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SOUTHERN CROSS

AMERICAL DIVISION

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Cavalry Forces Kill 61 NVA

HILL 29—Americal Div. air and ground cavalrymen trapped and killed 61 North Vietnamese regulars recently in a close-in, 11-hour battle described by their commander as a "classic cavalry action."

Jet bombers supporting the 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav. "Dragoons" and the "Blue Ghosts" of Trp. F of the 8th Cav. accounted for another seven kills in the first significant action in the division's area in several days.

The fight started early July 23 when an enemy force began pelting a Trp. A platoon with recoilless rifle fire from a hill-top west of here.

Engineer Company

"We have reason to believe the force was an NVA engineer company, and I think the only reason it fired at my platoon was to scare it out of the area," said LTC Richard D. Lawrence, "Dragoon" commander.

The mobility of the ground cavalry and the quick reactions of the air outfit combined to give the enemy soldiers more than they had bargained for.

"We got the remainder of Trp. A on the road quickly, and hit the enemy with artillery, jet strikes and the 'Blue Ghost' gunships while the tracks were enroute," Lawrence said.

"I don't think the enemy had planned on a sustained contact, and I think he was pretty surprised at the classic cavalry swiftness."

Work With Dragoons

The "Blue Ghosts" are assigned to the division's 123rd Avn. Bn. and work under the operational control of the "Dragoons," primarily as a reconnaissance element.

The remainder of Trp. A joined with its 2nd platoon, and, enlisting the aid of the gunships and artillery fire, ringed the enemy soldiers and went in after them.

"There was very little contact for a while, then some of our gunships discovered movement to the south. The ground units adjusted their positions and surrounded the enemy again," said MAJ Harold J. Earlywood, "Blue Ghost" commander.

No Escapes

This time, no one escaped the trap.

The cavalrymen dismounted, and, with the aerial-rifle platoon from the "Blue Ghost" troop, began searching bunkers and spider holes for the enemy.

"We had hit them so hard they were completely disorganized. My men moved from bunker to bunker and spider hole to spider hole and mopped them up. We killed several with grenades thrown in bunkers, and several by simply going in after them," said CPT George Kaczer, of Spokane, Wash., Trp. A commander.

Kaczer said he and the men

(Continued on Page 8)

WORK TOGETHER—A Cayuse observation helicopter from the 8th Cav.'s Trp. F hovers near a thicket while ground soldiers of the 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav. go in to recover the body of a Viet Cong killed by the air cavalrymen. A combined action such as this accounted for 68 enemy kills recently. (Photo by Sp4 Bill Guerrant, Photo Editor)

Vietnamese Police Unit Helping 11th

LZ BRONCO—"Jungle Warriors" engaged in intensive search missions are getting help from a new platoon of Vietnamese policemen.

A platoon from the Vietnamese National Police Field Force (NPFF), a highly-trained team of combat policemen from Quang Ngai, is currently under the operational control of the 11th Inf. Bde.'s provost marshal.

The first 24 NPFF's arrived here recently and underwent a week's training in airmobile operations and an orientation on brigade operations in southern Quang Ngai Province.

Highly Trained

MAJ John L. Pittman, brigade provost marshal, said the policemen are "highly trained and efficient. Their training combines both police work and infantry tactics for functioning in a combat situation, especially in counter-insurgency operations.

"They are not trained or equipped as assault troops, but are intended to work in a supporting role with the infantry."

The platoon's specialists,

(Continued on Page 8)

Heavy Enemy Fire

Daring Pilot Saves Marines

LZ BALDY—Teamwork by Army, Air Force and Marine aviation units combined recently with a daring individual effort by an Americal Div. helicopter pilot to pull eight Marines from the jaws of a trap being closed by 50 North Vietnamese regulars.

WO Leon Schoenborn, of Columbus, Ga., made two runs under intense enemy fire to pick up the leathernecks from the 1st Recon. Bn. of the 1st Marine Div.

The fighting was so heavy that the rescue was delayed twice while the supporting gunships from the 71st Avn. Co. returned to LZ Baldy to rearm and refuel.

Schoenborn is also a part of the 71st Avn. Co., and had been flying a flareship helicopter in support of the 196th Inf. Bde. when the emergency call was sounded by the Marines.

Heavy Fire

An Air Force "Spooky" flareship took over the illumination chores for Schoenborn as he prepared to move in for the pickup. As his ship went down, enemy automatic weapons beban blasting away from all sides.

"I told him to abort the mission, but he elected to stay and try," said WO James M. Collins, Jr., of San Antonio, Tex., the commander of the gunships.

The delay in boarding caused by the hostile fire forced Schoenborn back into the air after only three of the Marines had boarded.

Used Ammo

The gunships used up all their ammunition covering the first attempt, and were forced back to Baldy for more. They had already rearmed once.

When the aircraft returned to the scene, the men on the ground reported that the majority of enemy movement had shifted to higher ground. The gunships attacked under Air Force illumination.

As the enemy force began closing in on the leathernecks, Schoenborn once again made the trip down.

"We moved in with all our guns firing, and the rescue came off fast. We used up all our ammo protecting them on the second run, too," Collins said.

Triple Punch Kills 17

LZ DOTTIE—Army infantrymen, Navy swift boats and Air Force jet bombers teamed up in an operation near here to hit a Viet Cong unit with a triple punch.

The combined attack left 17 enemy dead.

The fighting broke out when an Air Force forward air controller saw about 40 enemy soldiers about eight miles northeast of Quang Ngai.

Eight air strikes hit the area and destroyed some 103 enemy structures and fortifications. Following the strikes, the men of Co. A of the 198th Inf. Bde.'s 5th Bn., 46th Inf. were airlifted to the seaside area shortly before dark to search for the fleeing enemy.

Gunships provided overhead firepower during the early stage of the battle.

Shortly before midnight, the Viet Cong hit the company's position with small arms and automatic weapons fire. Again gunships were called in, and, with the help of flareship helicopters, they drove off the enemy.

Throughout the action, U.S. Navy swift boats blocked the enemy's chance of escaping along the South China Sea coast, and ARVN junks patrolled the river lagoon to the south.

Like New

This stretch of Highway 1 near Mo Duc has been made "like new" by soldiers of the 39th Engr. Bn. (Photo by Sp4 James Leahy, 39th Engr. Bn.)

MAT Advisers' Role

By SP4 JOHN NICHOLSON
Staff Writer

The many headlines about fighting men in Vietnam tend to overlook an individual who is also helping the South Vietnamese government and army—the U.S. military adviser.

The Mobile Advisory Team (MAT) is made up of five of these men—a captain, a lieutenant, a light weapons NCO, a heavy weapons NCO and a medic—whose primary job is to help Regional Force (RF) and Popular Force (PF) units establish training programs.

The teams are formed in Vietnam and sent to Long Binh for special training by a group of advisers who have been in in Vietnam six months and have worked with RF-PF units.

They are then sent to a specific district and are placed under the supervision of the district adviser. An ARVN officer and interpreter are assigned to assist them.

A MAT bases its operations at the RF group headquarters or the district headquarters.

The team's primary concern is the mission of the RF-PF units in its district. It usually first observes the operations and training of the units, then determines what additional training is needed, tailoring it to fit local needs.

Typical training given to an RF company or PF platoon consists of marksmanship, patrolling and search and secure procedures. The MAT's also advise the RF group headquarters in logistics, personnel management and tactical employment of RF companies and PF platoons.

The teams do not do any of the actual training themselves, but limit their roles to that of advisers.

They are permanently assigned to their specific province and are replaced by new ones when they return to the U.S.

Skilled Men Package Water

By SP4 KEVIN HOWE
11th Inf. Bde.

LZ BRONCO—Soldiers fighting in the tropics have depended, since time immemorial, on a substantial water supply.

The British Indian Army used native water bearers in the late 1800's, a system immortalized in Rudyards Kipling's poem, "Gunga Din."

But the U.S. Army in Vietnam has come a long way from the leather waterbag hauled into battle by Gunga Din. His modern counterparts are skilled technicians, who purify and package this vital fluid.

The task of supplying water to the men of the 11th Inf. Bde. falls on the shoulders of two small detachments here—water purification teams of Co. C of the 26th Engr. Bn. and the 29th Engr. Det.

These two teams process 36,000 gallons of clear, pure drinking water each day, in addition to non-potable water for washing and other purposes.

The units maintain two semi-stationary purification plants mounted on specially built 2½ ton truck bodies. All equipment necessary for purifying water is contained in these plants.

CPL Donald E. Combs, of Newport, Ky., head of the 26th Engr. Bn. team, described the purification process in detail.

"First, we pump the water from the creek to a chemical mixing tank, where we add limestone and ferric chloride, which are coagulants; calcium hypochlorite, a disinfectant; and activated carbon, which removes objectional tastes and odors," he said.

"All this is then pumped to a sedimentation tank, where the disinfectants kill germs, the coagulants break up the bacteria in the water and impurities settle to the bottom. Some of this water overflows and is used as non-potable water. The rest goes through a final filtering process and is used for drinking."

Combs added that the filtering process "is the only difference between the drinking and non-potable water, unless the non-potable is drawn directly from the creek."

In addition to their vans and pumping equipment, the nine men in the two teams have built a concrete retaining dam across the creek.

"We were afraid the water level might fall too low in the dry season, but we won't have to worry about that with the dam," said PFC Samuel E. Cavanaugh, of Marion, Ind.

SP4 Jerry J. Pearson, of Aurora, Wisc., said the area has "one of the worst water sources in the division," but "the end product has always been pure.

"Right now, this water point is rated tops in the division, considering the quality of the supply, the amount we produce and the fact that we've never had a case of sickness caused by our water," said the head of the 29th Engr. Det. team.

The two machines each use 36 pounds of chemicals during their daily 12-hour operation, and produce 1,500 gallons of water an hour.

The teams recently completed a new 600-gallon-an-hour trailer-mounted mobile water purification unit, which can be used in forward areas where large amounts of water are needed for troop operations.

Hot Feeling Not Heartburn

LZ GATOR—For a 198th Inf. Bde. soldier on a search and clear mission near Chu Lai, a hot, burning sensation wasn't heartburn—it was a substitute for death.

SP4 George J. Snellenberger, an assistant machinegunner with Co. C of the 1st Bn., 52nd Inf., was moving into a defensive perimeter when enemy machinegun and rifle fire sprayed the area.

As the firing continued, Snellenberger suddenly felt a hot, burning sensation on his forehead, followed by a trickle of blood running down his face.

"An AK-47 rifle round hit me, but my helmet stopped it just in time," he said.

"I was stunned for a second, but recovered and started crawling backward with my head buried in the ground."

Moving a little farther out of range, Snellenberger pulled the age-old safety remedy against enemy fire.

"I just curled up into a tight little ball and hid under my helmet," he said.

Pick Up Time

A Chinook moves in to pick up soldiers of the 11th Inf. Bde.'s 3rd Bn., 1st Inf. after an operation west of Duc Pho. (Photo by Sp5 Al Holloway, 11th Inf. Bde.)

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AMERICAL DIVISION

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Informant Program 'Bringing In The Rounds'

PSYOPS TRUCK—A loudspeaker truck from the 11th Inf. Bde. enters Mo Duc to broadcast information on the VIP program. (Photo by Sp5 Al Holloway, 11th Inf. Bde.)

By SP4 DEAN POHLAND
11th Inf. Bde.

DUC PHO—The young boy's bright, eager eyes looked expectantly at the driver of the lone 3/4 ton truck.

He might have been one of the thousands of Vietnamese children who flock around Army vehicles in any one of hundreds of villages, looking for candy, cigarettes or any other type of handout.

But this little lad was different, for instead of outstretched and empty, his tiny hands clutched two deadly Viet Cong 82mm mortar rounds, and what he received was not candy, but cold, hard Vietnamese cash.

SP4 Charles Kinney, of Newark, N.J., turned and gingerly lifted the rounds over the tailgate of the truck and placed them carefully in a large sandbox.

Pocket Money

"That little guy has picked up a lot of pocket money so far this week. I don't know where he gets the staff, but every time we stop here he always brings a load of hand grenades, mortar rounds or ammunition," he said.

The 11th Inf. Bde.'s Volunteer Informant Program (VIP) has to be classified as an "unqualified success."

Every day the psychological operations truck, equipped with powerful loudspeakers, rumbles along Highway 1 in the "Jungle Warriors" area broadcasting its appeal for arms, ammunition and explosives.

Teams Get Rounds

Since the program began four months ago, two-man teams from the 7th Psychological Operations Battalion in Da Nang have recovered hundreds of artillery, mortar, antitank weapon, recoilless rifle and RPG rounds and thousands of rounds of small arms ammunition in addition to tons of explosives, mines and booby traps.

A little farther down the road a Vietnamese youth struggled toward the truck with a dud 175mm cannon round. SP5 Ken Gibson, of Kansas City, Mo., helped him load the 147-pound projectile into the truck.

"When we get live rounds we deprive Charlie directly, but the duds can be made into booby traps so we're glad to get these too," he said.

Helped In Work

Gibson and Kinney are aided in their work by two former enemy soldiers who handle most of the broadcasting and interpreting.

"In each new area we try to establish pick-up points where we stop every time we pass through. Once this has been done the program is self-sustaining and we turn it over to the area Civil Affairs office and move on to another territory," Kinney said.

Kinney hastens to point out the difference between PSYOPS' long-range plans and short-range results.

Better Vietnam

"Lots of munitions collected and Hoi Chan rallyers look good on paper, but what we are actually trying to do is penetrate every level of society and help the people create a more viable Vietnam," he said.

The PSYOP personnel may use many different techniques to achieve this end. In the recently-completed Operation Golden Fleece they persuaded the Vietnamese to pitch in and defend their rice crops from the Viet Cong tax collectors.

Working closely with the Vietnamese Information Service and the Joint U.S. Public Affairs Office (JUSPAO), PSYOPS provides everything from news programs to minstrel shows in order to attract the attention of the people.

Hard To Measure

"It's hard to measure our success in tangibles," Kinney said.

"A smile from a farmer who has just heard a Vietnamese language news program or taped music show, or an understanding nod from a woman as she listens to one of Vice President Ky's speeches is the only way we can gauge our results."

Farmers Get New Rice Seed

LZ BALDY—Farmers in the village Phu Hiep are participating in an experiment which is expected to increase Vietnamese rice production by nearly a third in the next few years.

Members of the 51st Civil Affairs Plt., working with the 196th Inf. Bde., recently introduced a new Philippine rice seed to the farmers of this small community.

The Philippine seed grows considerably faster than the seed which is currently being used.

Extra Crop

This speed will enable the farmers to grow an extra rice crop each season. They presently harvest two crops each season.

"If the farmers use the new rice properly, their yield should increase by one third," said SFC Steven J. Vinnings, of Augusta, Ga., with the 51st CA Plt.

He said the seed was introduced to the Philippines several years ago and its success there has led to its shipment to Vietnam.

Will Use Again

One local farmer, Nguyen Van Phu, has found the seed to his liking and plans to use it again next season.

The village chief told the Americans that his people are responding well to the seed and he expects more of them to take advantage of it next season.

'Charger' Gives English Classes In Local Hamlet

FSB CENTER—A member of the 196th Inf. Bde. recently started giving classes in conversational English to the residents of the village Binh Lam.

SP4 Bert C. Anderson, of Harwood Heights, Ill., heads a small civil affairs team for the 3rd Bn., 21st Inf. His team provides liaison with Vietnamese fighting units in the area and is also responsible for organizing and supplying materials for civic action programs conducted throughout the area.

The English classes were organized in early June as part of the civic action program.

Most of the students in the twice-weekly classes are children who "are very eager to learn and catch on quickly," the soldier said.

A few of the students are adults.

"I think these classes help our relations with the Vietnamese quite a bit," Anderson commented.

He is assisted in his work by an ARVN interpreter.

The local schoolteacher said he was very glad that the classes could be offered and he hoped they could be continued.

Villagers Unite To Help Insure Safety From VC

LZ BAYONET — Uniting under the banner of self-reliance, 1,200 Vietnamese are insuring safer lives for residents of three villages in the Ly Tin District.

The 1,200 are members of the Self Defense Forces, formed to instill pride and act as a police force against Viet Cong tax collectors and recruiters.

They were trained by Vietnamese district military personnel to assume full responsibility for the security and protection of their homes.

"We are proud of these people's efforts," a 198th Inf. Bde. spokesman said.

"They initiated the action and completed it on their own. Their desire to assume responsibility is outstanding."

PRUITT TAKES OVER

CHU LAI—LTC James R. Pruitt assumed command of the 3rd Bn., 18th Arty., in late July ceremonies.

He replaced LC Benjamin T. Meadows, who was awarded the Legion of Merit and an Air Medal with five oak leaf clusters by MG Charles W. Gettys, division commander.

YOUTH BRINGS ROUNDS—A Vietnamese youth brings ammunition to the 11th Inf. Bde. VIP team. (Photo by Sp5 Al Holloway, 11th Inf. Bde.)

High Flyi

Gunship banks to start run

Gunship crew sights weapon

Maintenance is a never-ending task

'Warlord' OH-23 searche

CHU LAI—The men of the 123rd Avn. Bn. make their presence known daily to both enemy and friendly troops throughout the Americal Div. area of operations.

Their duties range from finding the enemy to destroying him and from resupplying isolated landing zones to providing transportation for division personnel.

The battalion is made up of the Co. A "Pelicans," the Co. B "Warlords," the Trp. F, 8th Cav. "Blue Ghosts," a signal detachment, a transportation detachment and a headquarters element.

Organic Aviation

It was organized early this year as the division's organic aviation unit from outfits already in the area. It is commanded by LTC John N. Brandenberg.

The Co. A "Pelicans" are responsible for general air support for the division. Their duties include resupply, road patrol, the transportation of VIP's and the providing of aircraft for the various courier flights from Chu Lai.

Their efforts are often unsung, but nonetheless represent a vital cog in the air support of the fighting soldiers of the Army's only named division.

For instance, they fly nearly 50 tons of cargo each week.

Take War To VC

The high-flying "Warlords," the only aero-scout company in Vietnam, are equipped to take the war right to the enemy's doorstep.

The company carries its own infantry, reconnaissance and firepower support elements in one neat, three-helicopter package.

Using the standard OH-23 observation helicopter, the Co. B "Warlords'" primary mission is reconnaissance. Teams

ng Support

Smoke guides in resupply chopper

s for traces of the enemy

Air traffic controller watches chopper land

of two gunships and one OH-23 scour the division area for traces of the enemy, and the mobile aerial-rifle section is available for closer inspection when it is needed.

Though the company's duties are primarily reconnaissance, and not combat, its members have accounted for more than their share of kills in action which has been centered mainly in the southern part of the division's area of operations.

Other Support

The "Blue Ghosts" of Trp. F, 8th Cav., though assigned to the battalion for organizational purposes, are attached to the 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav., and more will be said about them in a later issue.

The 449th Sig. Det. provides avionics support for the battalion's aircraft. Though the scope of the signalmen's mission has greatly increased as the size of the battalion has increased, they have never failed in the vital job of keeping the aviators "on the air."

The 406th TC Det. "Roadrunners" keep the battalion in the air and on the go. The detachment provides direct support for the battalion, and calls no job short of entirely rebuilding an aircraft too large or too small.

Personnel from the battalion also are responsible for the operation of the Ky Ha tower, which controls much of the helicopter traffic coming in and out of Chu Lai.

Story and Photos
by
Southern Cross
Staff

Courier run leaves Chu Lai daily

Combat In Review

Back To Salt Mines For Enemy

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

LZ BOWMAN—It's back to the salt mines for a group of unwary Viet Cong in the 198th Inf. Bde.'s area southwest of here.

A patrol led by 2LT John L. King, of Slaton, Tex., caught the enemy with an unguarded cache and captured nearly seven tons of salt.

The tipoff to the cache came three days earlier when a forward air controller saw several suspects gathering in an unoccupied hamlet. The same group was seen for the next two days, and on the third day, the 1st Bn., 52nd Inf. unit, led by King, moved quickly.

"We went into the area and cordoned it off," King said. "Then we began our search and found the salt."

Detainees taken in the action reported that the salt was stored in the cache during the day, then moved by night to enemy units hiding in the mountains.

The salt was turned over to the Son Tin District headquarters for redistribution to local villagers.

Search Of Rubble Yields Surprise

FSB CENTER—A careful search of rubble can turn up a variety of objects, soldiers from the 196th Inf. Bde. proved recently.

"We had just taken Hill 406, the last of three hills which had been havens for the enemy. We were searching through the rubble when one of my men started digging around an odd-shaped piece of metal sticking out of the ground," said SGT Roderick Wetmore, of Spokane, Wash., a squad leader with Co. D of the brigade's 3rd Bn., 21st Inf.

"As he continued digging, he discovered that he had found a 12.7mm heavy machinegun, probably the one that had been used against us by an enemy sniper."

Chargers Search

These 196th Inf. Bde. soldiers search for a trace of the enemy during Operation Wheeler/Wallowa. (Photo by Sp5 Donald Evanger, 196th Inf. Bde.)

Gray 'Rocks' Volatile Find

FSB WEST—Soldiers searching a former enemy base camp in the Que Son Valley recently, uncovered a unique explosive used by the North Vietnamese.

The men of Co. B of the 4th Bn., 31st Inf. had discovered the abandoned enemy camp in a mountain canyon above the valley.

While searching grass huts in the camp, "Polar Bear" infantrymen discovered a concealed opening in a floor. They entered and found a room containing 600 pounds of polished rice, cooking utensils, medical supplies and a bin filled with what appeared to be a collection of light gray rocks.

"When my men started talking about an NVA rock collection I knew there was more to it than met the eye," recalled CPT John Wolfe, of Marcellus, Mich., the company commander.

Looked At Rocks

"I looked at the 'rocks' but couldn't figure them out, so I called on my radio-telephone operator, who had been a geology major in college," he said.

The RTO concluded that the rocks were probably natural and that the gray matter was probably organic. After studying them, he chipped off a piece of one and put a match to it.

"It started burning like C-4," Wolfe said.

Examined

He sent some of the rocks to battalion headquarters to be examined.

"About two weeks later, we were notified that we had found an NVA-used high explosive called 'heleite,' and, for the most part, that the rocks were a natural substance found chiefly in North Vietnam," Wolfe said.

Soldier Learns 'Sleeping Safety'

FSB WEST—A soldier in the 196th Inf. Bde. recently learned just how important picking a safe place to sleep can be.

The men of Co. B of the brigade's 4th Bn., 31st Inf. had set up a night defensive position after taking a hill near here, and SSG Eugene Mathis, of Merdec, Calif., and SP4 George W. Perry, of East St. Louis, Ill., had chosen a sleeping area.

They were sound asleep until awakened by an early-arriving helicopter.

When Perry got up, he noticed a thin wire running under his air matress.

"He checked it out and discovered that it ran to a hidden 106mm round which I had been sleeping on," Mathis said.

"If Mathis had rolled around too much during the night, it would have been the end of all of us," Perry commented.

"You can bet I'm going to be more careful where I sleep from now on," grinned the "Charger" platoon sergeant.

Men Make Best Of 'Inches'

LZ BAYONET—The difference between life and death in Vietnam is often a matter of inches, and two 198th Inf. Bde. soldiers recently found themselves barely on the right side of the scale.

1LT Sidney George and PFC Harlan Heinz wree the lucky ones during a battle southwest of Da Nang where 98 North Vietnamese regulars were killed by the men of two 1st Bn., 52nd Inf. companies fighting in Operation Wheeler/Wallowa.

"My platoon was pinned down," George said.

"My RTO and I were the only ones moving. As I peeked through a hole in one of the dikes, a bullet took off my rifle's flash supressor, which was about three inches from my face.

"When he heard the noise my RTO turned around and said my face was a complete blank."

As George was manuevering, Heinz attempted to move from his pinned-down position.

"My squad leader needed to move back, so I covered him. I was firing from my knees when a bullet knocked me over. It didn't touch me, though, as my web gear stopped it. I just got a few fragment scratches," he said.

Heinz picked himself up and crawled back to safety with bullets hitting all around.

"I'm lucky they were bad shots," he commented.

To relieve his platoon from its position George and a handful of men charged the enemy position up a partially concealed trench.

"I was sure we were going to get shot, but we had to take that position. Bullets were going over our heads, but when we got there they were all gone," he said.

Regulars 'Lower Boom'

HILL 69—Six 198th Inf. Bde. soldiers "lowered the boom" on some unwelcomed visitors trying to slip past their night defenses recently.

The six caught an enemy force in a draw underneath their bunkers and killed 17 in a furious 15 minutes of pitching grenades.

The Co. A, 1st Bn., 6th Inf. "Regulars" used more than 200 grenades to foil the enemy attempt to enter their perimeter. Their grenadier fired another 80 rounds into the attackers.

"Our platoon leader and sergeant rushed over with a machinegun and more grenades," said SGT Phillip G. Martocci, "but by then it was almost over. The machinegun, however, got six as they tried to get away."

A patrol the next morning captured a Viet Cong who said more dead and wounded had been carried away during the night.

Playing Catch

Soldiers from the 11th Inf. Bde. play a game of catch refilling their canteens from a mountain stream. (Photo by Sp4 Larry Mollner, 11th Inf. Bde.)

Support Soldier Risks Life Each Day For Men In Field

By SP4 ERIC DAUGHERTY
198th Inf. Bde.

LZ BAYONET—SP4 Reed E. Nichols climbed to a precarious perch atop a water trailer in the mdidle of the helicopter pad, tensely awaiting the incoming Chinook as it circled and descended.

Nichols was about to start his job for the day as a support soldier, tucked away "safely" several thousand meters from the "field." But 20 times during the day he would risk his life for those "field" soldiers of the 198th Inf. Bde.

Down came the 60-foot monster and with it the small hurricane which hurls dirt and gravel at anyone standing nearby. Nichols braced himself for the winds, but when the chopper got close to the ground the air churned so violently he was forced to bend down and grab the trailer to keep his balance.

The Chinook jockeyed back and forth, trying to get within hooking position, narrowly missing Nichols' head with its gigantic wheels. When it finally hovered in a good position he reached out and shoved the hooking apparatus into place.

Jumping from the trailer, he signaled "thumbs up" to the chopper pilot and the craft climbed, the water trailer swinging easily in the air.

"Good hook, Reed," a fellow 5th Bn., 46th Inf. resupply man standing nearby said.

"Thanks," the soldier answered, pulling off his goggles and running a dirty hand through his hair—a motion caused by habit which made no noticeable difference in his wind-blown appearance.

"We have to do that about 20 times a day. It gets a little dangerous sometimes, but I like it," Nichols said.

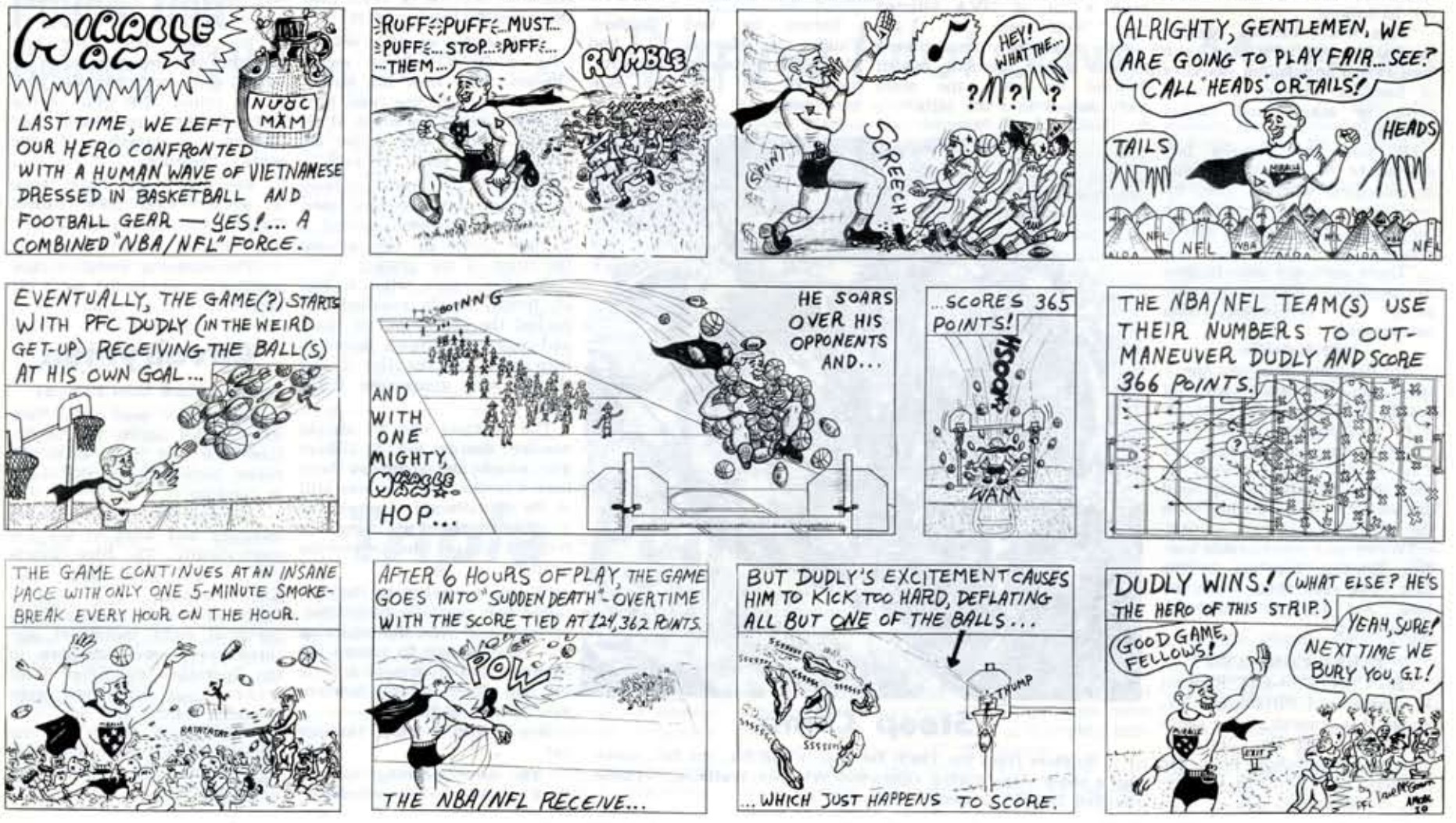
Nichols was a company clerk before volunteering to take charge of the resupply helicopter pad.

"This work gives me a real sense of accomplishment. I feel I'm really doing something for the men in the field," he said.

SOLDIERS RISK LIFE—Support soldiers such as these risk their lives 20 times a day for the "field" troops. (Photo by Sp4 Eric Daugherty, 198th Inf. Bde.)

Diana Dawn

Entertainer Diana Dawn was a recent visitor to Chu Lai and the Americal Div. Information Office. Miss Dawn intends to spend two years in Vietnam entertaining the troops, so as you can see, she's not too short. (Photo by Sp4 Bill Guerrant, Photo Editor)



Enemy 'Dive Bombers' Attack 11th Bde. Unit

By SP4 LARRY MOLLNER
11th Inf. Bde.

LZ BRONCO—Thousands of enemy "dive bombers" with "fixed bayonets" attacked an 11th Inf. Bde. reconnaissance platoon about 15 miles southwest of Quang Ngai recently.

The platoon, from the 1st Bn., 20th Inf. had spotted some 20 suspected Viet Cong in a village.

"We had just started down after them when our two Vietnamese point men stumbled into a thicket of bumblebees," said SP4 Richard A. Rodriguez, of Tucson, Ariz.

"They tried to warn us, but the bees were all around us. Everyone was swatting them while we ran for cover."

"There was a cloud of bees in battalion formation coming towards us," SP4 Rolando De Leon, also of Tucson, said.

"I kept wiping them off my face, but as fast as I did they were back. They flew up my nose and I could hardly catch my breath."

De Leon darted for a river at the bottom of the hill.

"As soon as I jumped in the water, with all my equipment, they stopped stinging," he said. "I know I swallowed two of them and it took me 15 minutes to pull the 50 or 60 stingers out of my face and arms."

Since the men were fighting a losing battle, 1LT Donald Hopper, of Chargrin Falls, Ohio, the platoon leader, called in a "dustoff."

"It was amazing the way the bees stuck with us until we were evacuated. It was like they were trained for a suicide mission against us," he said.

"The side of the hill was covered with bamboo shoots where the bees had their hives," PFC Robert Voss, of St. Louis, Mo., said. "They seemed to attack on command."

Some of the men in the rear used ponchos to cover themselves. Even so, only two men were not stung, and four needed hospitalization.

Chargers Find NVA Mess Hall

By SP4 GEORGE HAWKINS
196th Inf. Bde.

FSB WEST—Soldiers of the 196th Inf. Bde. uncovered a North Vietnamese base camp complete with mess hall after dealing a swift defeat to an enemy reaction force in a recent action northwest of Tam Ky.

Infantrymen from the 4th Bn., 31st Inf. were conducting a company search and clear mission in the Que Son Valley when they began receiving heavy enemy fire from a woodline in front of them.

CPT John Wolfe, of Marcellus, Mich., commander of Co. B, sent two of his platoons towards the woodline while another put suppressive fire into the area in which the enemy was hiding.

Moved Close

The assaulting platoons moved in close enough to throw grenades into bunker openings where the North Vietnamese regulars had holed up.

During the fight, the soldiers killed five enemy and captured their weapons.

"After we eliminated the enemy we moved cautiously into what we thought was a deserted village," recalled Wolfe.

"When we entered the area we discovered numerous spider holes and fighting positions circling 20 grass huts and a large mess hall with cooking facilities."

Found Weapons

The "Chargers" also uncovered several weapons and some ammunition.

Assorted medical supplies, abandoned rice stores, uniforms and web gear were also found in a search of the camp.

"There appeared to have been a lot of NVA billeted here," Wolfe said.

"We apparently encountered a rear guard element, which delayed us while the main body moved into the hills."

Police

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while remaining under the control of the provost marshal's office, will be temporarily attached to the brigade's maneuver battalions.

"This won't include regular combat sweeps," Pittman said, "but rather intensified searches of hamlets, villages or other areas, or search and cordon missions."

He said the platoon has specialists in demolitions and psychological warfare, field interrogation teams, intelligence personnel and special search squads.

"These men are also trained in identifing Vietnamese dialects," the Hollywood, Ala., native said.

Tell Location

"By listening to a man speak they can tell what part of South Vietnam he is from, or if he is from the north."

SSG Lones R. Warren, of Taylors, S.C., NCO adviser to the national police group, said brigade MP's have worked with the NPFF before.

"We've had considerable success working together in the past. I've seen them work before, and they're good," he commented.

TAKES COMMAND

FSB CENTER—LTC Richard M. Gecoma, of Pittsburgh, Pa., assumed command of the 196th Inf. Bde.'s 3rd Bn., 21st Inf. in recent ceremonies here. He replaced LTC William P. Snyder, of Columbus, Ga.

Beach Patrol

Armored personnel carriers from the 198th Inf. Bde.'s Trp. H, 17th Cav., move towards their night positions. (Photo by Sp4 Eric Daugherty, 198th Inf. Bde.)

Soldier 'Plows Up' Trouble

LZ BRONCO—When SP4 Gregory C. Faulk set out to smooth some of the bumps on roads leading out of here, it began like any other day on the job.

Before he had finished, Faulk, of Mentor, O., had plowed up quite a bit of excitement in the 11th Inf. Bde. base camp.

About mid-morning the Co. C, 26th Engr. Bn. soldier was working with the toothed ground breaking attachment (scarifier) on his grader, attempting to level a particularly stubborn section of road near the brigade headquarters.

"I had the scarifier set to dig down to about eight inches. The fork hit something buried in the road, but I didn't think too much of it because there are a lot of rocks in the area," he said.

Suddenly the "rock" started to sputter, and, a second later, a muffled explosion spread a 30 foot circle of fire around the front of the grader.

"I wasn't sure what it was at first," Faulk recalled. "I backed the grader out of there and when I jumped down to help beat out the fire I saw that it was gunpowder burning."

The engineer had hit an old powder charge for a 175mm gun which had somehow been buried in the road. It was still in its container, but when the scarifier dragged it along the friction set off the percussion primer.

"It was a good thing the container was partially rusted out, because as it was, the explosion was only enough to spread the flaming powder around a little bit and didn't do much damage," Faulk said.

But Faulk wasn't through yet.

The next morning, Co. C got a call for a demolition team to dispose of a piece of ordnance discovered in another area of the base camp.

"It seems," the caller said, "that the guy who was over here grading the roads yesterday afternoon dug up a live 60mm mortar round."

This time, his blade had scraped off the top layer of earth and scratched the side of the round. The glint of the sun off the base metal had alerted a passerby of the mine's presence.

"The round had been there a while," said SP4 Russel Taylor, the demolition expert who blew it in place.

"The amazing thing is that another vehicle hadn't set it off earlier."

Steep Climb

Soldiers from the 196th Inf. Bde.'s 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., move up a steep slope during Operation Wheeler/Wallowa. (Photo by Sp5 Donald Evanger, 196th Inf. Bde.)

Cavalrymen

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on his vehicle used more than 50 grenades during the battle. Lawrence said "from 45 to 50" enemy were killed in the close-in fighting.

"My men kept their platoon integrity and went at the job methodically. The Blue Ghosts did a real good job, too," Kaczer said.

The combined cavalry force captured eight individual and three crew-served weapons in the Operation Burlington Trail action. Four Americans were wounded during the day—two in the initial attack on the cavalry platoon and two when a helicopter was forced down by enemy fire.