SOUTHERN CROSS

AMERICAL DIVISION

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TECHNICIAN CLIMBS 300-FOOT TRANSMITTING TOWER of the new TV station in Chu Lai. Channel 13 now operates daily from 1600 hours to 2300 hours, thus giving many division viewers a choice of watching two stations.

New TV Station Here Beams On Channel 13

CHU LAI—AFVN-TV, Channel 13, aired its maiden telecast here March 14.

Personnel stationed at Chu Lai or immediately north of the base thus hold the distinction of being the only people in Vietnam to have a choice of two TV stations to watch: Channel 11, Da Nang, or Channel 13, Chu Lai.

The new station will be on the air daily from 4-11 p.m.

Located at the north end of the Chu Lai complex, Channel 13's studio and technical facilities are manned by Army, Navy, Marine, and Air Force broadcasters and technicians.

A 300-foot tower, which beams a 40-kilowatt visual signal and a four-kilowatt audio signal primarily to the south and west, is located at the same site.

The new station is the only one of eight television facilities in country to transmit on Channel 13; all others telecast on Channel 11.

3/16th Arty. Smashes Siege On Tien Phuoc

Story and Photo by SP5 THOMAS MAUS 3rd Bn., 16th Arty.

TIEN PHUOC—Firing in support of Allied forces. B Btry., 3rd Bn., 16th Arty., recently thwarted a fierce NVA/VC assault on the Tien Phuoc Fire Base, 15 miles southwest of Tam Ky.

Action began during the early-morning darkness on Feb. 23 when the enemy overran the nearby Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) outpost.

SGT Alton Roundy (Beverly, Mass.), NCOIC of the Tien Phuoc VHF radio station, recalls what took place: "I was on duty when I happened to look out the window of my hootch towards the CIDG outpost when I saw enemy rockets and mortars falling on their position, lighting up the sky like day."

Bombard Outpost

Immediately realizing the danger if the enemy gained control of the weapons on the outpost, CPT Nguyen Ngoc Diep, CO of CIDG forces in Tien Phuoc, called for B Btry. artillery to blow up the NVA/VC-infested area.

After white phospherous rounds pounded the enemy, the VC element tried to enter the main gate of Tien Phuoc, but was beaten back by CIDG guards.

All was quiet until 7:45 that morning.

"Everyone was walking around, still talking about the night before when the first incoming artillery hit," said SGT Edward Beaudin (Marine City, Mich.).

No damage was reported in the battery area that day.

Rockets Strike Again

The following day, a barrage of rockets hit Tien Phuoc, one of them exploding behind the VHF radio station.

"The concussions and shrapnel from the rocket knocked over one of the radio antennas and started a fire in the gasoline dump next to our generators," recalled PFC Jesse Adkins (Newton Falls, Ohio).

The fires were extinguished, and once more the besieged artillery base withstood the enemy onslaught.

More Incoming

The next day, B Btry. was eating breakfast when the alarm was sounded and again Tien Phuoc was under attack.

According to SFC Alfred Walsh (Vinegrove, Ky.), the mess sergeant, close to 40 people cleared out of the mess hall just 30 seconds before two 82mm mortar rounds struck dead center in the mess kitchen.

Ironically, just one week before the offensive, Tien Phuoc mess hall, or what was referred to jokingly as the Tien Phuoc Hilton, was the winner of the first 3/16th Arty. "Best Mess" award.

Third Day Of Battle

The following day, Feb. 25, enemy rockets and mortars continued to rain on Tien Phuoc, and B Btry. kept returning fire.

Although the artillerymen had to hit the ground when rockets or mortars landed, all six howitzers in the battery would recover quickly to resume firing.

(Continued on Page 8)

COL Donaldson Now C/S

CHU LAI—The commander of the 11th Inf. Bde. and the Chief of Staff have switched jobs.

COL John W. Donaldson, who has led the "Jungle Warriors" since mid-October, has come here to division headquarters while COL Jack E. Treadwell has gone to LZ Bronco to take the reins of the 11th Bde.

COL Donaldson, who is a 1944 West Point graduate, previously served as the Army member of the Staff Group of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.

He led the 11th Bde. during Operation Vernon Lake II, which accounted for 455 enemy kills and the discovery of 81 NVA base camps and three hospital complexes in the mountainous region southwest of Quang Ngai City.

COL Treadwell, who also joined the Americal in October, was awarded the Medal of Honor while serving as a company commander with the 180th Inf. Regt. during World War II.

Aerial Observer Crashes
Survives 30 Hours With VC

By 1LT FRANK LONGWELL
196th Inf. Bde.

LZ BALDY—1LT John McFadden's job as an aerial observer for the 196th Inf. Bde. is to detect enemy ground activity, but the sharp crack of .50 cal. bullets ripping into the fixed-wing aircraft indicated the enemy had reversed the process.

In the ensuing 30-hour period, 1LT McFadden scrambled along in a nightmarish evasion that combined the elements of luck and ingenuity.

Bird Dog Spotter

The mission started when the 27-year-old lieutenant from Chicago climbed into the Bird Dog observation craft, glad to see his pilot was the same one who took him on his first flight some 40 missions ago.

The small plane arched into Antenna Valley through Deo Le pass and headed south down the twisting Son Thu Bong River, approximately 10 miles south of An Hoi.

Downed By Machinegun

Gliding along 100 feet above the water and using the river as a guide, the two men spotted nothing unusual.

Suddenly, the snap of rounds from a .50 cal. machinegun broke the silence.

(Continued on Page 8)

MEN OF B BTRY., 3RD BN., 16TH ARTY., BLAST AWAY with powerful 155mm howitzers during enemy assault at the Tien Phuoc Fire Support Base. Their target is the hilltop CIDG post in background, which was overrun by enemy during the first day of the battle.

Religion and You

The Victory Of Easter

By CHAPLAIN (LTC) JACK C. RANDLES
Assistant Division Chaplain

In April 1965, I had the privilege of visiting the Civil War battlefield at Petersburg, Va. My visit was timed with the hundredth anniversary of that vicious battle.

As I walked across the soft green grass, noting the trench lines, the array of spring flowers, the white dogwood blossoms and even the tiny flowers under my feet, I tried to push the morning back exactly 100 years. The quiet serenity of my morning was in sharp contrast to "their" morning at Petersburg.

In my mind's ear I could hear the roar of the cannons and the yells of battle. What were "their" thoughts? Like all soldiers, I suspect they were personal—very personal. Slogans of war may be national in scope, but not the individual soldier's. His thoughts are of survival, home, and of his being a man in that moment of crisis.

I suddenly was struck most forcefully by the beauty around me that morning—beauty born of suffering and struggle. The peace about me was purchased by men who knew no peace in their lives. Pursuing the thought further, I came to realize that anything that is beautiful and valuable comes through suffering. The flowers under my feet had struggled to break the hard clay and thus earned the right to lift their cocky heads heavenward.

Suffering, pain, privations, and struggle may be thought of as unwelcome intruders during their visits, but they are the "tools" most frequently used by God in fashioning real men and women.

The beauty of life, the confirmed hope in man, and the pull of eternity comes to us because there was the "tragedy of a Good Friday." Without the dark backdrop of Calvary, there could not have been the glorious sunrise of that first Easter morning. God chose the route of suffering for His redemptive end.

The empty tomb is the hallmark of the Christian faith. Centuries ago, Job voiced the universal question of mankind, "If a man dies, shall he live again?" The message of the Easter morning is a resounding "affirmative." It makes death for the believer a "no, no."

Easter's victory is not a blanket removal of the plague of death. The Lord said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." (Matthew 7:13-14, RSV.)

The message of Easter is that life is optional—and thus death is optional. The choice is incumbent upon every man.

Flag Living Symbol Of Nation

By SFC LARRY BABITTS
Staff NCOIC

Ever since the first American flag was rushed into the fray at Lexington, Mass., that fateful day in April 1775, the colors of the nation have been the colors of individual liberty and freedom.

While it may be true that the design of our Republic's flag has undergone physical changes since then, from Lexington through Bull Run, to the Marine and Guadalcanal through Batangan Peninsula, our flag has gained the reputation as the hallmark of democracy.

Symbol For Immigrants

The flag is the great immigrant waves of the last century; it is the native Indian attempting to retain his culture in a fast-advancing world. It also is thousands of Asians brought to America to build the world's greatest railroads.

The flag is much more. It is the "prodigal sons" who fought a brave but foolish war for separatism from the Union for an ideal that now exists only as a historical curiosity.

The Oppressed Wait

It also is hundreds of millions of Europeans who, one generation ago, waited impatiently for the soldiers of our flag to release them from the heavy burdens of fascism.

The flag too is the present struggle of our nation's minorities for a better share of the affluent society their labors helped to create.

It is the hope of the world's oppressed, staring back at us from political prisons where they wait for freedom.

It is the flag that stands for freedom, a freedom that permits dissent without violence, a freedom so strong that it can withstand baseless and unwarranted insults.

Traditional Honors

Traditionally, certain honors are due the flag, honors not to a piece of cloth, but to the nation it symbolizes. It must be displayed in a certain prescribed manner, depending upon the occasion and type of banner used.

While the flag is, materially speaking, only a piece of cloth, sometimes tattered and sometimes soiled...it is you, if you are one of us...it is America, it is American...it is freedom and justice.

How often are we weary of the struggles of a free world to remain free...of hunger and despair...of the internal strife and the "new think" of a new generation of Big Brothers?

How often has the flag, the sign of our nation...one nation indivisible...been embarrassed by bigotry among its citizens? Embarrassed by poverty and sometimes disenfranchisement of some of her staunchest defenders?

Look Back In Anger

How often has the spirit of the flag been compelled to look back in anger and restore the ideals of Thomas Jefferson?

But the meaning of the flag is deeper than any interpolitical rivalry, stronger than any ethnic background problems, or the petty disturbances in our cities. There exists something more meaningful than all of that...it represents our mutual search for a better nation, a better life in a better world.

Look at the alternate red and white stripes, the union of stars upon a sky-blue field, and know that the flag is what you want it to be... and what you make it to be.

Look at it and know that to demean the flag is to demean yourself. You are the nation.

RE-UP! ARMY

The Army: Man Doing Man's Job

There have been many books and articles written about the monosex society of the modern civilization in which we live. Women have invaded almost every job and field of enterprise.

The Army is one of the few places left where it still takes a man to do a man's job. True, the feminine figure is now draped by the military uniform of all the Armed Forces; but you'll never see a WAC wearing a combat infantryman's badge and carrying an M-16 rifle. A woman's "gams" sheathed in jump boots and topped by a qualified parachutist badge, a lady tanker in an armored division, or a gal wearing the Ranger patch or the Green Beret of the special forces is something you certainly will not see.

These are jobs for men...Good Men! They offer adventure and excitement; a chance to prove leadership ability; and above all, a chance to be a man in a man's job.

* * * *

A former Baltimore automobile mechanic has hit it big with the Americal Division.

SP5 William R. Merson, an aircraft electrician with the 14th Cmbt. Avn.'s 132nd Aslt. Spt. Hel. Co., received a Variable Reenlistment Bonus (VRB) of $8,360 by re-upping for six years.

But the VRB wasn't the only reason Merson re-upped: "A career in the Army is something I've always looked forward to," he commented.

Why not let your career counselor tell you the whole story about VRB and its benefits.

SOUTHERN CROSS
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Weatherman Vital To Maneuvering

"I COULD HAVE SWORN THE AMERICAL WEATHERMAN said fair and sunny," could be the thoughts of this 198th Inf. Bde. soldier as he sits out the storm on his steel pot. Despite the rain, his stogie seems none the worse for wear. (Photo by SP4 Alfred Anthony Jr., 198th Inf. Bde.)

By SP4
DENNIS L. SELBY
Americal IO

CHU LAI—The closest most people come to meeting a meteorologist is when they tune in their television sets to catch the evening news and weather reports.

On the battlefields here, however, the often taken-for-granted weatherman is a pretty important guy.

From generals down, everyone listens closely when he makes his predictions because his reports determine how and when men will move.

Air Force Task

In the Americal, the job of making predictions and forecasts falls on Air Force CPT John P. Huddle, staff weather officer.

CPT Huddle, an Air Force and civilian-trained meteorologist from Sycamore, Ohio, supervises weather stations located at Chu Lai, LZ Baldy, and Duc Pho, which collect weather data for division planners.

The functions of these stations are to observe weather and sky conditions, take atmospheric measurement, and relay the results to the Chu Lai station, which compiles the information and produces a weather forecast.

"The instruments we use in Vietnam, for reasons of mobility, aren't as elaborate as those used in the U.S., but our equipment is just as efficient," CPT Huddle said.

Variety Of Equipment

Insturments used by the weather stations include the aneroid barometer, a device used to measure atmospheric pressure; a temperature dew point indicator, which indicates the temperature that air must reach before achieving the saturation point; and a wind speed-direction indicator or anemometer.

"Past records and statistics play a major role in predictions, as the records relate what type of weather may be expected during a specific period," the captain continued.

Forecast Flying Conditions

Aviation is one of the major items of concern to weather stations and tacticians alike.

"To be able to get a helicopter or C-130 airborne requires the latest information concerning visibility, windspeed and direction, and locations of fronts," CPT Huddle added.

The main concern to aviators, of course, is visibility. Low clouds pose problems to fliers so, to measure the height, a device bounces a beam of light off the clouds.

The light is received by another instrument and, by using plain old geometry, the angle and distance traveled by the reflected light beam gives the height of the cloud cover.

Guides Troop Movement

Troop movements on the ground are hindered by rain, mud, heat, and humidity.

To prepare for the worst, commanders must have the latest possible forecasts to determine tactics, equipment, and time involved.

In planning for an operation, CPT Huddle stated, "The information we provide is more of a climatology nature—that is, what general type of weather may be expected.

"But, as the operation progresses, the forecasts have to be more precise as to what the exact weather will be from day to day.

Lack Of Data

"The only real problem we have encountered," the captain continued, "is not a lack of equipment but a shortage of current or past weather data.

"Also, we receive little or no weather information from China and North Vietnam to give us an idea of what kind of weather may be expected."

Despite these handicaps, the U.S. Air Force weather station at Chu Lai continues to play an important role in turning out accurate weather predictions and keeping forecasts right up to date.

Prisoners Bound Puritan Style In Large VC POW Installation

LZ BALDY — Americal soldiers recently uncovered a large bamboo-enclosed POW camp where captured Vietnamese Popular Force Soldiers (PFs) had been shackled in a manner reminiscent of suspected witches of early Puritan New England.

Enemy Opens Up

Acting on intelligence reports about a prison for PFs captured by enemy forces, A Co., 4th Bn., 31st Inf., 196th Inf. Bde., moved into an area 36 miles northwest of Tam Ky and received heavy AK-47 fire.

Five VC were detected evading toward an adjacent ridgeline, but impending darkness prevented the "Chargers" from pursuing the fleeing enemy.

Early the next morning, the division unit moved into the area and located the sprawling POW camp.

Prisoners were kept in a large bamboo building, approximately 20 feet by 35 feet with walls fashioned from poles.

Shackle Prisoners

The prisoners were kept secured at night by placing their ankles in notches cut at regular intervals in a long bamboo pole. Another flat piece of wood was placed over the prisoners' ankles to hold them in place.

Three barracks and a kitchen indicated a large number of VC/NVA had been in control of the camp.

"The VC had been in there for years because the weather had discolored some of the bamboo poles in the buildings until they were almost black," said FSG Harold Winger (Laverne, Minn.).

Dropped, Kill Five, Lifted; Day's Work In 17 Minutes

LZ BRONCO—Impossible to complete a day's work in the short span of 17 minutes? A LRP team (recently redesignated Co. G, Ranger, 75th Inf.) accomplished that feat.

Working with elements of the 11th Inf. Bde., the Rangers were inserted at 10:41 a.m. into an area 13 miles southwest of Quang Ngai City. After leaving their helicopter, the men moved quickly into a treeline some 50 meters away and began to set up along a nearby trail.

SGT John M. Brown (Decatur, Ga.), the team leader, was positioning his men when he suddenly heard movement to his rear.

He cautioned his team to remain silent while five dark figures moved in their direction. Brown soon recognized them as NVA soldiers, each dressed in a gray uniform and carrying an AK-47.

His next order came in the form of a burst from his M-16, and the five enemy troops soon fell dead under a barrage of fire from the Americal team.

The Rangers were able to confirm the five NVA kills, but heavy sniper fire from several directions prevented them from capturing any weapons.

They soon requested extraction and left under fire at 10:58 a.m., just 17 minutes after setting foot in the area. The mission was short, but no one will deny the team credit for a full day's work.

Rescues GI From Undertow

'Charger' Saves Swimmer

CHU LAI—A young soldier from the 196th Inf. Bde. received the Soldier's Medal for heroic action in saving the life of a fellow "Charger" caught in the strong undertow off the beach here.

SP4 Donald R. Golden, a team leader with 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., was attending a beach party during his company's three-day stand-down.

Treacherous Undertow

Golden was watching two men on a raft in the ocean when suddenly he noticed them struggling beyond the breakers.

The raft on which the men were relaxing had been torn from them by a wave, and they were fighting to escape the strong undertow.

"They were about 300 yards from shore when I saw them, and the current was pulling them further out," Golden said.

Rescue One

The 20-year-old soldier from Yonkers, N.Y., a life guard for two years at Seaside Park, N.J., swam through surf and breakers to the men and towed the first safely back to shore.

But before Golden could rescue the second man, the undertow pulled its victim under the water and out of sight.

CHU LAI BEACH IS A NIFTY PLACE to sun and surf, as this bird's eye view shows. But beware of the danger lurking off the shore—undertow. It can whisk away careless swimmers. (Photo by SP4 Bill Guerrant, Americal IO)

PORTRAITS OF THE MEN

LAWYER, L
NC
SOLDIE

Story a
SP4 ALFRED
198th

Written on the face of a Kansan
In the deeper lines of a Carolinian
Pressed on their foreheads
Their lives are drawn in lines
Along the jaw
In callouses on the palms
In creases above the nose;
They've played ball in Yankee Stadium
Driven rigs through the Great Smokies
Smiled, and smoked good cigars
Lost and been big winners at cards
Been unsure about a woman
Given a kid a tough game of football
Put in toil at learning any job;

I WHO FIGHT THE WAR

BALLPLAYER

OW

RS ALL

nd Art by
ANTHONY JR.
Inf. Bde.

Men who've known
The baking of bread
The fittings for machines
Money
A good dance
Sitting alone
Soaking, sweating
Fighting the sun
Waiting for a muzzle flash;
Businessmen who've been bogged in mud
Lawyers who fly choppers
Men who count the days
Those who want to stay
Men who flourish in the field.

Division Blunts Enemy's Post-TET Drive

Allied Strike Traps Cong

LZ BRONCO—In an 18-helicopter assault, Americal infantrymen swept in to link up with Popular Force (PF) soldiers in an area just south of the Song Han River, killing 25 VC.

The operation began when the 11th Inf. Bde.'s 4th Bn., 3rd Inf. airmoved A Co. to a rice paddy north of the Song Han and B Co. to a hill two "clicks" (two thousand meters) southwest.

F Trp. tracks, with the "Old Guard" recon platoon aboard, drove in from the southeast.

With the support of the PFs, the three elements then moved towards the objective in a three-pronged attack which caught the VC in the middle, crushing the enemy force.

Combat In Review

Scurrying Aboard

"Blue Ghost" chopper extracts infantrymen from an operation with 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav. northwest of Quang Ngai City. (Photo by SP4 Steve Shingledecker, 523rd Sig. Bn.)

Launch Site Uncovered

CHU LAI—The next best thing to stopping a rocket attack before it starts is quickly pinpointing the launch site and then catching suspected rocketeers before they get away.

Thanks to the fast reaction of division radar personnel, observers in the field, and the 123rd Avn. Bn. that is just what happened in the Chu Lai area one morning during the post-TET offensive.

Detect Rocket Flash

Eleven 122mm rockets were fired into the Chu Lai Defense Command (CLDC) area at 6:25 a.m. on March 4, and shortly thereafter, a confirmed launch site had been located and five military-age males detained as enemy suspects.

Americal counter-mortar and counter-rocket radar spotted a probable launch site by zeroing in on the rocket flashes.

The site also was reported by a 198th Inf. Bde. observer for the 1st Bn., 6th Inf. in the field, and gunships of the 123rd Avn. Bn. were scrambled from Chu Lai to check the site.

Nab Rocketeers

The choppers found a launch location five miles southwest of Chu Lai and detained the five suspects in the vicinity.

A half hour later, a recon unit of the 1/6 Inf. reached the site and found 11 blast areas, 11 bipods, 11 shipping plugs, nine rocket caps, aiming stakes, and packing crates.

The rockets brought the total number to 86 expended on the CLDC since the current enemy offensive began Feb. 23.

Nab Enemy Trying To Elude Cav

Chopper Crew Leads Rout of Fleeing NVA

By SP5 JERRY HARRIS
16th Cmbt. Avn. Grp.

TAM KY—A camouflaged mass of NVA soldiers were discovered and eventually routed by the quick actions of an Americal helicopter crew in a post-TET attack near here.

Twenty-nine of the enemy were killed, six enemy soldiers including an NVA battalion commander captured, and numerous weapons and packs plus a .51 cal. antiaircraft weapon were confiscated in the encounter.

Cav Flushes NVA

A UH-1D Huey "Slick" commanded by WO Walter Seger (Warren, Mich.) was flying a visual reconnaissance mission in support of the 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav. when he discovered a large group of enemy troops fleeing from a tree line a short distance from the advancing cavalrymen.

"Enemy troops were moving down the opposite side of the hill, just out of range of the Cav," Seger said.

"They had tree twigs attached to their helmets and back packs, and they ran in a crouching, doubled-over position so there appeared to be 35 or 40 tumbleweeds blowing over the side of the hill in all directions."

The chopper made its first pass through the center of the disorganized mass, killing several NVA.

Firing as they retreated, the enemy tried to hide in hootches at the top of the hill. The A Co. "Slick" took several hits as the action continued.

"We could feel the ship shudder as the rounds hit," said SP4 Terry Bennet (Veneta, Ore.), crew chief of the 123rd Avn. Bn. chopper.

"They were firing armor-piercing .30 cal. shells and it appeared as if thousands of rounds were directed at us. I took one through the sleeve of my jacket and the co-pilot's neck was grazed as a bullet went through the roof.

Cobras Clean Up

"After we expended our machinegun ammo we continued to fire with our M-16 rifles until the Cobras arrived.

"Then I dropped smoke grenades marking the hootches containing the NVA, and the Cobras completely devastated them with rockets."

When the Cobras finished, 1st Cav. armored cavalry assault vehicles attacked the hill, completing the job.

Pre-Planned Fire Breaks Up Assault

LZ BAYONET—"We were on 100% alert and waiting for them when they came," said LT James P. Achille (Rochester, N.Y.), a platoon leader with the 198th Inf. Bde.'s C Co., 1st Bn., 52nd Inf.

The "Ready Rifles" had beaten back a post-TET NVA attack on LZ Professional, nine miles southwest of Tam Ky, and killed eight of the enemy while suffering one man wounded in action.

The infantrymen also captured one RPG launcher and three RPG rounds in the attack.

The company, commanded by CPT A. S. Jamison Hall (San Antonio), had gone on the alert when a number of other firebases and landing zones in the division area came under enemy attack shortly after midnight.

When the NVA struck at Professional at 4 a.m., the 1/52 was waiting with a devastating defense of small arms, grenades, and preplanned mortar concentrations.

In addition to the eight enemy bodies left lying in the wire and outside the perimeter, a number of heavy blood trails were found around the camp when the sun rose.

Young 'Charlie's' Toy Rifle Resembles Papa's AK-47

LZ BRONCO—Apparently the VC believe in training their "recruits" young.

While sweeping northeast in a recent joint operation, PFC Bill Latina (East Brunswick, N.J.), a member of B Co., 4th Bn., 3rd Inf., 11th Inf. Bde., uncovered a VC toy which looked like an AK-47.

The toy was a short wooden rifle with a wire sight and a hollowed out magazine well with a real carbine magazine inserted.

Latina, who kept the toy weapon as a souvenir, joked, "I wonder how much trouble I am going to have getting this registered as a war trophy."

M-60 Headrest

Resting his head on his machinegun stock, a soldier from the 196th Inf. Bde.'s 4th Bn., 31st Inf. pauses during an operation near LZ West. (Photo by SP4 Bill Crawford, 196th Bde.)

Laura Polkinghorne

A member of the Honey, Ltd., Laura belts out a song at the Bob Hope Christmas Show in Chu Lai. She is a college senior from Detroit. (Photo by SP4 Steve Shingledecker, 523rd Sig. Bn.)

Midnight Poker Party

'Chargers' Bust VC Card Game

LZ BALDY — The poker game was extending far beyond the midnight hour, and the five men were laughing and talking around the flickering candle.

Suddenly an M-16 nosed through the floor of the hootch into the bunker below, and a voice yelled out, "Okay, the party's over!"

All five men had lost their poker game to SP4 Bill Leach (Simpson, Ill.).

Hear Voices

Game-busting action started when a platoon from the 196th Inf. Bde., operating on a search and clear operation 29 miles northwest of Tam Ky, heard several excited voices coming from a small hootch.

Leach advanced cautiously forward to investigate. From the entrance he could see a candle shining from a bunker dug under the floor of the bamboo structure.

A closer look revealed five VC engaged in a heated card game.

After the rest of the platoon surrounded the area, Leach looked over the poker party and noticed several piles of money surrounding the deck of cards.

Absorbed In Game

"I must have stood there for nearly five minutes," the specialist said. "I wanted to sit in on their game, but I didn't understand what they were playing."

When the five startled enemy looked up at the barrel of the M-16, they decided everyone had been dealt a losing hand.

After questioning, the five card players admitted they were VC and had hidden their weapnos in the hills before starting the midnight poker party.

Enemy Squad Really Neat, Polices Up After 196th Unit

LZ BALDY—With their supply lines seriously severed by bombing, illness, and desertion, the VC and NVA are policing up after division field companies in an effort to implement their own depleted supplies.

Camp For Night

An element of the 196th Inf. Bde. recently was impressed with the persistence of a VC scrounging team. D Co., 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., had hacked its way up the thickly vegetated jungle slope of a mountain in Antenna Valley, 25 miles northwest of Tam Ky, and at dusk established a night laager near the summit.

Moving out the next morning, the company had not hiked five minutes from their night perimeter before looking back to see a squad of VC policing up after them.

Expert Policemen

There was nothing left behind for them to take, but as one infantryman commented, "You sure have to give them credit for trying." A squad of the "Legionnaire" company slipped back along the trail and broke up the enemy scavenger hunt with a few well-placed M-79 rounds.

The enemy uses discarded items like C-ration cans and ammo boxes to fashion home-made explosives. D Co. was making sure that metal containers left behind today would not endanger them tomorrow in the form of booby traps.

Division Newspaper Wins USARV Award For Informing Troops

CHU LAI—The SOUTHERN CROSS newspaper has been presented a USARV Journalism Award for its outstanding command information features during January.

The accolade praises the division publication for "outstanding service in supporting an effective command information program promoting efficiency, welfare and morale through excellence in editorial content, news interest and effectiveness of design."

Pills And Swabs Are Medic's Arsenal

Villagers Put Trust In Disease Fighter

By SP4 ALFRED ANTHONY JR.
198th Inf. Bde.

LZ BAYONET—"Bac si! Bac si!" shouted the children of Tri Binh village, two miles scuth of Chu Lai.

And PFC Kelly Thompson (Fairfax, Calif.) has come to know that they are shouting "Doctor! Doctor!" as they greet him in force at the tiny village gate.

"Hello, Thompson," smiled one youngster toward the six-foot-two Americal medic, who for the past four months has brought the basic medical treatment the villagers have lacked for so many years.

Volunteer Work

Working mostly on his own time, the burly but unarmed conscientious objector has become a familiar sight in villages near the base camp of the 198th Inf. Bde.

When he visits, children line the dirt paths and follow him with awe to the village school house, which for a day is turned into a hospital.

"It's reassuring to these people to be able to shake hands and talk with us," Thompson said, not stopping his treatment of an elderly man for a boil the size of a half-dollar.

"So often they just see us passing their village with our giant machinery which is so difficult for them to understand."

Classroom His Office

Soon the small but surprisingly clean third grade classroom is packed with villagers, some very young and already hampered by disaeses, and others old arid aching with arthritis.

Probing the aches and pains of his patients, sweat runs down the young medic's face as again he digs into a converted sandbag filled with sterilized cotton swabs.

"These are the staples of my medical bag," Thompson smiled, pointing to the swabs and a quart of hydrogen peroxide solution used to combat bacteria and infection—the villains which most often plague the villagers.

As the afternoon drifts on, the hot room becomes less crowded but Kelly Thompson continues to treat his patinets, getting satisfaction from their happy faces as they leave his care.

Friend Of People

As a member of the S-5 (civil affairs) section at the 198th, the native Californian has had close contact with the Vietnamese.

"I've always wanted to help these people," Thompson said. "My work offers them temporary help and often is only hit and miss, but it is all that I am able to do."

Although a graduate of the Army Medical Field Service School at Ft. Sam Houston, Tex. and a student of bacteriology at Utah State University, Thompson has not had formal civilian medical training.

"The experience I've gotten here is priceless," he explained. "In fact, I'd like to continue this kind of work later in the Peace Corps. It has even made me think seriously about getting a degree in medicine."

Pills Cure All

As he continues his work in this tiny village along Highway 1, Thompson noticed that many of the ailing patients ask only for pills to remedy inexplicable illnesses.

"The hypochondriacs are here too," he said, "but some of these people are really ill. I've even found one woman with cancer."

It is time to move on and the village children know their "doctor" must go. As Thompson and his interpreter, ARVN SGT Hy, walk to the jeep, the children follow close behind.

Thompson reacts by giving bars of soap to the youngsters, who rub their faces and shoulders in pantomime. The medic's dusty jeep rolls from the village back to LZ Bayonet, and the children know that soon the tall American will return, and the welcome cry of "Bac si! Bac si!" again will be heard.

Swoop Down In Heavy Fire

Heroic Pilots Rescue Wounded

By SP4
TONY SWINDELL
11th Inf. Bde.

LZ BRONCO — Two Americal chopper pilots braved heavy enemy fire and miserable weather conditions to organize and direct the rescue of wounded members of an ambushed infantry company south of LZ Cork.

1LT Earl Ingram II (Columbus, Ga.) and WO Richard C. Cichowski (Westfield, Mass.), UH-1 pilots with the 174th Aslt. Hel Co., supporting the 11th Inf. Bde., were flying the 3rd Bn., 1st Inf. Command and Control (C&C) ship on routine missions off LZ cork.

Suddenly, the radio blared that B Co. had been ambushed near a village by an estimated 100 enemy soldiers.

Direct Medevacs

After the C&C ship arrived at the scene, approaching medevacs radioed 1LT Ingram for landing instructions, but a pick-up zone (PZ) had not been established yet because of intense enemy fire.

As soon as word reached 1LT Ingram and Cichowski that the PZ was set up, they directed their 11th Bde. craft in to evacuate five wounded soldiers.

Later in the afternoon, one of the companies pushed into the village and called for a dust-off to pick up a seriously wounded man.

As the medevac was about to land at the PZ, intense enemy fire caused it to crash.

C&C To Rescue

Another medevac was hit repeatedly and forced to withdraw.

1LT Ingram and Cichowski then swooped into the pick-up zone despite the heavy fire, secured the wounded soldier, evacuated him to the hospital, and headed back to the action.

"We were flying in some of the most miserable weather I've seen over here," Cichowski commented, "and decided to head home since we had done all we could that day.

"But then we got a call from one of the units who had a man who couldn't last the night unless he was evacuated."

As 1LT Ingram and Cichowski circled the now-burning village, they tried to spot the landing signals put out for them, but the scattered fires complicated the mission.

"They were trying to bring us in with flashlights and burning sticks," 1LT Ingram said, "and it was almost impossible to find them for the fires.

"As low as we were coming in, I was sure that our rotor blades were going to hit a tree."

Bullets Riddle Ship

Cichowski made a perfect landing on the pick-up spot, but when the craft touched down, a sniper opened up from 20 meters away.

Bullets crashed into the rotor blades, engine, and hit the armor plating on 1LT Ingram's cockpit seat. A radio telephone operator informed the lieutenant that the rounds were outgoing, to which the officer replied, "Tell that to my armor plate."

Accomplish Mission

After withdrawing until another pick-up zone could be established, the chopper team repeated their hazardous low-level approach and successfully evacuated the wounded man.

Cichowski had nothing but praise for his fellow pilot:

"1LT Ingram organized and directed four "Shark" gunships, two medevac aircraft, a recovery ship for the downed medevac, and the C&C ship. He really did a fine job."

Break From Battle

SGT Elton L. Wall (Macon, Ga.) keeps a wary lookout as he takes a break in the doorway of a deserted house on the Batangan Peninsula. A member of C Co., 5th Bn., 46th Inf., he was taking part in Operation Russell Beach. (Photo by 1LT Cecil Green, Americal IO)

Downed Flyer

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When the Bird Dog began losing altitude, 1LT McFadden figured the pilot had been hit and managed to radio May Day calls before the aircraft crashed. The calls went unheard.

Plane Hits Water

The plane plummeted into the river, the cabin portion and wing submerged in a sandy bank.

"I got tossed around a bit, but just got scratched up a little," 1LT McFadden said.

"Finally, I crawled out of the right rear window, surfaced for air, then went underneath the plane to check out the condition of pilot."

Diving under the partially-exposed wing, he discovered the pilot was dead.

"When I surfaced for air underneath the wing," the lieutenant related, "I heard two or three enemy talking.

"When I thought they were gone I crawled out of the water, surveyed the area, and spotted two more enemy about 75 meters away on the bank of the river."

1LT McFadden fired his .45 cal. pistol at them and raced off in the opposite direction from the enemy, who fled.

Moving slowly through eight-foot-high elephant grass, the aerial observer suddenly heard a small group of enemy coming towards him, taking pot shots in hopes of flushing the downed lieutenant.

Waiting Game

After the enemy gave up the search, 1LT McFadden moved back further into the thick elephant grass to plot what he would do the next morning.

At dawn, the lieutenant pushed on through the vegetation until he found a plateau of grass with a large boulder sticking out conspicuously.

"Every time a plane would fly over, I'd jump on the rock and start waving," the aerial observer said. In the early afternoon a Bird Dog spotted him, and in the next five to ten minutes five planes scouted the area.

LTC Robert B. Longino, CO of the 4th Bn., 31st Inf., arrived in his C&C helicopter to pick up the weary lieutenant.

"The first thing he asked me as I boarded the chopper was 'Why didn't I shave?'" 1LT McFadden laughed.

Major Wilkerson Gets Promotion ...To Sergeant

LZ BRONCO—Is promotion from specialist four to sergeant major impossible?

Not for SP4 Major D. Wilkerson (Lenoir City, Tenn.), a mortarman with D. Co., 4th Bn., 21st Inf., 11th Inf. Bde., who recently was promoted to the rank of sergeant.

When asked about the complications that might arise from his promotion, SGT Wilkerson said, "Right now it's just a joke, and I won't have to worry about ever becoming Sergeant Major Major D. Wilkerson."

VC Attempt Chieu Hoi Message, But GIs Rather Fight Than Switch

LZ BRONCO—A VC PSYOP team broadcast their own version of a Chieu Hoi message to division soldiers on LZ Liz recently, but the only convert to their side was a barrage of 81mm mortar rounds.

The VC PSYOP program began one night as an enemy loudspeaker blasted its message through the darkness at the 1st Bn., 20th Inf. troopers as they sat in well-fortified positions a few miles from LZ Liz, an 11th Inf. Bde. fire support base.

VC Disk Jockeys

After the VC played American music to gain attention and give the men a feeling of home, they came on with their own version of a Chieu Hoi pitch.

The "Sykes Regulars" were unimpressed. "It sounded pretty good," said SP4 Francis Brennan (Clifton, N.J.), a B Co. rifleman, "but we thought we'd skip their offer for the night.

"They offered to treat us well and send us home if we would give up and bring our weapons with us."

Threaten Bunkers

The VC did offer some added incentive in their message, blurted out in broken English. They told the men machine-guns and mortar tubes were aimed at each bunker on the perimeter.

"Actually what 'Charlie' had done was to add a little realism to a practice alert which had been scheduled at Liz that night," said SGT Dwane M. Rousseau (Memphis, Tenn.).

In a matter of minutes, B Co.'s 81mm mortars were pounding away in the broadcast area, silencing the voices in the night.

Smash Tien Phuoc Siege

(Continued from Page 1)

Short on supplies and badly hurt, the surviving enemy intruders fell back to resupply and re-group their forces.

Except for periodic firing of friendly artillery, peace reigned over Tien Phuoc for the next three days as restoration of equipment and buildings continued.

But the lull in fighting abruptly ended on March 2.

"Just like the other day, everyone in the compound had just finished eating breakfast when the first rockets hit," said SP4 Michael Swenson (Edison, Wash.), a B Btry. cook.

Things became tense when rockets damaged lines to the Fire Direction Control Center, but quick repairs restored the important communications link.

The day after, March 3, the last rocket attack hit Tien Phuoc. But the enemy threat continues.

Leadership School Offers New Stripe For Enlisted Men

CHU LAI—A little schooling can go a long way for Americal soldiers who attend the combat leadership course at the Combat Center.

The school can mean a new stripe, a pay raise, and a leadership position with responsibility.

The 12-day course includes classes in tactics, artillery coordination and direction, weapons care and maintenance, and map reading.

Enlisted men grades E-3 through E-5 who are recommended by their COs are enrolled in the classes.