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4-21 Troops Storm Ridge, Overrun NVA

SOUTHERN CROSS
AMERICAL DIVISION

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By SP4 RICH SOEHNGEN

LZ BRONCO—A vicious, five-hour battle for a ridge seven miles southwest of here recently cost enemy forces at least eight dead and many more wounded at the hands of the 4th Bn., 21st Inf.

NBC cameraman Peter Bellendorf was wounded by enemy mortar fragments while photographing a machinegun team in action during heavy fighting.

D Co. was making an early morning move eastward to link up with a sister company from the 11th Inf. Bde. when enemy activity was spotted on the ridge.

After finding a trail through the dense underbrush, the company went up to investigate.

Under Fire

"We hadn't gone 40 meters up the trail along the ridgeline when we were hit by small arms, automatic weapons, and heavy machinegun fire," related rifleman Bob Lindoman (Baltimore).

"The NVA had a .51 caliber raking the slope and we were forced to pull back."

While the 11th Bde. soldiers were regrouping at the base of the ridge, artillery blasted the enemy positions, and C Co. 4-21 was combat assaulted to assist in destroying the enemy force.

A link-up on the ridge and another assault to push the NVA off the high ground was planned.

Once again, D Co. was forced to pull back by heavy machinegun and mortar fire as they attempted to move back up the trail. For the second time, the NVA positions were bombarded.

Skirting the ridgeline, D Co. moved away to set up a night defensive position as close to C Co. as possible.

Join Forces

The next morning, a trail was found leading up the slope, and D Co. moved up to complete the link-up.

The NVA, however, had moved through the night also and suddenly opened fire. Marine F4 jets silenced the enemy fire with close proximity runs, dropping 500-pound bombs.

SP4 Frank Martzall (Lancaster, Pa.) described what he saw.

"These guys must have been part mole the way they dug to get away from the stuff we dropped on them. We found deep holes and fighting positions all over that ridge." (11th IO)

Strategy Session

1LT David Yates (Chesapeake, Va.), a platoon leader with B Co., 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., 196th Inf. Bde., discusses the tactical situation with a RF-PF leader before beginning a cordon operation in the Que Son Valley. (Photo by SP4 Jim Bruce, 196th Bde. IO)

Boxes Enemy In LZ Attack

Unarmed Sergeant Kayos Sappers

By SP5 DENNIS IRVINE

LZ BALDY — SGT Larry Cathey (Sapulpa, Okla.) may not be a Golden Gloves Boxer, but to an NVA sapper, the young soldier could have been heavyweight champion of the world.

The 196th Inf. Bde. trooper was sleeping in his hootch at LZ Baldy when an incoming rocket shattered the silence and signaled the beginning of an early morning NVA sapper attack.

Cathey sat up instantly, jumped out of bed and headed for the fighting positions.

Confronts NVA

No sooner was the supply sergeant from B Co., 4th Bn., 31st Inf., outside when he found himself practically face to face with two very surprised NVA sappers in the inky darkness.

"They were still about six feet from me, so I let them keep coming and jumped the first one — the other one turned and ran," said the unarmed Cathey.

1LT Haze A. McDougal (Limestone, Maine), the company XO, was hurriedly exiting his hootch when he saw SGT Cathey tackle the NVA.

"I couldn't fire on the NVA for fear of hitting Cathey so I was forced to hold off," said LT McDougal.

"I hit the first one three times," said Cathey, "and he pulled a grenade, so I hit him once more, grabbed his AK and took off. The grenade exploded and the bruised NVA crawled under a building, getting back in a corner against some sandbags," he concluded.

Sapper Zapped

Later in the battle, the sapper was KO'd by a party of Cathey's buddies, led by 1SG Larry K. Ferguson (Selma, Ala.) of A Co.

Though a bit shaky after his close brush with the enemy, Cathey continued to seek more NVA sappers.

He joined two other men led by 1LT McDougal, who were attempting to make their way to a bunker, about 300 yards away.

Moving quickly along the edge of the road leading to the bunker, the rescue squad received heavy enemy fire from four desperate sappers.

The four enemy were brought under fire and killed by the infantrymen.

Bunker Surrounded

Cathey continued on with his squad, only to arrive at the bunker and find it surrounded. Receiving incoming RPG rounds, the sergeant helped evacuate the wounded.

Three NVA soldiers were trying to crawl through the perimeter wire directly in front of the bunker. "Everytime they moved," said 1LT McDougal, "Sergeant Cathey and the other men just picked them off."

Next morning, the "Chargers" found their quick reaction to the sapper strike had accounted for 17 dead enemy lying near and in the company area. (196th IO)

Welcome New Commanders

CHU LAI—The 16th Combat Aviation Group and two battalions in each the 198th and 11th Inf. Bdes. have new commanders.

COL Delbert L. Townsend (Washington, D.C.) has taken over the helm of the 16th CAG. COL Townsend replaces COL Hanz K. Druener who will report to the Chief of Plans Office, 18th Airborne Corps, Ft. Bragg, N.C.

LTC Craig G. Coverdale (Manhasset, N.Y.), a West Point graduate, assumed command of the 1st Bn., 46th Inf., 198th Bde.

LTC Coverdale replaced LTC George R. Underhill (Pulaski, Ill.), who has assumed command of the Americal Combat Center.

LTC Robert N. Fernandez (Fort Leavenworth, Kan.) now heads the 11th Bde.'s 4th Bn. 3rd Inf. (AMERICAL IO)

Paper Sports Different Look

CHU LAI — You may have noticed a brand new look for the SOUTHERN CROSS newspaper.

The paper has changed printers, now being printed at Pacific Stars and Stripes in Tokyo. Also starting with this issue, the SOUTHERN CROSS will appear every week instead of the previous bi-weekly schedule.

For you this means more news and features about your unit more often. In addition, a groovy full-page pinup will appear on page seven each issue.

If you are an amateur writer or photographer and have stories or pictures related to Americal activities, please send them to the Information Office, Americal Div., APO In-Country 96374.

Color slides also are welcome for use in the AMERICAL magazine, as are any comments you have about division publications.

Religion and You

Appreciate Fellow Man

By CHAPLAIN (CPT) JOHN P. KOWAL
26TH ENGRS.

There are many ways of learning. We can gain new knowledge by reading, by study, by instruction of others. Perhaps the most fruitful way is, as the ancient proverb puts it, by experience.

During our tour in Vietnam we pick up many and varied bits of knowledge. Almost all of us learn various phrases of the language. We become familiar with new customs of social behavior and seemingly strange religious beliefs. Some will even make lasting friendships with the people.

Different as these bits of knowledge may be, there is one lesson we all can learn, and that is a deeper understanding and appreciation of our fellow man.

Sociologists tell us that prejudices are often gained unconsciously, almost from infancy, because of circumstances over which we have no control. Hopefully, as we grow older, we outgrow irrational hatreds. We come to learn, theoretically at least, that to hate a man because of the shape of his eyes, the color of his skin, the language he speaks, the country of his origin, the religion he professes, is terribly wrong.

Now our theoretical beliefs are put to the strong test of practicality. Surrounded by the possibility of violent death, we come to realize just how much we need and depend on one another. We make strong friendships so quickly and easily.

It shouldn't really matter then what particular religious label we put on a man, the color of his skin, the shape of his eyes, the language he speaks, for these are not solid reasons to deny any man our friendship.

So often it is this same man who shares his food with us, listens to us when we are sad and lonely, shares our fears, binds up our wounds. So often it is this same man who dies for us.

This is the one lesson we should all share in common. And when we return to the world there may be many things we won't want to talk about because they may be frightening to others or bring back sad memories for ourselves. May we always try, however, to live in such a way that we would never be ashamed to talk about how we treated our fellow man.

VIETNAM-STYLE

Hamlet Of Quaint Memories

By SFC LARRY BABITTS

My Hue hamlet in northeastern Quang Ngai Province is not the type of place an American tourist is likely to visit.

This small fishing hamlet, named after the south-Asian lily, has stood longer than anyone can remember. Travel to My Hue requires great preparation because it is some distances from Highway 1.

The settlement stretches without pattern along the coast of an unnamed island across the Song Tra Bong from bustling Binh Son.

After traveling the pot-hole ridden road, swallowing more dust in one hour than anyone should in a lifetime, and exchanging wary glances with farmers on the road and Popular Force soldiers at checkpoints, one arrives at what is called a ferry.

This ancient junk, powered by two sexagenarian women and a very pregnant young girl, crosses the narrow, shallow river in a few minutes.

At first glance, My Hue seems to sit listlessly in the sun, and ignore the passing of time, the nation's grief, and the war.

In the language of the times the word is Revolutionary Development. In the feverish climate of Vietnam's war stricken, fifth-largest province, all is well.

All is as well as possible under the circumstances for the 5800 residents of My Hue, the "lily settlement."

At the quay, hamlet officials, dressed in ill-fitting, western-style clothing greet visitors. The tall one's badge of rank is apparently the numerous ball-point pens, their steel ends glistening and jutting from an artificial leather holder in the pocket of his white shirt.

They offer greetings in very halting English and motion for visitors to follow them.

On a walk through the marketplace, the people seem friendly. Two small boys play in the shade of a gnarled banyan tree.

The crowd grows along the walk with the hamlet officials as they explain that an American Civil Affairs platoon recently completed over six weeks of work on a new grammar school and community latrine.

Crossing the green courtyard, one wanders to the old partially destroyed school house.

Nostalgia strikes as the visitor fingers the rubble and picks up shards of clay and the inevitable reed baskets, clay objects like those American children make.

Fire-singed notebooks containing youngsters disorderly scribbling and the student matters on the walls all ring familiar.

A subconcious comparison is made between the clean, almost sterile-looking new school with orderly rows of benches and western-looking teacher and the old, dilapidated, partially-destroyed school with its generations of schoolboy carvings and graffiti on wooden, ink-stained desks.

Returning along the same path taken to the old school, depression sets in. Perhaps the first step in an era has begun for My Hue.

The village official escorts the visitor to the new building for a luncheon of crabmeat cakes, nuoc mam, and tea.

Two little boys play in the shade and one wonders, "Are they happy? Will they enjoy and use the new facilities? Will they know a better life after contact with Americans?"

Remembering his own past, the visitor envies them their present freedom from warm days in a schoolhouse.

After Active Duty, What?

When you entered the army, whether by induction or enlistment, you immediatedly incurred a six-year obligation.

Part of your six years is served on active duty and this amount of active duty determines whether and for how long you are required to remain in the Ready Reserve (attending drills and summer encampments) and how long the Standby Reserve.

Active Duty

Normally, a person serving two years active duty has a two-year Ready Reserve obligation and a two-year tour as a Standby Reservist.

Upon separation from active service, he will not be involuntarily assigned to any reserve activity. During this time, he may volunteer into any form of active service or the Ready Reserve of any military service.

Anytime after the 90-day period and up to five years from his entry on active duty, he remains eligible for call to the Ready Reserve.

However, under normal circumstances, his commitment to the Ready Reserve terminates not later than the fifth anniversary of his entry on active duty.

An individual who serves on active duty for either three or four years will not be involuntarily assigned to a Ready Reserve unit, but remains to fill his total of six years in the Standby Reserve.

Ready Reserve

Unless exempted under specific clauses in the law, each person while a member of the Ready Reserve must receive credit for participation in not less than 48 drill periods annually and perform not more than 17 days of active service each year; or whatever lesser training period may be prescribed in the category into which he is placed.

"Unless exempted under specific clauses in the law —". What are the specific clauses exempting the Vietnam veteran from participating?

Since June 1967, Department of Defense says that individuals who have served at least two years on Active Duty will not have to attend weekly drills (the 48 mentioned before) and —for a surprise benefit—in no case shall an individual who has served in Vietnam during the present hostilities be assigned involuntarily to a Ready Reserve unit for the purpose of attending drills.

But

However, this clause does not exempt the Viet vet from mandatory participation in the two weeks of Active Duty with a Ready Reserve unit.

Participation in Ready Reserve drills, although not mandatory, should be considered by the Vietnam veteran. It is a chance to keep up on the newly acquired skills learned while in the service and pays one days' pay for each drill.

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 Exchange Is Big Business

By SP4 JAMES W. BROWN

CHU LAI — The Americal Post Exchange has the busy atmosphere of a large department store with many soldiers browsing and shopping through the stacks of merchandise.

A main exchange and five branch locations serve a minimum of 2,000 troops daily with a Forward Area Support Team (FAST) making more than two trips per week to field locations.

The overall operation is under the direction of 1LT Frank A. Lucas (West Palm Beach, Fla.) and SFC James P. Habib (Bellingham, Mass.).

1LT Lucas' duties and responsibilities include inspection of exchange facilities, supervision of the 20 soldiers and 54 Vietnamese employees, and administrative duties.

The "floorman" is Habib, who knows the operation inside and out.

The Vietnamese cashier training program is handled directly by him.

Fast Service

The soldier in the field is not placed at a total disadvantage when it comes to procuring merchandise. FAST is headed by SFC John Jacobs (Hudson, Mass.) who insures that the team transports first class products to the field.

"On a slow day we still sell over $24,000 worth of merchandise," Habib said.

The Chu Lai sub-exchange is in the process of building a new soda and beer outlet to increase service to the soldier.

Also under construction is a central kitchen and food service center which will serve hot meals. This cafeteria will be located near the main exchange.

Vietnamese Help

The Vietnamese nationals employed by the exchange are under the direct supervision of Mr. Phan Van Dong, who will soon attend the Retail Managers Course in Saigon.

The exchange works closely with the G-5 section in distributing merchandise that is not saleable. This merchandise is given to such places as orphanages, POW camps, and refugee centers.

Profits from exchange operations are distributed to Army and Air Force welfare funds, which distribute it to individual units. (Americal IO)

PENSIVE POLICEMEN operating along heavily traveled Highway 1 demonstrate the effectiveness of Vietnamese and Americans working together. SP4 Ricky Soice (Three Rivers, Mich.), 23rd MP Co., and a National Policeman complete report on collision of an Army vehicle and a civilian motor scooter that occurred on the busy thoroughfare. (Photo by SP5 Bill Guerrant, Americal IO)

Derby Vets Roll Along

By SP4 EDWARD BURCHELL

LZ BRONCO—Division soldiers come from various backgrounds and many had unusual professions in civilian life.

PFC Robert Dancell, (San Francisco) of the 11th Inf. Bde.'s 4th Bn., 3d Inf. is one such soldier, having been a professional Roller Derby skater before he entered the Army.

Dancell considers Roller Derby, "a highly competitive body contact sport," and became interested in the sport through previous skating experience and televised Roller Derby matches.

He attended a training center in 1963 and started skating professionally in 1965.

Under contract with the Original Derby League, Dancell played for the Honolulu Hawaiians, the San Francisco Bombers, the Mid-West Pioneers, and the New York Chiefs.

A professional roller derby club is composed of a seven man team and a seven woman team. Separate competitions for each of the teams are held between opposing clubs.

The five players who are actually in the rink at any one time are called a "Pack" which consists of two "Jammers," two "Blockers" and a "Pivot Man" who can serve either as a "Blocker" or a "Jammer."

Dancell, a wiry 5'6" tall, became a "Jammer," possessing the qualities of speed and maneuverability which are needed to by-pass the opposing "Blockers" and score points in the alloted time of 70 seconds.

PFC Dancell attended City College in San Francisco for two years as a pre-medical student, and later as an accounting major before leaving school to travel with his team. (11th IO)

U.S., Viets Work Together

Allied Police Enforce Law

By PFC DENNIS SELBY

CHU LAI — In any war cooperation between allies is a must if their goals are to be achieved.

The Vietnamese-American military and National Police relationship is an excellent example of such teamwork.

The 146th MP platoon, with headquarters at Phu Bai, is under the operational control of the Americal's 23rd MP Co. at Chu Lai.

The unit is concerned with escorting convoys and transporting and guarding prisoners of war.

Two seven-man squads of the 146th, one located at Tam Ky and the other at Quang Ngai, are responsible for maintaining order in the two cities and along Highway 1.

Work Together

Combined ARVN, U.S. MP and National Police patrols take care of any violations they encounter. The patrols consist of an American, an ARVN MP, and a "Canh Sat" or National Policeman.

According to MAJ Lonnie S. Priest (Marion, Ill.), division deputy provost marshal, "a mutual respect of each policeman's responsibilities and abilities is the basis of an excellent working relationship."

One of the major problems encountered by policemen everywhere is the problem of jurisdiction.

In the RVN, military police control their own personnel whereas the National Police have jurisdiction over the civilian populace.

A good example of the benefits of combined patrols is a traffic accident involving both American and Vietnamese personnel.

Language Barrier

An Americal MP arriving on the scene would have trouble trying to discover the extent of injuries or even gather and consolidate the events leading to the accident, simply because of the language barrier.

However, this problem is eliminated when combined patrols are present to speak to people without struggling with a foreign tongue.

1LT Peter S. Tiffany (Carmichael, Calif.), the 146th platoon leader said, "When combined patrols are sent out, we try to let the same men work together as much as possible. This makes for better understanding and friendships also are created." (Americal IO)

Vietnam Is Home On Range For Infantry Rodeo Riders

By SGT DAVE DEVERICK

CHU LAI—Most infantrymen have a legitimate fear of the infamous water buffalo whose unpredictable temperament can turn him on a surprised soldier in the blink of an eye.

Two 11th Inf. Bde. soldiers from D Co., 1st Bn., 20th Inf. are not new to such dangers. Both were rodeo riders before arriving in Vietnam.

SP4 Victor Silvas (North Fork, Calif.) was in his first rodeo at Bishop, Calif., when he was just 12 years old.

Although he now participates in only three riding events — bareback bronco, saddle bronco, and brahma bull riding — he has ridden in all rodeo events.

"Saddle broncs are the most difficult to ride, but the bulls are the most dangerous," he said. "I like bulls best, though."

"Rodeo is a good life with lots of excitement and good times to go with the broken bones and bruises," he said. "I've never been hurt seriously, so I'll probably ride again when I get home."

SGT Derateo Lasa (McDermitt, Nev.) was not as lucky as Silvas. As he helped a fellow rider guide a bull into a chute, Lasa was attacked, run over, and suffered a broken arm from elbow to shoulder.

Bareback bronco riding is Lasa's forte. His first riding experience came at his parents' ranch and, like Silvas, he rode on his college rodeo team.

Lasa, a squad leader with D Co., has ridden in Idaho, Oregon, and Nevada.

"Rodeo riding is a lot safer than chasing Charlie, but I won't take it up seriously when I return to the states," Lasa said.

"After this year, I really don't need any more excitement or any more broken arms." (11th IO)

Division History

That noted military historian, Edward Hymoff, interviews a trio of Americal Division soldiers from the 23rd Supply and Trans. Bn., Div. Spt. Cmd., in preparation for his forthcoming comprehensive history of the Americal. To find out more about this soon-to-be published volume, see the story on page seven, just below the intriguing pin-up. (Photo by Terry Reynolds, VMH Pub.)

Americal Helps Refugees Resettle Hie

SP4 Bone helps the refugees in loading their precious sacks of rice aboard the waiting vehicles.

Convoy leaves LZ Ross for Hiep Duc Valley

SP4 David Hafford directs refugees into the trucks of B Co., 23rd

p Duc

CHU LAI — Last month the second phase of the resettlement program for Hiep Duc Province was undertaken and accomplished in a combined effort by the 9th Plt., 29th Civil Affairs Bn., MACV Advisory Team, and USAID (United States Agency for International Development) with convoy transportation supplied by B Co., 23rd S&T Bn. and route security provided by F Trop., 8th Cav.

Until two years ago, civilians of Hiep Duc were being moved to temporary settlements in Tam Ky due to Viet Cong activity in the province and to enable Allied operations to pacify the area. In March, approximately one thousand civilians were returned to the site of their previous homes, and on May 9, an additional four hundred men, women, and children were resettled.

The convoy from B Co. 23rd S&T Bn. carried rice, building materials, and farming supplies and equipment in addition to the second group of people. The move, a two day operation, went from Tam Ky to LZ Ross to Hiep Duc.

Photos By

SGT Derrill C. Dalby

Support Command

SP4 Lemon, with "Old Glory" waving in the breeze, begins convoy taking refugees to their new homes.

upply and Transportation Bn.

A pair of 23rd S&T drivers sit in their trucks, waiting for refugees to climb aboard.

Mini-Squad Packs Extra-LargePunch

By SP4 BILL CRAWFORD

LZ WEST—A company from the 196th Inf. Bde. is getting "maxi-accomplishments" from a "Mini-Squad."

The "Mini-Squad" is a 10-man element of D Co., 4-31 Inf., and they have been waging a private war against VC in recent weeks.

"This group of men has done an outstanding job since it was formed three months ago," said CPT John Whittecar (Salina, Kan.), company commander.

Surprise Enemy

SP4 John Warren (Huntsville, Ala.), who acts as the group's squad leader, explained the nature of the "Mini-Squad" missions.

"We are a small element so we can move quickly and quietly. Most of the time we surprise the enemy before they know we are around."

The squad operates best on night operations. A six-man squad recently captured eight suspected VC while on a night mission.

The lightning quick reactions of SP4 Joe Keller (Pittsfield, Mass.) saved several lives during a search and clear operation.

Keller observed two VC with rifles raised taking deadly aim on his squad. He blasted away with his M-16 at point-blank range, and two VC lay dead and two weapons captured.

Point Squad

The "Mini-Squad" walks point when D Co. is on the move. On one occasion the company received sniper fire from a hilltop.

SP4 Bob Abbott (Gary, Ind.) made his way through thick underbrush and observed two VC with weapons.

Abbott killed one and the other VC was killed by the squad as he attempted to evade.

4-3 Locates NVA Camp

LZ BRONCO — Soldiers of the 11th Inf. Bde.'s A Co., 4th Bn., 3rd Inf., made a combat assault into an area 2½ miles northwest of LZ San Juan Hill and found an enemy basecamp.

Led by CPT Ambrus D. Carnes (Brownwood, Tex.), the company moved out along a stream bed and approached a hill. Sniper fire suddenly broke out as they began ascending the hill.

With the aid of gunships and artillery, the company was able to push up the hill, following a trail leading to an NVA basecamp.

The complex contained eight huts, including a mess hall which had running water carried by bamboo ducts.

The 11th Bde. soldiers found more than 200 bags of rice, totaling 1½ tons. More than 12,000 rounds of AK-47 ammunition also were found.

Sgt Douglas Petrillo (Meadville, Pa.), the platoon sergeant of the first platoon which led the company to the camp said, "The basecamp appeared to be an old one being rebuilt. Freshly cut bamboo was on the ground and outside the huts."

Cave-Dweller

This cagey rifleman, PFC Paul L. Tilford (Kansas City, Mo.), B Co., 3rd Bn., 1st Inf., investigates the craggy rocks on the sea coast eight miles southeast of Duc Pho. "Always First" soldiers killed two VC and detained three others as well as an NVA cadreman after acting on intelligence reports that a Viet Cong platoon had been operating in the area.

(Photo by 1LT Fred Peleate, 11th Bde. IO)

Combat In Review

Fjord Every Stream

Up to his neck in an icy mountain stream, this "Polar Bear" from the 196th Bde.'s 4th Bn., 31st Inf., negotiates the forceful current by means of rope and air mattress. The infantrymen were sweeping the slopes of Nui Chom Mountain, scene of two intense battles late last year, for signs of renewed activity by NVA and VC forces. (Photo by SP4 James Bennett, 523rd Sig. Bn.)

Rangers Dangle From Chopper

Trapeze Act Real Thriller

By PFC DEAN WILLIAMS

CHU LAI—Those daring young men on the flying trapeze are a wonderful act.

To six Americal Rangers on a recon patrol the trapeze was a McGuire rigging, dangling from a Huey at night with a hail of enemy fire instead of a spotlight.

A McGuire rigging is a wooden yoke attached to a chopper's underside with 120 ft. ropes hanging down. Two bowline loops at the end of the ropes are used to snatch infantrymen off the ground.

The G Co. Rangers, 75th Inf., spotted two VC in a woodline 20 miles west of Chu Lai. A closer check revealed about 20 more enemy troops enjoying a party.

The team leader, SGT Richard Wolch (St. Cloud, Minn.), called artillery on the VC location and radioed for extraction.

Up And Away

A Huey from F Trp., 8th Cav., piloted by 1LT John Wyatt (Los Angeles) answered the call. A flare ship followed to illuminate the area, along with a gunship to provide protective fire.

Wolch and SP4 John Shenkaruk (Detroit) grabbed the McGuire lines.

During the lift up and moveout — a tricky maneuver with two members of the team already in the chopper and two already hanging on the rigging — Shenkaruk was brushed against a tree causing him to lose balance and ended up dangling and swinging by his feet.

Shenkaruk managed to pull his radio from his back and call the pilot. "I'm hanging upside down, can you set me down anywhere?"

Hectic Ride

"Impossible," said the pilot, so for the next 20 minutes and 15 miles they journeyed in this precarious position.

Engulfed in darkness, the chopper was able with some expert handling and luck to set down in a rice paddy west of Fat City.

After the entangled ropes were cut away, the Ranger trapeze artists were cut away and flown to Chu Lai. (Americal IO)

Braves Fire, Gets S. Star

CHU LAI—SSG Archibald D. Odom Jr. (Little Rock, Ark.), G Co., 75th Inf. (Rangers), was awarded the Silver Star for repeatedly exposing himself to enemy fire while on two consecutive recon patrols in April.

Odom volunteered to lead five men on a patrol into an area reported to be heavily infested with enemy troops. A few minutes after the team was inserted into the area, they were engaged by 12 NVA soldiers. Odom immediately directed his men to return fire, and called for gunships.

Exposing himself to enemy fire, he successfully directed the gunships onto the NVA's positions, resulting in four known NVA killed.

When the extraction chopper arrived to lift the team out, Odom guided the ship in while the NVA continued to fire on the Rangers. As the men were lifted out, the chopper came under intense fire and Odom took up a position in the door and assisted the doorgunners in placing suppressive fire.

The following day, Odom again volunteered to take a Ranger team into the area. After only a few minutes on the ground, the team observed two NVA within 150 meters of their position and a reinforced NVA company 1200 meters away, moving towards their position.

Calling artillery for four hours, he directed a deadly barrage of shells, killing at least seven of the enemy.

After the action ceased, Odom requested to remain in the area to observe the enemy-infested area. That night the persistent NVA began to probe the team's position and Odom requested another extraction.

Using a strobe light, he guided the chopper into the pick-up zone. After loading into the helicopter, Odom again took up a position in the door to help place suppressive fire on the enemy. (Spt. Cmd. IO)

Holy Mackerel A Food Cache

DUC PHO — "Charlie" will be eating a little lighter in the 11th Inf. Bde. AO since division soldiers captured an enemy food bonanza.

1LT Mark Richards (Los Angeles) was leading the first platoon of A Co., 4th Bn., 3rd Inf. when they came upon a trail heading to several enemy bunkers and fighting positions.

Platoon members investigated abandoned hootches and found a food cache in an excavation beneath the floor. The entire cache was contained within a large wooden cubicle structure similar to a connex.

An itemization of its contents revealed: 1300 pounds of salt, 800 cans of mackerel, 568 cans of ham, 29 cans of sardines, and 61 cans of luncheon meat. (11th IO)

A pretty girl on a desolate beach is not in the offing around Southern I Corps, but the Americal Division history is, so order a copy before you return to the land of pretty girls.

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Order Div. History

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

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

Experienced

Hymoff's credentials as an author-journalist include service as Korean bureau chief for International News Service during the war there and as a news editor for NBC.

He has written more than 1,000 magazine articles and books covering topics from the effectiveness of the United Nations to the guidance and control of spacecraft.

"The Americal history will be written on the scene, while the memories are still fresh," Hymoff explained. "It will set the record straight about what the division has done over here."

Americal Vets

The historian is interested in talking with anyone who may have served with the Americal during World War II or has any other interesting facts to relate about the division.

He may be contacted through the division Information Office.

The history book may be ordered on the adjacent form. Simply fill it out and send to the prescribed address. (Americal IO)

From Elephants To Pythons

Variety Of Wildlife Abounds In Div. AO

By SP4 JAMES BROWN

CHU LAI—Americal troops are continuously surprised by the amount of wildlife surrounding them. Some of the encounters are more than strange animal stories.

The wildlife is generally of the same types found in Bengal and the Malay Peninsula. The plateaus north of the Americal area of operation have been considered one of the best hunting areas of the world.

The large species found there include elephants, bears, wild oxen, and buffaloes, as well as tigers and leopards in particular abundance.

Leaping Leopard!

PFC Michael L. Rogers (Baltimore), 198th Inf. Bde., was startled when a stranger in the night came his direction.

"It was awfully low in the wire and I realized it was some kind of large cat. It was pretty dark and I couldn't tell what kind of a cat it was, but it was definitely large.

"When she was about eight feet away I finally got it in my mind it really was a leopard walking at me. I raised my M-16 and aimed for the heart.

"When I fired she jumped about three feet and started running. I fired a couple of shots and started yelling because she ran into the perimeter."

The next morning 198th soldiers followed a blood trail about 50 feet past the wire and found the leopard.

Small Game

Also located in the division AO are small game such as boar, deer, and hares.

Monkeys are found in all of the coastal area. Wild fowl, both water and land birds, are plentiful in parts of the Americal's sector.

Although there are snakes of many varieties, including large pythons, they are seldom seem. The cobra and almost all varieties of salt-water snakes are highly dangerous, though deaths from snakebites are rare.

Both fresh and salt-water fish are plentiful in the Americal area. In coastal areas sharks, dogfish, rays, and shad are obtainable in various seasons of the year.

Eels are numerous, and a great variety of fresh-water fish of the carp and catfish species abound in rivers, canals, lakes, and flooded ricefields.

As in most tropical areas, appreciable number of insect pests are prevalent. Among them are ants, termites, mosquitoes, ticks, and leeches.

Leeches are particulariy active in the Americal area after rains, possess an affinity for humans, and cause acute discomfort.

Good Hunting

The Montagnard people supplement their food supply by hunting. Among the game taken for food are deer, wild boar, monkey, wild ox, and many smaller species, including wildfowl.

Hunting is done by individual stalking and trapping. Traps include various types of snares, pitfalls, and deadfalls. Hunters employ bows and arrows, and a few are equipped with firearms.

Some Americal soldiers have become sport-minded, and have rigged their own styles of traps and catch-devices.

'US,' RA No More

CHU LAI — On July 1, the military service number will become a collector's item.

The service number will be replaced by the social security account number for all members of the active armed forces, in addition to retired and reserve personnel.

New personnel entering the military as of 1 July, for the first time, will not be issued service numbers.

The social security account number has no prefix or suffix. Therefore the familiar terms "US", "RA", "ER," and "NB" will be of the past.

"It will be important that personnel substitute their social security account number for their service number on any mail going back to the states processed after July 1," said SP4 Daniel Plata, a 1st Bn., 82nd Art[illegible] clerk. (Americ[illegible]

Check The Oil, Sir?

Due to a severe lack of authorized service stations in the Americal area, this chopper pilot from the 174th Aslt. Hel. Co. must clean his own windshield during a lull in the action in 515 Valley. The "Sharks" were operating in support of the 4th Bn., 21st Inf. (Photo by SP4 Rod Preuss, 11th Bde. IO)

Far Way To School

By SP4 JAMES BRUCE

LZ BALDY — Grandpa walking miles to school 40 years ago and urban youngsters riding crosstown to classes today have nothing on a couple of Americal officers.

The two men, medical officer and civil affairs officer for the 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., 196th Inf. Bde. commute 35 miles by helicopter three times weekly to Vietnamese language classes at division headquarters in Chu Lai.

Part of the flight each way is over territory still contested by enemy and allied forces.

Battalion Surgeon, CPT Phillip I. Whong (Los Angeles) and 1LT Spencer Baba (Bethesda, Md.), battalion S-5, catch the command and control helicopter out of LZ Baldy for their jaunts to the "Speaking Vietnamese I" classes.

CPT Whong figures the introduction to Vietnamese language gained during the eight-week course will increase his effectiveness during MEDCAPs to villages in the 2-1 AO.

LT Baba plans to make good use of language in his civil affairs work among the Vietnamese.

rriday, 13th, A Lucky Day

By SP4 TONY SWINDELL

LZ BRONCO — For a National Broadcasting Company cameraman and a division correspondent, Friday, June 13, 1969, lived up to its age-old tradition of fatefulness, and will not be forgotten by either.

On fhat superstition-filled day, the man from NBC was wounded while the correspondent possibly had his life saved when the camera he had slung from his neck stopped an enemy bullet.

It all began when Peter Bellendorf of the NBC Saigon Bureau and SP4 Rick Soehngen (Levittown, N.Y.) were with the 11th Bde.'s 4th Bn., 21st Inf. during a bitter fight on a hill seven miles southwest of here.

Bellendorf was in the process of photographing an American machinegun team in action against the entrenched NVA force when he was hit by mortar shrapnel and painfully wounded.

A short distance away Soehngen was assisting in the evacuation of wounded soldiers onto a waiting dust-off. As he turned to help another, a burst of fire from an AK-47 came ripping out of the dense underbrush.

"It wasn't until a little later that I removed the camera from my neck and noticed that it was demolished. I could hear the AK-47 slug rattling around inside of it. I guess you know I was really shook up then." (11th IO)

Lifeguard Suns, Surfs, Saves Lives

CHU LAI — Like a duck takes to water, so does SP4 Franklin Harrison (Andover, Mass.), chief lifeguard at the Chu Lai USO Beach.

SP4 Harrison, or "Duck" as he is known to the other lifeguards, was a scout dog handler with the 59th Scout Dog Plt. at Duc Pho before wading into his present job.

"When I heard about the beach at Chu Lai," Harrison stated, "I decided that I would like to become a lifeguard.

"Counting on my past experience as a swimming instructor to meet the standards set by the American Red Cross, I requested to be stationed at Chu Lai."

"Because of the rough water and strong currents off the coast, most of the rescues we make are with the aid of a surfboard," he explained.

Surfboard a Lifesaver

"Another advantage of using a surfboard is that if a person is unconscious, we can place him on the board and paddle back into shore, rather than fight the current and possibly lose the individual."

Two of the Chu Lai lifeguards, SP4 Archie Hapai (Hilo, Hawaii) and SP4 Jeff Little (Malibu, Calif.), surfed for several years before entering the Army.

The other three lifeguards are quite proficient in the use of a surfboard.

Embarrassed Swimmers

"Life on the beach is not without its humorous moments," said Harrison. "Occasionally, a Red Cross girl or a nurse will come to the beach to sun bathe. A swimmer that has gone out too far or is tired, will struggle to overcome the current and make it to shore on his own, rather than 'blow his cool' in the eyes of the young lady," Harrison said.

"When this happens," the lifeguard chuckled, "we get a surfboard and swim out to the hapless individual and ask if he would care for a ride back to shore."

"The job is great," admitted Harrison, "but to keep in shape, we have to jog a quarter mile each morning. Then when we get bored we usually drop and 'knock out a few pushups'." (Americal IO)

Fire Threatens Villagers

Squelch Montezuma Blaze

LZ BRONCO — Fighting fires has become second nature to the men from B Co., 523rd Sig. Bn., D Co., 43rd Sig. and Commo Plt. and U.S. Navy Seabees of MCB-58, Detachment Gulf, working at LZ Bronco.

Twice during a recent dry spell, the 11th Inf Bde. soldiers and Seabees were called on to extinguish fires raging across the west side of Montezuma, a precipitous hill overlooking the firebase, as a result of an early afternoon rocket attack.

Within minutes, the fire had progressed down the slope of the hill, exploding dud rounds and land mines scattered all over the grassy slope and becoming a serious threat to numerous living quarters clustered at the base of the hill.

Although hampered by the searing heat and choking smoke which necessitated the use of gas masks at one point, the soldiers and sailors formed bucket brigades to snuff out the fire.

Within an hour after the fire started, the part-time firemen had succeeded in turning the flames away from the hootches and putting it under control. (11th IO)

Top Grads

CHU LAI — Two 198th Bde. soldiers graduated at the top of the 12-day Combat Leaders Course at the Combat Center.

SP5 Michael D. Coleman (Alexandria, Va.), B Co., 1-52 Inf. was the top graduate, while SGT Craig R. Singer (Kersey, Pa.), A Co., 1-6 Inf. was second.