again ready to continue.

The building already has deep ties with the lives of the Vietnamese living in the area, even though it is only three years old and probably won't be fully completed for another two years.

When the communists hit this southern I Corps city hard during their Tet attacks, the towering semi-completed building became the gathering point for the homeless. More than 2,000 refugees from Quang Ngai and surrounding areas crowded into the area, making their homes within the building itself and on the church-owned land which rings it.

Thus construction, delayed once by the attacks themselves, was set back even further in the month following Tet.

It was only natural that the refugees were attracted to the cathedral.

At 220 feet long, 80 feet wide, and 55 feet high, with a 150-foot steeple at either end, it easily dwarfs every other building in the city, and is one of the largest structures in the I Corps area.

Also, it was designed and built entirely by the Vietnamese, with no American assistance.

It will provide the focal point for a new Catholic diocese, which will be organized in Quang Ngai to "fill the gap" between those in Da Nang and Qui Nhon.

By this time, most of the refugees have been moved—some to a new camp four miles northwest of here and some, through the efforts of the South Vietnamese government, to Cam Ranh Bay—and the workers are ready to pick up where they left off.

The Rev. Peter Chuong, a prominent Catholic clergyman in the area, said he hopes to hold his first mass in the new church by next May.

Framed By Barbed Wire And Refu

Photos By
PFC Bill Guerrant

It Offers Home For The Homeless

Refugee's Dwarfed By Cathedral's Size

Structure Stands Out In City

gee Huts, Cathedral Stands Above War

Baskets Of Grain Dry Outside Church

Scaffolding Was Used For Construction, Now Hammock Support

'Chargers' Strike

Unit Kills 123 NVA

LZ BALDY—Ground units of the 196th Inf. Bde. coupled with heavy artillery and air support to kill 123 enemy soldiers during 24 hours of continuous heavy contact in Operation Wheeler/Wallowa recently.

The fighting marked a sharp increase of enemy activity in the "Charger" area northwest of Tam Ky.

The most significant action involved the men of Co. D of the 1st Bn., 52nd Inf., who were attacked on a sweep operation and killed 86 enemy soldiers with only light casualties to themselves.

Men in a brigade observation post saw some 60 North Vietnamese soldiers moving towards the American unit from the north and a company-sized element advancing on it from the northwest.

Artillery and air strikes pounded the oncoming enemy, and the infantrymen, reinforced by another company from their battalion and a platoon from Trp. F of the brigade's 17th Cav., moved in for the mopping up.

Fighting continued until dark, when the badly-beaten enemy force moved back, leaving 86 of its dead behind. The action brought a letter of praise for the men of the battalion from GEN William C. Westmoreland, commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam.

The other kills for the brigade came in scattered action throughout the day.

Balance Act

This 4th Bn., 31st Inf. soldier does a tricky balance act crossing a stream near Hoi An. (Photo by Sp5 Donald W. Evanger, 196th Inf. Bde.)

'Ka Thump' Gives VC Tunnel Away

DUC PHO—"I know I saw that rock fall, sir. It went kinda 'ka thump, ka thump' about 25 feet into the ground."

Though PFC Paul A. Laniewicz, of Erie, Pa., had actually discovered a tunnel containing three enemy soldiers, four loaded weapons and some equipment, he was having a hard time convincing anyone.

His platoon, from the 11th Inf. Bde.'s 4th Bn., 3rd Inf., had entered a village during a search and clear mission in Operation Muscatine north of Quang Ngai.

"The platoon split up and I was probing and turning things over when a rock fell into a small hole," Laniewicz recalled.

"I heard it roll a few seconds before it stopped."

Being a new man in Co. B, Laniewicz went after the tunnel rat team and his platoon leader, 1LT Thomas Willingham, of Clark, N.J., before investigating his find.

When they arrived at the tunnel entrance, it was gone.

"Someone replaced the rock," the soldier protested. "I kicked it and it moved."

"Look, Laniewicz, you're a new man at these things. You only thought you saw it fall," Willingham said.

Laniewicz went over and kicked the rock again. It ka thumped down the shaft.

"It still didn't look like a tunnel. We had to widen the entrance before SP4 Rodney V. Linkous (of Tucson, Ariz.) could lower himself in," Willingham said.

As Linkous started in he suddenly slipped down at a 45 degree angle and landed on four loaded weapons.

"We cleared the complex and found three Viet Cong, a pistol belt with grenades and one NVA uniform," Willingham said.

"The lieutenant changed his mind about my rock going ka thump, ka thump," Laniewicz smiled.

Combat In Review

198th Infantrymen Kill Key NVA Leader

LZ WEST—Infantrymen of the 198th Inf. Bde. killed a Viet Cong Main Force battalion commander in a recent Operation Wheeler/Wallowa action near Hoi An.

The men in the reconnaissance platoon of Co. E of the 1st Bn., 52nd Inf. were searching an area for enemy weapons when they spotted two men walking towards them.

"When my men saw the enemy they set up a hasty ambush," said 1LT James A. Lockhart, the platoon leader.

"The VC entered the killing zone and the fire team sprang the ambush, killing both of them.

"The documents and papers we found indicated that one was commander of the 105th Main Force Battalion. His battalion was supposedly massing in the area," Lockhart said.

"He was also carrying a .45 cal. pistol and some hand grenades, but his documents were more important. They were a real find.

"We didn't have to search for the weapons after that. I knew that if we had killed a battalion commander, his men wouldn't be too far behind, and that they would have the weapons themselves," the platoon leader said.

VC Does 'Bang Up Job'

DUC PHO—A Viet Cong recently had a "bang up" time trying to rig up a booby trap to be used against soldiers of the 11th Inf. Bde.

Before he had finished the job, in fact, the unfortunate soldier had not only set up the booby trap, but he had set it off, killing himself and revealing the hiding place of five weapons in the process.

Co. C of the brigade's 3rd Bn., 1st Inf. was on a mission north of Duc Pho when the infantrymen heard an explosion near their position. Investigating, they found a dead Viet Cong at the entrance to a tunnel.

"Obviously, Charlie was fixing a booby trap to catch American troops and caught himself instead," explained 1LT David Fena.

"We appreciate everything they do for us. They're just dying to get on our casualty list."

Soldiers Stop Enemy Force

LZ CENTER—Quick reactions and tiger aggressiveness were the key factors when a 198th Inf. Bde. platoon surprised and routed a North Vietnamese unit northwest of Chu Lai.

"We had started down a mountain trail," recalled 1LT Ernie I. Carrier, of Benton, La.

"Suddenly, there was Charlie. My point element reacted first and laid down a heavy base of fire. The enemy soldiers who weren't killed were confused and tried to run.

"I contacted a helicopter that was in the area and it got ahead of them. When the enemy hid in the heavy underbrush, we stuck our noses in and kept more pressure on him than he could handle," said the platoon leader with Co. C of the 1st Bn., 6th Inf.

Some 17 North Vietnamese regulars were killed that day and not one American required hospitalization.

Greetings

The shell below was loaded (left) and fired (right) by the men of the 3rd Bn., 16th Arty. as a "birthday present" for North Vietnamese President Ho Chi Minh. It was fired in support of Operation Wheeler/Wallowa. (Photo by Sp5 John Stanton, 3rd Bn., 16th Arty.)

Too 'Short' For Bad Luck

DUC PHO—No matter how "short" a man gets in Vietnam, the unexpected can still happen, as CPT Vernon A. Campbell, of Patton, Me., found out on his last day in the field.

The men of Campbell's Co. A of the 11th Inf. Bde.'s 4th Bn., 3rd Inf., had made a combat assault north of the Tra Khuc River five miles west of Quang Ngai. As he and his men moved along a jungle trail, Campbell stepped on the cardboard top of a C-ration box.

SUDDENLY, THERE was a flash and bang, and the captain was knocked off his feet.

"It sounded like three blasting caps going off at once. We all froze, and when I looked around I saw a small cloud of smoke, then there was more smoke and a sputtering sound off to one side of the trail," he said.

THE SMOKE AND sputtering were coming from a 4.2 inch mortar shell. Campbell had stepped on the igniter of a booby trap.

"After a while, the sputtering stopped and the shell didn't explode."

But the captain's day wasn't over yet.

"We started to move out of the area, checking carefully for more booby traps. Then I stepped into a punji pit."

LUCKILY, THE punji pits, with their hidden eight-inch spikes, were old.

"Another man and I were cut by them, but not seriously," Campbell said.

Campbell is now assigned to Americal Div. headquarters as a briefing officer in the division's intelligence section. He had been with his company for more than a year, from training at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, to arrival in Vietnam last December.

"I HATE TO leave the company. Some people may think I used up all my luck that day, but as far as I'm concerned, I've still got plenty left. It probably wouldn't happen again if I stayed for two more years," he said.

He had one more comment on his last day in the field:

"Oh, I forgot to mention it. That night, we got mortared."

Hey, Suzy

Sweet Suzy Kendall, in a scene from her latest movie, "30 is a Dangerous Age, Cynthia." She would, of course, be in no danger in Vietnam. (Picture Courtesy Columbia Picture Corp.)

Dogs Watch Over Soldiers

By 1st LT. STEVE MEEHAN
198th Inf. Bde.

CHU LAI — Although Bill stands only three feet at the shoulder, he and the other 25 short "infantrymen" in his platoon have saved the lives of many 198th Inf. Bde. soldiers.

Nobody in this platoon of midgets has any rank and none speaks a word of English, or Vietnamese. They are all members of the 57th Inf. Plt. (Scout Dog), operating in the Americal Div. area.

The dogs arrived in Vietnam in early March and underwent two weeks of refresher training on booby trap detection, alerting for Viet Cong and finding tunnels.

Following the training the dogs and their handlers moved to the field for some live action. Walking the point position on patrol, the dogs have spotted four Viet Cong ambushes before the trap could be sprung.

Their alerts have led to the capture of 29 weapons and 11 enemy soldiers and the discovery of more than 2,000 pounds of food, in addition to the deaths of 32 enemy soldiers.

11th Rakes In Three Enemy Salt Caches

DUC PHO—Units of the 11th Inf. Bde. gathered in more than 150 tons of hidden salt in three separate actions at the end of April and beginning of May.

The military significance of the finds was underscored by a brigade civic action officer who noted that there are no salt mines in Vietnam.

"The VC have to rely on what they can gather along the seacoast by evaporating salt water," said Capt. Winston Gonzoules of the 4th Bn. 3rd Inf.

Back To GVN

All of the vital salt was turned over to governmental authorities for distribution to refugees in southern Quang Ngai Province.

The largest haul of the three was made by the men of the newly-arrived 4th Bn., 21st Inf., when they discovered 85 tons of salt stockpiled on the shore of the South China Sea some 10 miles southeast of here.

Warlords Find Cache

The other two finds were made in the area on the Batangan Peninsula northeast of Quang Ngai by the "Warlords" of the 123rd Avn. Bn.'s "Aero Scout" company and the men of Co. B of the 11th Bde.'s 4th Bn., 3rd Inf.

The finds came within one day of each other as the soldiers moved into the area for combat operations.

More than 5,000 bags of salt were loaded into helicopters and evacuated.

The high-flying "Warlords" also discovered a processing plant along the coast.

Last Kiss

Sp4 Clifford Hamlett, with the 198th Inf. Bde.'s newly-arrived 5th Bn., 46th Inf., closes his eyes to savor the last kiss coming his way for a year. The donor was a stewardess on the airplane which brought the battalion to Vietnam. (Photo by Sp5 Gary Befus, 198th Inf. Bde.)

VC 'Turnpike' Yields Rice

LZ CENTER—Soldiers of 198th Inf. Bde. recently uncovered a tunnel system that "looked like a turnpike" and contained enough hidden rice to feed all the citizens of a nearby hamlet complex.

The find was made by members of Co. C of the brigade's 1st Bn., 6th Inf. operating about 20 miles west of Tam Ky as a part of the Americal Div. Operation Wheeler/Wallowa.

The food was evacuated through four miles of enemy territory through a joint American-Vietnamese effort.

Halted For Lunch

Company commander CPT Carl A. Gruggel, of Pittsburgh, Pa., had just halted his men for lunch when the discovery was made.

"One of the men sat down on what he thought was a soft spot in the grass, and it turned out to be the tunnel entrance," Gruggel said.

"Compared to most tunnels we've found, this one looked like a turnpike.

"There was a room at the end of the tunnel that contained 132 bags of polished rice. The bags were too heavy to carry, so we used buckets to move the rice out," he said.

2 Tons Total

MAJ Frederick W. Tonsing, brigade civic action officer, said the tunnel contained a total of two tons of rice.

There was enough to give each resident of a three-hamlet complex in the Ni Lac Son area, near where the rice was found, two pounds.

A "convoy" made up of two squads of the 1/6 Inf. company, a platoon of Popular Force soldiers and about 600 of the villagers carried the rice back to the village with only minor resistance from the enemy.

Gimlets

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from the DMZ.

"Our assigned mission was to seize and hold Nhi Ha," said LTC William P. Snyder, battalion commander.

"We captured the village after some fierce fighting and held on to it despite some pretty desparate attempts by the enemy to get it back."

The battalion is credited with completely destroying an NVA battalion in its initial assault on the village.

Battalion officials have classified the action in three separate phases.

"The first phase came when we took the village. That took four days in all. The second phase was the patrols Co. A ran north of the area once we were in, and the third phase was when we held off the NVA when they tried to retake the village," Snyder said.

The action was a part of Operation Napoleon-Saline, controlled by the 3rd Marine Regiment.

'Dragoons' Commander Leaves In Early July

HILL 29—LTC Walter C. Cousland, who has commanded the 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav. Dragoons for the past six months in the coastal lowlands of Southern I Corps, will leave the first week in July for a Pentagon assignment.

Successor to Cousland will be LTC Richard D. Lawrence, a veteran of the Korean War, where he served with the 6th Cav.

One of the most battle-honored units in the Army, the 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav. will complete its first year of Vietnam service in August.

During the past year as the Americal Div.'s mobile armored strike force it has added to its already distinguished combat record.

Working from its base camp here—dubbed "Hawk Hill" for the unit crest of the Blackhawk—located about 35 miles northwest of Chu Lai, the mechanized squadron of armored cavalry assault vehicles (ACAV's) and M-48 tanks has used firepower and mobility to effectively control a brigade-sized area with a battalion-sized unit.

"We have fought them all—Viet Cong local forces and main forces and North Vietnamese regular forces," said Cousland, who assumed command of the Dragoons last Dec. 31.

Boasting the highest kill ratio in the Americal Div., about 40-1, the soldiers of the squadron have killed more than 2,100 enemy, while sustaining themselves 59 dead. They have earned nearly one Purple Heart for every man in the unit.

Koster

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and Bold" brigade, was transferred to Long Binh and is now working in the intelligence section of the U.S. Army, Vietnam.

BG George H. Young, Jr., former assistant division commander, assumed command of the division on the departure of MG Koster.

The 196th and 198th brigades are now commanded by Colonels Frederick J. Kroesen and Charles B. Thomas.

Assumes Command

CHU LAI—LTC Arthur E. Jones assumed command of the 198th Inf. Bde.'s 1st Bn., 14th Arty., in recent ceremonies near here. He replaced LTC William H. Embley.

Soldier Slips Past Enemy Night Perimeter

LZ COLT—A 196th Inf. Bde. soldier crawled all night through enemy-infested territory after becoming separated from his unit in recent heavy fighting five miles south of the demilitarized zone.

SGT Charles Desmond, of Boston, Mass., said that when he started his mile-long journey from the wrong side of a North Vietnamese perimeter he could "see the NVA and hear some of them talking."

After clearing the enemy-held area, the soldier hid in a river until the following morning.

"I was so scared I was shaking all over and that caused the water to ripple," said the squad leader with the brigade's 3rd Bn., 21st Inf.

"I thought that would give my position away, so I kept telling myself, 'if you want to live, stop shaking.'"

In addition to the enemy threat, Desmond had to worry about a U.S. pilot who saw him making his way through a rice paddy, and, thinking he was an enemy soldier, began to drop flares.

"The plane circled me for quite a while but when I got to the river I lost it," Desmond said.

The sergeant became separated from his company during an assault on a fortified village.

"We were going after a bunker from which they had opened up on us," he related.

"One of my men was hit, and I crawled over to him, but he was dead when I got there. I noticed that the fire to my rear was subsiding, but I was still drawing fire from the bunker.

"I threw a grenade at the bunker and then made my way to a bomb crater for more cover. I began to understand that my company had pulled back, not realizing that I was still up there," he recalled.

"I yelled at two soldiers in some elephant grass to my left who I thought were Americans because they wore steel pots and jungle fatigues, but when they looked in my direction I saw they were NVA. I opened up and dropped both of them."

As it was starting to get dark and the firing had completely ceased, Desmond decided his best bet was to stay in the bomb crater.

"I figured I would stay there till dark, then try to get out," he said.

"When it was dark enough, I took off all my equipment and kept my weapon and two magazines and started to crawl. I could see the NVA and hear some of them talking."

Desmond managed to clear the perimeter undetected and slowly made his way back to the vicinity of his company's perimeter.

"I was only about 500 meters from our position when the plane spotted me and started dropping flares. I knew if I tried to make it back to the company they would probably shoot at me thinking I was an NVA, so I made my way to the river and hid until daylight," he said.

When morning came, some soldiers went to the river to get water and brought the shaken but unharmed soldier back to the friendly perimeter.

"I was really scared but I just tried not to lose my head. I tried to get out of each situation as it arose," the sergeant said.

Desmond's exploits came during 10 days of heavy fighting five miles from the DMZ which cost the enemy a total of 579 killed and 139 weapons captured in a running battle for control of the village of Nhi Ha.