Three Major Division Operations End

CHU LAI—Three of the most successful campaigns in Americal history—Operations Vernon Lake II, Hardin Falls and Fayette Canyon—ended simultaneously Feb. 28.

The three operations netted a combined total of 860 enemy kills, as compared to 26 American casualties.

Weapons and articles uncovered during the campaigns included everything from rockets to bicycles and sewing machines.

Operation Vernon Lake II began Nov. 2 last year and involved the 3rd Bn., 1st Inf. and 4th Bn., 21st Inf., 11th Inf. Bde.

Uproot NVA

Aimed at pushing the 3rd NVA Div. out of a longheld bastion southwest of Quang Ngai City, the operation accounted for 455 enemy kills during its 119 days and the discovery of 81 base camps.

Included in the list of weapons and articles captured were 1,253 mortars, 196 rockets, 83 hand grenades, 23,450 rounds of small arms ammo, 121 tons of rice, 115 recoilless rifle rounds, and 964 NVA uniforms.

Civilians Benefit

Much of the captured material already has been put to good use by local Vietnamese civilians.

COL John W. Donaldson Jr. (Alexandria, Va.), 11th Bde. commander, and his men feel Vernon Lake II ran according to plan.

"There were no civilians out there," the colonel stated. "If we saw someone, he was sure to be an enemy troop. We have shoved the 3rd NVA Div. out of an area they have used as a haven for a long time."

Pacification Effort

Operation Hardin Falls began Dec. 2 last year as a three-phased, 70-day program aimed at clearing out and pacifying six hamlets in the Thang Binh District that had been under VC control for more than four years.

Taking place just north of the 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav. headquarters at Hawk Hill, the operation consisted of U.S. and Vietnamese military forces as well as Vietnamese medical and civil affairs teams.

Americal forces involved during the first steps of the campaign included B Trp., 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav.; A Co., 1st Bn., 46th Inf., 196th Bde.; and D Co., 26th Engr. Bn.

Joint Campaign

The main purpose for American involvement in the operation was to assist GVN (Government of Vietnam) forces in all phases of the operation and to provide security for the hamlets.

"The operation was a howling success," commented LTC Philip L. Bolte, CO of the 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav.

(Continued on Page 3)

SLOSHING IN A MOUNTAIN STREAM, 2nd Bn., 1st Inf. troops of the 196th Inf. Bde. look for 'Charlie' in recently-concluded Operation Fayette Canyon. (Photo by SP4 Jim Bruce, 196th Inf. Bde.)

SOUTHERN CROSS
AMERICAL DIVISION

Vol. 2, No. 6 CHU LAI, VIETNAM March 16, 1969

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MAR 5 1969
ARMY WAR COLLEGE

1/1 Smashes Enemy Thrust, Kills 263 Outside Tam Ky

By 1LT CECIL GREEN
Americal IO

TAM KY—The 1969 post-TET offensive ended in mid-stride around here when three enemy battalions collided with the immovable wall known as the 1st Cav in a three-day running battle that left 263 VC and NVA dead.

The 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav. had only two men killed and less than 20 wounded.

Units of the 2nd ARVN Div., working alongside the "Dragoons," racked up an additional 163 kills.

In what reads like a dramatic movie script, the action began early on Sunday morning, Feb. 23, with the daring rescue of the survivors from a hilltop outpost manned by American advisers and Regional Force (RF) militia.

2LT Rodney F. Eddy (Redondo Beach, Calif.), platoon leader of the 3rd Plt., A Trp., and his 28 men and six ACAVs (armored personnel carriers armed with a .50 cal. and two M-60 machineguns) were stationed on the grounds of the province headquarters to serve as a mobile reaction force.

"It was 0300 when the radio warned us that Hill 38 was in danger of being overrun and we were needed," recalled 2LT Eddy.

There was only one road up the steeply-sloped hill.

"We had to drive up the road because the tracks couldn't make that slope," the lieutenant said.

Single-File Assault

"So we lined up in single file and began fighting our way in. It was so dark and we were firing so much that the barrels of our machineguns glowed like red neon.

"But we really surprised the NVA," he grinned. "I guess they had never seen the Cav operate at night and many of them just stood and gaped as we rolled past or over them."

When the platoon reached the crest of the hill, the NVA had just overrun the outpost and were beginning to regroup inside the perimeter.

Three ACAVs careened through the perimeter wire and headed toward the bunkers while the other three deployed around the opening and kept firing.

Counterattack Begins

The platoon removed wounded Americans from the bunkers to safety without sustaining any injuries. At dawn, an RF platoon of 20 men joined them and the counterattack to re-take the hill began.

"We called for helicopter gunships, the C-47 'Spooky' and its miniguns, and artillery fire, before we headed up again," 2LT Eddy said.

"And those RFs did a helluva job. They had to run to keep up with us, but they were fighting all the way. We were able to place so much accurate fire that the enemy on top of the hill broke and ran."

Off To Hill 14

"Contact was heavy—damn heavy—so that we could only advance at the speed of a walk," 2LT Eddy recalled.

"The enemy were so close to the vehicles we were dropping hand grenades over the side and shooting them as they crawled on top."

A few minutes later, the

(Continued on Page 3)

ACAV FROM 1ST SQDN., 1ST CAV. BLASTS AWAY at VC/NVA force that tried to launch an offensive toward Tam Ky. The "Dragoons" annihilated the enemy push. (Photo by SP4 Steve Shingledecker, 523rd Sig. Bn.)

'Shark' Ships Stop VC Rocket Threats

LZ BRONCO — Four "Shark" gunships of the 174th Aslt. Hel. Co. killed 50 VC in two significant incidents near Duc Pho during the post-TET offensive.

"Shark" action started in early-morning when WO1 John Pennington (Newark, Ohio) spotted rocket and mortar flashes from his perch atop a high hill in the middle of the 11th Bde. headquarters at LZ Bronco.

Airstrip Imperiled

Pennington called artillery on the flash points, but the "Sharks" remained atop and at the foot of the hill where they waited to scramble as a reactionary force.

Their work day began in earnest at 5 a.m. when a large VC force threatened Duc Pho airstrip.

Heading quickly west, four "Sharks" caught the VC in the open and killed 23 before pulling off to refuel and rearm.

In addition to Pennington, the other pilots were WO1 Ellsworth Beebe (Tiffin, Ohio), WO1 William Cooper (Huddleston, Va.), and WO1 Robert Thomas (Birmingham, Ala.).

Obliterate Launch Site

At approximately 9 a.m. on the same day, rocket launches were spotted from LZ Liz six miles northwest of Duc Pho.

Artillery fire in the area was impossible because an Americal patrol was nearby.

On arrival, the "Sharks" caught a large VC group at the launch site before it could reach the cover of a well-fortified bunker nearby.

Despite ground fire, the "Sharks" killed 27 VC and destroyed 20 huts in the area to silence the intruders.

Religion and You

Tribute To Field EM

By CHAPLAIN (MAJ) ROBERT F. SHADDOX
Division Artillery

Not enough has been said, nor has it been said often enough, of the debt society owes the ordinary soldier. I'm speaking of the private, PFC, or specialist who serves on what is commonly called the "lower levels."

He's the one on whom so much depends, and without whom the task in Vietnam could not be completed. This man is the one who knows most intimately the hardships, privations, and miseries that go along with war. He's the one with the muddy boots, the big pack, or the one who shows evident signs of his close contact with the enemy and rugged terrain.

He is not a man without feelings or compassion. On the contrary, he may be more sensitive than most. Though his courage and accomplishments of the menial tasks too frequently go unnoticed, our appreciation of him should not. Frustration and failure immediately face those who try to get along without the "common soldier."

Thank God for this man and his willingness to do his job.

VIETNAM-STYLE

By SFC LARRY BABITTS

Confucius Says . . .

Every time you deal with a Vietnamese citizen, you are exposed to a type of thinking known as the "ethics of Confucius." Confucius, or Kung Fu-tse as he he known in China, was a writer-philosopher who lived and taught nearly 500 years before the present Christian era.

The belief that there exists a regular order between all things earthly and heavenly and that they have a harmony of operation is vital to any Chinese-oriented or educated person.

Confucian thinking and precepts have existed in Vietnam for more than 20 centuries. What we often consider to be a casual attitude of acceptance or absolute "coolness" is the ethics of the Chinese master in practice.

The Confucian thinking reckons that each being on earth is controlled by the several natural principles of life expounded by the Great Teacher himself.

These principles are explicit and binding upon the followers, and they promise peace and prosperity to all. Confucius maintained that if each human being would act toward the others he meets as he desired them to behave toward him, life would be harmonious.

Confucius was able, however, to realize that all men are not capable of controlling their individual emotions nor able to retain the ease and composure necessary for the "good life."

One of the most noticeable differences between the Confucian and the western ethical phliosophers lies in the oriental belief in the authority of a divine person who is usually vested with the title "the son of heaven" or the emperor.

Supposedly, this divine person was closest in harmony with nature and therefore was entrusted with the responsibility of divine-right rule over mankind. The emperors of China, the old Vietnamese Empire, and Thailand, and even today the Emperor of Japan, have been considered to be divine and hold or held their office through this belief.

While much Confucian doctrine has the overtones of an organized religion, nothing could be further from the truth. The ethics and doctrines were taught to be incorporated into other, older and more orthodox religions.

Confucius' main point is that a daily life focusing on the conduct of one human being to another and on all forms of social intercourse is all humanity would need to create the "good life."

The tenets of Confucius, more often than not, are the basis of conduct for even the simplest villager.

Using the family concept as a basis, Confucian ethics picture life as a long series of duties and obligations of one member of society to another, culminating in the duty of all mankind to the state and the duty of the state to the heavens.

The adoration of the ancestors is not in itself considered a holy act, but is a symbol of love for persons who have been, who are, and for persons yet to be.

How Not To End Up Like This

By SP4 JOHN W. HEATH

The 57-ton VTR struggled slowly up the hill by the Chu Lai PX.

Straining as it towed a 52-ton tank, the VTR finally reached the top, then darted down the incline with over 100 tons of force.

The driver tried to shift to a lower gear, but the VTR's steering failed, causing the massive tank to flip over and slam into a 3/4-ton truck loaded with GIs.

Two men in the truck were killed and 13 injured.

Accident Toll High

This tragic accident is just one of the vehicle mishaps that have resulted in 40 deaths and 365 injuries in the division since the beginning of last year.

And throughout Vietnam during the eight years American troops have been in country, 2,709 personnel needlessly have lost their lives due to traffic accidents, accidental discharge of weapons, burns, or drowning.

Hardly a record to be proud of, especially since most of these incidents were preventable.

Individual At Fault

Carelessness ranks as the main cause of vehicle accidents.

Besides general inattentiveness on the part of the driver, the old nemesis, SPEED, and failure to maintain control of the vehicle are the main reasons for predicaments like the one faced by our airborne driver shown above.

For your own welfare, save the rubber-searing starts and screeching turns for back home on the dragstrip.

Vietnam Driving Different

You may have noticed the lack of Howard Johnsons around Chu Lai, which should remind you of an important aspect of Vietnam traffic.

Driving is tough here compared to the world—there are no superhighways or elaborate electronic traffic signals. The roads here were not built for the large trucks and equipment the U.S. uses.

And since mechanical vehicles are relatively new to this country, Vietnamese drivers lack experience and pedestrians lack full awareness of the perils of jaywalking.

Your Responsibility

Consequently, the burden of accident prevention falls on you, the individual driver.

Here are two driving tips that will help ease your burden: drive defensively and obey traffic rules. Sounds simple, and it is.

Driving defensively means the same here as back in the States—watch out for the other guy.

When you drive through the vill, keep an eye out for that little girl who may dash in front of your truck. And watch that two-wheeled driver. His Honda is no match for your deuce-and-a-half.

Observe Signs

Obeying traffic regulations may seem like a drag, but it is a proven fact that if you observe speed limits and other traffic signs, your odds of staying healthy zoom.

Drive defensively and play by the rules here so you can live to enjoy a spin around town in your flashy wheels back home.

SOUTHERN CROSS
AMERICAL DIVISION

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WITH A HEAVE, 198th Inf. Bde. soldiers add another sandbag to a bunker at Fire Support Base Minuteman, the new forward LZ of the 5th Bn., 46th Inf. Minuteman is the first American fire base in the heart of the Batangan Peninsula, a former Communist stronghold for 20 years, 15 miles south of Chu Lai. The fire base—constructed by D Co., 5th Bn., 46th Inf. and a platoon of B Co., 26th Engrs.—is expected to aid in the pacificatoin of the peninsula. (Photo by SP4 John Hollenhorst, 198th Inf. Bde.)

198th Mans Minuteman

First LZ Built On Batangan

LZ BAYONET—The pounding of hammer against nail still could be heard. Shovels cut into the peninsula turf with a dull thud.

Amidst it all, CPT Michael Smith (New Lebanon, Ohio) dug the guidon of D Co. 5th Bn., 46th Inf. into a grassy hill overlooking the Batangan Peninsula.

First Fire Base

The fire support base Minuteman, a new forward LZ for the 198th Inf. Bde., had been dedicated, establishing the first permanent American fire base on the peninsula 15 miles south of Chu Lai.

The peninsula had been a Communist stronghold for more than 20 years despite the brief tenure of a Korean base camp there two years ago.

So entrenched were the VC that search and clear operations continue to uncover massive tunnel complexes despite the recent cordon sweep over the area.

Aid In Pacification

"This base definitely will help in our operations here and allow us to move about more widely and extensively in the area," explained CPT Smith, CO at Minuteman.

The new fire base also is expected to aid in the peninsula's pacification program once civilians return from their temporary refugee center near Quang Ngai City.

All Companies Participate

CPT Smith's company is expected to occupy LZ Minuteman for at least the initial few weeks, conducting search and clear operations throughout the area and improving the fire base itself.

Different companies of the battalion will man the fire base on a rotating basis.

"We named the fire base Minuteman after the 176th Avn. Co. because we couldn't operate without their help, and we're proud of them," said LTC Ronald R. Richardson, commander of the 5th Bn., 46th Inf.

"Minuteman" is the aviation company's nickname.

196th Backs Vietnamese In Stepped-Up Programs

LZ BALDY—A battalion of the 196th Inf. Bde. is employing Popular Forces (PFs), members of the Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG), National Police, and Regional Forces (RFs) in a stepped-up attempt to expand government control in the Nui Loc Son area, 14 miles northwest of Tam Ky.

Work With PFs

Two battalion liaison teams from the Civil Affairs Section at LZ Center, home of the 3rd Bn., 2nd Inf., have been working directly with PF and RF troops in security activities.

"These liaison personnel also work with village and hamlet officials in self-help projects," said 1LT Lowell Hardwick (Fountaintown, Ind.).

"There are two projects currenty in the material procurement stage," the lieutenant continued. "One is a new medical dispensary in Binh Tam and the second is a new school house in Binh Tanh.

Self-Help Kits

"We also are distributing school kits with tablets and pencils, carpenter kits with various types of tools, and other needed self-help kits."

A MEDCAP team formed by the medics on LZ Center travels to Nui Loc Son weekly to administer medical aid and supply the people with soap and candy for the kids.

Three Operations End

(Continued from Page 1)

The village of Phuoc Am exemplifies the achievements of Hardin Falls.

Villagers Resettle

"When the campaign started," LTC Bolte said, "the village of Phuoc Am had a population of only three or four families. Now this same village has some 2,000 Vietnamese civilians living there.

The village acted like a magnet to draw the people out of the VC-infested area and combine them in one area."

Besides accounting for 78 enemy killed and 17 enemy suspects detained, the operation also attracted 59 Hoi Chanhs and located 39 members of the VC infrastructure.

Capture Hospital

Operation Fayette Canyon began Dec. 15 last year after intelligence reports indicated an estimated 1,000 NVA were securing a hospital complex and supply depot atop Hill 953, 25 miles northwest of Tam Ky.

The campaign was composed of two elements from the 196th Bde.—the 2nd Bn., 1st Inf. and 4th Bn., 31st Inf.—and the 1st Bn., 46th Inf., 198th Bde.

"Legionnaires" of the 2nd Bn., 1st Inf. saw the heaviest action during the operation, netting 101 enemy kills against only one friendly casualty.

Of the total 327 enemy kills, artillery support was credited with 45, while B-52 bomber strikes and helicopter gunship assaults added another 55 and 18 kills respectively.

"Polar Bears" of the 4/31 encountered a large NVA force in the battle of Nui Chom Mountain in late November, killing 65.

Smash NVA Stronghold

"The Fayette Canyon Operation was designed to drive enemy forces from a base camp area which 'Charlie' has been able to use for many months because of the rugged, almost inaccessible terrain," stated COL Frederick J. Kroeson Jr. (Arlington, Va.), 196th Bde. commander.

"In addition to making contact with major elements of NVA forces," he continued, "we have discovered and subsequently destroyed large bunker complexes, hospital areas, and in general have driven the enemy from a long-used mountain haven."

During the campaign, 535 bunkers and 421 huts were destroyed.

In addition, 70 weapons were captured, including one 12.7mm anti-aircraft gun, one U.S. .50 cal. heavy machinegun, and 14,000 rounds of small arms ammo, plus a large quantity of other arms, ammunition, and supplies.

Cav Smashes Enemy

(Continued from Page 1)

opposition melted into the background and no one was shooting at the platoon anymore.

The 1/1 unit got another radio call around noon that a group of Marines were pinned down near the Tam Ky airstrip.

Charge On Line

When they reached the strip, the platoon lined up once more, side by side, and assaulted a tree line from where the heavy fire was coming.

Once more, the enemy fire ceased and 3rd Plt. was left in charge of the battlefield. The platoon, which had only four men slightly wounded during the day, was credited with 54 kills.

For their actions on Feb. 23, the members of the "3rd Herd" received the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry and 2LT Eddy was awarded the Silver Star. Other members of the platoon also have been recommended for awards.

ARVNs Under Fire

After a lull in action the next day, activity flared again Feb. 25 when the 3rd Plt. of B Trp. made the initial contact.

A platoon of the 2nd ARVN Div. was sweeping down a valley toward the village of Phu Ninh, four kilometers south of Tam Ky, when it started getting heavy fire from both sides.

C Trp. joined B Trp. in the fray, forming a line 33 ACAVs wide.

"We were in the attack more than 600 meters, firing all the way," said C Trp. commander CPT Kenneth R. Lamison (El Paso, Tex.).

"It was quite a sight to see. The enemy had an elaborate three-section trenchline dug out around the village."

Chase Enemy

By the time the troop had broken through the last trenchline shortly after 1800, an ARVN unit had swept down from a hill through the village behind the trenches.

The enemy had vanished into the coming night, but left 168 bodies on the ground.

"I think the offensive in this area is just about ended," said LTC Philip L. Bolte, CO of the 1/1.

"The Cav and the 2nd ARVN Div. have met their challenge, whipped them badly, and the enemy are heading back to their mountains."

'Little Americal' A Missile Shield For Saigon Base

CHU LAI—The Americal, the Army's largest division in Vietnam, covers two large provinces in I Corps—Quang Tin and Quang Ngai, and part of Quang Nam.

But there also is a little Americal.

Located near Saigon is C Btry., 6th Bn., 56th Arty., whose mission is to defend Tan Son Nhut Air Base from air attacks, enemy missiles, and aircraft.

The battery, like the rest of the 6/56, uses HAWK missiles, and is the only such artillery unit in the Army assigned to a division.

Originally, when the 6/56 came to Vietnam in October 1965, it was assigned to Tan Son Nhut, but last October was moved to the Americal.

CPT Christopher Vast, the CO of C Btry., and his 175 men were left permanently at the air base—a little Americal in the III Corps Tactical Zone.

335th Keeps Division Aircraft F

Crippled Americal choppers are patched up outside the 335th Trans. Co.'s main maintenance hanger

Mechanics search for trouble spot in Cayuse engine

Fixed-wing craft also receive expert repair

The helicopter fix-up center for the division, the 335th,

'lying High

Story and Photos by SP4 DEAN NORLAND

CHU LAI—The past quarter century has seen the 335th Trans. Co. move from the waterfront dock to the aircraft hangar in order to keep in stride with the ever-changing U.S. Army. The unit got its start as a harbor craft maintenance unit at Camp Gordon Johnson, Fla., on Dec. 14, 1943.

Since that World War II beginning, the company has had its mission changed and has been activated and deactivated as defense needs dictated. On Sept. 20, 1963, the 335th was called to active duty because of the Vietnam war, but it has switched from the sea to the air.

It now functions as the hub for all maintenance performed on division helicopters and a number of fixed-wing aircraft. "Our mission is to provide direct and backup maintenance and supply support for the Americal and other closely-positioned aircraft units," said the CO, MAJ Henry J. Northridge. "We have the best facility of any division aircraft maintenance supply-support company in Vietnam."

The company is divided into five platoons. First platoon works on Huey helicopters, while second platoon repairs LOH observation choppers. Third platoon maintains fixed-wing aircraft, with the shop platoon providing overall support ranging from fixing armaments to doing sheet metal work.

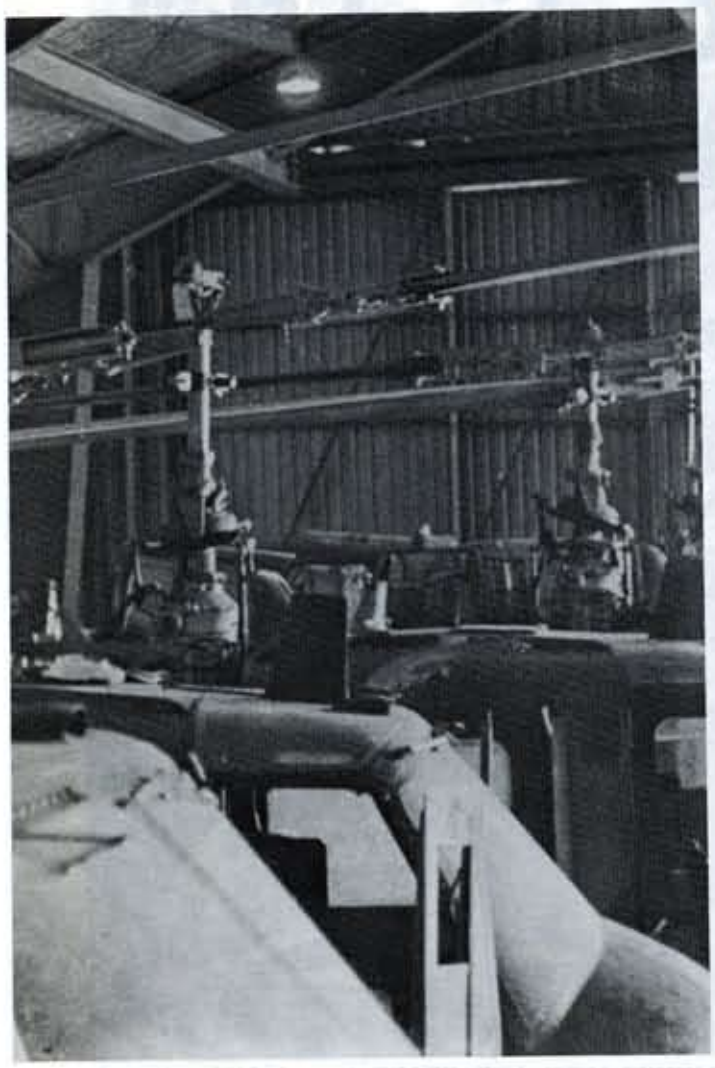
The final platoon, supply, plays the important and difficult role of trying to keep scarce aircraft parts on hand not only for the 335th but also for other transportation detachments.

"We have more than 14,500 line items on our authorized stockage list plus 5,000 fringe line items (those ordered only occasionally)," said CPT William E. Martin, aviation technical supply officer. To keep inventory current, a data processing unit lends automated assistance.

And the brand of all workmanship is checked by the quality control section. Ninety-two civilian employees from Lear-Siegler Industries, Avco-Lycoming, Bell Helicopter, and the Aviation Systems Command work hand-in-hand with the GI technicians.

All this exacting workmanship is critically important. CPT Martin summed it up: "Without a support unit like ours, the choppers couldn't move. We're the ones who keep them in the air."

Vital rotar mechanism gets close scrutiny from repair specialists



makes endless line of Hueys ready for action

Computer is fed with data to keep track of 20,000 replacement parts

Combat In Review

Probing For Enemy

A soldier from the 11th Inf. Bde. jabs with his bayonet in search of hidden enemy tunnel openings. (Photo by SGT Ronald Haeberle, 11th Inf. Bde.)

196th 'Roaring '20s' Raiders Crash In On VC Booze Party

LZ BALDY—Soldiers from the 196th Inf. Bde. are conducting midnight raids in the prohibition era style of Elliot Ness.

Operating on a night search and clear mission 32 miles northwest of Tam Ky, a platoon of A Co., 4th Bn., 31st Inf., encountered a lone VC who was apparently on sentry duty.

Tries To Sound Alert

The enemy was subdued without a struggle, but he began yelling loudly, obviously trying to alert somebody about the presence of the 4/31 unit.

After securing the VC, 1LT Eddie Zuleger (Avondale, Ariz.) led his platoon down a trail for a distance of about 500 meters, where they detected loud laughing and talking to their front.

Figuring it was a sizeable group of VC, the lieutenant split his platoon into two elements, each element forming a half-circle around the hamlet then advancing through the shadows in the direction of the uproar.

Raid Party

The platoon leader and his men entered the hamlet where they found more than 30 VC having a boisterous party. At this point, the VC noticed the party crashers and scattered in an attempt to escape.

In the melee that followed, one VC was killed and a second enemy soldier was wounded. A total of 14 VC were captured.

In typical "Roaring '20s" fashion, 30 gallons of rice wine were discovered—apparently the main source of the enemy's merriment.

The enemy is going dry in the 196th AO, and it's a good bet the VC will "speak easy" now when they have a party while A Co. is near.

Hides Out In Tunnel

Stubborn Sniper Dug From Hole

By SGT
DAVID DEVERICK
11th Inf. Bde.

LZ BRONCO — The expression "digging 'Charlie' out of the area" became an accurate description of what a company of 11th Inf. Bde. soldiers were forced to do recently.

"Sykes Regulars" from A Co., 1st Bn., 20th Inf. were making a combat assault in an area 12 miles northwest of Duc Pho when they began receiving sniper fire.

Zap Sniper

The company, led by CPT David W. Walsh (Colton, Calif.), moved toward the sniper, killing one VC and capturing his SKS rifle.

Another sniper carrying a BAR was wounded, causing him to drop his weapon as he ran for a tunnel.

"There were several tunnels in the area," explained 1LT Leo C. Beachwell (Princeton, N.J.). "I found the right one though."

Cue-Stick

1LT Beachwell crawled into a tunnel, poking around with a long stick.

As he was about halfway through the entrance the stick was grabbed from his hand. "I took this as my cue to move out of the hole," the platoon leader said.

An M-26 grenade and a CS gas grenade were thrown into the hole as soon as 1LT Beachwell crawled out, but the VC refused to leave his position.

Finally two bangalore torpedoes were placed in the tunnel by SP4 Charles W. Veatch (Des Moines, Iowa), the company's demo man, but to no avail.

Their efforts thwarted in every attempt, the Americal soldiers began digging their way toward the lurking VC and found another hole at the bottom of the tunnel where the sniper had hidden.

VC All Shook Up

"The little guy had a wound in each leg and was scared to death," CPT Walsh stated. "He was carrying documents and was plenty eager to talk.

"I think he was pretty happy to get out of the hole too. He must have had a heck of a headache."

PSYOP Broadcasters Irk VC, Provoke Hail Of Angry Bullets

DUC PHO—An Americal PSYOP team which recently tried to make the VC hit parade with Chieu Hoi music almost met a violent end to their disk jockey careers.

Broadcasting Vietnamese music from their sound truck, SGT Gary Taylor (Oak Lawn, Ill.) and SP4 Patrick Fleming (St. Paul, Minn.), members of HB-9 broadcast team, 3rd Det., 7th PSYOP Bn., were driving down Highway 1 three miles north of Duc Pho when they heard a barrage of fire behind them.

They turned their truck around and headed for a spot along the road where 20 Regional Forces (RFs) soldiers were engaged in a fire fight with a VC force.

Facing their truck at the fire, the Americal pair began broadcasting their Chieu Hoi message as they and the RFs moved out against the enemy, receiving heavy cross fire.

Amidst a blaze of bullets, Taylor then moved back to his vehicle to call in support. In a matter of minutes "Shark" gunships from the 174th Aslt. Hel. Co. and a track from E Trp., 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav. were on the scene, their supporting fire squelching the enemy's efforts and freeing the PSYOP team.

"I guess they didn't like the music we were playing," said Fleming.

Special Team Uses Combined Skills

CHU LAI—Hide 'n Seek is a familiar game, but specially-trained Americal combat teams have added a new twist, developing an effective tactic to invade isolated VC hideouts.

The new maneuver involves the coordination and special skills of three groups —Long Range Patrols (LRP), Aero Scouts of the 123rd Avn. Bn., and tracker dog teams.

Together, they form a highly mobile, quick reaction force that had moderate success on its first field test.

Seek Out VC

Acting on information gathered from the LRP team working in mountainous country 15 kilometers southwest of Chu Lai, the combined teams air assaulted into the area where a VC base camp and ammunition dump had been spotted.

They were hopeful of catching the enemy while he was still in the area, but he had left by the time the Americal troops arrived.

All the VC had left behind were two base camps, empty caves where they had stored ammunition, and a lot of mines and booby traps.

Efficient Teamwork

The LRP teams usually operate as small teams in enemy territory, observing troop movements and directing artillery fire on large concentrations of personnel.

The Aero Scouts also are one of the division's reconnaissance units, patrolling the division area with light observation helicopters, followed by Huey helicopters carrying "Warlords," infantrymen assigned to the unit.

The tracker dog teams are made up of well-trained Labrador retrievers and men who are trained as visual trackers.

These specialized combat units team up to give division planners another tactic to deal with the enemy.

Combat Center's 30,000th Troop

CHU LAI—SP4 Paul L. Armstrong (Fort Ord, Calif.) became the 30,000th soldier to enter the division's Combat Center for Vietnam orientation classes since it opened in 1967.

BG Howard H. Cooksey presented Armstrong an engraved cigarette lighter to commemorate the event.

CAMOUFLAGED AND READY to seek hidden enemy, LRPs relax and check equipment before choppers fly them to mission. (Photo by SP5 Robert Buzogany, Americal IO)

'It's A Girl' Flashed To Proud Pop Thanks To Efforts Of Red Cross

DUC PHO—What happens when the stork makes a delivery half a world away from a soldier in Vietnam?

Norman Edwards (Salinas, Calif.), assistant Red Cross field director assigned to the 11th Inf. Bde. here, explained that most expectant fathers make no secret of the expected blessed event.

"They want to know as soon as the child is born," Edwards said. "They know that the best way to do this is to inform their wife how to contact the Red Cross and have arrangements all ready."

A Birth In Chicago

Recently in Chicago, Mrs. Sandra Kikulski, wife of SP4 Richard G. Kikulski, a wireman in the 1st Bn., 20th Inf.'s Communications Platoon, gave birth to a 7 pound 10 ounce baby girl, Sharen Marie, some 10,000 miles away from her husband.

Kikulski's mother immediately notified the local chapter of the Red Cross, which in turn contacted the national headquarters in Washington, D.C.

From there a priority wire was sent to the Americal Red Cross director in Chu Lai, who relayed the message to Edwards in Duc Pho.

Talks To Wife

In less than 24 hours from his daughter's birth, Kikulski had been informed and was passing out cigars.

The new father's notification also listed a telephone number to call at the hospital.

With this information, Edwards set up a priority call to the new mother through the Duc Pho Military Affiliated Radio System (MARS).

Within 35 hours after the birth, the proud parents were talking to each other, thanks to the cooperation and understanding of the Red Cross and the Duc Pho MARS station.

Irish Charm Saves Flyboy From Harm

DUC PHO—For a Huey helicopter pilot named O'Sullivan, the "luck of the Irish" is a reality, especially when he is flying the unfriendly skies of Vietnam.

But what kind of luck is it when he has been hit by enemy fire 18 times in six months and forced to land on five of those dubious occasions?

"Good luck," says WO1 John I. O'Sullivan (Brooklyn, N.Y.), a pilot with the 174th Aslt. Hel. Co. in Duc Pho. "After all, I've only been wounded once."

O'Sullivan, who came to the United States in 1960 from Ireland with his parents, still retains his Irish citizenship.

O'Sullivan's "luck" began to show itself on his first day in Vietnam when his helicopter received hostile fire west of LZ Liz and crashed.

"We were hit with small arms fire and grenade frags," he said. "When we tried to fly out of the area we lost power and went down."

O'Sullivan has been recommended on three different occasions for the Distinguished Flying Cross and once for the Soldier's Medal, proving his willingness to take necessary risks. St. Patrick would be proud.

Lisa Dunn

A Sydney, Australia beauty, Lisa adorns a Chu Lai floral scene during her recent visit with an Australian rock group, the "Surfriders." Sydney for R&R anyone? (Photo by SP4 Steve Shingledecker, 523rd Sig. Bn.)

Cool Pilot, 'Funny' Plane Put VC On Spot

Story and Art by SP4 ALFRED ANTHONY 198th Inf. Bde.

LZ BAYONET—CPT Jack Dickens (Madison, W. Va.) presses out the stump of a good Havana cigar, walks hurriedly into the flight shack up to a rack with his name on it, and picks up a black leather satchel bursting with well-worn maps and flight plans.

In two minutes he's rushing across the taxi ramp to a strange-looking propeller plane, Helix, with one engine on the front of the fuselage and another aft.

Prepares For Flight

The captain tosses the satchel onto the left of the two seats, circling the aircraft with his men. He pushes the rudder by hand while his eyes comb the rear prop and tires.

After the door is clamped shut, the pilot's hand circles above his head, the engines spit the propellers into motion.

The Forward Air Control (FAC) pilot for the 198th Inf. Bde., one member of a crack team of veteran fliers, is prepared for his mission.

The O2 Helix climbs quickly from the Chu Lai airstrip. In a couple of minutes he's dead-ahead, south, over the Song Tra Bong River at a thousand feet. Then begins the circling and spotting.

Infantry Requests Support

Helix hangs above an infantry operation below. A unit of the 198th has called the division's Tactical Operations Center requesting an airstrike.

"He's down in there," the pilot murmurs, meaning the enemy. "Watch, we'll get him out. He might be dug in—20-30 feet."

At this time a team of jet fighters is returning from points west. They are calling in to Americal: "Can you use us?"

"Helix Two-Seven," the radio calls. CPT Dickens acknowledges momentarily with a slight drawl. "Roger, looking—about eleven o'clock." A tiny black speck and then another are emerging just below the heavy cloud cover. "Got him in sight."

Marks Enemy Position

The Helix dips its right wing, points it like a finger to the target, seems to roll over within the span of its own length.

Quickly, the Helix has its nose aimed at the tree cluster—woosh, a trail of smoke extends from the wing to the billow of white spreading through the leaves below. "Target marked."

PEERING DOWN TO SPOT HIDDEN VC, CPT Dickens prepares to launch another smoke-marking round to guide fighter jets on target. He is flying in support of 198th Inf. Bde. ground forces.

GRASPING SMOKE-MARKING ROUND, CPT Dickens stands beside Helix in which he directs deadly air strikes on enemy. (Photo by SP4 Mike Sullivan, 198th Inf. Bde.)

One jet dives, leaving a line of bright yellow flashes in its path right through the center of the enemy position.

The jet climbs back to its original position where it joins its teammate for a second dive.

CPT Dickens asks for one final run. He dives the Helix to mark another target about 500 meters northwest. "Not too low this time," he tells the jets. "They may be firing from this position." The fighters comply, complete a successful mission, and are gone.

The captain takes it down, scouting the area once more. Then he's off to an area north by Tien Phuoc. He calls the air controller for an obstacle check, and the voice on the radio is reading sets of grid coordinates for the positions of artillery fire.

Directs Artillery

The Helix reaches LZ Bowman, skimmnig the mountaintops—the watchful eye above for the men in the field.

To one side of a small stream climbs a mountain almost completely bare. The top shows pinpoints of a score of spider holes.

"The enemy dug in there for months maybe," CPT Dickens says. It now looks like an abandoned ant hill.

He keeps his vision on the ground and positions the plane almost as a second-thought. After the artillery has zeroed in, the captain levels off and heads back south to LZ Bayonet.

Back Home

After the Helix lands, the ground crew is waiting on the parking ramp to disarm the remaining rockets. Helix 27's air hours are complete for the day.

Back in the flight shack someone asks CPT Dickens, "Want to fly to DaNang tomorrow?"

"Don't fly tomorrow," he answers. "Wish I did."

Medic On Bataan During World War II

Death March Survivor Recalls Horrors

Story and Photo by
SP5 THOMAS MAUS, 3/16 Arty.

CHU LAI—Twenty-seven years seems like a long time to SP6 Herschel Hendrickson (Houston, Mo.), medical NCOIC at the 3rd Bn., 16th Arty.

But the facts that surround him as one of the final survivors of the Bataan Death March still on active duty remain so vivid in his mind, he talks as though the march took place yesterday.

Hendrickson entered the Army in March 1941, just four days after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Then a master sergeant, he was a member of the 31st Inf. Regt. in the Philippines.

Following five months of heavy fighting, Hendrickson and more than 30,000 American and Philippino troops converged on the small peninsula of Bataan.

Swims To Freedom

Hendrickson's stay on Bataan was rather short. He was captured along with eight of his buddies in April. Three days after his capture, Hendrickson and his fellow POWs killed the two enemy guards assigned to watch them and escaped to Corrigidor, an offshore island, by swimming a two-mile wide channel.

Other prisoners on the Death March were not as fortunate. During the following 41 months of the war, 92 percent of the Bataan captives died from starvation, torture, and diseases.

"To survive," said the medic, "one had to possess a strong desire to live, for food was scarce and most of the men were lucky to receive one meal every three days."

Releases Prisoners

Hendrickson was re-captured in May while still on Corrigidor, and sent to Bilibed Prison in Manila where once again he escaped while on a work detail, fleeing to the island of Luzon. While passing through Bailers Bay on the northern tip of Luzon, he met a group of guerilla warfare experts, whose job was to free prisoners from enemy POW camps.

"MacArthur Headquarters in Australia would get word to us by radio that a prisoner with a certain critical job skill was needed," the specialist recalled. "We had to free the captive and return him to friendly lines."

Hendrickson would allow himself to be captured and taken to an enemy POW camp where he would give the Japanese a bogus name and non-combatant unit.

"After locating my man," Hendrickson explained, "the two of us would position ourselves by the entrance to the camp and wait for a work detail to pass. We would fall in with the formation as it passed us and march to the working location."

When the detail reached its destination, Hendrickson would give an excuse to the gullible guards to leave the formation. The two of them then would fade into the jungle and move to friendly lines where the freed prisoner would be shipped to where his job was critical.

SP6 HERSCHEL HENDRICKSON EYES an M-2 carbine similar to the one he used during World War II. Comparing it to the M-16 weapon, the medical NCOIC of the 3rd Bn., 16th Arty. said, "I would have given a year's pay for an M-16 on Bataan." Hendrickson was one of the small percentage of soldiers who lived to tell of the Death March 27 years ago.

Hendrickson continued freeing POWs until September 1944, when once again he was captured, only this time under the direction of the enemy, and placed on board a ship to Formosa.

Survives Lead Mining Camp

When the vessel arrived in Formosa a long 28 days later, only 144 of the original 1,800 GIs were alive to walk ashore. Most of the men died from starvation, torture, and combat action.

Following a three-month stay in Formosa, Hendrickson was sent to a lead mining camp at 3B Sendai Area, northern Japan. In all, 1,142 men arrived at the camp in January 1945, but only 145 left the camp eight months later.

"They beat and starved us and the disease death toll was heavy," the still-fighting medic recalled. "I weighed 236 pounds when I entered the camp and 79 pounds when I was liberated."

After being liberated in 1945, Hendrickson spent two years in a Stateside hospital, and was discharged in 1947 with 80 percent disability.

Starts Army Life Anew

Starting a cattle ranch and small trucking line in his native Missouri, Hendrickson worked and enjoyed some hunting, fishing, and baseball, but soon grew discontent with civilian life. In 1957, with the help of some influential friends, Hendrickson re-entered the Army.

The veteran said re-taking basic training as a sergeant "made me feel more like a man knowing I could soldier right along with the younger men."

After medical training and assignment to a missile battalion in the States, Hendrickson served in Germany as a first sergeant and later as a hospital wardmaster before returning to the U.S. as a wardmaster in the orthopedic section at Valley Forge Hospital.

After a year in Vietnam in 1966, he returned to the States, but then went back to Vietnam in May 1968.

Comparisons And Memories

When asked to compare Vietnam and World War II, Hendrickson commented, "This is a young man's war; young men are more capable of copeing with the jungle warfare fought here today. In addition, mainline resistance or front lines are non-existant in Vietnam. You can meet the enemy anywhere."

Many medals for heroism were presented to Hendrickson, but he said, "I choose not to wear the medals from World War II because of the memories behind the awards. Many men died beside me, yet I lived on to see the outcome of their actions."

It was 27 years ago, yet the horror is as fresh as yesterday.

CG Hosts Lieutenants For Dinner

CHU LAI—General are not noted for fraternizing with lieutenants, but it happens every week in the commanding general's mess here.

MG Charles M. Gettys has a "Lieutenant of the Week" to dinner each Wednesday. The invitation is rotated among the division's rifle battalions.

Concerned Leaders

1LT Russell J. Martin (Thatcher, Ariz.) was one of those recently brought in from his normal duties as a platoon leader with D Co., 4th Bn., 3rd Inf.

"I was briefed but I really didn't know what to expect," he said. "The whole division staff was there, and I don't usually see so much rank in the same room.

"I was surprised to find out they were down to earth and concerned about us."

Chided By Men

When the 28 GIs under 1LT Martin's command heard about their leader's selection, they gave him some good-natured ribbing.

"They wanted to know if I was going to tell the general how to run the division, accused me of goldbricking and made other unmentionable comments."

"General Gettys asked me a lot of questions about my platoon," the 11th Inf. Bde. soldier continued, "and I told him some of our problems.

"But I was more nervous about my table manners, with three generals and a lot of colonels opposite me. I usually don't have to worry about that in the boonies."

Form Of Recognition

The weekly invitation gives the general and his staff a better idea of the problems faced at squad and platoon level, but more importantly, it honors the junior officers in the field.

"It was great, and gave me a better idea of how a division really works as a team," said 1LT Martin, one of the few lieutenants who now can say, "As I was telling the general the other night...".

3 Support Battalions Dissolved By ROAD

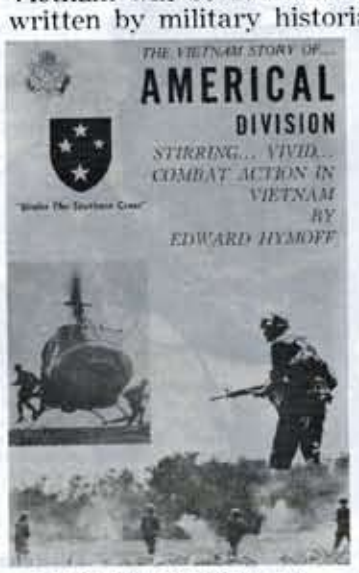
CHU LAI—Three Americal Support battalions—the 6th, 8th, and 9th—were deactivated Feb. 15 as the division was reorganized under the ROAD (Reorganization Army Division) concept.

The three battalions formerly provided combat service support for the division's three infantry brigades.

Under the centralized concept, the functions of the three units will be absorbed by existing maintenance, medical, supply, and transportation units throughout the Americal.

Americal Combat History To Appear In Book Form

CHU LAI—The Americal's battle record in Vietnam will be recorded in an 80,000-word book written by military historian Edward Hymoff.



RUGGED COMBAT action will be chronicled in the forthcoming history.

World War II activities of the division also will be summarized in the hard-bound documentary.

The book, which will take six months to research and write plus three months to print, should be available by this fall.

Hymoff is interested in talking with anyone who may have served with the Americal during World War II, was assigned to Task Force Oregon, or has any interesting facts to relate about the division.

He may be contacted through the division Information Office.

Order forms for the book will be available at individual units soon.