Americal Marks Anniversary

SOUTHERN CROSS

AMERICAL DIVISION

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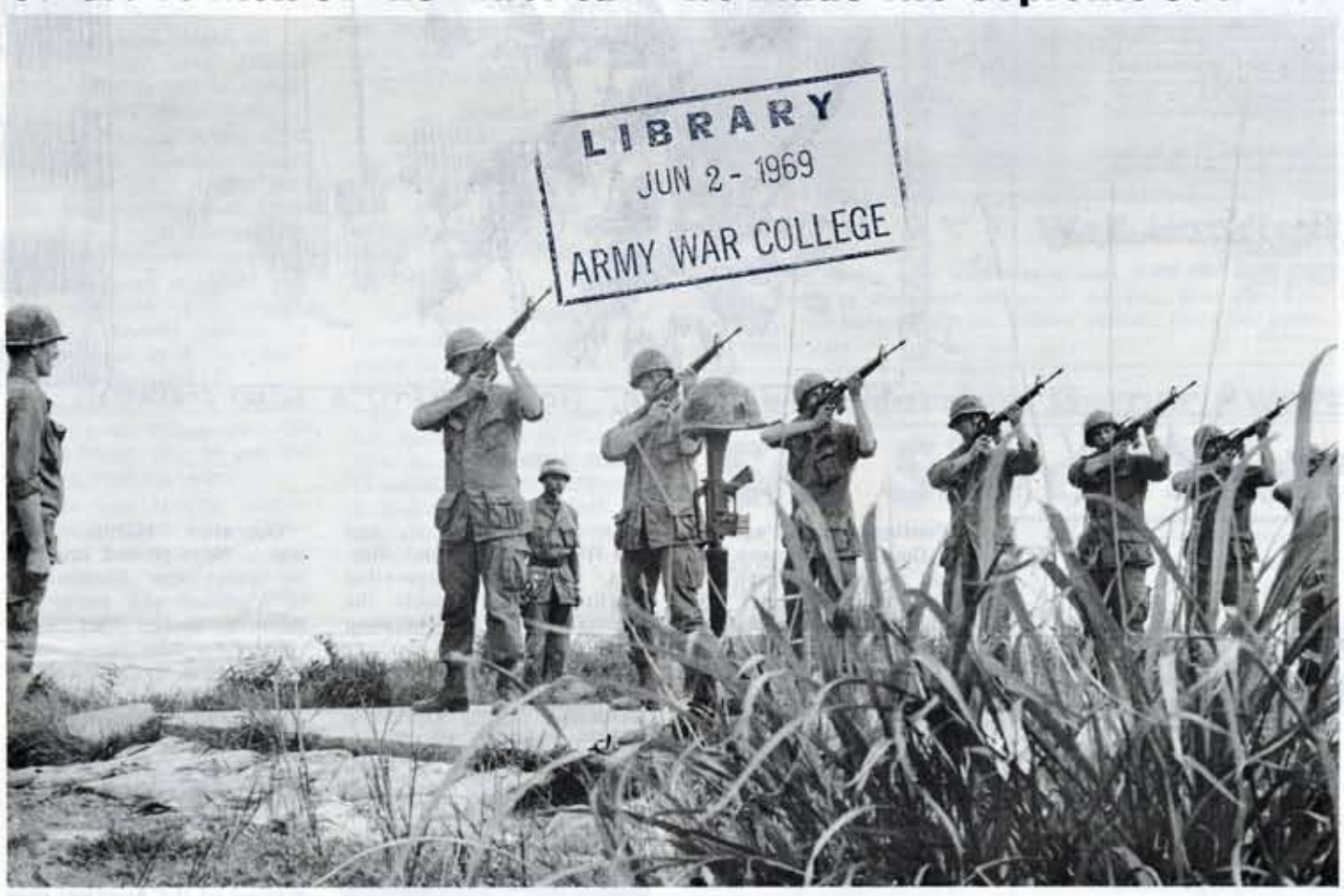
Salute To Men Of The Americal Who Made The Supreme Sacrifice



The Americal, a 27-year-old combat veteran, will pause, if only for a moment, to pay tribute to fallen comrades in arms on Memorial Day May 30.

Memorial Day for Americal troops is more than paying tribute to soldiers who gave their life in defense of America. It is a day to recognize buddies who endured hardships along with us. We who must continue as they did can appreciate what they gave.

Their tombs are many places. We symbolically give them Arlington, and the soldiers of the Old Guard closely watch over three graves: the graves of history, bravery, and loneliness.

Civil War Origin

Memorial Day honors for our comrades date back to the Civil War. Commander in Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, John A. Logan, issued a general order, "For the purpose of strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion."

General Logan's hope that the memorial be kept from year to year slowly became a reality. At the beginning the states commemorated their fallen soldiers according to local custom and the date fluctuated. Today all states recognize May 30 as Memorial Day.

Organize In 1942

We of the Americal, soldiers of a certain distinction, can be proud of our heritage. Our roots go back to January 1942, when the task force that was soon to become the Americal was en route from New York to Australia.

Thirty-four days on the water, a short stay in the vicinity of Melbourne, Australia, and then our first duty.

General Patch informed the troops that New Caledonia, north of Australia, must be protected, and it was

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SGM With Division When Formed

He Fights From New Caledonia To Duc Pho

By SGT DAVID DEVERICK

DUC PHO—In 1939, PVT Anthony Manfredi (Salinas, Kan.) entered the Army. On the morning of Dec. 7, 1941, CPL Manfredi was about to be discharged from the Army.

His orders were quickly changed and he was ordered to Australia. From there, he was sent to New Caledonia where the newest U.S. Army division was being formed—the Americal Division.

Twenty-seven years later, SGM Manfredi returned to the Americal. He is now sergeant major of 1st Bn., 20th Inf., 11th Inf. Bde.

Manfredi served as a squad leader with a pioneer and ammunitions unit with the 164th Inf. Regt. during his first tour with the division.

On Guadalcanal

He spent nine months on New Caledonia training in jungle warfare tactics and saw his first action at Guadalcanal as the 164th was among the first American troops to stage an offensive operation in World War II.

Manfredi followed the division's moves through the Pacific until he returned to the United States in 1945. During his tour the young corporal was promoted to sergeant.

"World War II was completely different from the war here in Vietnam," he stated. "We had lines set up and pretty well knew where the enemy was."

Earns LOM

A smile crossed his face as he talked of a patrol that earned him the Legion of Merit award.

"We went out in a sampan and rendezvoused with a Catholic priest, who had a great deal of information for us," recalled Manfredi.

"The information was transmitted in the clear by two American Indians using their tribal language."

"The operation was a success. We killed nine Japanese and captured another. We also uncovered seven enemy bivouac areas."

He also observed that the Americal soldier today may possibly be a better soldier than his counter-part of World War II because of better training.

SGM Manfredi is a fairly good soldier himself. He recently was awarded the Silver Star for his actions last December when he braved heavy hostile fire in overrunning an NVA position.

Gunner Ignores Explosions To Save Track Commander

LZ BAYONET—A 21-year-old machinegunner for the 198th Inf. Bde.'s H Trp., 17th Cav. ignored the danger of an exploding armored assault vehicle and rushed inside to free his vehicle commander moments before the track burst into flames.

PFC Raymond A. Brinkman (Debois, Ind.) was blown clear of the track when the vehicle hit an estimated 200-pound mine.

Saves Commander

"Brinkman jumped back into the track to help the track commander out," explained CPT Jim Watts (Jonesboro, La.), H Trp. commander. "Minutes after that, the thing blew up."

Track commander SP4 Gilbert A. Norton (St. Paul, N.C.) was the only seriously-injured man among five riding the vehicle. He suffered two broken legs.

"I know one thing," said CPT Watts. "If it weren't for Brinkman, that track commander would have been burned alive."

The personnel carrier had completed 10 days in the field in support of the 4th Bn., 3d Inf., when it hit the mine.

Three Thrown Clear

When the mine exploded, three crewmen atop the track—Brinkman; machinegunner SP4 Richard H. Goolsby (Apopka, Fla.); and grenadier PFC Jerry W. Martin (Los Angeles)—were thrown clear.

The driver, SP4 James E. Baker (McHenry, N.D.), immediately crawled to safety as the heavily-armed vehicle began to burn. Meanwhile Norton, also riding on top, fell into the track's belly.

Moments before a series of secondary explosions began, Brinkman pushed Norton out of the track and, with the help of a medic, carried him to safety.

Army Chief Of Staff...

UNITED STATES ARMY
THE CHIEF OF STAFF

TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF
THE AMERICAL DIVISION

It is a distinct pleasure on the twenty-seventh anniversary of the activation of the Americal Division to extend to all its members hearty congratulations from the men and women of the United States Army.

During World War II the Americal Division was the first division to be activated in a foreign country and was also the first Army unit to go into combat against the Japanese forces on Guadalcanal. The organization took part in four major operations in the Pacific.

The division, now in its second year of fighting in Vietnam, again has a "first" -- the first such unit to be activated in Vietnam. In combat and in programs to assist the South Vietnamese people, the division continues to add to its proud record of marked success. Operations such as WHEELER-WALLOWA, BURLINGTON TRAIL, CHAMPAIGN GROVE, and POCAHONTAS FOREST during the last year have shown the enemy that he will not be allowed to succeed in his aggression and that we are determined to help assure South Vietnam the opportunity to determine its own destiny.

For its achievements, I salute the Americal Division. I am confident that each of you will continue to uphold its fine traditions through your courage, dedication, and skill.

W. C. Westmoreland

W. C. WESTMORELAND
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff

Commander, MACV..

HEADQUARTERS
UNITED STATES MILITARY ASSISTANCE COMMAND, VIETNAM
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96222

TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF

THE AMERICAL DIVISION

On behalf of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, I extend my congratulations to the Americal Division on the 27th Anniversary of its activation.

During the past year, you have added a long list of achievements to your already commendable record and contributed significantly to the progress made against the enemy. With operations such as "Wheeler/Wallowa" and "Burlington Trail", the two longest running Americal operations, you accounted for more than 12,000 enemy killed and 2,598 weapons captured. During Operation "Vernon Lake II", 11th Brigade "Jungle Warriors" uncovered 81 NVA base camps, three surgical hospitals and accounted for 455 enemy killed.

You are also to be commended for your outstanding efforts in Pacification. In "Golden Fleece", you helped the Vietnamese harvest one million tons of rice. During "Hardin Falls" and "Russell Beach", you assisted the GVN in the pacification of former enemy strongholds.

I salute you as worthy members of the United States Team in the Republic of Vietnam and wish you continued success in your future operations.

Creighton W. Abrams

CREIGHTON W. ABRAMS
General, United States Army
Commanding

SOUTHERN CROSS
AMERICAL DIVISION

THE SOUTHERN CROSS is an authorized periodic publication of the Americal Division Information Office for division units in the Republic of Vietnam. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army. Contributions are encouraged and may be sent to the information Office, Americal Division, APO 96374, Tel: Chu Lai 2414. The editors reserve the right to edit all contributions.

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Division Marks Anniversary

(Continued from Page 1)

here that PFC Fonseca suggested the name Americal.

The division under the Southern Cross rounded out its units, trained for war in the bush, and on October 13, 1942, the 140th Inf., Americal Division, reinforcing the 1st Marine Division, was the first army unit to conduct an offensive operation in any theater during World War II.

On Guadalcanal

Guadalcanal and names like "Coffin Corner", "Bloody Ridge", and "Matanikau" became Americal history.

The division worked with the Marines, jumping from island to island (Fiji, Bougainville, Leyte, Cebu), finally achieving victory and spending a short time as occupation troops in Japan.

The division returned to Seattle, Washington and was deactivated December 12, 1945.

In February 1967 a need arose to have more troops in southern I Corps of the Republic of Vietnam. An Army task force under Marine control became operational in April, and in September 1967 Task Force Oregon was reconstituted as the Americal Division.

An official change of colors ceremony was held on October 26, and the Americal became the seventh Army division fighting in Vietnam.

Work with Marines

The division was once again operating in the tropics, working in sweat, penetrating the thick jungle, and helping the Marines secure an area.

In the late days of 1967, Operation Wheeler/Wallowa was effectively securing the area west of Tam Ky and the Hiep Duc-Que Son Valley.

A year later, Operation Burlington Trail made the possibility of a road between Tam Ky and Tien Phuoc a reality, and the rich rice crop of the Que Son valley was harvested during Operation Golden Fleece.

The end of 1968 concluded these operations, and the division began pacification programs.

Operation Hardin Falls was a three-phased program to assist the Government of Vietnam and pacify six hamlets under Viet Cong control for four years.

The first phase was to establish a fire base, second, cordon and entry of the hamlet, and third, withdraw and leave the Government of Vietnam in control.

Russell Beach

The times had changed but the climate was similar and soldiers of the Americal once again were shoulder to shoulder with Marines in Operation Russell Beach. While the Marines employed amphibious tactics, the Americal troops pushed through the jungle tightening a cordon around the enemy on the Batangan.

Four days of PSYOP saturation resulted in 2,449 refugees moving through the cordon to processing centers.

Even with pacification gaining momentum an operation like Vernon Lake II was necessary. Ending in February 1969 it discovered and eliminated a large number of enemy base camps from the area southwest of Quang Ngai.

Southern I Corps is not won yet, but Americal troops are bringing victory to the steamy jungle home of the communists. It is a slow battle, and each day a comrade is taken away.

A soldier is gone from the battlefield and the living continue the mission.

The division is 27 years old. Each man who has served knows the hardships, and to our comrades who lost their lives on the battlefield, we salute you.

GIs Exiled To Siberia Watch Over Refugees

LZ WEST—Not many GIs can say they came to Vietnam and wound up in Siberia, but that's what has happened to a 196th Inf. Bde. company.

Siberia is a strategic new Americal fire support base built by D. Co., 4th Bn., 31st Inf. and the 26th Engr. Bn. on Hill 165, 38 miles northwest of Tam Ky.

LZ Siberia's primary function is to provide security for the newly re-established Hiep Duc District government. Hundreds of refugees are returning to Hiep Duc after four years' absence due to devastating terrorist attacks.

"To provide adequate security during this re-establishment, Siberia is located on ground overlooking the entire area," said LTC Robert B. Longino, 4-31 CO.

History

"In addition, the unit occupying Siberia provides U.S. forces the opportunity to conduct joint operations daily with Regional and Popular Force troops from Hiep Duc District."

The name Siberia was chosen by LTC Longino because of its significance in early 4-31 history.

On Aug. 21, 1918, the 31st Inf. Regt. landed in Vladivostok in southeastern Russia to defend the Trans-Siberian Railroad against attack by military factions competing for power in Russia.

Adopted

The 31st Inf. distinguished itself during the Siberian Campaign and in April, 1920, American Expeditionary Forces were withdrawn.

For its Siberian service, the 31st was named the "Polar Bear" regiment. Within the following 10 years, that emblem was adopted as the official regimental crest. (196th IO)

Patients Enjoy Cool Recovery

CHU LAI—"I'll get by with a little help from my friends," is as true a statement for the 23rd Med. Bn. as for the Beatles.

The friends consisted of Army, Navy, and Marine Corps units as well as a large international corporation.

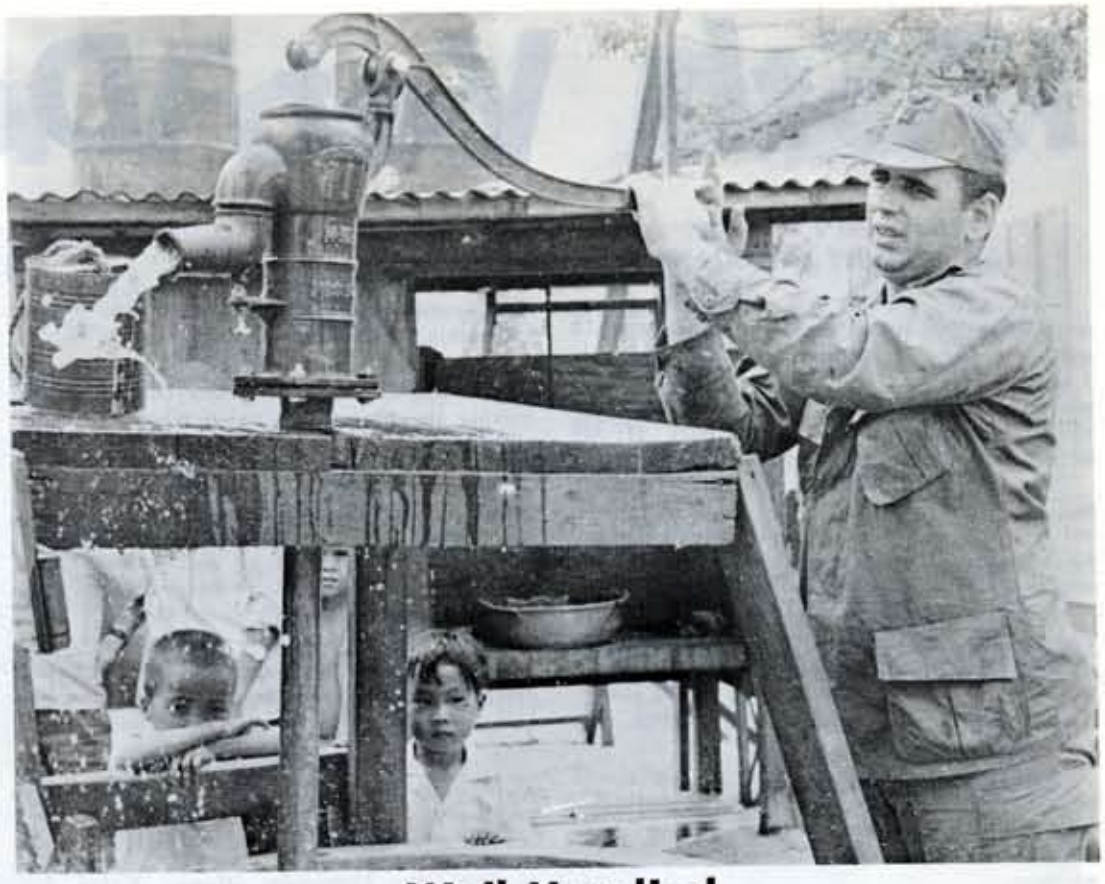
It all began when CPT Donald B. Rhodes (Santa Barbara, Calif.) walked into the Americal Support Command area with a large, not-quite-new air-conditioner.

He believed it would provide welcome relief during the hot summer months for the patients in A Co.'s medical-malaria ward.

Unable to fix it himself, CPT Rhodes called upon the 723rd Maint. Bn. to put the unit in working order.

This was shortly accomplished. Then the Naval Support Activity Detachment (NSAD) installed necessary electrical wiring, the 335th Maint. Bn. and Lear-Seigler, Inc. constructed the duct work, and men from Marine Air Group 12 provided building insulation.

Instead of the stifling 100 degree temperatures on the outside, the patients now can recover in the balmy 73 degree atmosphere inside the newly air-conditioned building. (Spt. Cmd.)



Well-Handled

Curious young eyes watch as a man from the 14th CAG installs a new water pump in an orphanage in the small village of An Ton, near Chu Lai. CPT Jeffery P. Knowlton (San Antonio), the battalion's civil affairs officer, tests the pump. (Photo by WO1 J.C. Pennington, 14th CAG)

Jungle Warriors Garner Awards

Six Silver Stars Given

By SP4
JAMES WM. BROWN

CHU LAI—The Silver Star was awarded to five 11th Inf. Bde. officers and one EM for gallant action against hostile forces.

Honored were MAJ Alfred J. Danner (Rockledge, Fla.), 1st Bn. S-3, 20th Inf.; CPT James R. Smith, then CO of C Co., 4th Bn., 21st Inf.; and CPT James A. Walker (Wakefield, R.I.) then CO of D Co., 3rd Bn., 1st Inf.

MAJ Danner was decorated for action Dec. 22 against a force of NVA at an LZ near Duc Pho.

Locate Basecamp

MAJ Danner directed door-gunners' fire which killed three of four NVA, then landed a command group and overran the enemy OP.

CPT Smith was cited for action last Aug. 11 when leading an ambushed squad to safety.

During fierce fighting, CPT Smith left safety of his company's perimeter to mark a position near the trapped squad, enabling gunships to free the squad.

Rescues Platoon

CPT Walker won the Silver Star for action Dec. 20 while leading his company against a battalion-size NVA base camp to rescue a besieged platoon in mountains west of Mo Duc village.

The Silver Star also was awarded to CPT Alfred N. Webb Jr. (Baltimore, Md.) while serving as CO of C Co., 1st Bn., 20th Inf.; 1LT Steven R. Kosach Jr. (Lafayette, Calif.), while serving as platoon leader of E Co., 1st Bn., 20th Inf.; and SP4 Thomas M. Steel (Chelsea, Mich.), a Ranger with G Co., 75th Inf.

CPT Webb received the award for action on Dec. 5 when his company came under intense enemy mortar and grenade fire near Toi Lac.

Patrol Ambushed

1LT Kosach distinguished himself while on a patrol mission when he and his pointman began crossing a bridge spanning a large stream, then came under intense hostile automatic fire, resulting in the pointman being wounded.

1LT Kosach rushed to the aid of the soldier amidst hostile fire and carried him to safety.

SP4 Steel distinguished himself on a recon mission near the village of Chop Vum.

Although wounded during initial action, he then moved to a supply cache and placed demolition charges without regard to his painful injuries. (AMERICAL IO)

Maiden MEDCAP For Montagnards

IN THE FIRST MEDICAL VISIT to the Montagnard village of Ba To, CPT Lawrence Wasser (Boston), battalion surgeon for the 4th Bn., 3rd Inf., checks the heart beat of a complying little boy. The Americal MEDCAP team treated over 40 patients during their four-hour visit. (Photo by SP4 Tony Swindell, 11th Inf. Bde.)

DUC PHO — Montagnard villagers of Ba To, 16 miles southwest of Duc Pho, received medical treatment for the first time when a team from the 4th Bn., 3rd Inf. recently conducted a MEDCAP there.

Led by the 4-3 battalion doctor, CPT Lawrence Wasser (Boston), the five-man team treated the ills of well over 40 patients during the four-hour mission.

The 11th Bde. team performed physical exams, gave penicillin injections, and passed out soap and medicine to the people gathered in a small village courtyard.

"This area has been virtually untouched by American troops," CPT Walt A. Shannon (Plattsburg AFB, N.Y.) explained. "We intend to keep providing desperately needed medical attention for these people, and also to teach them hygiene."

Security for the MEDCAP was provided by members of Special Forces Team A-106, as the villagers of Ba To were treated. (11th IO)

175th Vet. Det. Inspects

Story and Photos by
SP5 ROBERT BUZOGANY

CHU LAI—The big job of inspecting close to 100,000 gallons of dairy products, 5 to 7 million pounds of refrigerated food, and 5 to 7 million pounds of canned and packaged food every month is handled by seven men: the 175th Veterinary Detachment, part of the 522nd Med. Det., 44th Med. Bde.

The 175th, which supports the Americal, inspects for purity all the dairy products, refrigerated meat and produce, and packaged foods received for consumption by the division and other military units in southern I Corps.

Led by CPTs Paul Elwell (Harwinton, Conn.) and John Prucha (Auburn, Calif.), the unit of three local inspectors, a clerk, and an inspector in Duc Pho handles the area's veterinary duties as well as all food inspection. All are special school trained.

Added to the sheer bulk of the job is the big problem faced in Vietnam with maintaining sanitation standards and proper temperature in the food storage areas to prevent spoilage.

SP5 Edward J. Kelly (Walpole, Mass.) works directly with the civilian-managed Foremost Dairy in Chu Lai, inspecting all dairy products. It is his job to see that the milk, ice cream, and cottage cheese leaving the plant has been quality controlled for freshness and purity.

Employing 52 Vietnamese and three civilians, the well-equipped Foremost plant pumps out 2,500 pounds of cottage cheese every other day, 1,200 gallons of ice cream every day, and 35 to 55,000 pints and 650 to 900 scholle (6 gal. containers) packs of white and chocolate milk each day.

SP5 Kermit Johnsrud (Columbia Falls, Mont.) is the food inspector who checks all perishables arriving at the Naval Support Activity Detachment (NSAD) docks.

It is Johnsrud's job to advise on the length of time the meat and produce can be satisfactorily refrigerated, how to store it, and how much of it is useable after receiving the shipment.

"There hasn't been more than 2 or 3 percent produce spoilage in the time I have been inspecting," the specialist said.

Before Johnsrud inspects the refrigerated food, it has already been inspected once before leaving the States and again when off-loaded in DaNang.

The meat and produce arrives at NSAD from DaNang by refrigerated (reefer) barges, each with a 250 measurement-ton capacity. The food is either put on pallets and transported in one of the reefer barges' three huge holds or sent as a unit from the U.S. in a SeaLand reefer trailer, three to a barge.

It takes 48 to 72 hours to unload a landing craft barge, and from barge to the mess hall tables requires only two to three days.

From the 93,000-cubic-feet freeze and chill storage space at NSAD, which is roughly three-fourths full at any given time, some 8,000 trucks a month draw unit rations.

SP5 Mike Fernandes (Kapaa, Kauai, Hawaii), the dry storage food inspector, has the job of checking the canned and packaged food, which is stored in three huge warehouses near NSAD.

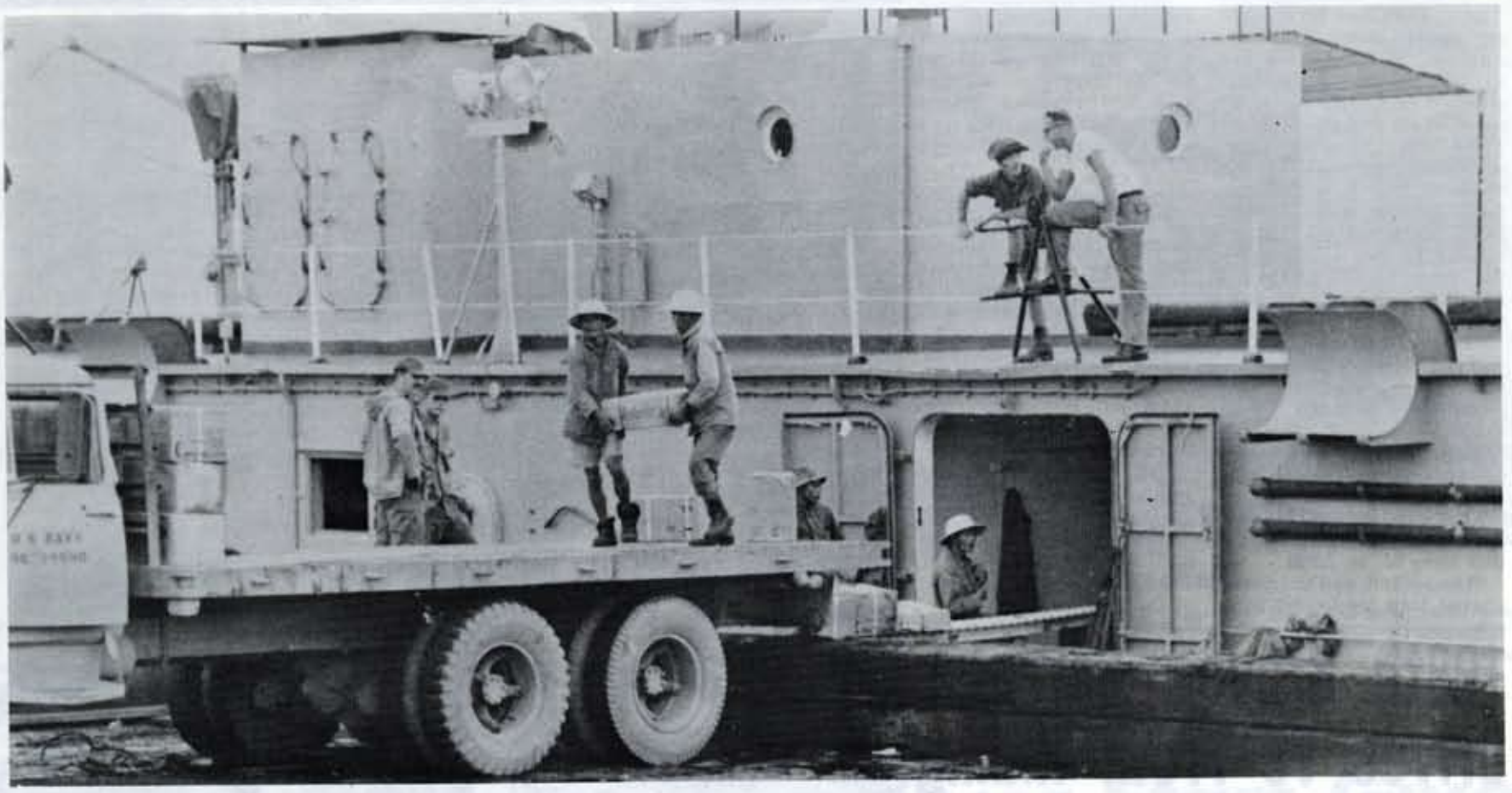
Each day 65 to 70 pallets of food, with roughly 40 cases per pallet, are issued out from the facility. In addition to the 5 to 7 million pounds of canned goods shipped out each month, as many as 200,000 cases of C-rations are kept on hand.

When a shipment arrives, it is repalletized, inspected, dated, and stored. "Everything is 100 percent inspected," stated Fernandes, "and anything here more than 90 days is inspected again."

The food you eat may not bear the stamp "untouched by human hands," however it is comforting to know that the men of the 175th have inspected it and given it their stamp of approval so that it reaches you fresh.

SP5 Kelly and Foremost Dairy Production Manager Hap Pierce (top) check the pasteurizer control board at the Chu Lai plant. Milk bottling machines (left), storage tanks (right), and all plant equipment must be kept spotless.

's Division Food Daily



Refrigerated food is brought from DaNang by 'reefer' barges and off-loaded at NSAD dock

SP5 Johnsrud inspects newly-arrived vegetables, while SP5 Fernandes checks damaged cereal

SeaLand vans bring meat and produce to 'reefer' storage where units pick up rations

Combat In Review

Sappers Assault Bridge, Repulsed by 11th, APCs

DUC PHO—An NVA sapper squad, under cover of darkness, and protected by an NVA squad of snipers, attacked bridge 95, one mile north of Sa Huynh.

The squad, armed with homemade grenades from discarded beer and C-ration cans, satchel charges and RPGs, assaulted the bridge guarded by two squads from the second platoon of C Co., 1st Bn., 20th Inf., 11th Inf. Bde.

Enemy Blasts Bunker

"I was sleeping on top of the bunker when all hell broke loose" said SP4 Roger Voyles (Plainview, Texas). "About twenty homemade grenades were thrown on top of our bunker."

After getting inside the bunker the "Sykes Regulars" then were hit by RPGs.

"The rockets and grenades started both inside and outside of the bunker on fire, so we left and ran under the bridge where it was harder for the snipers to see us," said SP4 Rosoling Pizzillo (North Arlington, N.J.), a squad leader.

Cav. To Rescue

Fighting continued until the 2nd plt. of C Co. arrived on the APCs of E Trp., 1st Cav. The wounded were evacuated and the remaining men were resupplied with ammo.

For the rest of the night, gun and flare ships of the 174th Aslt. Hel. Co. provided the men on the bridge with illumination and protection.

"All the men kept calm throughout the fight and they all helped turn away a well planned NVA attack," said SGT John Wrigley (Decatur, Ill.) the weapons squal leader of the platoon. (11th IO)

Big Mouth

The towering mouth of a 175mm self-propelled gun gets ready to speak as "Gun Bunnies" check their sightings. The big gun of A Btry., 3rd Bn., 18th Arty., supports division and South Vietnamese Forces in the mountains southwest of Chu Lai. (Photo by SP5 A.C. Barnett, DIVARTY)

198th Braves Barrage, Drives VC From Hiding

LZ GATOR—Elements of the 198th Inf. Bde.'s 5th Bn., 46th Inf. cordoned off a tiny hamlet west of the Batangan Peninsula recently and killed 15 VC using the hamlet as a firebase and hideout.

After learning of enemy presence B Co., 5-46 conducted a combat assault of the area, meeting heavy automatic weapons fire as they closed on the hamlet.

As darkness began to fall four combat assault vehicles of H Trp., 17th Cav. were dispatched from LZ Minuteman on the nearby Batangan Peninsula along with third platoon of A Co. to assist in the cordon.

Sporadic fire from the village continued through the night. As dawn broke, the brigade's PSYOP team dropped leaflets urging the enemy to surrender.

Soon after the infantrymen swept through the hamlet destroying the fortified bunkers and a tunnel complex 700 meters long.

The VC killed were believed to be part of a local force battalion which has long eluded allied soldiers in the area west of the Peninsula. (198th IO)

Discover Enemy Basecamp With Big Arms Cache

LZ PROFESSIONAL—An estimated NVA battalion basecamp, containing a huge munitions cache, was found by a company of the 1st Bn., 46th Inf. three miles from LZ Professional.

A Co. discovered the basecamp just hours after the enemy had fled, leaving behind the cache of more than 320 rounds of 82 and 60 mm mortars, two mortar tubes, two claymore mines, three rifles, and over 15,000 rounds of small arms ammunition.

"They departed in such a hurry they left behind three commercial radios," said 1LT Ron Piggee (Gary, Ind.), whose 1st platoon was the first unit into the basecamp. "Some of the campfires were still warm."

The basecamp was uncovered only hours after the start of a combined U.S.-South Vietnamese sweep 20 miles southwest of Tam Ky aimed at clearing the enemy from rugged terrain around LZ Professional.

The camp included three large huts and huge cave containing the munitions. It was embedded in a large rock complex covered with triple canopy jungle, hiding the camp from the sky.

Although no enemy casualties were sustained, the 198th Bde. soldiers have taken a home away from Charlie. (198th IO)

Blast Enemy With Grenades

196th Silences Loud NVA

LZ CENTER — An early-morning patrol designed to catch the enemy off guard found three NVA alert but unable to cope with grenade-throwing "Chargers" of the 196th Inf. Bde.

After several days of intense enemy contact in the NVA-infested Tien Phuoc area, the 3d Bn., 21st Inf. began search and clear operations at dawn throughout Vietnamese villages in the vicinity.

Noisy Enemy

Moving before sunrise, the first platoon of C Co. was on patrol 7½ miles northwest of Tam Ky when the point squad heard loud talking in a hootch area to the front.

Platoon leader 1LT James Gordon (Columbia, S.C.) moved his men forward in an attempt to seal all escape routes. Within 15 meters of the building, he maneuvered his men to strategic locations.

"In seconds, we were well positioned when bullets suddenly tore through thick grass all around us," said 1LT Gordon.

After returning fire, the "Chargers" began throwing grenades. Several landed close to the doorway and, when all exploded, enemy fire ceased.

Close For Kill

The platoon closed in carefully. "I was several feet away when I spotted an enemy soldier staggering to the front of the hootch," said SGT Chester Shephard (Lufkin, Texas).

The dazed NVA had no weapon and was seized immediately. Other men searched the hootch and found two NVA dead of grenade wounds.

Three automatic weapons and web gear were captured, and the NVA was evacuated for interrogation, making the "Gimlets" early morning efforts pay off. (196th IO)

AWOL Enemy Doc Tries Own Medicine

LZ ROSS—The NVA doctor prescribed a Chicom grenade as a death device for a persistent 196th Inf. Bde. soldier recently. Instead, the GI gave the doc lethal medicine.

Action started when a patrol of C Co., 2d Bn., 1st Inf. moved on a search and clear mission up a mountain slope in an NVA-infested area 25 miles northwest of Tam Ky.

Intelligence reports indicated a heavy concentration of NVA on the mountain top.

Surprise NVA

The patrol had run out of trail and pointman SP4 Douglas Chappell (Wampom, Pa.) was looking for a new route when he spotted an NVA at the crest of a ridge. Chappell wounded the man who disappeared into the tangle of brush and rocks.

Ears cocked for the slightest sound, Chappell inched through the brush ahead of the patrol. A faint blood trail glistened on the sandy soil.

Survives Grenade

A smoking Chicom grenade suddenly bounced at the pointman's feet and exploded hardly a meter away. Chappell was scratched by the faulty grenade, but his quarry wasn't as fortunate when Chappell fired back.

A search of the body produced documents showing the enemy soldier had been an NVA doctor with overdue orders to report to a new unit in another area.

He had waited two days too long. (196th IO)

Div. Bards Offer Off The Wall Scrawls

Lonely OP Guard Pens Poem To Liven Up His Letters Home

By SGT
ALFRED A. ANTHONY JR.

LZ BAYONET—It may be the isolation of a bunker line observation post by which the nature of poems are born.

In any case the isolated, heavily sandbagged, thick-planked outposts ringing headquarters for the 198th Inf. Bde. have become an ivory tower and "a source of inspiration" for PFC Rick Kennett (Menomenee Falls, Wis.).

Bunker Guard

The infantryman is one of the brigade's "Wolfpack" detachment, charged with maintaining the outer bunker line and first line of defense for LZ Bayonet.

"Staying up night after night you start thinking deeply. I wanted to make the thoughts productive. My letters home were kind of dull so I started using poetry to keep in touch with the girls," Kennett said.

The dim light of the living quarters beneath the tower finds Kennett scrawling along the cardboard of C-rations boxes, about the isolation:

Lonely Poet

"As darkness shrouds this lonely place / I find myself face to face / with very lonely thoughts."

As a "Wolfpack" soldier keeps a sharp lookout, Kennett writes to a girl about daylight: "Somehow you have captured the sun, but without you, there is no one to share its warmth."

"These are the thoughts I face each night / these are the thoughts that ward off fright," he has written on the corner of a small box. "Stormy day, a peaceful night / the one with—a gentle fight."

Sitting Duck

As the telltale marks on the large rocks around the OP show, the tower is sometimes an easy target for the enemy.

He has marked down well the dangers: "Time stays but once / and then it is gone," he writes.

For Kennett, "time" is the most prominent part of soldiering when home happens to be an OP.

With the South China Sea six miles to his back and the wilderness to the front, he scrawls, "Cold despite my blanket / lonely amongst my friends." (198th IO)

GVN Decorates Division Troops

QUANG NGAI — Nine Americal soldiers from the 5th Bn., 46th Inf., 198th Inf. Bde .were among 32 Americans decorated for valor recently by the South Vietnamese Government.

LTC Ronald R. Richardson (Colorado Springs, Colo.) and CPT Michael R. Smith (Dayton, Ohio), were awarded the Gallantry Cross with Silver Star.

Awarded the Gallantry Cross with Bronze Star were SP4 Wendell R. Roberts (Kodak, Tenn.) and SP4 Guadalupe Elizondo Jr. (McCalla, Tex.) of A Co.; SGT David W. Bloom (Oakley, Kan.) and SGT Edward E. Floyd (Rushville, Ind.) B Co.; PFC Charlie W. Rose (Tradwell, Va.) C Co.; 1LT James G. Fraser (Decatur, Ill.) and SP4 Gary N. Brock (Bixby, Okla.), a HHC medic working with D Co. (198th IO)

Where There's A Wall, There's A Way

By SP5
ROBERT BUZOGANY

CHU LAI—You can see the writing on the wall here in Vietnam.

This statement doesn't refer to the future of the war, but literally to the fact that where there is an accessable wall there probably is writing on it—GI-style graffiti.

In every latrine, along the walls of the messhalls, in bunkers, and back in base-camp hootches, scribblings of wit, social commentary, vulgarities, and name calling abound.

A GI has occupied the place, and he wants everyone who follows to know it.

Graffiti Heritage

The fathers of the present generation of soldeirs spread the words "Kilroy was here" across Europe during World War II, but the Vietnam GI has remained less consistent while perhaps more inspired with originality.

Much of the graffiti left behind by the soldier can be roughly categorized. Probably one of the most frequently written (and yelled) messages is the one-word cry, "SHORT!"

Tied in with that is the "days to go" category. Some writers even use the walls of their hootch or messhall as short-timer's calendars, continually marking off the days in their tour.

Then comes the "where I'm from" class, which of course proclaims to the world the hometown of the GI.

Why anyone would choose to honor their place of birth on a latrine wall is a mystery, but apparently pride blinds the writer from his surroundings.

Inscribing his own name or the name of his girlfriend also is very popular and ego boosting. Few GIs escape from being tagged with a nickname, and these serve to personalize the signature.

Social Commentary

After these popular forms of expression come the real "hardcore" graffiti: The witty put-down, the message for society, the gripe, the rhyme, or in a few cases, the serious thought.

Here are some printable examples:

"Caution: Vietnam may be hazardous to your health."

"Chaste makes waste"

"Every little breeze seems to whisper disease"

"Forever is a day in Vietnam"

"Enter this messhall at your own risk"

Part of the fun of watching the wall darken with graffiti comes in looking for answers to previously scribbled messages.

For instance one GI wrote "Pray for surf," only to have it scratched out and replaced by, "Pray for sex, anyone can surf!"

Another soldier wrote on a messhall wall, "Man cannot live on bread alone." In diffcrent handwriting the message was followed by, "He needs peanut butter too."

In a serious mood, one GI was moved to write, "For those who fight for it, life has a flavor the protected never know."

Camouflage Covers

For those "grunts" in the field who don't have the luxury of permanent wooden latrines or messhalls, (if you'll pardon the following) where there's no wall, there's still a way...to get the graffiti message across.

Rare is the GI who hasn't written something on the camouflage cover of his helmet or on the machines that he works with, whether jeeps, tanks, artillery pieces or helicopters bear a boldly emblazoned name or phrase.

So as the rotation of soldiers continues here, the list of graffiti masterpieces grows.

(Americal IO)

Peggie Moje

A singer and violinist, 20-year-old Peggie takes a relaxing break from her performance in Chu Lai. It's a long way from her home in Inglewood, Calif., but Peggy thinks the Vietnam sun is groovy, too. (Photo by SGT Herb Hartley, Americal IO)

Birthday Wish From World

CHU LAI– Happy Birthday! Happy Birthday! Happy Birthday, SFC Ralph E. Howe.

The SOUTHERN CROSS received a letter from Mrs. Howe and children stating that SFC Howe, a member of AG Reenlistment, 23rd Admin. Co., celebrated a birthday May 23.

The Howes requested us to say for them: "Happy Birthday, Daddy! From your loved ones back home!"

Although this is not in accordance with the paper's policy, this is the first "fan" letter we've received and we delight in printing good news, and join in saying Happy Birthday, SFC Howe.

Choppers Greeted 'Warmly' In Hot Tien Phuoc Fighting

LZ BALEY—"Riot 12 receiving fire from three or four positions!" crackled the radio in the command post. "One man hit! We're coming in."

The distressed helicopter was the command and control ship of the 2nd Bn., 1st Inf. whose commander, LTC Sinclair L. Melner (Reno, Nev.) and CSM Harold L. Sturdivant (Sacramento, Calif.) had been flying into a hot landing zone with ammo resupplies for surrounded A and C Cos.

Since dawn, the 196th Inf. Bde. units had been fighting elements of the 3rd NVA Div. in mountains eight miles southwest of Tam Ky near Tien Phuoc village.

Enemy troops hid in well-camouflaged bunkers, and the situation was becoming critical when LTC Melner made the first resupply attempt in his "Charlie-Charlie."

'Vulnerable'

As the LZ's rough ring of trees and rubble rushed up to meet the chopper, automatic weapons fire popped from several directions.

Chaplain (MAJ) Donald L. Bartley (Rockbridge Baths, Va.), "along for the ride," found himself a target: "I've never felt so vulnerable and exposed in my life."

The chopper crew chief, acting as door gunner, took a round in the leg, and the ship turned back to secure medical aid for him.

The position of the embattled companies worsened, and the colonel soon was back in the air for a second try.

Aground

Again the "Charlie-Charlie" encountered intense automatic weapons fire but took no hits as it settled into the LZ to deliver ammo to the surrounded companies.

While his ship removed three seriously-wounded men and made a second trip with four more wounded, LTC Melner and CSM Sturdivant remained on the ground to coordinate with company commanders.

Five resupply and MEDEVAC choppers were hit over the battle area that day, and one crashed. Its crew escaped moments before a flaming explosion.

Flying into blazing LZs on resupply and MEDEVAC missions isn't new to LTC Melner. He received a Silver Star for similar action last November. (196th IO)

Anyone Home?

A soldier from the 11th Inf. Bde.'s C Co., 4-21 cautiously checks out "Charlie's" lair. He was taking part in an operation in the Song Ve Valley, 12 miles west of Duc Pho. (Photo by SP4 Rodney Preuss, 11th Inf. Bde.)

Hey, Cuz, The Name's The Same

LZ BAYONET—An Americal soldier mentioned an interesting coincidence in a letter to his father, which produced unexpected results.

SP4 Ralph G. Cooksey Jr. (St. Petersburg, Fla.), B Co., 1st Bn., 6th Inf. noted in a letter home that one of the Assistant Division Commanders had the same last name as their family.

Unknown to the 198th Bde. soldier, his father began investigating the family tree, which revealed SP4 Cooksey and BG Howard W. Cooksey were in fact second cousins.

Ralph's father immediately wrote to BG Cooksey. The general answered the elder Cooksey's letter, adding that he would arrange a meeting with Ralph Jr.

The two newly-found cousins met and talked at the battalion's forward fire base Fat City, north of Chu Lai.

SP4 Cooksey later asked how it felt having a general as a cousin replied, "I really don't feel any different than before," and pointed out that "our conversation was centered around other members of the family."

Each has gone his own way again. BG Cooksey has moved to Long Binh to be Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations at Hqs. USARV, and SP4 Cooksey remains with his company at LZ Bayonet near Chu Lai. (198th IO)

Village Pagoda Yields Cache

Professionals Find Enemy Weapons

LZ GATOR—As the infantrymen searched the tiny village west of the Batangan Peninsula, they couldn't help but remember a wet, dangerous four hours last January.

On that day, D Co. of the 198th Inf. Bde.'s 5th Bn., 46th Inf. had been pinned chest-deep in a rice paddy by automatic weapons fire from the same village.

The long firefight had subsided only with darkness that January day as the Americal unit skirted the enemy area to join a cordon operation on the peninsula.

Find Cache

Now it was differnet as SP4 Richard Ellashek (Youngstown, Ohio) and SP4 Kenneth Bates (Louisville) searched the village pagoda and found 13 Russian and Chinese 82mm mortar rounds behind the altar.

"We weren't really expecting to find anything, but we discovered a double wall behind the altar and became suspicious," said Ellashek.

"After removing the bricks, we found a large compartment lined with plastic. Someone used a lot of ingenuity to build the secret compartment."

Mortar rounds weren't all D Co. found during the village search which began when PFC Dewey D. Davide (Southgate, Calif.) noticed two VC sneaking toward his platoon near the village.

He killed one VC while the rest of his company started a thorough village search.

An ammo cache there contained the mortars; charges and fuses, many still packed in shipping containers; 300 .30-cal rounds; an American grenade; an M-72 LAW rocket; and assorted ammo.

After searching the village, the company's tunnel rats impregnated tunnel walls with CS.

"The company has taken belated revenge," said CPT John T. Goorley (West Monroe, La.), D Co. commander. "We've destroyed VC supplies and denied them a rest area. (198th IO)

Luck O' Irish Again Prevails For O' Sullivan: Shamrock, DFC

CHU LAI—Weaving his helicopter through dense fog and heavy fire, a Brooklyn pilot demonstrated the luck of the Irish once again.

WO1 John O'Sullivan was serving as pilot of the command and control helicopter of the 4th Bn., 21st Inf., 11th Inf. Bde. when the unit came under attack.

As the battle progressed, one soldier was felled by an extreme case of battle fatigue, and a dustoff was called.

Because of the inclement weather and hostile fire the three attempts to evacuate the casualty by chopper were unsuccessful. Disregarding all danger, O'Sullivan volunteered to attempt the evacuation.

With a thorough knowledge of the area and skillful maneuvering of his craft he dropped onto a hastily prepared landing zone and picked up the man.

For his action O'Sullivan, assigned to the 174th Avn. Co., 14th CAB, received the Distinguished Flying Cross. (AMERICAL IO)

Just 'Plane' Sharp

If you are going on leave, R & R, or DEROSing, remember your appearance. The Southern Cross patch on your shoulder tells the world you are a member of the Americal Division.

No matter how bad the conditions were while we were doing our jobs, when it comes time to leave, a neat appearance is expected.

Fastest Gun In West Ends Cannoneers' Digging Woes

By SP5 A.C. BARNETT

LZ CENTER—The men of B Btry., 3rd Bn., 82nd Arty. were hard at work digging up the "pad" that supports their 105mm howitzer.

It was hot and dusty, the ground hard and the heavy timbers and ammunition boxes were awkward to free from the clay-like soil. But these men were happy—in fact they were overjoyed; this was the last time they would ever have to dig up a pad.

New Guns

The isolated fire base, 35 miles northwest of Chu Lai was a maze of industry as the men prepared for three new howitzers to arrive from Hqs. Btry.

The latest model howitzer was designed to adapt the old WW II weapons to the unusual demands of this insurgency type conflict.

Modifications on the new M-102 form an impressive list, but one change in particular won the immediate approval of every cannoneer that ever swung a pickaxe.

No longer does the gun require a pad. Each new "tube" has its own pad—a large metal platform that easily supports the weapon and requires only a series of stakes to secure it to the ground.

No Sweat

Sharing the enthusiasm of his men, the CO of B Btry., CPT Richard J. Madsen (Battle Creek, Iowa), was quick to explain the advantages of the new howitzer. "Ground preparation now takes minutes instead of hours and saves a lot of sweat over here."

Within five minutes of its arrival the M-102 was ready to deliver its thirty-pound projectiles at the rate of three rounds per minute, making it the undisputed "fastest gun in the west." (DIVARTY IO)