Hard Hitting Team Thwarts Enemy

By SP4 Bill Eftink and SFC Herb Nesmith

LZ STINSON—Forces of NVA and VC often team up in the I Corps area, but they ran afoul of a stronger team when combined division ground and air elements found and engaged them, killing 12 and detaining 4 in a four-hour firefight 12 miles south of Chu Lai.

Helicopter gunships from 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav. and an infantry recon unit of the 198th Inf., Bde. worked smoothly together to smash a combined NVA and VC force near an abandoned village three miles north of this 1-52nd Inf. fire support base.

In A Treeline

The contact was first made when D Trp. gunships spotted the enemy in a treeline near the village. The "Sabres" opened fire on the enemy from the air and then landed an infantry element hitting them from two directions at the same time. This first phase of the engagement netted two enemy kills and two more detainees.

A platoon from E Co., of the 1-52nd Inf. then came slicing in on a heliborne combat assault, landing under fire in an open rice paddy 550 yards from the village and beginning an immediate sweep.

"We didn't know how many of them there were in the area when we dropped off, but we could tell they were spread out well and dug-in," said SP4 Peter Norford (Fultonville, N.Y.) "Every time we moved forward we would receive fire from a different spot, so we would drop back, mark our location with smoke and let the 'gunnies' work the spot over."

Routing the individual snipers out of their holes, trenches and heavy underbrush involved close combat for many of the infantrymen—especially the platoon sergeant, SSG Joseph Michaud (Fontana, Calif.).

Loaded AK-47

"I took a LAW and worked my way over to a treeline where we had seen a VC disappear a few minutes earlier. When I got there I noticed a ditch running behind the trees, so I began crawling down it. Then I spotted a hole along the inside of the ditch. I went over to check it out and came face to face with the VC I had been looking for. He was squatting in the hole with a loaded AK-47 pointed directly at me. He really had the drop on me. He opened up with a burst of automatic fire that ripped the LAW out of my hand, knocked my 'pot' off and busted my glasses."

Thowing himself backwards, the unharmed but shaken platoon sergeant returned fire with his M-16 and threw a grenade in the hole silencing the enemy fire.

The recon platoon from E Co. continued their sweep, killing five more of the enemy and detained two others.

The "Sabre" elements were also still in contact with the NVA and VC and they killed an additional four in the engagement. This brought the division team's total to 12 of the opposition killed and 4 captured.

The Main Topic

Returning to the fire support base, the platoon talked about the contact. The main topic was Michaud's LAW with four bullet holes in it and his shattered glasses.

The newly bi-spectacled Michaud had somewhat a different observation. "What really suprised me was that after we swept through the valley they got choppers right out to us, and had us back here in time for a hot supper that night." (198th IO)

SOUTHERN CROSS

AMERICAL DIVISION

Vol. 2, No. 38 CHU LAI, VIETNAM December 19, 1969

The Makings Of A Merry Christmas

A Division soldier with his Christmas packages spread out in the deep elephant grass reads a seasons greetings from home. Perhaps for a few days he will carry a little extra weight in his ruck-sack, perhaps a few extra memories in his mind. (Photo By PFC Laszlo Kondor, Americal IO)

Soldier's Discovery Nets Tons Of Rice

By PFC Toby Prodgers

FSB LIZ—A company of Division soldiers drastically undermined enemy rice supply operations by uncovering one of the largest rice caches ever found in I Corps. Over 21 tons of the enemy food staple from a small hamlet completely surrounded by flooded rice paddies, five miles north of Duc Pho, was evacuated by D Co., 1st Bn., 20th Inf., 11th Inf. Bde.

The company's 2d Plt. had conducted a sweep through the area and came back to the hamlet to set up a night encampment. PFC Sam Wise (Etters, Pa.) was on guard early the next morning, when he noticed something odd in the floor of one of the huts.

"There was a definite outline in the floor, and you could tell something was buried there," he explained. He borrowed an entrenching tool and started the digging that was to last more than a week.

Virtually every hut in the hamlet contained large amounts of rice: bagged, buried, and in barrels. There was rice outside under the ground, in the pathways, and submerged in the rice paddy water. "There was even rice where they landed the choppers," said PFC Delbert Kirby (Johnstown, Colo.).

Although most of the rice was located in the small island-hamlet, the men also found a number of smaller caches to the east, just past the water covered rice paddies surrounding the hamlet.

Each hut contained two or three large deposits of rice, most of it in 55-gallon drums or in plastic bags buried in layers under the floor. "There were holes five to six feet deep. Some of the rice was in small bags, probably so the VC could move it out quickly," explained 2LT Richard Stephens (Marshallville, Ga.), platoon leader of the 2d Plt.

It was learned that the enemy had moved its rice caches from the "Gaza Strip" coastline, north of Duc Pho, so that D Co.'s sister company wouldn't uncover the rice during its land clearing operations there.

Apparently they didn't anticipate that Sam Wise would be kicking around in a hut one morning and turn the isolated hamlet into "Rice Island." (11th IO)

Nails Food Cache For Div. Troops

LZ HAWK HILL — A barrage of 105mm howitzer rounds from a Division firebase abruptly halted an attempt by a group of VC to steal rice from a South Vietnamese village.

Artillery rounds killed 12 of the enemy. The next morning an element of ARVNs discovered 4 more bodies in the water. In addition, 2 SKS weapons were found.

PFC Patrick Sullivan (Greenville, Miss.) was on duty at the Fire Direction Center (FDC) of A Btry., 3rd Bn., 82nd Arty. when a message from CPT Thomas Crews (Pittsburgh, Pa.), liaison officer with a PF unit, was received over the radio.

Said Sullivan, "CPT Crews reported a large number of VC wading through the rice paddies near a small South Vietnamese village 6 miles north of Tam Ky. They were picking handfuls of rice and stuffing it into baskets."

Because of the remote location of the rice-stealing culprits, the PF and ARVN soldiers with Crews were unable to pursue the enemy so the liaison officer requested immediate artillery support.

Moments later the ground trembled as the mighty howitzers sent their high explosive projectiles in the direction of the VC location.

"The artillery bombardment caught the VC completely off guard," explained CPT Crews. (196th IO)

Seasons Greetings

AWARDS & DECORATIONS

SILVER STAR MEDAL

CPT Boots C. Blanks, 11th Bde; SP4 Thomas O. Brown, 14th Cbt Avn Bn; 1LT Terry T. Hodgkinson, 11th Bde; SP4 Michael J. Martin, 11th Bde; PFC Ulyess Richards Jr, 11th Bde; CPT Robert H. Smith, HHC Americal; SGT William Sylvester, 11th Bde; 1LT William H. Vincent Jr, 11th Bde.

DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

MAJ William M. Price, 14th Cbt Avn Bn.

BRONZE STAR MEDAL WITH "V" DEVICE

SP4 Larry G. Barnett, 11th Arty; 1LT Tony G. Bjorn (1st OLC), 11th Bde; SSG Tony H. Blankenship, 196th Bde; PFC Paul W. Critchlow, 82nd Arty; PFC Oscar D. Dean, 196th Bde; SSG Donald P. Fleshman (1st OLC), 196th Bde; SP4 Roy M. Harvey, 1st Cav; SP4 Gregory M. Howard, 11th Bde; PFC William E. King, 196th Bde; SP4 Bill M. McWhirter, 196th Bde; SGT William A. Miller, 196th Bde; PFC Reynoldo Pacheco (1st OLC), 196th Bde; FFC Gary Priest, 16th Arty; PFC Thomas E. Randolph Jr, 196th Bde; SGT Londell Scott (1st OLC), 196th Bde; PFC Ronald Selle, 198th Bde; SP4 Carl R. Sumner (1st OLC), 11th Bde; 2LT Jack G. Starich, 82nd Arty; PFC Sakuji G. Tamaura, 11th Bde; SGT James T. Taylor, 11th Bde; PFC Otto L. Trinka Jr, 1st Cav; PFC Robert Ward, 196th Bde; PFC David E. Williams, 196th Bde; 1LT John D. Zimmerman, 11th Bde.

AIR MEDAL WITH "V" DEVICE

SP4 Thomas M. Arnold (2nd Awd), 14th Cbt Avn Bn; SP4 John W. Bond (2nd Awd), 14th Cbt Avn Bn; SP4 Michael G. Brown (2nd Awd), 14th Cbt Avn Bn; SP5 Francis N. Dailey (4th Awd), 14th Cbt Avn Bn; SP4 Michael D. Deahl, 14th Cbt Avn Bn; WO1 Dennis P. Ellis (2nd Awd), 14th Cbt Avn Bn; SF5 John W. Kimber (2nd Awd), 14th Cbt Avn Bn; SP5 Francis N. Dailey (4th Awd), 14th Cbt Avn Bn; SP4 Robert J. Shoe (2nd Awd), 14th Cbt Avn Bn; SP4 Richard C. Tice.

ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL WITH "V" DEVICE

SGT Richard S. Allison, 196th Bde; SGT Juan R. Class, 196th Bde; SGT Wesley D. Davis, 196th Bde; PFC Francis P. Eates, 196th Bde; PFC Ynocencio Y. Gonzales, 198th Bde.

Wishing A Merry Christmas

The Americal Red Cross "donut dollies" wish each soldier a Merry Christmas and the happiest of New Years. They are from left to right: Marcia, "Tee", Karen, Laurel, Carolyn and Joan. (Photo By 523rd Signal Bn.)

Chaplains Conduct Retreat

CHU LAI — A joint Protestant-Catholic religious retreat, sponsored by the Division's Support Command, will be held December 20.

According to Chaplain (MAJ) Clinton E. Grenz, Support Command Chaplain and project officer, "This is the first religious retreat ever conducted by the command. It is designed to provide an in-depth spiritual retreat for both Protestants and Catholics."

The Combat Center Chapel will host the Catholic services and the picturesque Spt. Cmd. Chapel overlooking the South China Sea will be used for the Protestant services.

Chaplain (LTC) Wallace D. Forsythe, Hqs., 80th Gen. Support Group, will be the retreatmaster for the Protestants and Chaplain (MAJ) Leonard Lukaszewski, assistant division Chaplain will be the Catholic retreatmaster.

In keeping with the modern trends and using "Is Christian Morality a Go Go?", as a theme, both retreatmasters will work toward a meaningful exchange of the spiritual and moral needs, desires and goals of the individual soldier.

The pre-Christmas one-day retreat schedule calls for three religious services and three discussion group periods.

Due to lack of space, it is suggested you contact Chaplain Grenz at Chu Lai 3440 for reservations and additional information. (Spt. Cmd. IO)

Veterans Administration Preview Of Benefits For U.S. Soldiers

EDITOR'S NOTE: Veterans and their families are asking thousands of questions concerning the benefits their Government provides for them through the VA. Below are some representative queries.

Q—Does the current year's VA insurance dividend include Modified Life policies?

A—Yes. It will be a modest, first-time dividend with the average payment about $11.00.

Q—Does the VA, under the new GI Bill, pay the cost of tuition and books?

A—The VA allowance is intended to help you meet, in part the expenses of tuition, school fees, supplies, books and equipment, and subsistence during the period of your enrollment.

Q—Since my wife and I are both veterans, can each of us claim our one child as a dependent to qualify for increased educational assistance?

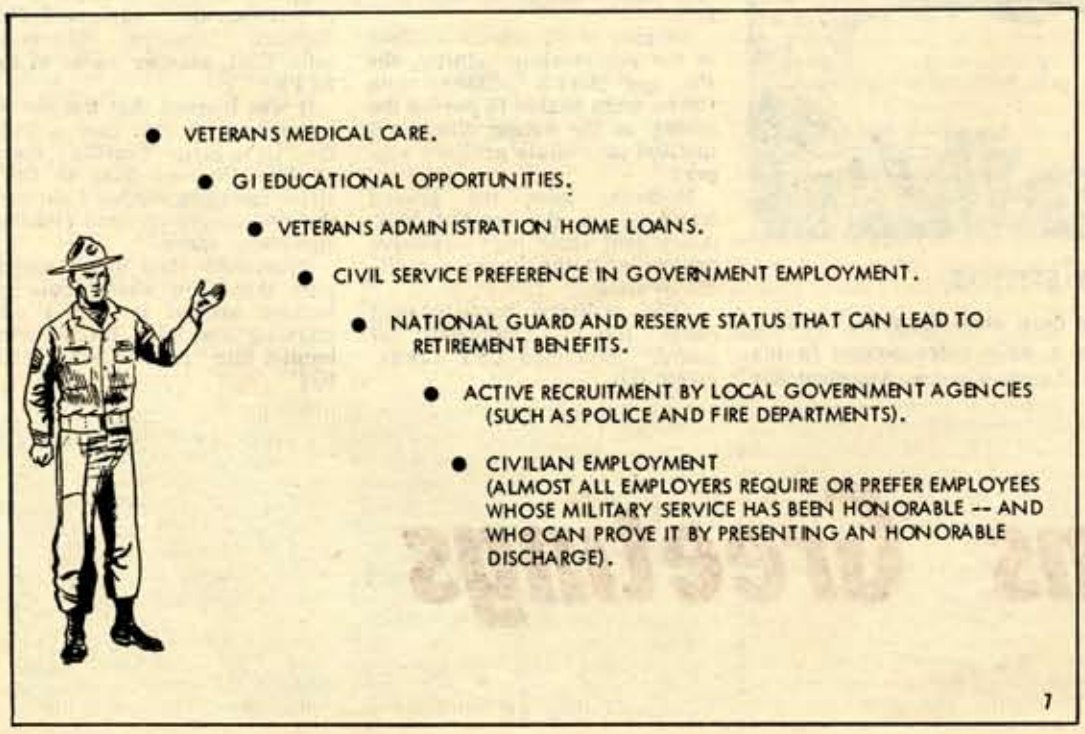
A—Yes. Both of you can qualify for the increased allowance on account of the child. You may also claim your wife as a dependent. However, you cannot be claimed as a dependent of your wife.

Q—My deceased husband's headstone which was furnished by the Army has become unsightly because of age. Will the Army furnish me another marker for his grave?

A—Each request is decided on its merits. You should apply for a replacement marker to the Chief Support Service, Department of the Army, Washington, D.C. 20315. In your application be sure to give full details concerning the appearance of the present headstone.

Q—I was discharged from active duty in March 1964, after two years of service. About eight months before separation, I had a tooth filled. The filling has fallen out. Can I get the tooth repaired by the Veterans Administration.

A—No. Application for treatment of dental conditions incurred in service must be made within one year of discharge. Exceptions to the time limitation are permitted only for veterans who have been prisoners of war, who sustained traumatic injuries to their teeth or who are receiving compensation for a dental disability. These exceptions do not apply in your case. (VA News)



Religion And You

A Man's True Peace

By CHAPLAIN (LTC) JAMES E. SHAW
Amcal. Div. Chaplain

Christmas speaks of peace. To emphasize this peace in Vietnam appears to be hypocritical anachronism to some. Can our soldiers sing "peace on earth good will to men" and mean it while at the same time being engaged in a protracted conflict of death?

The son of the carpenter and the King of the universe who was born in that little village in the Middle East called Bethlehem, did not come to bring earthly peace. Conflict, strife, injustice, and war will always exist on this earth because we live in a world filled with greed, covetousness, and man's inhumanity to man.

Those who fight these injustices have often been victimized, attacked, and killed. The God-man Jesus Christ experienced this tragic truthfulness more personally than any other in history. Nations too have had to fight for what is right. Perhaps this is part of the thinking behind Christ's words when He said there would be "wars and rumours of war" until the end of time. This same Christ also said, "Peace I leave you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

The Christ Child did bring peace, not a worldly peace, but a peace of heart, mind, and soul to all those who know Him. He lived a perfect life for every man who ever lived and paid for all evils ever committeed so that by trusting in Him the peace of heaven which He proclaimed might be ours.

We can sing of peace this Christmas! It's the peace the Christ Child brought, the peace of which the angles sang, and the peace which has brought more happiness and joy to the earth than any other source. May this peace be yours this Christmas.

SOUTHERN CROSS AMERICAL DIVISION

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Chess Related To War

Intellectual Games Of Chess Demolish Cultural Gap

By 1LT James P. Collins, Jr.

FSB BRONCO — It was once noted that many battles were won "on the playing fields of Eton." CPT George A. Durgin (Los Angeles) assistant S-2, 11th Inf. Bde., feels that the struggle for intellectual rapport with the Vietnamese is handily won on the playing boards of Co Tuong, or Vietnamese Elephant Chess.

"The cultural gap is bridged while fighting next to them in the field," said CPT Durgin. "It is during the lull, the quiet periods of conversation and leisure that the cultural difference makes it difficult to relate to them. Yet if we are to assist the Vietnamese, we must understand them," he added.

Avid Chess Player

CPT Durgin, an avid chess player for 18 years, noted that nearly 90 per cent of all Vietnamese men play Co Tuong, with most learning the game as children. "They consider it the badge of an intellectual."

"The Vietnamese are flattered when they know you have learned their game," the captain related. "They regard you as a man of education — one to be respected."

Occidental and Oriental Chess both derive from Chaturane, which originated in India. "Since chess is basically a war game, there are simularities," explained CPT Durgin. "For the mind of war is parallel."

Most Powerful Figure on Board

"But there are differences in method which reflect the differences in our cultures." For instance he noted that there is no queen on the Vietnamese chess board. Instead, an elephant is the most powerful figure on the board. He attributed this to the silent role of the Oriental woman in political life.

CPT Durgin is presently preparing an article for publication on chess as a "bridge between nations." He has already published an article in Armor Magazine entitled "From The Chess Board To The Battlefield," relating the tactics of chess to the tactics of war.

Co Tuong

"Co Tuong enables you to communicate intellectually with the Vietnamese and share a common interest with them," summarized CPT Durgin. "Besides that, it's fun!"

With that he turned around and resumed playing Co Tuong with his interpreter. (11th IO)

CPT GEORGE A. DURGIN OF the 11th Inf. Bde. Plays Vietnamese Elephant Chess with interpreter Vu Toung. (Photo By SP4 Don Naughton, 11th IO)

Soldier Instructs In English

By Sgt John L. Smith

FSB BRONCO—The delightful giggles of the Vietnamese children quickly sweep you away from the harsh reality of war. On their faces you see an intense concentration and a frown when they fail to understand a word from their teacher.

These children are learning English from a Division soldier, SP5 Robert Harris (Atlanta) of the 11th Inf. Bde.'s Civil Affairs Section at the Duc Pho Orphanage.

Eager Students

As the class begins, silence supplants laughter and the fifty eager students energetically copy-down the first assignment. Their serious approach overwhelms even the casual observer.

Harris, who teaches the one hour class six days a week, remarked, "The intentness with which these children study and the attention they give me makes the job rewarding. Even their smiles are reward enough. Their attention to the smallest error is fantastic."

Scene Is Nostalgic

The scene is nostalgic for an American, reminiscent of the time when he too was struggling to properly learn English: "Where do you live? See the dog. I went to town yesterday."

Watching children conquering a difficult language is something you feel a part of; you find yourself silently mouthing the words with them.

When one child makes a mistake in pronunciation the other children quickly correct the mistake vocally, as the child's face quickly reddens with embarrassment. With renewed determination and an encouraging nod from their instructor the child begins again, "Hom qua emdad . . . where did you go?" Letter perfect! The smile reappears and the class grins at their classmate's triumph.

When the class ended, Harris distributed candy to each child, who rose ceremoniously, saying "Thank You" in perfect English. (11th IO)

Viets Amass News

LZ HAWK HILL—The 3rd Bn., 21st Inf., has found the local Vietnamese civilians to be valuable friends. Recently the villagers brought the 196th Inf. Bde. unit some interesting news. A group of NVA had been seen moving up a trail west of Binh Lanh Village.

The battalion immediately called artillery in on the suspected NVA location. For two minutes shells burst over the area, ripping enormous gaps in jungle undergrowth. Shortly afterwards the Division infantrymen searched the site of the shelling. Seven NVA lay dead in the brush.

The Americans found documents on one of the bodies which revealed the location of a major enemy supply route a few miles to the north.

"The villagers usually give us information about, say, the location of a VC mortar position or of a small weapons cache," explained CPT Boudewijan Van Pamelen (Waipahu, Hawaii) intelligence officer of 3rd Bn., 21st Inf.

"However, sometimes they provide us with more valuable information, such as the location of enemy troop concentrations and important supply routes," added the captain. (196th IO)

Soldiers Take Earned Rest

A combined LRP team comprised of Rangers from the 4th Regt., 2nd ARVN Div. and Americal's G Co., 75th Inf. (Ranger) operating in support of the 11th Bde. near Duc Pho.

(Photo By 1LT Harrison Jack, 11th IO)

Infantrymen Aid The Construction Of The Tu My Resettlement Area

By PFC Mark Geiser

FSB 4-11 — A flurry of activity has entered east of here as a joint Division-GVN operation begins to take hold.

The result is Tu My Resettlement Village. Located five miles west of Quang Ngai City, the village has a present population of 4,289 people. The number is expected to push close to the 5,000 mark before the end of the year.

The operation had its beginning in early July when the 3rd Bn., 1st Inf., 11th Inf. Bde., working with the 4th ARVN Regiment, was moved into the Quang Ngai Valley to set up a fire support base.

Apparent To The People

It soon became apparent to the people that this was their chance to move from VC-controlled areas. According to District Senior Advisor Ken Gould, "There were three reasons why the people decided to come under government control."

"The VC had taken all their young people from them and had enlisted them as soldiers and as porters; and they knew that the presence of the U.S. forces would provide security for the movement."

The first group of people to pack up their belongings and move were 300 Montagnards who came to the outskirts of Quang Ngai. They were closely followed by another 500 lowland Vietnamese.

1969 Pacification Program

Because the new village was not part of the 1969 pacification program, special permission had to be granted by the Saigon and Provincial governments for the construction of the village.

Rather than having the people set up permanent homes near Quang Ngai, it was decided to make special plans for the village to be relocated near the new firebase. Special allocations provided food and other supplies. Shelters were built for the people until they were to move again.

In late July the District Chief, MAJ Hoa, conferred with the then battalion commander, LTC George V. Ellis (Kent, Ohio), as to when the people would be moved to the new village. Due to the amount of enemy activity during this time, it was decided to wait until the area was secure for the big move.

By the middle of September, the move was fully coordinated, 800 people began their trek to their new homes. Construction started immediately upon arrival.

People Increasing Daily

With the number of people increasing daily, buildings were erected to allow for expansion. Tin for roofing and food supplies were sent in to fulfill the needs of the people. Cement was brought in to reinforce the sides of the wells. Rice-gathering parties were sent out to gather the crops of rice in the area.

In the early stages of settlement, two MEDCAP teams a week were sent from FSB 4-11 to administer medical aid to the people. Since that time the need has diminished to a point where one team is needed a week. Vietnamese nurses have helped to decrease the need for U.S. assistance.

The village has been a significant rallying point for Hoi Chanhs. In the last two months, 136 have "chieu hoied" at Tu My. One of these recently led C Co. of the 3rd Bn., 1st Inf., to a large cache of 36 weapons.

As the District Senior Advisor stated, "The reason for the high number is attributed to the Revolutionary Development cadre in the area who are getting the word out to the people in the village and they in turn are contracting those not under GVN control."

Evidence Of Freedom

Evidence of the freedom that the people have acquired is exemplified by the free election that will be held before the end of the year to select village leaders.

Defense and security of the village is provided jointly by U.S. personnel and ARVN forces. PF platoons are also working in the area. The People's Self Defense Force personnel are being trained by the U.S. and ARVN forces in the defense of the village.

Explaining the role of the 3rd Bn., 1st Inf., Battalion Commander LTC Leslie J. Stottle (Clarksville, Tenn.), stated that "we have a twofold mission: providing security and defense for the village and working with the village cadre in meeting their needs."

Greater Chance For Survival

The colonel added, "The people are now under the control of the Vietnamese government. Security has been reestablished in the area and thereby a complete turnover has taken place."

District Senior Advisor Gould explained, "The people now live much better than they did before. They have a much greater chance for survival, for the village has given them a 'new hope'." (11th IO)

Art By PFC Dennis Briscoe
Div. Arty IO

A Soldier's Christmas

By
SP5 James Brown

A soldier's Christmas
Is thoughts of all the ones before
With loved ones of deep remembrance.

Dreaming lending to other dreams:
Peace fulfilled with man's pure sacrifice
On life's altar of eternal hope.

A soldier's Christmas
Is reaching into the dark shadows of time,
To build a world of bright peace.

Combat In Review

Where Do You Want It Moved?

A U.S. Army bulldozer smashes a brush covered enemy bunker in a giant land clearing operation in the 198th Bde area west of Quang Ngai City. The Division men of B Co., 26th Engr. Bn., and a platoon of ARVN Engineers are doing the clearing. (Photo By PFC Bill Eftink, 198th IO)

Soldier-Team Folds Battered Viet Cong

By 1LT David Coffman

LZ HAWK HILL — As the ARVN tanks surged toward them, the VC broke and ran. Elements of 196th Inf. Bde. combined with Korean Marines to block escape routes. U.S. jets pounded the retreating enemy.

When the fight was over, the 5th Regiment, 2nd ARVN Div., working 13 miles north of Tam Ky, had killed 56 VC and taken 90 prisoners.

The battle started when the 5th Regt.'s 2nd Bn., probing east toward the Troung Giang River, came into heavy contact with VC units. Though there were U.S. forces in the area, the Vietnamese soldiers wanted to go after the enemy themselves.

"They felt it was their operation," said LTC Robert E. Wallis (Washington, D.C.), senior advisor to the 5th ARVN Regt. "The Americans therefore assumed a supporting role."

During the early stages of contact LTC Pham The Vinh, commander of the 5th ARVN Regt., insured that his enemy would not escape.

He positioned the 3rd Bn., 5th ARVN Regt., to the east as a blocking force. The regiment's Recon Co. guarded the south. F Trp., 17th Cav. and A Co., 2nd Bn., 1st Inf. — both from the Division — blocked the northwest route of escape. Korean Marines blocked to the northeast.

Eventually, mauled by air strikes and continual pressure from the 2nd ARVN Bn., the enemy tried to withdraw. But by this time they were trapped.

Colonel Vinh had been quietly massing his armor to the south. Now, with his antagonists battered and weary from two days' fighting, he unleashed 3rd Trp., 4th Armored Cav. Sqdn., upon the enemy's rear.

Taken by surprise, the VC first wavered, then broke. Soon they were in headlong retreat; the bitterly fought contest had become a rout.

The ARVN soldiers pressed on. When the bewildered enemy found their retreat blocked by the Truong Giang River, they began to surrender in droves. Helicopters were brought in to evacuate the prisoners.

"They were so eager to give themselves up," said LTC Wallis, "that they fought to get on the helicopters." (196th IO)

FO Becomes Heroic During Fiery Battling

By SP4 Carl Ekengren

LZ HAWK HILL—In the face of seemingly insurmountable odds, a forward observer still managed to drag two of his wounded comrades from the 196th Inf. Bde., across the rice paddies to safety.

For 1LT John Crenshaw (Pottstown, Pa.) being a forward observer from A Btry., 3-82nd Arty., proved to be far more a perilous task than he ever expected.

Working in a small area 15 miles northwest of Chu Lai. A Co. 2-1st Inf. had the primary responsibility of providing protection for C Co., 3-21st Inf. who were searching for a platoon of NVA soldiers, reported hiding in a small bunker complex.

"It was on our fourth day of operations," said Grenshaw, who was working with A Co., "when we received word from C Co., that they were within 200 meters of the bunker complex. Cutting through thick underbrush, our 75 man company advanced about one mile south. As we approached the location of C Co., on our hands and knees, we began receiving intense fire from enemy AK-47s."

"The NVA were well concealed in the rice paddies so none of us could actually see them clearly," added Crenshaw.

Seeking cover in the high grass of the paddies, a small element from A Co., pushed forward in quest of the enemy. No sooner had they moved approximately 20 meters when the point man was hit by a sniper. Attempting to aid his buddy, the platoon sergeant was severely wounded in the left leg.

"We were really in a bind," said Crenshaw, "something had to be done and done fast."

The lieutenant saw that his only chance to save the plt. sgt. was to crawl along a narrow canal between the rice paddies. Helicopter gunships arrived on the scene and were directing all their firepower on the enemy.

With bullets whizzing over his head and ripping into the water next to him, Crenshaw hugged the side of the canal and pressed on.

The rest of the company saw what he was doing and provided a cover with small arms fire.

Finally Crenshaw reached the sergeant and discovered a badly wounded lieutenant beside him. Scattered around the area were six dead NVA. Securing a firm grip on the two wounded men, Crenshaw started back into the canal still drawing heavy fire.

Safely back with his unit, Crenshaw noticed blood stains on his shirt sleeve and realized he had been wounded. For the heroism he displayed he was awarded the Silver Star. (Div. Arty IO)

LRRP's Do NVA A 'Job'

Firefight Sings Ranger Saga

FSB BRONCO — Wearily walking to their night defensive position, NVA soldiers finally arrived at their hideaway. In just a few meters they would be safe from U.S. bombers. As they approached the bamboo thicket their complacency was shaken by a sharp explosion and heavy rifle fire, for in their haven was a six-man LRRP element from G. Co. 75th Inf., (Ranger) attached to the 11th Inf. Bde.

The brief firefight in which four enemy soldiers died and an AK-56 was captured occurred seven miles west of Duc Pho where the LRRP team was on an area recon patrol.

"We set up the ambush in the bamboo thicket because intelligence reports indicated the enemy was using this as a NDP," said SGT Danny Jacks (Rison, Ark.) assistant team leader.

"At first we thought there was only one, but when Jacks moved out on the trail, he spotted about 15 NVA," related SGT Ed Beattie (Salisbury, N.C.)

The enemy force was hit with claymores, small arms and grenades which forced them to retreat into open terrain.

After the exchange the victorious LRRPs emerged without a scratch. The enemy will now be more cautious in their own backyard. (11th IO)

NVA Paymaster

FSB DEBBIE—NVA Finance clerks will have a difficult time balancing the books this quarter due to the cost-cutting suggestion of an 11th Inf. Bde. unit of the Division.

An element of B Co., 4th Bn., 21st Inf. surprised an NVA paymaster cooking lunch five miles southeast of Duc Pho.

They in turn were surprised to discover 180,000 piaster neatly broken down into 18 stacks of crisp, new, 500 piaster notes.

At this point, the unit convinced the man that a total wage cut would be advisable to curb the inflationary spending tendencies of the NVA soldiers in the area. (11th IO)

Friday The 13th Spells Lucky Day For Troop

FSB BRONCO — Friday the 13th will always have a special meaning for Americal soldier SP4 Donald C. Naughton (San Diego, Calif.). SP4 Naughton received a Silver Star, Bronze Star for Valor (2ndOLC) and a Purple Heart with 1st OLC for valorous actions while serving with D Co., 4-21st Inf. on that day in June. Naughton is currently a combat photographer with the 11th Bde.'s 31st PIO Detachment.

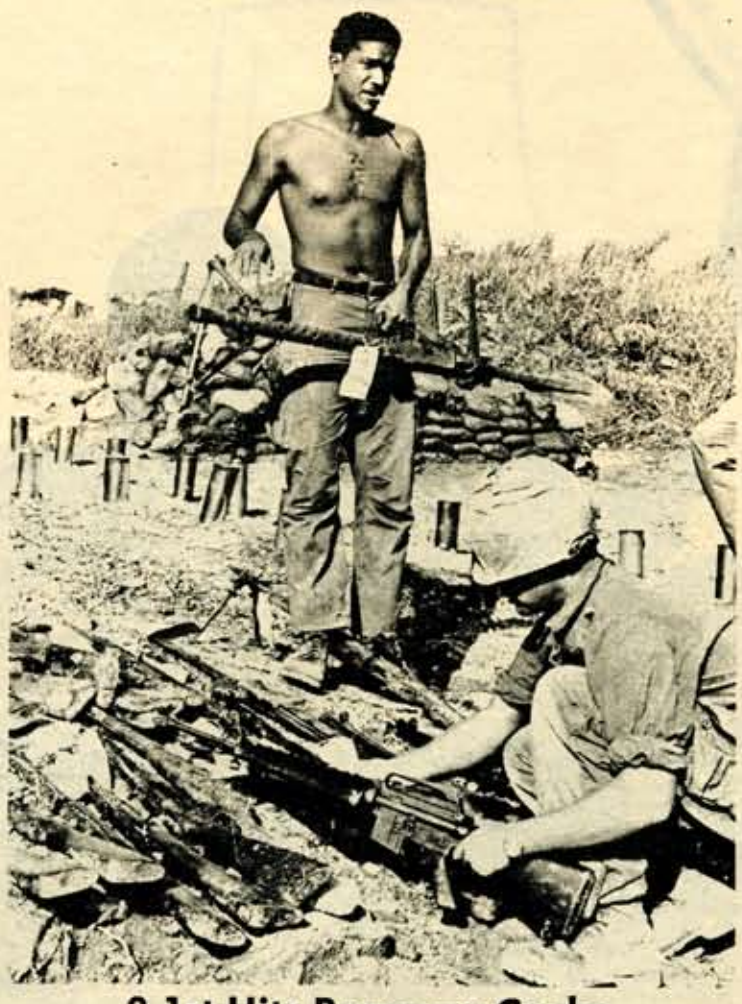
"After I came out of the fighting, I considered myself the luckiest person alive," said SP4 Naughton. "All hell seemed to break loose that day."

An enemy force was being encircled by D. Company nine miles west of Duc Pho. "We moved within ten meters of them before their .30 cal. machinegun opened up. The elephant grass was so high that at times we couldn't see each other," said Naughton.

When his companions were hit he ignored his own safety and exposed himself to enemy fire to help carry the wounded to a rear area.

An enemy small arms and mortar fire started hitting the aid station, SP4 Naughton directed the emplacement of a machinegun to suppress enemy fire. His heroic actions were brought to a close when he cleared a landing zone so that the wounded might be evacuated.

He plans to go into radio and television production after finishing college. But no matter where he is, memory of one Friday the thirteenth in Vietnam will still be there. (11th IO)



3-1st Hits Bonanza Cache

SP4 James W. Walker (Antwerp, Ohio) compares his M-16 to one of the 37 weapons captured by 3-1st Inf., 11th Bde., while PFC Henry L Chichester Jr. (Los Angeles, Cal.) prepares them for evacuation to the rear. (Photo By SP4 Don Naughton, 11th Bde IO)

How about a little holiday cheer? While trimming the tree, this delightful young miss decided to start celebrating the holidays with a toast to Americal soldiers.

Musical Trilogy Dominates Div. Entertainment

By SP4 Budd Perlman

CHU LAI—Psychedelic, Funkadelic, and a little touch of home is the theme for Special Services Entertainment Division's December program. From its inception the Entertainment Division, currently under the direction of Miss Nan Nall, has been providing a wide spectrum of entertainment to the fighting man in the field as well as support troops in the rear.

Due to difficulties with weather and the rather disagreeable attitude the enemy has taken in the past, field shows have been kept at a minimum. However, this month during the holidays, the Entertainment Division will be providing shows throughout the division.

'GROK'

The program has been divided into three distinctly different areas of musical entertainment. The all male band called GROK, provides troops with those heavy psyschedelic sounds associated with the youth movement today. GROK got its name from the grunt of satisfaction expressed by early cavemen when they were either pleased or impressed with an event.

In those days the cry of "GROK" was heard whenever a young man accomplished a great deed. GROK has come a long way in the last million years, and with musicians like Steve Hensley, Brian Baker, and Thomas Davidge, you too will agree after hearing the sounds of GROK this month.

Joint Chief of Staff

On the other side of the musical spectrum is the Joint Chief of Staff Band. The JCS brings heavy soul, rock jazz and that new FUNKADELIC sound to division personnel. Joining leader George Dragotta are William Hamilton, Garnett Brooks, Jackie Williams, and Ronnie Henderson. The full sound JCS soul, jazz, and rock will be coming this month.

Carolers

The third segment of the musical trilogy are the Christmas Carolers led by Nan Nall. Joining Miss Nall in this trip through Christmas Carols, Broadway show tunes and a big sing along are John Gieda, Douglas Martin, Buddy Butts, John Tabor, Ray Murray, Amy Lazaar, Raedeen Ruskin and Marvin Woltersroff.

This chorus, nine voices strong, will provide that little touch of home during the holiday season.

Pyschedelic, funkadelic and Christmas Carols will round out the Entertainment Divisions' December program. For further information call Special Services at 3149 and don't forget to say GROK. (Special Services)

Dr. Doolittle's Elves

Sick Call For Santa's Reindeer: 175th Vet. Team

By SP4 William Hayes

CHU LAI — The medical officer was in the treatment room of the 175th Medical Detachment at Chu Lai when an enlisted man with a worried look on his face carried in a small patient.

"I've got a sick one here, sir," the soldier said.

The patient was unconscious and breathing in quick, short gasps. Her muscles were tense. Her mouth clamped tightly.

The medical officer carried the patient to the examining table where another medical officer joined him in the effort to diagnose and treat the unconcious form lying there.

CPT William Sternenberg (Montgomery, Ala.) pried open the patient's mouth with a tongue depressor to help her breathe. At the same time, CPT Robert W. Cannon (Kansas City, Mo.) checked her temperature and tried to get some information from the man who brought her in.

"When was the last time you saw her behaving normally?"

"This morning, she tried to walk to me, took a few steps, and fell over. She's been like that since."

CPT Cannon checked muscle tension while CPT Sternenberg gave her an injection to relax her muscles. After that all they could do was wait and observe the injection's effect on the patient, CPT. Cannon reassured the young soldier.

"We can keep her here overnight and see how she's doing in the morning. Why don't you give us your name and unit and we'll let you know how she's doing."

They could ask her how she felt, but she could not answer. She was a dog — a small Vietnamese dog, similar to a brown Chihuahua. She had apparently swallowed some rat poison.

Humane Mission of Veterinary Team

Emergency care of servicemen's pets in the division is only one part of the work of the six enlisted men and two officers who make up the 175th Medical Detachment (Veterinary).

Their mission includes caring for dogs used by the military, inspection of all food intended for use in the division, control of animal diseases that may be carried to humans, and civic action projects geared to prevent the spread of dangerous diseases among animals owned by civilians in the Chu Lai area.

Though caring for and treating pets takes comparatively little time out of their working schedule, the men who bring in their strange pets sometimes provide a bizarre change from the daily routine. CPT Cannon and CPT Sternenberg have been faced with sick parrots, snakes, mongooses, monkeys, and water buffalo. They try to discourage adoption of the monkeys as pets, though. Monkeys seem able to carry practically any animal disease and the chances of them infecting humans is high. They immunize animals for distemper, rabies and hoof and mouth disease.

When they are not working with exotic animals, the men of the 175th MD have a big responsibility with the dogs so many units keep as pets. Regulations allow one pet per company-size unit, and this pet must be inoculated against rabies and registered with the 175th. Rabies is widespread in Vietnam, but through the efforts of the 175th, only two of the 75 animals placed in rabies quarantine in the last five months have proved to have rabies.

Food Inspection

Food inspection is the most time-consuming task. The team inspects a total of 35 to 40 million pounds of food each month. This includes foods shipped to Vietnam from the United States, food procured locally, bakery and dairy products produced in Chu Lai, and even the ice Americal soldiers use to cool their drinks.

The detachment keeps one man permanently assigned to inspecting food refrigerators at Chu Lai, while another two men "commute" to their jobs, inspecting the bakery, ice plants, and local vegetable markets.

The men of the 175th Medical Detachment have a big job, but they're handling it with all energy and resources at their disposal. They keep the Army's dogs alive and well, help keep animal diseases away from military personnel, ensure that the soldier's food is safe, and help promote good will between the Vietnamese people and the Division. (Americal IO)

Cbt. Unit Claims Membership In Both Arty. And Infantry

CHU LAI—It's not everyday that a combat unit can claim membership in both the infantry and the artillery. However, it recently happened to an artillery battery in the division.

LTC Robert C. Bacon, CO, 3-21st Inf. 196th Bde., extended honorary membership in his battalion to A. Btry. 3-16th Arty.

Colonel Bacon was impressed with the day and night fire support the artillerymen provided for his unit.

In presenting the battalions' crest, LTC Bacon said, "Despite hours of continuous firing, lack of sleep and physical duress your battery maintained its high level of proficiency of providing close, continuous and effective fire support. The actions of your unit helped to inflict a costly defeat on the enemy and saved many American lives." (Americal IO)

Do-It-Yourself Bunker Becomes Bde. Hospital

By SP4 Richard Merritt

LZ HAWK HILL — Faced with building a complete hospital unit, C. Co., 23rd Med. Bn. threw in a little practical ingenuity and turned out a do-it-yourself underground complex with real cement floors.

Monument to med. architecture

A monument to "medical architecture" is this new hospital-bunker at a 196th Inf. Bde. fire base. Medics of the division unit designed the facility, keeping in mind what they had to work with, and came out with exactly what they wanted.

"We knew the regular specifications for bunkers would never do," said CPT (MD) Donald Speer (Los Angeles, Calif.) "First we raised the ceiling beams to eight feet to give us head room."

The hospital took only eight days to build. It is made from six bunker kits, H.-shaped, with each upright of the "H" being an 80' x 20' ward.

Doc's know what they want

"The engineers helped some," admitted CPT Speer. "But we who work in the hospital know the problems of space and availability of materials that might make a construction change necessary. So we called most of the plays."

Modifications include a glassed-in radio-telephone operator's booth, a 10' by 16' dental clinic in the crossbar of the "H" and a cement floor. The floor is an improvement; the three medical officers had worked on an uneven wooden floor in the emergency room of the old dispensary.

The emergency room here takes one whole wing of the "H." It is equipped with five complete surgical units housed in stalls running the length of the ward. Additional alcoves serve as waiting rooms and storage areas.

Individual Touches

"We let every man build his own area where he works," said CPT Speer. "The X-ray technician, for example, has built his examination room to meet stateside standards."

Parallel to the emergency ward, in the other side of the "H", is a 35-bed ward, large enough for immediate hospitalization needs.

"The evacuation helicopter we have," said the Doctor "makes it possible for us to move patients quickly. There are always spare beds."

Plans call for a third 80' by 20' extension by next February or March. This unit will increase the number of beds to 65 and will add 15 beds for Vietnamese patients who make up about 65 percent of the clientele.

Does the medical staff plan to build the new wing? "Oh, we'll need the engineers to build it", CPT. Speer assures us, "after we draw up the plans." (196th IO)

M-Man Off After 22

CHU LAI—The last original "minuteman" is turning in his musket and three-cornered hat and returning to the world.

After spending 22 months with the 176th Assault Helicopter Company, SSG Alfred T. Nowak (Rochester, NY.) is returning to the states to be reassigned at Ft. Eustis, Va.

Nowak was first assigned to the 176th Minuteman Co. on March 23, 1966, at Ft. Benning, Ga., when the company was organized. "Senior ARVN Staff", as he is known to his friends, was also a member of the advance party which landed at Tuy Hoa Air Base when the unit was deployed to the Republic of Vietnam in February 1967.

Later in the month of March, Nowak was stricken with a tropical virus and was medevaced to the states. Although he held a permanent profile against all tropical climates he volunteered, eleven months later, to return to his original unit, the 176th.

The sergeant is highly respected by officers and enlisted men alike. He has received the Air Medal, 10th Award, for in country missions and two Bronze stars for achievement. His time spent in Vietnam and the experience he has gained working with aircraft make him one of the most knowledgeable and well-rounded of the "Minutemen". (16th CAG IO)

Merry Christmas From The Editors Of The Southern Cross

MARS Call Easy As Dialing 2415

By PFC Tom Cain

CHU LAI—A Christmas phone call to the "world" is as close as the phone on your desk or a visit to the Military Affiliate Radio System Station (MARS).

The MARS program is a two way radio link between Vietnam and the United States.

"We take phone listings every day starting at 0530 until we are booked up. We take approximately 25 to 30 at a time, but we have no way of telling how many out of the 25 or 30 we will be able to place," said SP4 Ken Jones (Grant, Neb.)

The number of listings taken depends upon how long the contact with the United States is operable.

"Sometimes people get angry when we can't place their call, but they fail to realize that weather conditions here and in the states decide whether a call goes through or not," explained Jones.

A Red Cross emergency case has priority over all the people who are trying to call. A slip of paper from the Red Cross verifying the nature of the call must be brought to the MARS station.

Every Wednesday is reserved for calls from hospital patients. The hospital wards are notified early Wednesday morning that their calls are being accepted. Hospital patients are told by a station operator not to discuss the nature of their wounds or circumstances surrounding the wounds.

The failure to say "over" is the most common mistake made by people making MARS calls. "Over" is the cue word for the other party to speak.

Specified areas of information cannot be discussed over the air, such as location and movement of units, casualties, and air warnings.

The MARS station accepts calls on a first come first serve basis so if you wish to talk to home on Christmas, "best you be getting there early". (Americal IO)