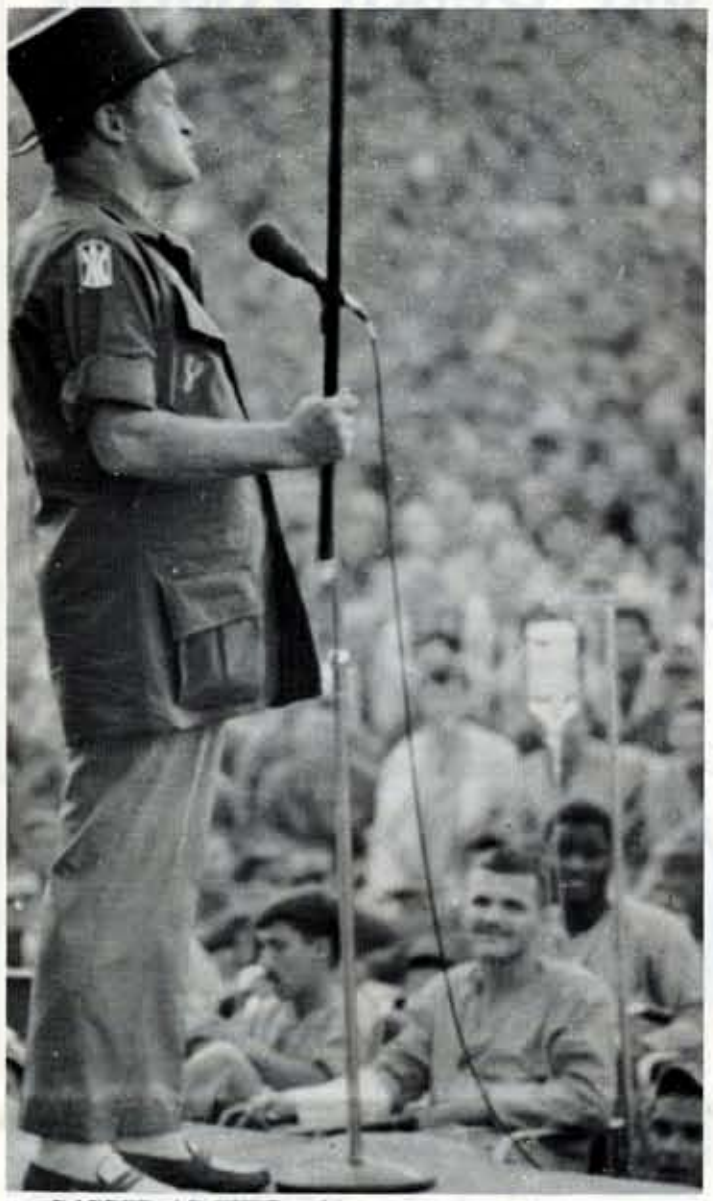
Christmas '68 Brings Hope To 18,000 Troops



DAPPER AS EVER, with cane and top hat, Bob Hope jokes with audience. (Photo by 1LT Joe Collins, USMC).

CHU LAI—With a planeload of pretty girls and a bagful of laughs, Bob Hope—looking for all the world like Santa Claus—brightened up the Chu Lai scene Christmas Eve.

Hope and his troupe entertained an estimated 18,000 Americal soldiers, Marines, Seabees, and sailors under almost perfect weather conditions at the Chu Lai Amphitheater.

"It's great to be here at this military ghetto," the GI's perennial overseas entertainer quipped as he came on stage.

From then on, Hope had the huge audience laughing, yelling, and even crying during the hour and 45 minutes of his colorful show.

Secret Arrival

The exact arrival date for the troupe and the show time were closely guarded secrets until 12 hours before the show, but rumors quickly filtered through the Chu Lai area days beforehand.

The day before Christmas Eve, a number of soldiers and Marines were already homesteading seats close to the front.

When asked why he was at the amphitheater so early, one soldier joked, "I just thought I'd sleep out here for a change."

Included in the audience were almost 700 troops from remote fire bases of the 11th and the 196th Inf. Bdes. and the 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav., who were flown in by Chinook helicopters just to se the show.

Security Provided

The 5th Bn., 46th Inf., and 1st Bn., 6th Inf., both of the 198th Inf. Bde., provided security for the immediate Chu Lai area during the performance.

The mobile dental clinic from the 219th Med. Det. was on hand to take advantage of the early, large crowd, treating approximately 40 of the soldiers who were waiting.

(Continued on Page 4-5)

Behind The Footlights

200 Men Labor "Unnoticed"

When Bob Hope walked on stage Christmas Eve, more than 200 people behind the scene gave a collective sigh of relief—these were the men from the Americal whose "unnoticed" work made the show possible.

Rooms For Girls

To prepare the necessary facilities, men from B Co., 26th Engr. Bn. built a 16 foot by 32 foot addition to the amphitheater dressing room to accomodate the unusually large number of girls in Hope's troupe this year.

A special public address system and telephone communications backtage were provided by the 523rd Sig. Bn.

To supply power for the microphones, lights, and other equipment, the 523rd joined forces with the division engineers and men from the Naval Supply Activity Depot.

Twenty-three men from Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 258th Personnel Services Co., and 23rd Admin. Co. were utilized as general stagehands to assist Hope's technicians with cue cards, baggage, and equipment.

Well Prepared

A spokesman for the Hope show remarked that the Americal had been the best prepared and best organized of any place they had visited to date, and that everything the crew needed had been provided.

'Boxcars' Log 30,000 Hours

By SP4 DEAN NORLAND

CHU LAI—The 178th Aslt. Spt. Hel. Co. has become the second Chinook company in Vietnam to log 30,000 hours in the air.

The "Boxcar" unit was formed at Ft. Benning, Ga., in October 1965 and came to Vietnam in February 1966. The company's first year in country was spent in general support of III Corps.

Aid In Oregon

April 1967 saw the 178th move north to Chu Lai on a temporary basis to support Task Force Oregon, the forerunner of the Americal Div.

The transitory assignment has become a permanent relationship and the company's parent organization, the 16th Cbt. Avn. Grp., recently became part of the division.

The nickname for the unit is emblazoned on each helicopter in the form of three pairs of red and white dice, each showing a six, which in dice jargon is "Boxcars."

(Continued on Page 7)

SOUTHERN CROSS

AMERICAL DIVISION

Vol. 2, No. 2 | CHU LAI, VIETNAM | January 19, 1969

196th Traps NVA Force, Kills 66 In Mountain Battle

Story and Photo by PFC JIM BRUCE 196th Inf. Bde.

TAM KY —— Three 196th Inf. Bde. companies, inching forward through thickly tangled undergrowth along steep mountain slopes, killed 66 NVA who were part of quickly retreating elements of the 2nd NVA Div., 25 miles west of Tam Ky.

Initial contact for the 2nd Bn., 1st Inf. companies came early on the fourth day of Operation Fayette Canyon.

The operation originally began on Dec. 15 after intelligence reports indicated an estimated 1,000 NVA were securing a hospital complex and supply depots atop hill 953.

The action started when elements of B Co., led by CPT John R. Malpass (Larchmont, N.Y.) spotted about 40 NVA with packs and weapons moving along the steep cliff of a lower ridgeline.

"As we watched, they just kept coming and coming until there must have been close to a hundred of them," said CPT Malpass.

Arty, Gunships Open Up

B Co. first called for artillery and gunships and then opened up with a barrage of plunging machinegun and small arms fire, dropping many of the NVA headlong from their precarious cliffside perches.

As the last gunship broke station, Bravo called for an emergency resupply of ammunition.

Then came the slow, tortuous move down the mountain, into the enemy base camp, over rocky cliffs, thick undergrowth, and along jungle trails strewn with debris from bombs dropped earlier by B-52s.

Rugged Descent

"There were no acts of heroism up there on the hill," said CPT Malpass, "but coming down it was all individual effort, clearing them out from bunker to bunker."

A and C Cos. blocked ridgelines to the north and west, while B Co. swept into a base camp of 75 bunkers. They encountered sporadic fire from defending NVA who were making a last-ditch effort.

The total number of enemy dead kept rising as scattered fighting continued within the "Chargers'" wedge. B-52 raids, gunships, airstrikes, and artillery missions made a large contribution to the total NVA killed.

NVA Rear Guard

One enemy soldier ran away from Bravo troops and fled directly into an A Co. position. He prudently shouted "Chieu Hoi."

He told A Co. interrogators that the NVA column the 196th had engaged on the fourth day of action had been the rear element of a 400-man main force moving toward Hoi An.

On the same day C Co., commanded by CPT Charles A. Slaybaugh (Lakeview, Ohio) reported a second base camp approximately 1,000 meters west of the first one.

A BAG OF RICE is lifted out of an enemy hiding place in one of the two large base camps uncovered by "Guardians" of the 196th Bde. during Operation Fayette Canyon, 25 miles west of Tam Ky.

Religion and You

Prepare For Future

By CHAPLAIN (CPT) GLENN P. HARGIS
198th Inf. Bde.

Many soldiers have enjoyed gazing at the beautiful scenery of Vietnam, but when the "incoming" yell is heard we come to a more intimate relationship with "mother nature." We get a "worms eye view" of things because we are lying on or in the ground.

I have often thought about the profound theological question: Does an earthworm (MIA1 worm, fishing) have enough intelligence or did God goof? I have concluded that worms are usually in a world of hurt because they cannot remember where they have been, nor do they know where they are going.

There are some men, who, like earthworms, forget where they have been, the ways of their youth, personal values, and what there country has done for them. Also, there are some men who cannot remember where they are going. They forget to think ahead and prepare themselves for future jobs and assignments by working now. They forget how to accept responsibility now and do not put their trust in tomorrow. They fail to select future goals worthy of a maximum effort now.

Some people like to live the simple life of the worm, but most of us prefer the life of wisdom and knowledge. To begin to be wise requires great effort and discipline.

The beginning of wisdom is the study of God's will and way for us. "But where shall wisdom be found...Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." (Job 28:12,28, RSV)

A Life And Death Matter

By SP4 JOHN W. HEATH

To PFC Dudly, all that "safety" meant was two points for being tackled in the end zone.

He never bothered to clear his weapon, and thought that care in handling explosives was kidstuff.

Too bad for Dudly's buddy, who now is numbered among the platoon of GIs wiped out in Vietnam during a recent four-month period by friendly weapons thoughtlessly handled by buddies.

What, Me Worry?

It's easy to turn yourself off when the topic of safety is brought up. "It can't happen to me," you say. Or "I'm old enough to take care of myself."

Maybe so. But look at it this way: you have nothing to lose by being extra careful with that M-16, .45 caliber pistol, or explosive.

M-16 Deadly

About one quarter of all accidents reported in Vietnam during that same four-month period involved improper handling of the M-16.

This weapon is designed solely to kill people, so, treat it with respect.

Clear your rifle while in a secure area. Often the weapon's magazine is removed, but a round remains in the chamber. Somebody gets shot.

Failure To Clear

Here is a true tale of an Americal bunker guard causing himself a lot of unnecessary hurt.

Our hero was going outside the bunker when he tripped over his M-16.

Loaded and on semiautomatic, the weapon discharged, blowing a hole in the guy's knee. The cause of his grief — a round needlessly chambered.

You can save yourself trouble by never having rounds chambered in fire bases or on bunker guard unless the enemy is observed, hostile fire is being received, or you are ordered otherwise.

Although small compared to the M-16, the .45 caliber pistol can be just as deadly at close range.

The 60 USARV soldiers killed last year while cleaning or handling their .45s attest to that.

"Quick-draw McGraw" types also do a lot of the damage. They swagger into the barracks and make like Wyatt Earp, often ending up with a hole in their foot or in their buddy's head.

Handle With Care

Firearms are not the only menace to your well-being.

So far this year, careless handling of explosives has resulted in four dead and a hundred and fifty-six injured Americal soldiers.

In another real-life episode, one of our dauntless bunker guards thoughtfully removed boxes of grenades and trip flares out of the rain and into his bunker.

Suffering a safety lapse, however, he placed the flares next ot the grenades, and a flare accidentally ignited.

His carelessness cost him multiple fragmentation wounds.

The Culprits

"Remington Raiders" in base camps may choose to ignore admonitions about weapons' safety.

But heed the fact that half the accidental shootings occur in base camps.

And if you are a 19- to 21-year-old PFC or SP4, count yourself in the select group that pulled 75 percent of the stunts putting buddies six feet under.

Think Safety

In all accidents involving firearms and explosives, the cause is esay to pinpoint: Carelessness on the part of the individual.

"Your son is dead because he accidentally shot himself" would be a tragic telegram for mom to receive.

So boost your odds of returning to the world healthy. Think safety.

VIETNAM-STYLE

By SFC LARRY BABITTS

Mother And Child

What's it all about? Last week this reporter found out what the war's all about. The big issue in Vietnam's bush-country isn't imperialism, Asian economics, or the question of relocation of the masses of people.

The big issue here in the Valley of the Happiness River is the welfare of a small montagnard boy. Just before noon one day, a montagnard woman, aged beyond her 30 years, appeared at the gate of the Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) Camp at Minh Long. She asked to see "bas-si"—the doctor.

Slung over her shoulder according to the fashion of the Hre tribe was an emaciated looking, small boy, less than two years old.

The woman was led to the dispensary by one of the local tribesmen serving with the CIDGs here and introduced to the "bas-si", SP4 Clifford H. Brenner (Harlington, Tex.) the Special Forces A-team medic.

Brenner, a graduate of the Army's 48-week course at Fort Sam Houston, Tex., speaks none of the montagnard dialect, and the woman could speak no English. In fact, her knowledge of Vietnamese was extremely limited, for like most montagnards she had never learned the language of the Viets.

To make her needs understood, she unwrapped the child from the dirty black-cloth sling and pointed to the boy's feet. More than a dozen sores were spread over an area from the ankles to the toes.

She explained, using many hand signs and broken Vietnamese, that when the boy complained of pain, "she took all of the known Hre measures." She had taken him to the village shaman or witch doctor who advised the sacrifice of a chicken whose blood would be spread on a pole in front of her house and the feathers would be burnt.

When this failed to cure the boy, the illiterate, comparatively primitive woman carried her child more than nine kilometers through brush country and dense jungle to find a "Hoa Ky" (American) medic. She came from a village that is classified as "non-friendly" to get aid for her son.

This woman, a primitive from another century, knew what the local Viet Cong cadre might do when they found out where she went for help.

Now, here was a woman whose husband, father, brothers, or maybe even herself had fought against the "Hoa Ky" soldiers in these hills. But she was also a mother. A mother who despite the pettiness of local politics and picayune ethnic prejudices brought her child to a small way station in the jungle—thinking first of her son's health and his future.

And that's what the war is all about.

SOUTHERN CROSS
AMERICAL DIVISION

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Two GIs Play Santa, Spark Orphans' Yule

DUC PHO—Christmas had a special meaning this year for the 140 children in the Duc Pho orphanage.

Thanks to the efforts of two 11th Inf. Bde. soldiers, the custom of yuletide gift giving was introduced into the orphanage in a big way.

SP4 Timothy P. Noland (Salem, Ore.), D Co., 3rd Bn, 1st Inf., and SP4 John H. Wetterer (Massapequa, N.Y.), A Co., of the same battalion, worked independently on projects to accumlate gifts for the orphans.

Visit Inspires Idea

SP4 Noland began his project after a visit to the orphanage one day.

"I was at the laundry in Duc Pho when I began talking to Sister Coletta from the orphanage. She asked me to the orphanage and when I got there the needs were obvious," he said.

That meeting took place months ago. Since then Noland collected hundreds of dollars worth of clothes, blankets, school supplies, powdered milk, and toys.

Help From Home

His mother, who began the work back in the States, received help to buy, package, and send the items to Vietnam.

Noland said there was immediate response back home to his idea of helping the orphans.

When he returns to the States shortly, he plans to continue his charitable project.

Toys And Clothes

SP4 Wetterer, a supply clerk for his company, delivered over 700 toys and 300 articles of clothing to the orphans with the help of the Brigade Civil Affairs Section.

He began his work in a way similar to Noland.

"When I saw the orphanage, things were in pretty bad shape," he said.

Bring Christmas Cheer

So with the help of relatives, friends, and neighbors, Wetterer put together a large stockpile of Christmas gifts for the 140 children in Duc Pho.

There wasn't a real Santa Claus to create laughter at the orphanage this year, but the generous efforts of two 11th Bde. soldiers brought a great deal of happiness.

CHRISTMAS IS A LITTLE GIRL'S SMILE when opening a gayly-wrapped gift, as this young Vietnamese orphan shows. (Photo by SP4 Peter Schwarz, Americal IO)

Self-Help For Hamlet Men

LZ BAYONET—Men from five hamlets formerly under varying degrees of Viet Cong control are being given a fighting chance thanks to training provided by Marines and Vietnamese Popular Forces, with assistance from the 198th Bde.

The hamlet inhabitants are students at a school in Civil Defense for Hamlet Security at Binh Son District Headquarters. The 20-man class will receive two weeks of instruction.

Thorough Training

The students receive instruction in squad tactics, squad defense, patrolling, ambush, counter-ambush, recon., PSYOPS, camouflauge, assembly and disassembly of weapons, marksmanship, first aid, and Vietnamese government (civics).

On completing the course, the students will be furnished equipment, ammunition, and arms—including BARs, carbines, shotguns, and AK47s—from the Vietnamese government.

Centralize Instruction

While the self-defense training has been in effect for some time, a new wrinkle has been added.

The Marines' Mobile Training Teams (MTTs) formerly went out to each hamlet to instruct the populace, whereas new instruction will be centralized at the MTT-2 school in Binh Son.

This will allow the team to enlarge and improve the scope of training.

198th PF Training Program Supplements Local Security

LZ BAYONET—A program designed to raise the quality and level of Popular Forces (PF) participation in local security efforts has been initiated by the 19th Inf. Bde.

The 1st Bn., 6th Inf. is conducting the training of PF platoons in three-day cycles that emphasize modern weaponry, tactics, and leadership.

An important by-product of the training is an increased rapport that develops between Vietnamese and American soldiers.

The program calls for a platoon of PFs to be attached to a company of Americans for a three-day cycle, participating in ambushes and taking part in the battalion's patrol plan.

Instruction includes safety, assembly, and disassembly of the M-16 rifle, the M-79 grenade launcher, and the M-60 machinegun.

UNDER THE GUIDANCE of a 1st Bn., 6th Inf. trooper, this Popular Forces soldier inspects the bore of an M-16 rifle. Both men were participating in a program to update the training of PFs near Chu Lai. (Photo by SP4 Mike Sullivan, 198th Inf. Bde.)

Art of TAE-KWON-DO

Kick, Jab ARVN Defense

QUANG NGAI (2nd ARVN Div. IO)—The two ARVN soldiers stand facing each other with staring eyes of concentration, their muscles tense in anticipation, bodies in the classical stance of self defense.

Suddenly, they begin to flail at each other with swift kicks, chops, and punches to vital areas of the body.

Soon the contest ends as suddenly as it began.

Neither opponent is hurt, however, because the blows were all caught miraculously short, a mere two inches from contact.

Compete For Blue Belt

These two 2nd ARVN Div. soldiers are taking their test for the blue belt in TAE-KWON-DO, the Korean art of self defense, after three months of instrurtion with 30 other classmates.

TAE-KWON-DO is taught to selected members of the 2nd ARVN Div., the Regional Forces, and the Popular Forces in Quang Ngai Province.

The military forces of South Vietnam are so impressed with the importance of TAE-KWON-DO that it is required by regulation for every unit to practice it daily.

Since at the present time there are not enough Vietnamese qualified to teach, instructors are being used from the Republic of Korea Army in Vietnam.

Different Degrees

It is possible for the individual soldier in the course to receive a brown belt, one degree below a coveted black belt, upon completion of the course.

After three months an examination is given to determine who will receive the blue belt.

The blue belt is the first degree of ability, ranking after the beginning white belt and before the brown belt.

About 13 out of 20 will attain this first plateau while the others return to their units.

The new blue belts remain for three additional months of training and a try for the brown belt.

Good Students

According to CPT Byung Min So, a Korean instructor who holds a 4th degree black belt, the Vietnamese are eager students willing to learn.

Thanks For The Christm

SP4 Steve Shingledecker, 523rd Sig. Bn.

Trampolinist Dick Albers soars.

Linda Bennett—with the whole of Chu Lai in her hand.

(Continued from Page 1)

Hospital patients, some walking, some in wheelchairs, all in blue hospital gowns, were ushered into the stage front seats.

Surrounding them were men from all services who sat anywhere there was room—leaned against fences and posts, on top of trucks, and on faraway buildings with binoculars.

A fleet of Marine Chinook helicopters was employed to ferry the troupe and technical crew from Da Nang to the Chu Lai Admin. pad.

Convoys of trucks and buses then transported the performers to the headquarters area, where they enjoyed their first real meal in several days, Hope commented.

The chow was prepared by the American consolidated mess.

This year's Christmas show featured 19 girls and two men, besides Hope.

Included in the cast were:

—Ann-Margret, beautiful and talented dancer-singer-actress, who openly admits to being "very proud of all the guys over here"

—Blonde singer Linda Bennett

—Miss World, Penelope Plummer

—The Honey, Ltd., four mini-skirted misses from Detroit, Mich.

—12 young beauties called the Golddiggers

—Former football star Roosevelt (Rosey) Grier

—And Dick Albers, a world-renowned trampolinist

Music for the show was provided by Les Brown and his Band of Renown, who have traveled overseas with Hope every year except one since 1948.

This was Bob Hope's fifth visit to Vietnam, and his 27th year of providing entertainment for American servicemen, both at home and abroad.

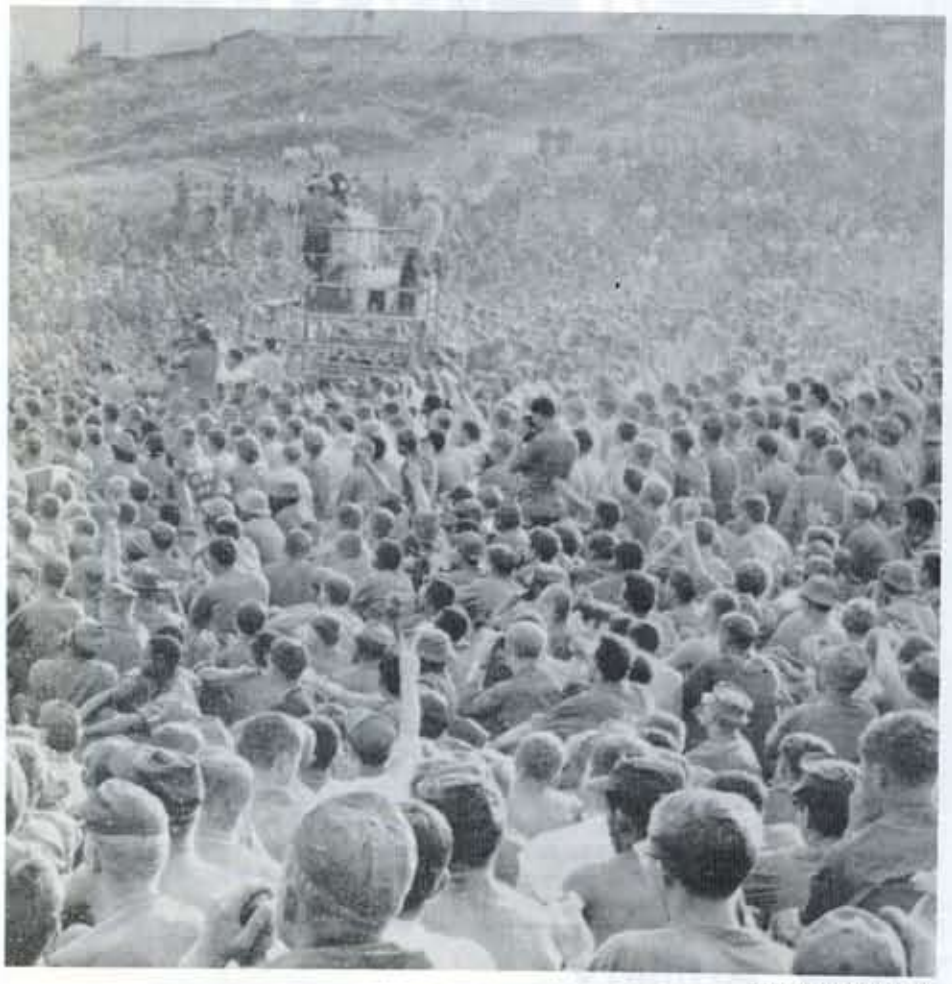
1LT Joe Collins, USMC

"Band of Renown" tunes up.

SP4 John W. Heath

GIs ogle a different kind of bird.

ıas Memories, Mr. Hope



SP4 John W. Heath

SP4 Peter Schwarz, Americal IO

Ann-Margret . . .

1LT Joe Collins, USMC

"Rosey" Grier—BIG Soul

SP4 Steve Shingledecker, 523rd Sig. Bn.

"I'm proud of all you guys."

1LT Joe Collins, USMC

"Golddigger" in the wings.

SP4 Steve Shingledecker, 523rd Sig. Bn.

Hope and troupe lead audience in "Silent Night."

Chinook Crews Offer Detente To Ruffled Comrades On LZ

CHU LAI—Men hide in bunkers, shelter halves flap violently, empty sandbags fly up in a swirl of blowing sand, and the harried ground commander mutters a string of epithets at man and machine.

The cause of his displeasure is the CH-47 Chinook and its crew which have unleashed a man-made tornado as the aircraft resupplies the fire support base.

The ground commander looks with dismay at his artillery, now covered with sand. Once again the ground crews must perform the tedious task of restoring order to the LZ.

Air CO Irked Too

Overhead, the aircraft commander expresses his dissatisfaction with the ground unit's performance.

The loose sandbags and other debris have come close to hitting the rotor blades as they are tossed skyward.

Elsewhere, an unwary ground guide is motioning to an aircraft crew, indicating where he wants the inbound bulldozer set or the load of ammunition placed.

Difficult Target

He then watches in disbelief as the Chinook continues forward and downward, past the designated spot, seemingly flying into the ground.

In some instances, the point of touchdown is uncomfortably close to where the ground guide stands.

No, the aircraft crew is not trying to main him. The sling load is of such weight that a normal approach to the LZ, terminating at a hover over the point of intended touchdown, is not possible.

Caution: New Pilot

This is not to say that the aircraft crews are not blameless.

The novice pilot does not realize how sharp the sting of blowing sand is to the hook-up man perched precariously on top of a sling load.

The first time a "Hook" pilot experiences the misfortune of being in the open in a dusty LZ when a Chinook makes an approach, he will come to appreciate the hardships of the ground guide, and plan his approaches more carefully.

See For Yourself

The crews of the 132nd Aslt. Spt. Hel. Co., "Hercules," welcome the opportunity to further the understanding between ground and aviation units.

Many aircraft carry spare flight helmets, and unit commanders are invited to sit in the troop commander's seat where they can gain a better understanding of the problems faced by aircraft crews.

Chances are the experience will prove helpful, both to the ground commander and to the 132nd Aslt. Spt. Hel. Co.

Combat In Review

FROM THEIR WELL HIDDEN VANTAGE POINT, one man spots the enemy's location while the other calls artillery fire. These 198th Inf. Bde. spotters were part of a 13-man SRP who took several VC soldiers by surprise during an encounter south of Binh Son. (Photo by SP4 Mike Sullivan, 198th Inf. Bde.)

Direct Deadly Artillery

Hidden SRP Baffles VC

LZ BAYONET—When soldiers of the 198th Inf. Bde. begin to play hide and seek, the enemy had better watch out.

That's what a group of Viet Cong found out recently when their evening rendezvous was broken up by a band of Americal infantrymen they never even saw.

A short range patrol (SRP) from D Co., 5th Bn., 46th Inf. was concealed on a hill observing activity in an area 15 miles southwest of Chu Lai when they spotted two enemy soldiers with weapons and packs about 1,000 meters away.

Out For Stroll

"They were just walking around in the open like they owned the place," said SGT Dennis Braboy (Raymond, Wash.), the patrol leader.

"We kept them under observation with our binoculars and called for artillery fire," he added.

While the artillery fire mission was being coordinated, about eight more enemy appeared and joined the first two. The VC still had no idea there were Americans in the area.

"What was so interesting about it," said CPT Michael R. Smith (New Lebanon, Ohio), D Co. commander, "was that the VC had no idea there was anyone observing them. They were just wandering around down there."

Eight of the enemy were killed in the engagement.

Repeat Barrage

As darkness crept in, the 198th soldiers remained in their position on the hill. Periodically during the night they would call for artillery fire in the area where the bodies lay to discourage other VC from going near.

Early the next morning they spotted more VC in the area and again called on B Btry., 1/14 Arty. for 105mm fire support. The VC hastily cleared the area.

Night Force Scores Hit

LZ BRONCO—Moving by night, a task force of the 11th Inf. Bde. has shown that Americal soldiers can infiltrate an enemy area undetected, and keep itself hidden during the day.

The unit was made up of elements of B Co., D Co., and the Recon. Plt. of the 4th Bn., 3rd Inf., led by B Co. CO, CPT Jack H. Pryor.

In its night operation, the task force accounted for two VC killed on the four day operation and uncovered a large enemy base camp. Numerous baskets and other pieces of evidence indicated that the camp was a major rice supply point for enemy forces.

During the operation CPT Pryor and his men carried all their food and water, built no fires, and smoked no cigarettes in order to remain undetected.

They used natural vegetation to camouflage their bodies and exercised extreme noise discipline during the day as they lay hidden from enemy forces.

"The main problem was night navigation," said CPT Pryor. "You cannot distinguish land features at night ,and maps must be read previously."

Pocketful of Strategy

The strategy of this 11th Inf. Bde. soldier is simple: Stick close to that friendly APC and be alert. (Photo by SP4 Steve Shingledecker, 523rd Sig. Bn.)

GI's Shout Dupes NVA

LZ BALDY—Thickly vegetated triple canopy jungle wouldn't seem to be a likely stage for a promising acting career to begin.

But the performance of SP4 Billy Gillespie (Huntsville, Ala.), 196th Inf. Bde., was received with full impact by two NVA soldiers in a bunker and won rave notices from members of his own squad.

The curtain rose as Gillespie, a rifleman with D Co., 4th Bn., 31st Inf., and four other members of his squad began following a blood trail in Hiep Duc Valley, 26 miles northwest of Tam Ky.

Suddenly, heavy automatic weapons and machinegun fire from an enemy bunker complex pinned down the squad.

As his buddies found good defensive positions, Gillespie began running around the area firing his weapon and yelling at the top of his lungs at the enemy.

"I don't know if they understood what I said," recalled Gillespie, "but I do know they thought there was a bunch of angry GIs out there.

Firing his M-16, he dived into the bunker, killed the two NVA soldiers, and then took up a firing position in the bunker.

Franky Can Fix It

He's Mechanical Magician

By SP4
ALFRED ANTHONY, JR

LZ BAYONET — There's this incredible pain screeching through his neck. But if he can just hold his head up a minute longer the bolt'll come loose.

The final suspenseful turn and the black oil is throbbing miraculously down between his fingers, along the arm, and off the elbow, where it reaches its destiny, smoothly into the quart can in the mud.

Not Like Home

This is not the spotless repair shop in Milwaukee, or even Joe's Texaco on the corner of Elm.

Franky's been on his back in the mud for twenty minutes, and the toughest part of the job is just holding his head up out of the puddle.

He fills the can and gets the bolt back in, to where it'll hold. In exhaustion, he just lets his head fall back into the water.

Muddy Job

Now he's got to extricate himself; get up and out again, walk to the oil dump and back. The mud has ways of working itself into pockets and under the collar of his shirt.

He takes his watch off for the fifth time today, empties the grunge from under the strap, winds it, checks the time.

Back To Work

Arranging the empty sandbags he uses to lie on, he goes back under, aims the socket wrench at the bolt, fixes it tight.

He lies back his head again under the muddy security of the jeep bottom, of the cakey manifold, the dented sump; his eyes raise up, stare at these yellowish-green frozen streams of new grease.

He'd repaired the universal on the front end that morning and now with that oil change, something was going to work smoothly: the whole quarter-ton truck. The jeep was going to purr.

Man Vs. Machine

Franky's got his eyes planted on the steering mechanism, and then on the front axle, and then on the wheel and the tire.

The edges of his mouth crack into a wide smile and he lies there, just he, and these few kind-of-amazing parts that make this small heap of tin, he thinks, work.

Fixing His Game

What the reason? What the game? He considers, but doesn't especially care.

This fixing he does is what he's happy about, whether it's in Milwaukee or even if it's got to be here, LZ Bayonet.

Nobody asks Franky to do much else, and if they did there's the chance that he might get bugged because Franky's got a hard opinion of what he's doing here in Vietnam, and when he gets his mind set on something there's no stopping him.

A Real Pro

He's got hands like magic when it happens that a vehicle's got a bug in it. And he'll set it straight to get the rations or mail through to the guys in the field.

He's been called at night a hundred times to get a truck back on its feet.

"What I like," says Franky, "is the pleasure of seeing trucks roll the way they should.

"I used to work on stock cars, and when our car'd come into the pits with mechanical trouble, well, then the burden was on me.

Important Business

"The driver'd want to know why something went wrong, and a lot of times it was just some cheap oil gasket that would keep the car from finishing.

"That kind of bad business can really hurt a guy. So I got my defenses up and I learned to almost predict what was going to go wrong.

"I do the same thing here in my job, and if it's helping Uncle Sam, then that's as much satisfaction as winning a race."

Test Run

So Franky's in the driver's seat now. He cranks the jeep up and takes it down the muddy road for a test.

He's not happy until he's checked it, and you can see him leaning out the side, driving with one ear to the engine, because he knows the sound of anything that doesn't function exactly right.

And when this one's okay, the first thing on his mind is the next one in line.

"The distributor's bad. Not much sweat there." There never is with Franky.

Americal Magazine Nears Completion; Has R&R Guide

The color, tradition, and battle tactics of the "Dragoons" of the 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav. are featured in the cover story of the newest issue of **AMERICAL** magazine, which is due to arrive at division units the last week of this month.

Titled "The 1st Cav Brings Smoke," the article covers the hard-hitting power of the armored cavalry unit and describes in detail its smashing victory over units of the 2nd NVA Div. during a four-day showdown last August.

Special On R&R

Complete with battle maps and action photos, the story captures the spirit of the men and their machines as they fought their way through the rice paddies west of Tam Ky.

In another special artical, the division quarterly presents to the men of the Americal "A Quick Guide To R&R." Designed to be pulled from the magazine for handy reference, the center-spread chart lists the things you will want and need to know about all the R&R sites.

Much More

Other articles included in this colorful issue cover an 11th Inf. Bde. MEDCAP mission, a 198th Inf. Bde. training course for Vietnamese nurses, a color pictorial on a visit by GEN Creighton W. Abrams to a 196th Inf. Bde. unit on LZ Mellon, and much more.

Be on the lookout for your copy of **AMERICAL**, and after you're finished with it pass it on to your buddy or send it home so your family can see your division in action too.

Ann-Margret

Sporting a Japanese robe, Swedish-born Ann-Margret looks just as groovy relaxing backstage as she does in a glittering black gown before the footlights. She received a special citation from President Johnson for her outstanding performance in a Near East swing last year. This was her second tour of Vietnam. (Photo by 1LT Joe Collins, USMC)

'Boxcars' Milestone

(Continued from Page 1)

The company's CH-47B helicopters provide a vital link between major supply points and desolate fire support bases and landing zones inaccessible by road.

Missions performed by the 178th, now commanded by MAJ Rodney A. Pimental, range from hauling ice cream to airlifting artillery pieces.

During its first 30,000 air hours the company flew 109,-132 sorties, moved 166,256 tons of cargo, and transported 283,424 passengers.

Last fall the 178th joined with other helicopter units to transport rice harvested in the Que Son District of Quang Nam Province.

The operation is credited with depriving the enemy of 155 tons of rice.

The "Boxcars" have written and published a widely used training manual explaining proper techniques for using Chinooks.

Mechanics Tops

Behind every good aviation unit is an equally good maintenance outfit and the 178th is backed up by the 400th Trans. Det.

The aircraft mechanics work around the clock in two shifts to insure that each one of the $2-million helicopters will stay in the air the next time it is pressed into service.

One of the many inspections performed on the big choppers is the preventive maintenance periodic inspection, which is conducted every 100 flying hours and takes 3,780 man hours to complete.

The fact that a 178th Chinook has never been lost due to a lack of or improper maintenance indicates the quality of support continually offered by the 400th.

Curse You, Red Baron

Snoopy, he's everywhere. As this Huey chopper pilot's personal mascot, Snoopy is right on the job in the 198th Inf. Bde.'s AO. (Photo by PFC Art Noel, 198th Inf. Bde.)

26th Engrs. Gouge Road For Giant Guns

LZ SNOOPY—Early pioneers who followed Indian paths through the American frontier, building roads as they went, had nothing on the men of C Co., 26th Engr. Bn.

In a recent two-day operation about 20 miles northwest of Duc Pho, the engineers literally scraped a one-lane "Wilderness Road" out of a time-worn footpath in brush-covered mountains.

TWO 175MM GUNS tag behind engineer vehicles through twisting mountain road built between LZ Snoopy and Minh Long. (Photo by 1LT Cecil Green, Americal IO)

The road building was a two pronged operation, with one group of men and equipment airlifted into the Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) camp at Minh Long working toward another group that started from LZ Snoopy.

Clear Gun Route

The overall objective of the mission was to open a route into Minh Long for two 175mm and two 8-inch self-propelled guns too heavy to be airlifted in.

"Every technique a combat engineer is expected to know was tried and tested on this project," said CPT James P. Collins, C Co. Commander.

"Often, the footpath we generally followed was washed out, and much of the way was little more than six inches wide and surrounded by thick brush."

Perform Many Tasks

The engineers employed standard road building practices in addition to bridge building and demolition work.

"We also had to install culverts along the way, cut trees, have mine sweep teams patrolling to check for buried explosives, and provide our own security along the road," CPT Collins added.

To prepare for the task, Chinook helicopters lifted four 3/4 ton dump trucks and a jeep into Minh Long, along with a group of engineers.

Flying Cranes also hauled a scoop loader, airmobile grader, and two D-5 bulldozers into the camp.

CEV CUTS ROAD along narrow mountain path to pave way for heavy artillery pieces. (Photo by 1LT Cecil Green, Americal IO)

A BULLDOZER PLOWS ITS WAY across a shallow river near Minh Long, about 20 miles northwest of Duc Pho. The 26th Engrs. were constructing a road through rough terrain so self-propelled artillery pieces could reach Minh Long to support division soldiers in the area. (Photo by SGM John R. Spehar, 26th Engr. Bn.)

Monster Clears Path

The group from LZ Snoopy moved behind two monstrous combat engineer vehicles (CEVs), which mount a bulldozer blade, a boom and winch, and a 165mm demolition gun.

Other graders and bulldozers followed the CEVs to make rapid improvements as they progressed.

The artillery pieces from C Btry., 3rd Bn., 18th Arty. trailed the earth-moving machines and were guarded along the route by nine armored personnel carriers from E Trp., 1st Cav.

The big guns will be used to provide heavy fire support for Americal soldiers in the area.

Bridge Builders Help

The group from Minh Long cleared approximately 14 kilometers of the roadway, with special assistance from a bridge-building team from E Co., 26th Engr. Bn.

The bridge crew and the raw materials were flown in, and the men completed a 30-foot span in four hours, working only with hand tools.

The second group traveled about 18 kilometers from LZ Snoopy, which is 10 kilometers south of Quang Ngai City, until they linked up with the other engineers.

Tough Going

"The guys from Snoopy had the roughest section of the road," CPT Collins said. "At one point where they forded a river, the first vehicle had to virtualy tow the others across."

They also had to wind their way through the most mountainous terrain, their trail marked by several sharp switchbacks.

Enemy activity had been expected along the route.

"One of my reconnaissance flights was shot at before the project started," CPT Collins said, "and an ARVN company killed about 20 VC near our projected route just the day before we began."

But no resistance was encountered by the engineers and men of A Co., 1st Bn., 20th Inf. who provided flank security through the 11th Bde. area.

Guns Begin Booming

Less than 36 hours after their arrival in Minh Long, C battery fired its first registration mission, scoring a second round direct hit with one of the 175mm guns.

The whole operation from the initial road march to the firing of the registration round took only five days to complete.

CSM Meade Assumes Post Of Command Sergeant Major

CHU LAI—CSM James P. Meade has assumed the duties of division Command Sergeant Major.

CSM Meade filled the position left vacant by CSM James D. Rogers who has been reassigned as Command Sergeant Major of the First Army area at Fort Meade, Md., First Army Headquarters.

With 196th And 198th

Before taking over his present position, CSM Meade was Command Sergeant Major of the 196th Inf. Bde. for eight months.

During his first two months in country, he was Command Sergeant Major of the 5th Bn., 46th Inf. of the 198th Inf. Bde.

"It is truly an honor to be selected as the Command Sergeant Major of the Americal Division," CSM Meade said.

"I intend to be a working sergeant major," he continued. "I would rather the men refer to me, not as the sergeant major, but as our sergeant major."

Selected for his slot by MG Charles M. Gettys, CSM Meade is scheduled to rotate in June.

Decorations

During his 22 years of military service, CSM Meade has been awarded the Bronze Star for Valor, the ARCOM,

CSM James P. Meade

Combat Infantryman's Badge, World War II Victory Medal, Asia-Pacific Campaign Medal, American Theater Campaign Medal, Philippines Liberation Ribbon, and the Presidential Unit Citation, Philippines.

A native of Torrington, Wyo., he now claims Portland, Ore., as his home.