SOUTHERN CROSS

AMERICAL DIVISION

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1971

Air-ground attack accounts for 11 VC

By SP4 Terry Williamson

LZ STINSON (198th Inf. Bde. IO) – Eleven Viet Cong were killed and seven enemy weapons captured as a company of the 23rd Division's 198th Infantry Brigade teamed up with helicopter gunships in a combined air-ground attack on several pre-selected enemy locations south of Chu Lai.

Delta Company of the 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry employed one platoon to make aerial insertions into two suspected enemy locations while the rest of the company acted as a ground force to check out another location.

The helicopter-borne rifle platoon drew a blank card on their first insertion, but on the second insertion things quickly improved.

"We had just made our second landing when I received word over the radio that gunships had spotted two Viet Cong entering a bunker near our position," said First Lieutenant Daniel J. Boccolucci of Buffalo, the platoon leader. "We began moving in that direction until we found the bunker complex."

The "Ready Rifles" maneuvered towards the bunker and received sporadic fire from the structure. Sergeant George Macaskel of Manhattan, Kan., moved in closer while the rest of the platoon covered him with M-16 fire. When the firing lifted, Sergeant Macaskel threw two hand grenades into the bunker and killed both enemy soldiers. A .45 caliber pistol was gound near the bodies.

The platoon was then inserted to beef up the main element of Company D which had already made contact with another enemy force. Three Viet Cong were spotted trying to evade to a nearby woodline from a small hamlet. One of the enemy was killed as the infantrymen engaged the fleeing VC with small arms fire.

One squad from the "Ready Rifles" pursued the other two enemy into the woodline. Specialist 4 Larry Taylor of Valley Park, Mo., heard a shot from an AK-47 crack behind him and turned around to see two Viet Cong hiding in a foxhole. With a quick burst from his M-16, Specialist Taylor brought down both enemy soldiers and captured the enemy weapon.

By this time the "Ready Rifles" were receiving sporadic fire from the area of contact. A sweep was organized as gunships from the 174th Aviation Company pounded the area with rocket and minigun fire. The infantrymen fired into the area as they moved across the sparsely vegetated terrain.

As the sweep continued, the infantrymen found one Viet Cong killed by the gunships and five more killed by their ground fire. Five more enemy weapons were taken from the area.

In all, 11 Viet Cong were killed and the "Ready Rifles" captured two AK-47 rifles, one SKS rifle, one grenade launcher, one carbine, one automatic weapon, and a .45 caliber pistol. All the weapons were extracted to a nearby LZ.

"The plan worked without a flaw," said Captain Perry Kaizer of Youngstown, Ohio, the company commander. "And the men reacted quickly to each engagement. I think it's a tribute to the company that the men accomplished this mission without sustaining one friendly casualty in the entire operation.

Division recap

Action was 'moderate

Action was moderate this week as the men of the Americal Division accounted for 84 enemy kills, with heaviest action concentrated in the Frederick Hill area of operations manned by the 196th Infantry Brigade.

Frederick Hill

During the week, the men of the 196th Infantry Brigade killed 36 enemy soldiers and captures 3,800 pounds of rice, 200 pounds of corn and 500 pounds of tobacco.

Early this week Company B, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry engaged five Viet Cong with small arms fire while on patrol northwest of Tam Ky, killing five.

Also this week. Company B of the "Gimlets" killed two VC while on patrol northwest of Tam Ky.

Company B observed movement around their night defensive position and fired the area up. A sweep of the area at first light revealed three NVA killed by the night firing.

Upon observing three VC, Company A opened up with M-16s, killing one and wounding another that was then captured.

Rounding out the Gimlet action for the week, Company A on patrol saw three VC which they killed. As they moved forward they spotted another VC and opened up with small arms fire, killing him.

Company D of the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry while on a search and clear mission observed three NVA to their front. They called in artillery, searched the area and found one enemy dead.

Company C of the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry discovered a hootch area northwest of Tam Ky containing 500 pounds of tobacco, 200 pounds of corn and three sampans.

Earlier in the week, Company C, 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry found two VC graves, with the kills being credited to them for earlier actions in the area.

The company kill two other VC southwest of Tam Ky as the enemy walked into the "Professionals" day defensive position. Two AK-47s were captured in the action.

Company D also found two VC killed by artillery and later, while working southwest of Da Nang found 1,450 pounds of rice.

Company A of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry discovered 2,150 pounds of rice and 100 pounds of corn while working the same area.

The "Firebirds" gunships of the 71st Assault Helicopter Company were credited with eight kills this week as they supported Regional Forces southwest of Tam Ky.

Iron Mountain

Action was moderate this week as infantrymen serving in the 11th Infantry Brigade accounted for the deaths of 23 enemy soldiers.

Early in the week Company B of the 1st Battalion 20th Infantry observed and engaged two Viet Cong. The results of the action were one VC killed.

The "Warlords of the 123rd Aviation Co., observed one VC carrying a pack, in the foothills southwest of Quang Ngai City. They engaged him and chalked up a kill.

Flying over the lowlands southeast of Quang Ngai City, the "Warlords" again claimed four kills after engaging a quartet of VC later that afternoon.

Troops of Company B, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry acquired credit for a couple of kills after a brief fight southeast of Quang Ngai City.

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LZ Dottie – Captain Philip LaGuidico of Modesto, Calif., battalion surgeon of the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry shows the tender touch of his profession as he treats a cut on the knee of a child at the Binh Son Orphanage.

(U.S. Photo by SP4 Terry Williamson)

Jungle Warriors get 10

By SP4 Gregory Wright

FSB BRONCO (11th Inf. Bde. IO) – Following a day's work west of Iron Mountain, the "Jungle Warriors" of the 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry clashed with NVA elements three times in one night of fast action, killing ten of the enemy.

As darkness was falling in the Song Ve Valley, Company Commander First Lieutenant Marcel Lettre, put his force in a laager position and sent elements of the 2nd and 3rd platoons to set up night positions. The first hours of darkness yielded no results, but as the hour of midnight approached, movement was heard by men of the 3rd platoon.

"It sounded like a party of approximately 25 or 30 men," said Staff Sergeant James E. Hayes, Rockey Point, N.C., the platoon sergeant. "As soon as they were near, we maneuvered on them and opened up with small arms and claymores."

An investigation of the trail revealed five dead NVA and a quantily of equipment. The location was quickly cleared and the men moved back into their positions.

The remainder of the night was quiet. In the morning, however, as first light began to filter through the murky night, the infantrymen's patience was again rewarded. This time it was the second platoon which spotted movement and unleashed claymores and M-16s. When the fire had subsided, two more NVA lay dead.

Daylight did not end the action for Company C, as a patrol led by Specialist 4 Douglas Ayers of Plainville, N.C., followed two NVA.

"We were moving down the Song Ve when we spotted two NVA," reported Specialist Ayres. "They were completely unaware of our presence so we moved quietly forward to engage them. The two joined a larger group which we engaged at about 40 feet, killing three."

NVA bathers get surprise

By SP4 James Tabata

FSB BRONCO, Vietnam (11th Inf. Bde. IO) – Bathing during duty hours recently cost three NVA their lives and weapons as infantrymen of the 23rd Division's 11th Infantry Brigade sprang a hasty ambush five miles west of FSB Chippewa.

The CP (Command Platoon) and Fourth Platoon of Company D, 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry were moving along a trail contouring a sparse ridgeline when it's pointman, Private First Class James Gibson of Gaston, N.C., heard voices and spotted four NVA bathing in the river below. "The river, full from recent rains, was noisy and covered the sound of our moving into position," said Specialist Four Dan Shockley.

With security out to the flanks, the hasty trap was set and the firepower of individual and crew served weapons surprised the enemy.

The Mountainmen quickly moved down to the area of contact and found three NVA dead, an AK-47, a 9mm Chinese Communist pistol and the blood trail of the fourth NVA leading up the river into the water. A thorough search of the area was made, but the wounded enemy soldier was not found.

A cave close to the river, used as a sleeping position, yielded 100 pounds of rice, food stuffs, hammocks, five rucksacks and AK-47 magazines. All items, including the weapons, were evacuated to Chu Lai.

Join the Army To see the sea

By SP5 William Hayes

CHU LAI, (23rd Inf. Div. IO) – Shortly after he entered the Army, Specialist 4 Virgil W. Lucado of Princeton, W. Va., laughed at a friend who enlisted in the Army to work on boats.

"Man," Lucado said at the time, "the Army doesn't have boats."

The Army has boats. Lucado ended up working on them.

Assigned to the 23rd Infantry Division's 544th Medium Boat Transit Company, he works as a marine engineer a board an LCM-8 (Mike 8). He's responsible for keeping the 40-foot boat's four Diesel engines running smoothly.

"I like the job...it's something different from what I did before," he said as he climbed out of the crowded engine room.

Before he entered the Army, he was already a skilled auto body repairman. After he completed basic training at Fort Jackson, S.C., he was assigned to a motor pool at Fort Eustis, Va.

But when he came to Vietnam, he was put in an on-the-job training program aboard a Mike 8.

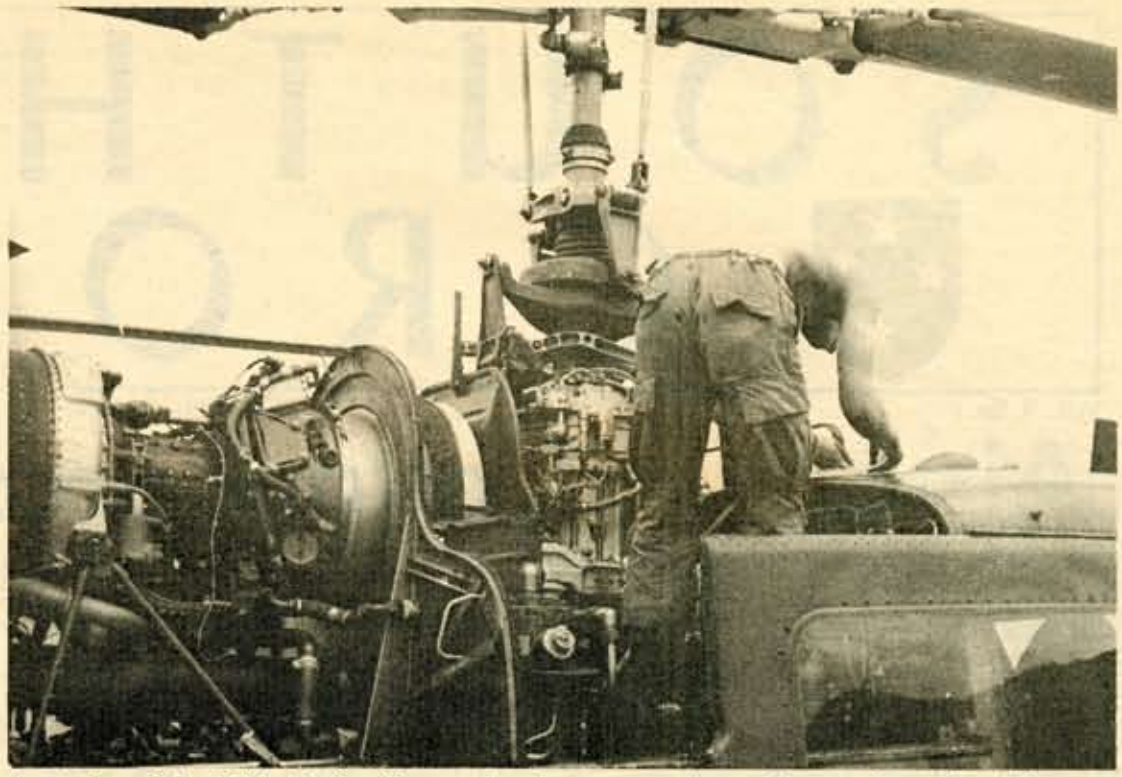
He wasn't sure if he would be able to explain how he got his new job to his wife, Audrey Kay, he said.

Lucado's job is not without it's advantages, though one of them is born out of necessity. "I may be one of the few guys who are authorized to work without a shirt on," he said. "After we've been running four or five hours, the engine room heats up to about 160 to 170 degrees."

As for the boat itself, the specialist commented, "we can run the boat at about eight knots, but we don't like to push it any more than that; we're just not built for speed."

The squared-off prow of the craft can be lowered for loading when the craft is beached. But the boat isn't exactly built for comfort, either. Its only below-decks space is full of engines, so the crew sleeps topside. "We usually sack out down there in the cargo well," the specialist said as he pointed down to the steel deck below the water line.

What the boat lacks in speed and comfort is compensated for by its armament. The craft is armed with 50 caliber machineguns mounted forward of the boatswain's platform on either side. The whole platform at the stern is surrounded with armored bulkheads. Observation slits let the helmsman navigate even while crouched out of the way of any enemy fire.



A member of the 174th Aviation Company's maintenance section performs an inspection of the power train of this UH-1 helicopter.

Medic performs carry under fire

By SP4 Terry Williamson

CHU LAI, (198th Inf Bde IO) – Few infantrymen ever wish that they could participate in the 50 yard man carry after basic training, but a wounded soldier in the Americal Division's 198th Infantry Brigade got a free ride from a daring medic who raced to the wounded man's position, and carried him in the well remembered piggy-back fashion to cover under intense enemy fire.

A platoon of Delta Company, 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry while maneuvering northwest of Chu Lai, was taking heavy enemy fire when Specialist 4 Donald R. Belton from Highpoint, N.C., platoon medic, waded through heavy AK-47 and .30 caliber machinegun fire to administer aid to a wounded soldier.

"When I was running toward the wounded man, all I was thinking about was who could it be that was hit," said Specialist Belton. "When I got there, I found three men had been wounded, but only one was unable to walk, so I thought I had better get him out."

Belton picked up his patient piggy-back style and raced to the rear of the element where there was better cover, and finished his treatment. The wounded soldier had received a wound in his right foot and was unable to walk, but it was not serious.

The other two men had received graze wounds, and they continued firing at the enemy position, and did not require much treatment. As a result, the enemy soldiers were quickly dispersed by thunderous fire from the "Professionals".

"I began to worry about what I had done only after it was all over," said the specialist. "I really didn't think about what I was doing at the time, after all that is my job."

"There were some pretty anxious moments for a while, but when somebody called for a medic, Belton passed me before I had time to turn around and look for him," said First Lieutenant Henry C. Hunter, platoon leader from San Francisco. "When I saw him carrying the wounded soldier on his back, I really did a double take."

A Medivac helicopter was quickly on the scene, and the wounded soldier was safely taken to a Chu Lai hospital. Specialist Belton remained behind to continue his daily routines, but it was a relief to know that he didn't need a refresher course in the man carry.

PFC enters a shrine; finds booby-trap

By SP4 Zin Balaban

LZ HAWK HILL, (196th Inf. Bde. IO) – While searching an area north of Tam Ky, Private First Class Patrick W. Hutchinson of Palm Beach, Fla., came upon one of the numerous religious shrines dotting the Vietnamese countryside. Third platoon leader First Lieutenant Dennis A. Calton of Baraboo, Wisc., told PFC Hutchinson, the pointman to probe the small temple.

"I approached it cautiously, knowing that there could very well be a booby trap in the area," said the PFC. "However, I was really surprised to find something so large as the 200 pound bomb there which was booby-trapped with a pressure-release type device."

A closer examination also revealed four 155mm rounds and numerous small arms rounds–all booby-trapped. The platoon eliminated the hazard.

"The next morning we were returning to the main trail to resume our search of the area," continued Hutchinson. "All of a sudden something inside me silently screamed 'DANGER', and I froze in my tracks. At the same time, I heard a tiny 'cling' like metal striking against metal."

Sergeant Norman K. Gault of Alexandria, La., a squad leader with the third platoon who was walking close behind, heard the noise also. A careful examination of the nearby brush uncovered a fragmentation grenade with the pin pulled.

"The only thing that kept it from going off was a bit of weeds tangled around the handle," said the sergeant.

It was also discovered that the trip wire which triggered the device broke pulling the grenade completely out of the weeds. Luck? Undoubtedly. But PFC Hutchinson firmly believes that it was his sixth sense that saved him.

This Cav trooper takes along a friend as 'A' Troop, 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry moves out for operations west of Tam Ky. The troopers often carry a pet along for the ride while looking for Viet Cong. (U.S. Army Photo by 1LT. Robert L. Palmer)

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The IG-- what can he do for you??

By SP4 Rick Holloway

CHU LAI (23rd INF DIV IO) – "I'm going to see the IG!"

You've probably heard this declaration more than once in your Army career. But what does the statement mean to you? What is an IG? What role does he play in your life and in the U.S. Army? Should you take your problems to the IG, or to your unit commander?

General Washington established the office of the Inspector General 188 years ago to improve the efficiency of the Army's faltering stronghold at Valley Forge.

The role of the IG, as it developed during the intervening years, and stated today is: "To inquire into and report upon the matters which pertain to the performance of mission and state of discipline, efficiency, and encomy of the command, installation, or activity in which they serve."

In deciding which problems should be presented to the IG and which to your commanding officer, consider the following facts:

1. Each member of the U.S. Army has a right to register complaints orally or in writing with the inspector general.

2. Service personnel are encouraged to discuss their problems or grievances with their unit commander.

3. Any person who, under the guise of presenting a legitimate complaint to an inspector general makes statements which are proved to be knowingly untruthful, will be subject to disciplinary action.

4. Any type of disciplinary or other adverse action against an individual for registration of a complaint, except as provided above, is prohibited.

5. Anonymous complaints will be processed in the same manner as any other type, except that no acknowledgement is possible.

6. In addition to receiving complaints, inspectors general are available for assisting in the resolution of personal problems which may confront service personnel. Actions of this type are termed "Requests for Assistance" and should not be confused with complaints.

With these facts established, to whom should you present your problem or complaint?

Your first stop is your commanding officer. He like every commander of every unit in the U.S. Army., is vitally concerned with insuring that his unit's mission can only be accomplished through dedicated and devoted service of every individual in the unit.

If your complaint, request for assistance, or grievance is of such a nature that it can be corrected by your commander, then present it to him first and give him a chance to clear the matter up.

If, after presenting your problem to your commander, you do not consider his action to be adequate or the problem is of such a nature that he cannot resolve it, then contact your acting IG or Division IG for assistance.

At present there is a problem vital to the interests of every member of the U.S. Army in Vietnam. A portion of the personnel serving here are not taking advantage of the command and IG channels and are presenting their grievances directly to members of Congress and to the President. Actions of this nature result in a serious drain on the United States.

Under our democractic system of government you have the undeniable right and privilage to communicate directly with any member of our government. However, you will find that your problem can normally be solved more quickly and easily if presented to your commander and then to your local IG, if you are not satisfied with the actions of your unit commander.

The unit commander holds an open door session in which you may go and present your problems to him. Avail yourself to this opportunity if you have a problem.

One example of where the commanding officer didn't help was when an infantryman was complaining of his back, that is was a strain to carry the pack. The C.O. apparently didn't believe the man and therefore kept sending him on patrols. The man finally went to the IG, told him the problem and the IG had him evaluated at the hospital. It was found that the man did have a bad back and was given a job where he wouldn't have to go to the field.

In some cases of course neither the commanding officer or the IG can help. In one such case a soldier had attended the NCO school, and after graduation was required to extend his enlistment so that he would have enough time left in to fill his commitment.

The man thought that he was made to sign for the extra time because the people at the school were against him, so he went to the IG. The inspector general looked into the matter and found that this time the government was right and there was nothing they could do about it.

The IG notes that most of there complaints come in when there is either more work having to be done, or a change of command. In a combat situation, if the unit is short of men, more work will have to be put on the individual soldier, nothing can be done about it until replacements come in.

When there is a change of command and the new C.O. changes all the policies, and you don't like them, if he is within the law, he is doing what his position warrants. If you don't like the new policies, check to see if they are within regulation before going to the IG.

Help yourself, help the Army, and help your country by consulting your commanding officer first and then if necessary the Inspector General.

LZ DOTTIE -- Private First Class Jerry Lee Wood of Seneca, Mo., a member of the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry presents clothing that was gathered by his unit to Sister Giesle, supervisor of the Binh Son Orphanage.

(U.S. Army Photo by SP4 Terry Williamson)

Ex-sapper is Number 1

By SP4 Joseph Alward

LZ DEBBIE, (11th Inf Bde IO) – Poor leadership, lack of support from the populace and a succession of aborted offensive operations led to his disillusionment as a VC, explained Pham Van Binh, 19, whose enthusiastic approach to his present duties as a Kit Carson Scout for the 23rd Infantry Division won him the Bronze Stars for Achievement and Valor.

As a fledgling member of a VC sapper company, Binh says he could find little to motivate him so he rejected the life of his comrades and chose the course of action which led to a change of uniform.

"He has been with us for ten months now, and has shown himself to be a no-nonsense guy," offered Sergeant Paul E. Covington of Bennington, Ind., Recon team leader for Company A, 4th Bn., 21st Inf. "Half of the enemy contact our team has made in the past few months was initiated by Binh."

Outlining Binh's achievements during the past year, Sergeant Keith Harwell of Memphis pointed to his discovery of several rice and munition caches and his unique ability to find the enemy. "He's ruined a lot of enemy ambushes–he has a 'nose' for them."

Binh's insistance on always walking point--the most vulnerable position in a combat patrol–has endeared him to all of the men in the company, noted Sergeant Covington.

"One day he was leading us through a village when he heard voices," Sergeant Covington recalled. "Buku VC were making plans," he said. He took off by himself through the hedgerows, leaving the rest of us just standing there. Very shortly, we heard shouting followed by two explosions. We got there in time to see Binh pulling rucksacks and the second of two dead VC from a bunker."

Medic delivers baby in chopper

By SP4 Tom Mano

LZ HAWK HILL, (196th Inf. Bde. IO) – Years from now a small Vietnamese boy will look up to his mother and ask with fascination how he came into this world. His mother will tell him about a soldier from across the ocean who worked feverishly to insure his safe birth.

Specialist 4 Charles R. Harris, an air-ambulance medic with the 236th Medical Detachment from Greenville, N.C., was that soldier.

The air was crisp and alive as the medevac helicopter took off on a routine flight to Chu Lai. It carried Harris, three other crew members, a Vietnamese girl who the specialist described as "about 25 and pretty good-looking," her ARVN husband, and the baby in her womb.

"The baby wasn't supposed to be born until we arrived in Chu Lai," said Harris. "But I guess that nature doesn't always listen to doctors."

About half-way to Chu Lai Harris noticed the girl was having labor pains. "Her facial expressions and the tightening of her muscles betrayed her condition," he explained. "She was really grimacing and straining.

"When I lifted the blanket and saw the outline of the baby's head, I knew he wasn't even going to wait until we got to Chu Lai," he continued.

As the baby came out, Harris held his head and body level as he had been taught so well.

"Surprisingly, he wasn't small like Vietnamese are," he said. "He wasn't breathing so I cleaned his mouth out with my finger. Then I wiped the mucous off his face because it tends to dry and clot when it hits the air."

Not authorized to cut the umbilical cord, Harris laid the baby level and sat back on a litter to wait until the chopper got to the 27th Surgical

In five or six minutes the chopper was descending into Chu Lai. "We've got one pregnant mama-san," was the pilot's message to the ground.

A quick correction came from Harris in the back of the aircraft. "Wrong, we have one mama-san and one baby-san."

"I guess in all the excitement I got too involved to relay my operations to the pilot," reflected the air-medic.

"I never got to visit them after they were unloaded, but I heard that everything turned out perfectly," he said. "It is a great feeling to see a healthy mother and baby."

Wear the latest

By SGT Chuck Merdzinski

FSB BRONCO (11th Infantry Bde. IO) – Now that Indian summer has ended with a splash, Sykes' Regulars have turned their attentions to the latest fall fashions.

One of the most popular items this season, the 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry troopers say, is the monsoon sweater, also known in some supply rooms as the jungle sleeping garment. This durable, heavy duty pullover may be worn indoors or out; it is particularly convenient for night snakes or bunker guard duty. Available colors–in order of popularity–are deep OD, OD and faded OD. Sizes range from too small to too big.

Another item in the well-dressed infantryman's wardrobe this autumn is rain pants. Referred to in the current issue of Gentlemen's Quarterly as Farmer Browns, the pants are an over-all type garment designed to protect the legs and torso from November showers.

It has two, over-the-shoulder suspenders, complete with adjustable straps to insure individual fit. Even adhesive ankle straps that enable the wearer to avoid tripping over his own two feet. The Farmer Brown's come in a variety of colors, including battleship grey, Duc Pho green and 515 brown (515 is a valley with a particular hue the 11th Brigade infantrymen know well).

Rain jackets compliment the Farmer Browns by enabling the wearer to don a stylish, matching set. The water-resistent jacket comes with a permanently attached hood that keeps raindrops from falling on one's head. The lighweight jacket is not lined: therefore, it may be worn even on sunny, crisp November afternoons. The most popular colors are Blueleg green, Redleg brown and immersion foot grey.

Infantrymen in the forward fighting areas of Saigon, Cam Ranh Bay and Da Nang will have an opportunity to see these fashions modeled by a touring USO show. Other interested parties should contact their supply sergeant or refer to the Bontany 500 and Brooks Brothers adds in the current Esquire.

An aerial defense??

by SGT Matt Gryta

If you happen to look up one day and spot an immense helicopter toting what looks like a small house under its belly, have no fears; division headquarters isn't moving out from under your nose.

Its defense system is merely being rearranged to a certain extent.

Since the end of October, working in conjunction with the Chu Lai Defense Command, the third platoon of Company C, 29th Engineer Battalion has been involved in the re-location of guard bunkers and watch towers along the Chu Lai defensive perimeter.

The engineers have seen to the air movement of nine bunkers and one fifty foot tower to date.

"A typical bunker lift recently took place when an abandoned bunker was moved more than two miles from the southern tip of the perimeter to a position on the Combat Center beach," explained 1st Lieutenant Michael L. Shaw, Forest Park, Ga., platoon leader.

"A similar bunker situated there had been washed away during Typhoon Kate."

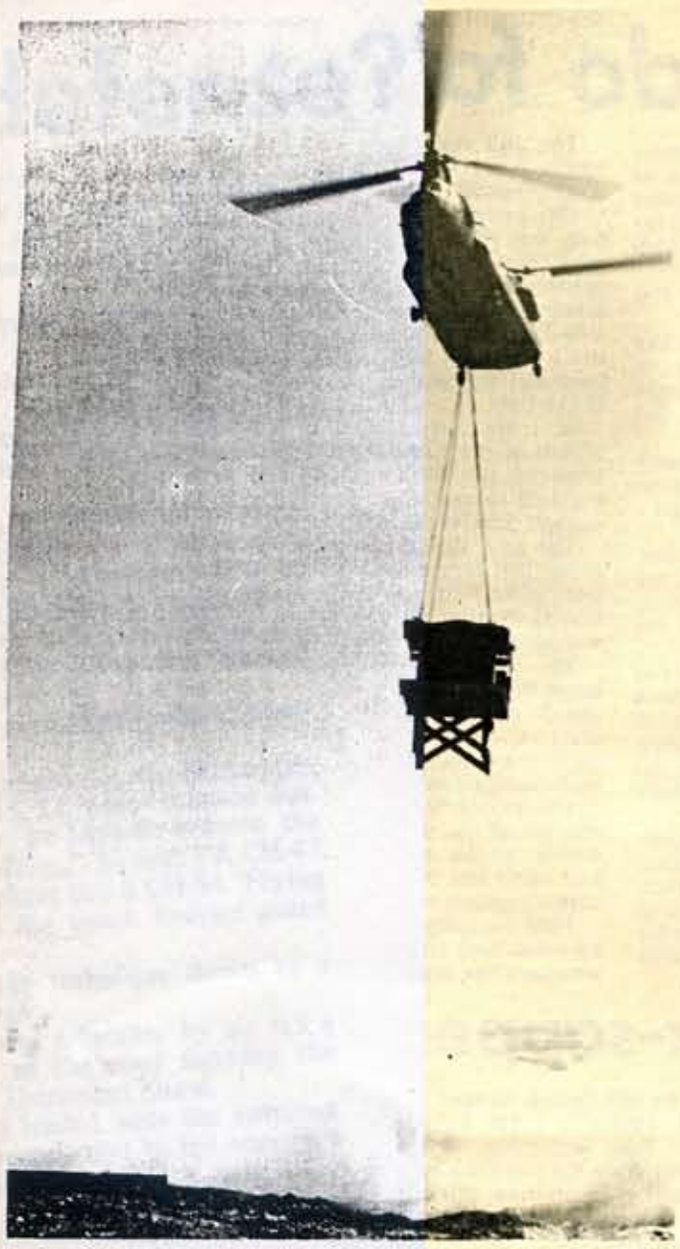
Before a structure can be safely lifted by the helicopter, they must be partially dismantled, Lt. Shaw pointed out.

"Prior to lifting the structure we have to remove the outside revetment walls and sandbags," he said. "A CH-47 'Chinook' can lift the small bunkers but a CH-54 'Flying Crane' is required to transport the much heavier guard towers."

The engineers have the airlift technique down to a science now, but it wasn't always so.

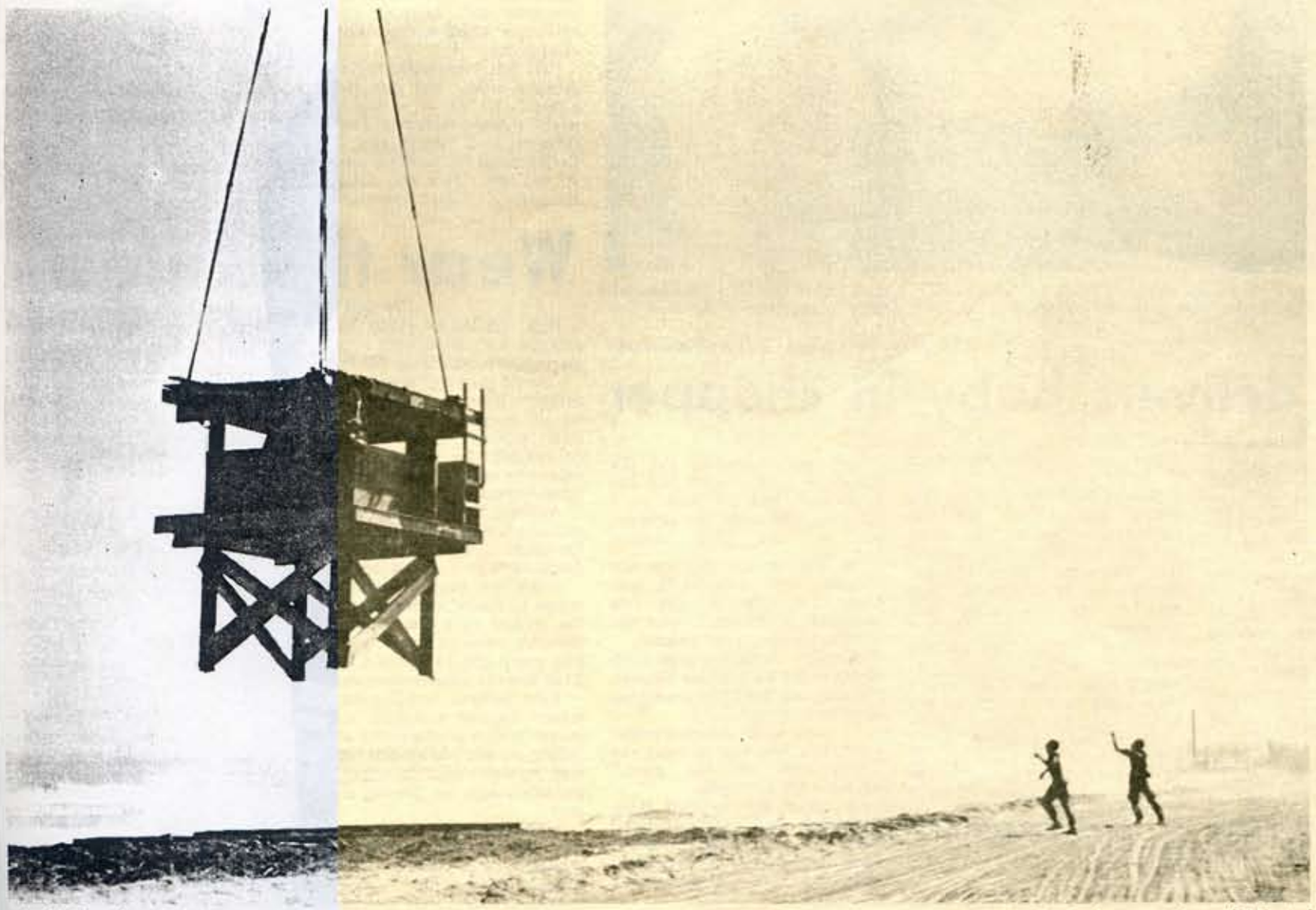
"We learned that when moving a bunker by air it's a good idea to paint an arrow on the roof showing the direction of placement," noted Lieutenant Shaw.

"Some of our first attempts landed with the entrance way facing the enemy, and perpendicular to the enemy, a few were set down as they should be with the door away from the enemy."



A "Chinook" supplied by the 178th Assault Helicopter Company carries the bunker toward its destined location on the Combat Center beach.

The bunker was stripped of its outside revetment walls and sand-bagging to ensure a safe lift.



Amid a howling sandstorm churned by the blades of the "Chinook" an engineer ground crew uses hand signals to guinde the bunker onto its pre-fabricated foundation.

Placement of the bu

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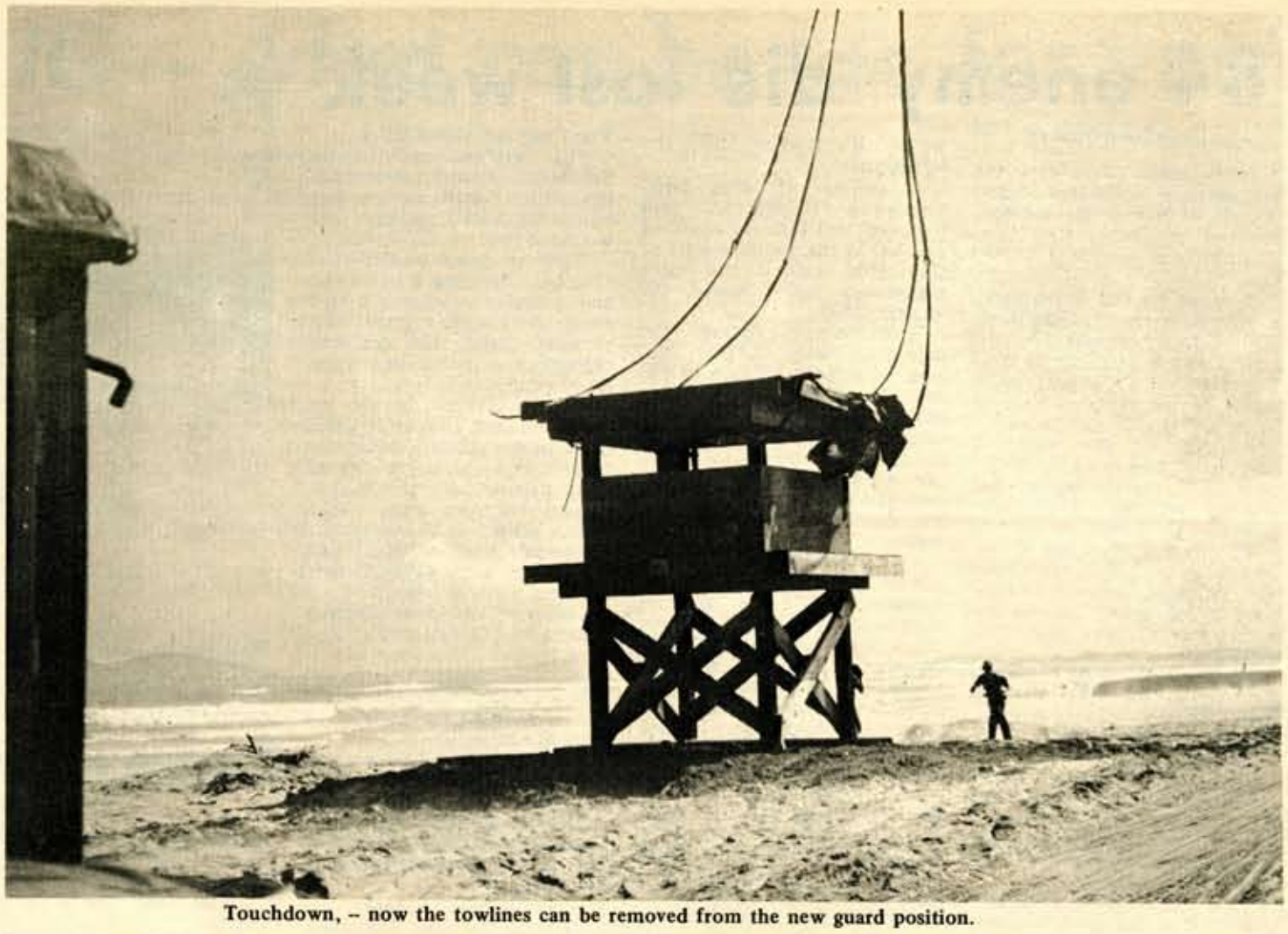
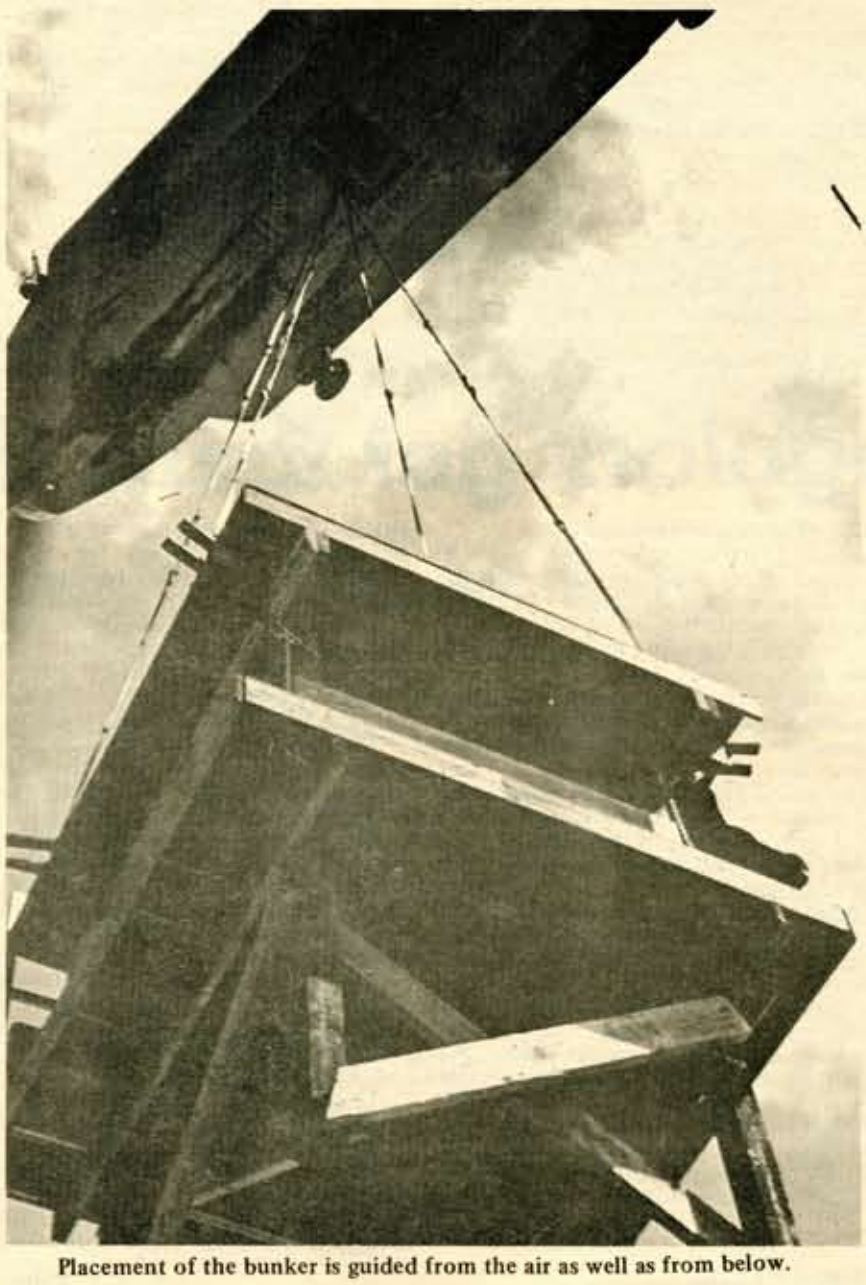
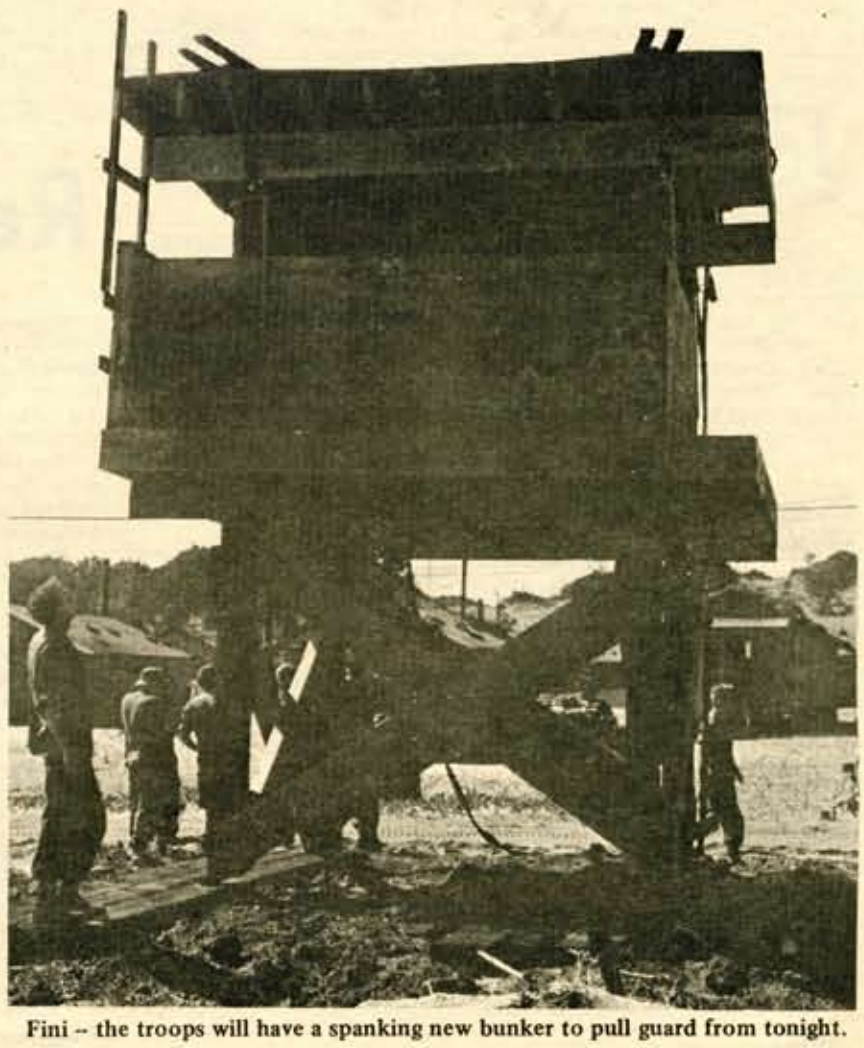


Touchdown, -- now the towlines can be removed from the new guard position.



Placement of the bunker is guided from the air as well as from below.



Fini -- the troops will have a spanking new bunker to pull guard from tonight.

84 enemy die last week

continued from page 1

In the middle of the week, the infantrymen discovered 3,800 pounds of rice in the foothills southast of Quang Ngai City. The rice was evacuated to Mo Duc.

Towards the end of the week, members of the 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry caught two VC setting up a booby trap for their benefit. The infantrymen wounded and captured both of the enemy in the brief action.

Earlier in the week, a "Warlord" gunship of the 123rd Aviation Company spotted and engaged two VC. The results were two VC dead.

Elements of Company C, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry found one VC dead, believed to have been killed during one of the company's previous fire missions.

A day later, while patrolling the lowlands southeast of Quang Ngai City, the company spotted, engaged, and killed a VC.

Recon platoon of the battalion found six well constructed tunnels with a fresh water stream and an excellent view of the valley floor, in the foothills northwest of Duc Pho. They were destroyed.

Earlier in the week a "Shark" gunship from the 174th Aviation Company spotted one VC in the lowlands southeast of Quang Ngai City. He was engaged and killed. His AK-47 was captured.

Company C of the 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry killed an NVA and found two one hundred pound bags of unpolished rice alongside a trail while patrolling the foothills northwest of Duc Pho.

In separate actions, the company killed two more enemy later in the week, and then, while checking a base camp in their AO they observed more enemy soldiers almost too late. The enemy engaged them at 50 meters but the infantrymen recovered returning small arms fire and killing one enemy.

Within a period of four hours, the 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry found approximately 14 huts of which eight had connecting tunnels, in the mountains west of Duc Pho. Also found were various VC and NVA field equipment. The huts and tunnels were destroyed by the infantrymen.

A couple of days later, Company D of the 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry observed one VC in the foothills west of Duc Pho. During the short engagement that followed, the VC was killed.

While moving through the mountains west of Duc Pho, men of a recon platoon of the 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry observed three VC apparently setting up booby traps. Result of the action was one VC killed and one AK-47 captured. The next day, the platoon killed another VC carrying a pack at 300 meters.

Geneva Park

The men of the 198th Infantry Brigade and gunships from Delta Troop, 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry accounted for 20 enemy kills for the week as action was moderate in Operation Geneva Park. The "Brave and Bold" also wounded two enemy soldiers and captured another during the week.

The "Ready Rifles" of the 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry killed 13 enemy during the week, including a major action south of Chu Lai in which nine Viet Cong were killed.

While in their night defensive position, the battalion's Company C started receiving AK47 fire from a group of VC 400 meters to the east. The company returned fire and called for gunships and artillery illumination. Cobra gun ships arrived on station and brought down three enemy with mini-gun fire. The "Ready Rifles" then swept the area and found six additional VC their own organic small arms had killed.

Earlier in the week, Charlie Company saw some VC moving to the west some distance away. They contacted a recon element in the area who engaged and killed two of the NVA soldiers.

The next day the company engaged a group of VC at a distance of 75 meters while moving to a night position. One VC was captured and one killed in the action.

Operating south of Chu Lai, Bravo Company of the "Ready Rifles" engaged and killed one Viet Cong in a brief firefight.

The "Professionals" of the 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry had light action for the week as they killed four NVA soldiers and wounded two.

While on patrol northwest of Chu Lai, Company B killed two and wounded another in a brief engagement with a small NVA element. Later, the company engaged and killed two more enemy soldiers.

The "Regulars" of the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry killed three enemy soldiers during the week and captured several weapons southeast of Chu Lai.

Early in the week, Echo Recon killed two VC while on a night patrol. Two rifles, two packs and a pistol belt were captured in the action.

Company A observed and killed a lone VC moving along a small trail.

In other action, H Troop, 17th Cavalry received three ralliers during the week. Two of them turned in rifles.

Company B of the 26th Engineer Battalion received 47 grenades 13 gas rounds and four mortar rounds from a group of Vietnamese civilians southeast of Chu Lai. All the munitions were destroyed.

Pennsylvania Square

Moderate action continued throughout the Pennsylvania Square last week as the "Blackhawks" of the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry killed five enemy soldiers and captured two more.

Bravo Troop of the 1st Squaddon began the week by destroying five enemy bunkers and killing two VC. Two days later B Troop destroyed a tunnel, killed one enemy soldier and wounded another, who was evacuated.

Farther to the South, Troop A made contact, killing one VC and wounding another who was evacuated. Later in the day a Hoi Chanh led the troop to 800 pounds of rice. The next day another Hoi Chanh led the troop to another rice cache, this time of 600 pounds.

C Troop of the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry and F Troop of the 17th Cavalry together under the V.I.P. program received a total of 35 mortar rounds, 13 anti-personnel mines, 7 artillery rounds, and 14 M-79 rounds.

Staff Sergeant James Gregory followed by Sergeant Bill Platz, both of B Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry move across an open field about nine miles northeast of LZ Dottie. (U.S. Army Photo by PFC James Dunn)

Enemy provides meal

By SGT Louis Miller

CHU LAI, (198th Inf Bde IO) – When infantrymen of the 198th Infantry Brigade are cold, tired, and wet, one of the few things that makes their day more enjoyable is a hot home cooked meal. Even if it is Viet Cong style, at the enemy's expense, and at an enemy R&R center.

On a patrol east of the Ky Tra Valley, Echo Recon of the 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry found five hootches, and three bunkers located along a river in a heavily vegetated area.

Cautiously entering one structure, Sergeant George Scook of Raytown Mo., a squad leader, and Private First Class David Mullen from Omaha found themselves in the middle of an enemy mess hall.

Taking advantage of the situation, the two men followed the aroma to the rear of the structure where they found corn, rice, and fish being cooked over an open fire. SGT Scook also noticed a lit cigarette lying on the edge of a table.

The infantrymen, tired from a long day's work, decided not to let the food go to waste.

"The food was very tasty, especially when you're as hungry as we were," remarked PFC Mullen. "Almost everyone came in for a canteen cup full, mixing the corn and rice together then throwing chunks of fish on top. Everyone was telling each other how good the food was."

All of the hootches contained wooden tables and chairs. At the rear of the structures the "Professionals" found a shower stall complete with running water. There was a dock which could accommodate a medium size san-pan. Steps cut from the embankment on the river led to a hootch believed to be an officers' quarters.

Before leaving the area, Echo Recon place explosive charges in the hootches and bunkers completely annihilating them, but just to make sure, artillery was plotted on the structures for later that evening.

"It must have been their R&R center," remarked PFC Mullen. "The hootches were all sixty feet long and thirty feet wide, but there weren't many fighting positions. At any rate the food was hot and tasted good. What more can you ask from the enemy?"

Cough kills Charlie

by Sp4 Joseph Alward

FSB BRONCO (11th Inf Bde IO) – Ineffective noise and light discipline on the part of an unknown size enemy force recently cost three Viet Cong their lives during a pre-dawn, 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry, cordon and search operation southwest of Duc Pho.

"We were to cordon a small hamlet and sweep through before dawn, looking for a VC rice-carrying party thought to be in the area," said Company A commander, Captain Michael L. Katula, San Diego, Calif. He noted that an advance party had engaged a squad of Viet Cong with rucksacks.

"Our scout spotted several Viet Cong advancing under the cover of a herd of water buffalo," recalled Sergeant Paul E. Covington, Jr., Bennington, Ind. "After a short firefight, they rushed into a nearby village."

The 11th Infantry Brigade element gave chase but impending darkness prompted them to return to their NDP.

"At 0300 we moved from our position and surrounded the hamlet," Cpt. Katula said. "Just as we reached the first group of hootches, we made contact."

"The scout heard a cough," explained Covington, "and he immediately leaped across a rice paddy dike and opened fire on about six Viet Cong. His weapon jammed so he started pitching grenades at the shadowed figures in the hedgerow, and we fired into the area.

Covington said his team remained near the point of contact and saw lights after dark and fired into the area.

"We had one VC killed in action about 20 meters from us, and we heard someone on the trail just before it got light," Covington continued.

A first-light sweep of the area initially revealed two Viet Cong killed in action, one with a flashlight hanging around his neck, and the other with a can of warm rice and fish and a bag of medical supplies.

The third KIA was found under his rucksack in knee-deep water.

Regulars get there first

By SGT Chuck Merdzinski

FSB BRONCO (11th Infantry Brigade IO) – A Viet Cong patrol along the Gaza Strip recently tried to pick night location and found out it was already taken as the 3rd Platoon of Company A, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry killed four and detained one.

The unit had selected a large mound 60 meters from the South China Sea for their NDP because it offered concealment and advantage in observing extensive beach area.

Just before guard duty, PFC Mike Garretti of Gary, Ind., spotted a 12-man patrol walking the shore-line and alerted the rest of the unit.

"They were about 400 meters away when we started watching them," said Spec. 4 Ron Shrader of Stevens Point, Wis. "There were flare ships and helicopters patrolling the beach, and everytime they shot an illumination round or passed over, the patrol would squat down."

The infantrymen used caution thinking it might be a friendly element until they came closer. "They stopped about 150 meters from our position and three men started toward the mound as if they were going to check it out," said PFC Jim Crawford of Port Gibson, N.Y.

Crawford and a fellow regular, PFC Ron Bunnell of St. Joseph, Mo., killed an AK-47 carrying VC who came within 20 meters of their position.

Other platoon elements fired at the main VC patrol which had taken cover behind a small sand hill. Then the platoon split into two elements and maneuvered as the enemy tried to escape along the beach.

With illumination, the platoon followed signs of two bodies being dragged. "We followed the trail for about 500 meters until it lead to the shore," Bunnell explained, adding "We assumed they dragged the bodies into the water to hide them."

The sweep continued, and one VC was captured only 50 meters from where the trail led into the water. The insurgent was found even though he attempted to partially bury himself in the sand.

Bunnell spotted a sampan on the beach and said he could see a back-pack beside the boat. "I figured it was booby-trapped so we stayed away from it and circled around one side of the sampan. It was then I saw a VC pop out of a hole next to the pack and reach into it for something."

PFC Frank Schurich of Lafayette, N.J., and Bunnell fired at the hole to prevent the guerilla from using a grenade. One of the rounds killed the VC and the men searched the pack and found an AK-47 and several Chicom grenades.

"I can't figure out why he didn't use his rifle," commented Bunnell. "It was lucky for me, but I think it might have been defective."

After returning to the initial contact site, the platoon discovered 30 Chicom grenades, clothing, equipment, supplies and food inside packs that had been hastily discarded by the fleeing VC.

This is the Southern Crosses' way of trying to give you everything you need for a happy New Year. Lovely Diane Barnett is the 1971 San Francisco National Sports and Boat Show Queen.

Orphans receive Merry Christmas

By SP4 Terry Williamson

CHU LAI (198th Inf. Bde. IO) -- Several hundred Vietnamese orphans will benefit this year by the Christmas spirit of the 23rd Division's 198th Infantry Brigade.

The soldiers of the "Brave and Bold" are sponsoring two orphanages this Christmas and virtually hundreds of gifts will be distributed to the children at Binh Son and Camp Phan Chu Trinh.

The whole thing started as a Division project and the brigade civil affairs offices were asked for help in procuring money for the worthwhile cause. Soldiers of the 198th responded by reaching down in their pockets and producing $2272 for the project, tops in the division. Altogether, the Division collected nearly seven thousand dollars.

One brigade soldier said, "I don't really have anyone over here to buy Christmas gifts for, and this is one way I can feel it's really Christmas in Vietnam."

Similar sentiments were expressed throughout the brigade as the program met heavy approval in each of the units. The 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry led the way with over nine hundred dollars collected, but each unit came through with hefty sums.

"We spent one day visiting the companies in the field and at fire support bases collecting the contributions," said First Lieutenant Ron J. Johnson, the brigade Civil Affairs Officer from New Carlisle, Ohio. "We were getting a great response, and even the helicopter crew that flew us around caught the spirit. They donated $8.10."

The success of the toy fund was not entirely due to the Christmas spirit, however. The brigade has always had close ties with the Catholic orphanage at Binh Son. Medcaps are run there weekly, and often former members of the brigade now in the states send gifts to the children.

Americans have always been welcome at the orphanage and the Christmas spirit provided another outlet for the infantrymen to express their feelings and concern for the children.

The association with the orphanage at Camp Phan Chu Trinh is new for the brigade, but officers feel that the start they are off to with the Christmas fund will lead to closer future ties.

The civil affairs office will purchase the gifts from the local market as long as the supply holds out. Other gifts will be purchased elsewhere when the supply around Chu Lai dwindles.

The toys will be put into individual packets and distributed in a traditional Christmas party at the orphanages.

With flags whipping in the breeze like guidons from out of the past, troopers of the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry mount their steel horses for a drive to Fire Support Base Hawk Hill on a mission.

Professionals rob the enemy blind

By SGT Matt Gryta

LZ YOUNG (23rd Infantry Division IO) – The southernmost sector of Tam Ky District has proven to be a veritable supermarket in terms of communist supplies and munitions for one 23rd Infantry Division battalion since its recent move here.

The uncovery of weapons caches has become an almost daily occurrence for the men of the 1st Battalion 46th Infantry in the three weeks the "Professionals" have been operating off this low-lands firebase some six miles West of the district capital along the Tam Ky Provincial Highway.

The greater part of the booty, ranging from 656 homemade Chinese Communist grenades to seventeen tons of granulated salt, has been unearthed in and around the Ban Quan, Dat Do and Day Tham mountains just South of LZ Young, which guards the sole overland resupply route to the combined US-Vietnamese garrison at Tien Phuoc.

"We've been finding a large amount of heavy weapons among the caches," noted First Lieutenant Edward L. McCay, New York City, 1/46 Intelligence Officer.

"Apparently the enemy battalions have been stockpiling arms and supplies since the beginning of the monsoon season in preparation for a new offensive early in the new year."

The Professionals' move off LZ Mary Ann, overlooking "Drag-on Valley" in western Quang Tin Province was necessitated by in-creased enemy ambushes along the provincial highway.

"A large measure of our success in this area can be attributed to our working platoon for platoon with four Vietnamese Regional Forces units," Lieutenant Colonel William P. Doyle, Honolulu, Battalion Commander, pointed out.

Two hundred and six enemy dead have been accounted for since the joint operation began and the "Professionals'" scoreboard of captured weapons reads like a Viet Cong armor's property book.

It includes one 75mm recoiless rifle, four 57mm recoiless rifles, twelve AK-47's, ten carbines, two .30 caliber machine guns, five Browning Automatic Rifles, fifty-one Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPG's), nine 60mm mortar rounds, six 82mm mortar rounds and 2650 AK-47 rounds.

The 196th Brigade troops have become so adept at finding enemy stores that lately they've been running across the wares even when they aren't actively searching.

"We got hit by some mortars and small arms fire the night before Thanksgiving as we were moving to our night laager," related Specialist Four Tim Carmichael, Mancelona, Mich., a medic with Charlie Company's first platoon.

"The incident made a medevac necessary and as we were cutting out a landing zone on a heavily wooded ridgeline we came across a large corroded box lying in some thick bush under a large tree."

"The box itself was unusually old, but when we opened it we found three perfectly good 60mm mortar rounds and three 106mm recoiless rifle rounds," said Private First Class Ken Gates, Warren, Illinois.

Alpha Company uncovered two large stores of granulated salt within a forty-eight hour period during a recent search and clear mission along Ban Quan Mountain.

"My second platoon had pulled out a hundred one gallon cans of kerosene which had been secreted under a rockpile beneath a mountain waterfall," said Captain Paul S. Spilberg, Los Angeles, Company Commander.

"A further search of the immediate area produced two large wicker baskets covered with ponchoes under some thick foliage. Each of the baskets, approximately ten feet in diameter by four feet high, held about 8,000 pounds of salt."

Less than two days later, while working their way down the slope of the ridgeline the men of the second platoon ran across three more wicker baskets containing an additional 18,000 pounds of the white condiment.

During a break in the monsoon rains the salt was air-extracted out of the field and turned over to the Province Chief at Tam Ky where it was distributed to local villagers.

Hot chow is welcomed by a member of Company C, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry. The unit was operating northwest of Duc Pho.
(U.S. Army Photo by Sergeant Bill Lake)

Television and movie actor Serves 2nd Vietnam tour

FSB BRONCO, (11th Inf. Bde. IO) – When Staff Sergeant Ronald A. Numkena of Wheat Ridge, Colo., a platoon sergeant with the 11th Infantry Brigade's Company C, 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry was inducted into the Army in July of 1966, he was 22-years-old and already had eighteen years of experience "harassing hostile troops, executing ambushes and dodging bullets."

Since he first appeared on the Colonel Tim McCoy television show in 1947, Numkena has had a number of minor roles and performed numerous stunts on television and in the movies. It was only natural for him to always be cast as an Indian since his father was a Hopi and his mother from the Kalamath Krete tribe.

Some of the motion pictures in which Numkena has appeared include Naked Jungle, Pony Soldier, Wall of Noise, Cat Ballou, and the Professionals. In the later film, he was paid three hundred dollars to fall from a one hundred and fifty foot tower. On television, he has appeared in Zorro, Brave Eagle, Advance to the Rear (F Troop) and Bonansa.

Numkena has on several occasions caught a glimpse of his past life. He recalled that one movie he had been watching was interrupted and a segment replayed after someone had recognized him in a particular part. His first tour in Vietnam was with the 4th Infantry Division.

After he gets out of the military picture, Numkena plans on continuing his education in the field of fine arts and eventually become an interior decorator. Nevertheless, he says he will continue to do stunt work on the side.