Professionals net five

By PFC John P. Szaynowski

LZ MARY ANN, (198th Inf. Bde. IO) – Quick, decisive action by the "Professionals" of the 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry, coupled with the element of surprise, recently accounted for the deaths of five NVA soldiers who were ensnared in a hasty surprise set by the 196th Brigade soldiers.

The first platoon of Company B encountered the fire enemy troops in a heavily wooded area while on a search and clear mission southwest of Tam Ky.

"We had just moved across a small rice paddy when I sent out a patrol to look for an easier route of travel," recalled 1st Lieutenant Donald G. Rider of Cooperstown, N.Y.

While on patrol a short distance from the platoon, the 23rd Infantry Division soldiers detected a small trail leading up a finger of a ridge line. Sergeant Richard Whitlock from Detroit, in command of the squad-size patrol, sent the point man, Specialist 4 Santo M. Spinali of Florissant, Mo., to explore the trail.

"I walked up the trail about ten meters," explained SP4 Spinali, "and happened to glance off to the right and noticed the butt of a rifle sticking up in the bushes.

"I called to Sergeant Whitlock and we checked it out. When we were satisfied the rifle was not booby-trapped, we picked it up."

"After SP4 Spinali found the SKS, we dropped our rucksacks and started to make a thorough search of the area," said Sgt. Whitlock.

During the search, the sergeant, who had moved down the side of a nearby knoll, spotted five NVA.

"They were travelling in a gully about 25 meters away," he related. "After I noticed Lt. Rider, we moved back up the knoll to join the rest of our platoon."

In an effort to capitalize on the element of surprise, the lieutenant quickly deployed the platoon in a hasty defensive position on the crest of the knoll overlooking a gully.

As the platoon maneuvered into position, Staff Sergeant Steve R. Sweat of Fayetteville, N.C., platoon sergeant, called in his unit's location to the battalion tactical operations center on LZ Marry Ann and requested artillery and gunship support.

"The NVA were still unaware of our presence," related Lt. Rider; "When we opened up, they didn't know what hit them."

After the initial bursts of fire, the "Professionals" silenced the remaining enemy resistance with a barrage of eight hand grenades.

A short while later, after artillery and gunships had combed suspected enemy positions with preparatory fire, the first platoon linked with the second platoon and madd a sweep of the area.

During the search operation, the "Professionals" uncovered a small enemy storage shelter, which, upon closer scrutiny, yielded a sizable cache.

Time sometimes seems to drag on forever as "arty" men from the 3rd Battalion, 16th Artillery at Tien Phuoc wait for a fire mission. (SP4 Guy Winkler)

A 23rd Infantry Division soldier from Company A, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry moves out during a sweep and clear operation northwest of Tam Ky. (U.S. Army Photo)

SOUTHERN CROSS
AMERICAL DIVISION

Vol. 4, No. 4. Chu Lai, Vietnam January 22, 1971

Division nets 48 enemy

By SP4 David Goodrich

In relatively light action last week, the men of the Americal Division accounted for 48 enemy dead, while capturing a number of others.

IRON MOUNTAIN

While action was very light elsewhere, it was almost normal in the 11th Infantry Brigade area of operations during the week ended. The troopers of Iron Mountain accounted for 21 enemy kills, as well as capturing supplies.

While scanning the foothills west of Quang Ngai City at start of the week, a LOH spotted three enemy soldiers. Two NVA and one VC were killed.

The next day, another LOH from the 123rd Aviation Company spotted and engaged a lone VC over the foothills southwest of Duc Pho. The enemy was killed.

In the same area that day, the "Blues", an aerial rifle platoon of the 123rd Aviation Company were inserted. The platoon engaged and killed two enemy soldiers.

A gunship from the 174th Aviation Co. killed a lone VC over the lowlands west of Duc Pho.

Patroling the foothills southwest of Duc Pho, G Company, 75th Rangers engaged two enemy soldiers, killing both.

A couple of days later, Company C, 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry engaged and killed a VC while in a day laager position. Checking the area, they made contact again, killing another enemy and capturing a rifle.

Elements of F Troop, 8th Cavalry, spotted a VC along a roadside in the lowlands west of Quang Ngai City yeaterday. The gunships engaged the enemy, killing him.

The next day, Company C, 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry engaged a VC in the lowlands south of Duc Pho. He was killed and an automatic weapon was captured.

While patroling the foothills southwest of Duc Pho, elements of Charlie Company, 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry observed and engaged an enemy soldier. He was killed and a pistol was captured.

Later in the same area, the company spotted, engaged and killed another Viet Cong, capturing his AK-47.

Three Viet Cong Chieu Hoi'd and turned themselves into the 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry northeast of Duc Pho. All ralliers complained of inadequate food and a general apathy of Viet Cong goals.

An attempt to set a 250 pound bomb as a booby trap was foiled when troops of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry engaged the enemy at 150 meters, killing him.

A gunship of the 123rd Aviation Company spotted and engaged three Viet Cong, while flying over the foothills west of Quang Ngai City. All three were killed.

Working in the lowlands south of Duc Pho yesterday, Company C of the 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry found five hootches with connecting bunkers, containing a small variety of VC equipment. The infantrymen also unveiled three spider-holes nearby. After a thorough study of the area, the hootch area was destroyed.

Frederick Hill

Teh men of the 196th Infantry Brigade managed to kill 14 enemy soldiers during the week ended.

On patrol at the beginning of the week, Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry uncovered a cache containing 500 pounds of rice. About 200 meters up the trail, they came upon another 500 pounds. All the rice was extracted to LZ Center.

Continued on Page 6

Any suggestions for better Army?

By PFC Fred Abatemarce

CHU LAI, (23rd Inf. Div. IO) – To insure that all possible sources are exploited for ideas on improving service attractiveness in support of the modern volunteer Army, USARV (United States Army Republic of Vietnam) has established a "Modern Volunteer Army Suggestion Program."

Basically, the program provides for actively soliciting and encouraging all military personnel to submit constructive suggestions on how to improve the Army.

Command Sergeant Major Fred E. Darling, 23rd Infantry Division, believes that the new program will reap "constructive and sound suggestions."

"Today's soldier is aware of his situation and now has a way to improve it," commented the Sergeant Major.

This newly established program differs from previous suggestion programs in that it is geared specifically towards the creation of an all volunteer Army.

There are no constraints to the program other than any letter submitted must be signed and contain the writer's return military address; this is needed to permit acknowledgement and response to the writer.

There is no prescribed format, although handwritten letters are encouraged. The letters may be sent through channels or mailed directly to USARV Headquarters at the option of the writer.

Letters sent to USARV should be addressed as follows: Headquarters, USARV, Modern Volunteer Army Program, APO In-Country, 96375.

HELP !

Is the tour of duty in Vietnam being cut from 12 to 10 months?

Answer: There is no official ten month tour at this date. Drops are going through 3 Mar 71 according to Personnel Management section. Any announcement of further drops will be made by USARV should they occur. The 10 month tour rumor possibly started from the fact that you must complete 10 months in Vietnam to get credit for a full tour.

If you have a question for Project Help, dial HELP or write Help, APO SF 96374

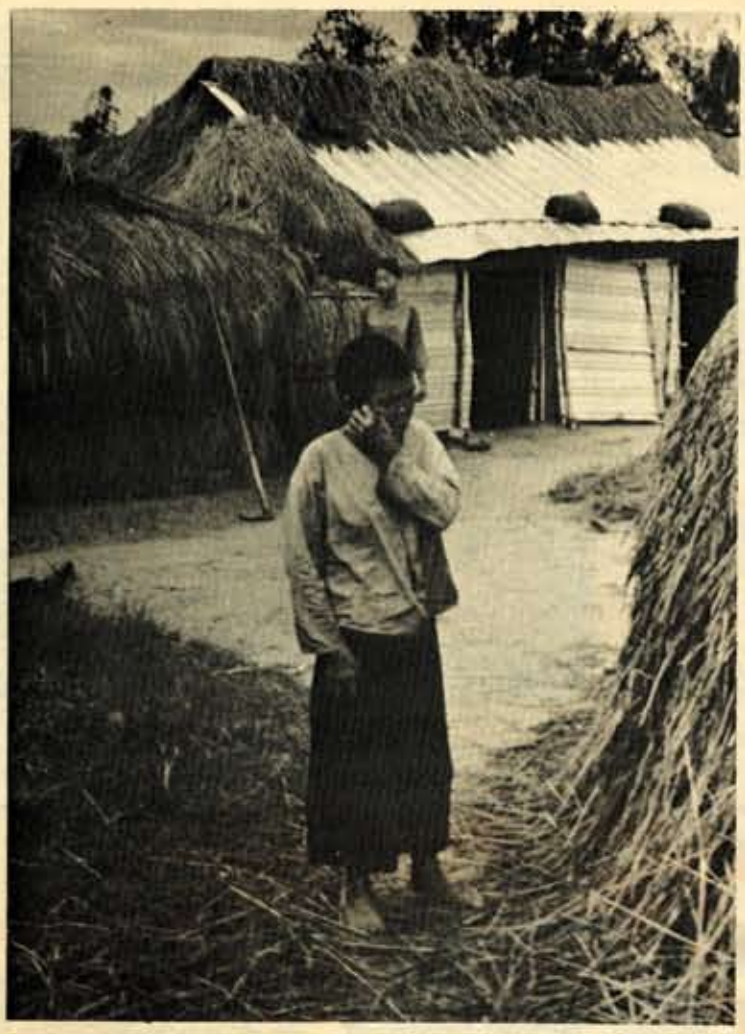
Orphans given Yule treat

By SP4 Lee Habich

CHU LAI, (23rd Inf. Bde. IO) – In the spirit of Christmas, 23rd Infantry Division soldiers distributed over 14,000 toys to Vietnamese orphans throughout the southern First Military Region of South Vietnam.

The Christmas gifts included dolls and hair dressing kits for the girls, as well as toy trucks and jet planes for the boys. In addition to the toys, the G5 Section of Division Headquarters arranged for 26 sewing machines and more than 3,000 yards of cotton cloth to be distributed to orphanages in the division area of operations.

Men in the division voluntarily contributed over $7,000 to purchase the gifts. Among the orphanages receiving gifts were the Truong Doan Duona and Captain Rod Memorial orphanages in the 11th Infantry Brigade, the Camp Ton Quang Thei underprivileged Children's Center in the 196th Brigade and the Binh Son and Phan Chu Trinh orphanages in the 198th Brigade.



A break in the day's activity allows this Quang Ngai Province villager to ponder his next trip to the marketplace. (U.S. Army Photo)

Lt. colonels are saints

By SP4 Don Newton

LZ HAWK HILL, (196th Inf. Bde. 10) – Two brother, both lieutenant colonels in Vietnam, mark up 1970 as another period of togetherness in their Army careers.

With one brother as squadron commander of an armored unit and the second brother as battalion commander of an infantry unit, they were able to combine several of their field maneuvers over bordering areas of operations.

"It requested the 23rd Infantry Division because my brother recommended it to me," said Lt. Col. Charles P. Saint of Teaneck, N.J., commander of 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, of the 196th Infantry Brigade. "He had already served in Vietnam with the Division in '67 and '68. And, of course, luck played a large part in our being stationed so close together.

"We worked closely with each other from mid-July through mid-October of last year," continued Charles Saint, who at 38 is four years older than his brother, Lt. Col. Crosbie E. Saint of West Point, N.Y. "Our combined operations, perhaps five in all, took place around the flatlands west of Tam Ky."

Crosbie Saint recalled that their teamed offensives usually involved either the infantry or the armored unit as a sweeping element while the other unit provided a blocking force.

"In such an operation one of us would normally set up a blocking force at the base of a hill before dawn, and then the other would sweep down on the enemy from above," related the younger brother who served at that time as squadron commander of 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry. (He is currently the 23rd Infantry Division's operations officer in Chu Lai.)

During those three months the armored unit claimed responsibility for an area extending west from the coast of the South China Sea to the borders of the 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry. From there, brother Charles' infantry unit watched over an area which extended further west into the mountains.

One enemy force which suffered from the Saint brothers' coordination was the 70th Local Forces Battalion. "The 70th consisted of about 80 per cent NVA and 20 per cent VC working in our areas of operation," said Lt. Col. Charles Saint. "In about three months the men of the 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry and the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry reduced this enemy unit in half--down to about 90 men."

Both men agree that their mutual trust and understanding helped make their military teamwork more effective.

Mistaken identity seems to be a problem common to both soldiers, although it doesn't seem to bother them.

"The confusion which sometimes results when I phone my brother is enjoyable," mused the elder Saint. "I simply ask for Col. Saint, and when they ask who's calling, I tell them that Col. Saint is calling."

Each man graduated from West Point as did their father. Their mutual array of decorations include a Silver Star, Bronze Stars, Legion of Merit, Army Commendation Medals, Gallantry Cross and several Air Medals.

At the end of his six month extension, Lt. Col. Charles Saint will have served two and one-half years in Vietnam, at which time he plans on reassignment in Washington D.C. where he will join his wife and children.

Little girls don't like shots ,but...

By SP4 Terry Williamson

CHU LAI, (198th Inf. Bde. 10) – Ly Long watched closely as three jeeps, carrying medics from the 23rd Division's 198th Infantry Brigade and Vietnamese civilian health workers, drove into the Dinh Phuong Refugee Camp in Binh Son District. The six-year-old girl had been treated in Medcaps before, but she still had mixed feelings about the upcoming events.

The little girl showed a mark on her leg that had long healed from previous treatment. But she now had a cut on her foot which had become infected.

Her camp had little provisions for treating injuries like that. Also, she had been told that today, in addition to having her foot treated, she would receive a shot for typhoid. Both prospects were not attractive in her mind.

The child wandered over to a long line of people waiting for their innoculations, which were given by the health workers from Binh Son. Ly Long slid to the end of the line and welcomed anyone who wanted to butt in front of her.

But the line shrank and the inevitable finally came, and the little girl's turn had come. She took the needle bravely, turning her head away from the medic to avoid seeing what was happening.

She didn't cry, but she did say that the shot hurt her arm and that she was not looking forward to getting into another line that might end in pain. But then she remembered her infected foot and slowly moved to another line.

This line was longer and everyone in it seemed anxious to get to the front where two American medics were treating assorted ailments. Finally, Specialist 4 Dennis Johnson of Barbarton, Ohio, a medic with the 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry, took Ly Long, set her on his knee, and looked closely at the infection on her foot.

The medic poured a white liquid, which produced a foam, on the child's foot, and the girl thought that the tiny bubbles felt good to her burning skin. The medic then covered the cut with a yellow salve that was cool, and the young girl like the effect of the pretty ointment on her foot.

Ly Long stood on her newly painted foot, and though she could still feel some pain, the salve felt good, and somehow she knew her cut would get better. Specialist Johnson gave her a bright yellow balloon and the little girl's ordeal came to a close with a gleaming smile.

"I like them," she said in Vietnamese, pointing to the medics who were still busy with the long line of patients. "I don't like shots, but I like balloons."

Specialist Johnson began packing up his medical supplies after the medical team had treated almost 400 refugees, and he knew that today, like other days, the team had done alot to help alot of people.

Little Ly Long watched the jeeps pull out, and wanted to answer the medics' good-byes but she could not speak English. Anyway, she knew they would be back soon. And they knew what the smile meant on the face of the little girl with the yellow balloon and the painted foot.

14,000 Get Federal Jobs

WASHINGTON (AFPS) — Some 14,000 Vietnam-era veterans were appointed to Federal civilian jobs from January through June, 1970. The majority were employed through regular Civil Service competitive procedures which provide preference for veterans.

It's a pretty big step from SP4 to captain

By SP4 Lee Habich

CHU LAI, (23rd Inf. Div. 10) – If Specialist 4 Bazile J. Bacino Jr., of Metarie, La., made any New Year's resolutions, refraining from bars was not one of them.

As a matter of fact before the year was two days old Bacino had himself three new bars and a new job as well.

Actually, the Louisiana native is well versed in bars. He passed the Louisiana State Law exams in spring of 1969 and until recently Bacino was working as a legal assistance aide with the Staff Judge Advocate (SJA) Office at 23rd Infantry Division Headquarters in Chu Lai.

In an unusual promotion ceremony Bacino received a direct commission to 1st Lieutenant. An hour and a half later he was promoted to Captain.

"It was short but pleasant," he said, reflecting on his brief career as a 1st lieutenant.

Captain Bascino, currently serving his seventh month in Vietnam, spent his first four and one half months with the 26th Engineering Company as a minesweeper along the Tra Bong Road south of Chu Lai. About mid-November Bacino was transferred to the Staff Judge Advocate's office.

In additon to his promotion Bacino is being reassigned as SJA council with the 173rd Aviation Battalion.

Captain Bacino received both his bachelor of Science and Law Degree at Loyola University in New Orleans. He took basic at Ft. Polk, La., AIT at Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo., and arrived in Vietnam in July.

The new captain intends to request Germany as his next duty assignment upon completion of his tour in Vietnam.

In this open air Vietnamese classroom reading, writing and arithmetic seem to be taught to the tune of the bamboo stick. (U.S. Army Photo by PFC James Dunn)

SOUTHERN CROSS
AMERICAL DIVISION

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

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Operation Reindeer Express: for mail

By PFC Fred Abatemarco

CHU LAI, (23rd Inf. Div. IO) – Operation Reindeer Express officially went into effect at the Army Post Office here on October 1st, and lasted until January 5, to handle Christmas mail.

On December 24th, the operation reached its zenith with over 100,000 pounds of mail arriving within a 24-hour period.

It became the job of the 98 postal workers in the 23rd Infantry Division to break down, sort, transport and deliver the enormous load of letters and parcels to the addressees as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Captain Arthur Gipson of Dayton, Ohio, Division Postal Officer, admitted that he was surprised by the sudden flood of incoming mail.

"We have been averaging around 70,000 pounds per day for the last month. I though we had reached the peak last week, but I see that we hadn't until today."

Faced with a work load that was more than four times the size of a normal day, one would expect the Captain to be worried about the ability of his men to face the challenge before them. But working side by side with his staff, Captain Gipson was the picture of confidence.

"I have no doubt that this mail will be ready for the evening mail call," he stated.

A pyramid of U.S. Mail sacks reaching over ten feet in height threatened to put a wrench in his plans, but the non-stop activity of the men sorting the mail and loading it outgoing vans gave a realistic hope to his expectations.

They work in two shifts which keep the Post Office humming 24-hours-a-day. Because the Post Office depends so heavily on manual labor very few modifications were made for Operation Reindeer Express other than adding more personnel.

"Because of drops and early-outs it has been hard to keep at maximum strength for the Christmas rush," Gipson explained.

The APO has been working with about 22 extra men, but the constant turnover has made this figure variable.

PFC Carl Boles, of Tampa, Fla., came to the APO after spending eight months in a mortar platoon at LZ West.

"I like it better here than in the field, but it is really hard work," commented Boles as he busily sorted parcels into bins for various units of the 23rd.

Another combat veteran who came to take part in Operation Reindeer Express, SP4 Shiku of Kingston, Jamaica, agreed that the tremendous volume of mail was causing a lot of work.

Shiku went on to say that the monotony of the job occasionally breaks when something unexpected happens. he cited the letters from President Nixon which passed through the APO as an example.

Captain Gipson praised all his men as "diligent workers." However, he lamented for the lack of trained personnel.

"The job requires a certain degree of expertise and unfortunately most of these men come to me with no training at all. They eventually learn but the time involved cuts down on our efficiency," he noted.

Private First Class Donald Clark of New Orleans, La., however, is what the Captain described as a "bona fide 71F", army postal clerk, one of the few men working at the APO with previous postal training and experience.

PFC Clark was employed in the Federal Post Office in his home town before joining the Army. He has since worked as a postal clerk at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indianapolis, and also in New York City during the nation-wide postal workers strike of last year.

"I've seen bigger loads before," stated Clark. "But what makes this operation so unique is the importance of getting the mail delivered on time."

PFC Clark was speaking of the efforts everyone was making to get the mail to all the anxiously expectant GIs on or before Christmas.

"The guys know that they have got mail coming and it means so much to them that you don't want to disappoint anyone," Clark added.

Glancing at the sparse remains of the once gargantuan stack of mail, it was obvious that Operation Reindeer Express didn't disappoint anyone.

This shows you how much trouble you guys caused the postal types during Operation Reindeer Express. (U.S. Army Photo by PFC Fred Abatemarco)

Robin Hoods!

LZ BRONCO, (11th Inf. Bde. IO) – Poles, bags and shovels are playing an important part in feeding Vietnamese and denying the enemy food in southern Quang Ngai Province.

Infantrymen and Kit Carson Scouts from the 11th Infantry Brigade's 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry have poked through hundreds of haystacks and hootches, bagging over 217,000 pounds of rice since May.

"One squad uses heavy poles to check out the ground and probe the hedgerows and hootches while another bags and extracts rice," said 1st Lieutenant John P. Iappini, Cambridge, Mass., Company B Commander.

Most of the rice is found in half-buried 55 gallon drums, and in more conspicuous containers with nearly 20 inches of dried potatoes on top, Iappini said.

"With an estimated 2,000 tons harvested each year, the VC have been doing their best to take their share from the people. But, their market operation is being stopped," explained Major Richard F. Wright of Columbus, Ga., battalion operations officer.

"For each 50-pound sack of polished rice, a group of VC will pay about 4,000 piastres, or about $20," he noted. Fortunately, our denial operation has succeeded in almost completely eliminating this illegal traffic."

While the VC have been forced to resort to their meager resources in the mountains, Maj, Wright said that further searching has yielded thousands of pounds of rice from the Spring harvest. "In the past five months," he continued, "almost 50 tons of rice have been reclaimed in the name of the people of Duc Pho District.

In April and May alone, the battalion tallied more than 50 tons of polished and unpolished rice.

Rice redistribution efforts are coordinated with MACV and the Duc Pho district chief. "When word of diminishing food supplies in the hamlets near our firebase reaches the district chief, he contacts us and we pull the necessary amount of rice from our warehouse and truck it out to them," explained 1st Lieutenant Jerry Webster, Winston-Salem, N.C., of the 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry S-5 office.

One cache recently yielded over 5,000 pounds of unpolished rice–enough to feed 1,000 needy people for one week, according to Wester.

The present rice harvest is in full swing; sharp-eyed soldiers are using their poles and listening for the familiar hollow sounds of a buried rice cache. And the people are waiting for their hard-earned rice to be returned.

Engineers build Hau Duc road to serve two pacified villages

CHU LAI, (23rd Inf. Div. IO) – "Each morning at 7:30 we started out by mine sweeping the road, said Staff Sergeant Hughie Smith of Columbus Ga.

So began the work days for the men of Company D, 26th Engineer Battalion as they worked on the road from the combined U.S.-Vietnamese outpost of Tien Phuoc to New Hau Duc 16 kilometers away through the heavily pacified area of the two villages.

Guarded by a security force of local Vietnamese Regional Force and Popular Force, a demolition team led by Staff Sergeant Arthur L. Stokes of Baton Rouge, La., ushered the engineers back each day for continuation of their road project by conducting a minesweep of the road.

Demolition team blew any spots indicated as possible mines, after which a truck was used to pressure test the toad as a final check.

"After the road is clear of mines and booby traps, we start repairing the road by making it wider, putting in culverts where needed," stated Sergeant Smith.

"Working in close cooperation with the Tien Phuoc village chief, the road was built through the village, through 2 kilometers of rice paddies, 12 kilometers of jungle through a steep, narrow pass, and then 2 more kilometers of rice paddies to Hau Duc," outlined First Lieutenant William B. Rynearson of Northfield, Vt.

"The "White Lions" had to supply rock and gravel to build the road a level above the rice paddies.

Metal culverts were put in at certain spots to allow for drainage across the road without washing it out with each rain. In the early stages of the work, "heavy nightly rains would wash out our road before we could put in culverts," lamented Lt. Rynearson.

The engineers cleared the land of heavy foliage for the roadway, and the demolition men had a big job in blasting some hills to enable bulldozing down to a 10% grade consistent with Army road specifications.

The efficient Company D team secured by the local Vietnamese forces turned a footpath into a roadway for supply and local use by the villagers traveling between the two pacified villages.

The crews of a Sheridan Tank and an APC take a break near a Buddist temple during a halt in a recent operation conduted by Troop A, 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry in Quang Tin Province. (U.S. Army Photo)

Infantrymen play with 'rubber ducky'

By SP4 Guy Winkler

CHU LAI, (23rd Inf. Div. IO) – You might think that an infantry company that plays with "rubber ducks" has been in the field too long, but when Bravo Company from the 23rd Infantry Division's 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry, plays with "rubber ducks" while on maneuvers...watch out Charlie.

On a mission about 14 miles west of Chu Lai recently, the 198th Infantry Brigade company discovered that they were on the wrong side of the Song Ba Ky River in order to search out an enemy force which was observed on the opposite side.

After the order was given to cross the swiftly flowing river, six men from Echo Company, 26th Engineers were flown by helicopter to the location with two inflatable rafts to transport the men across the yards of water. "This will be the first river crossing by raft that the battalion had ever done while in Vietnam," said Captain Roger Templar of Honeoye Falls, N.Y., commanding officer of Bravo Company.

Artillery fire from the 1st Battalion, 14th Artillery at Landing Zone Ky Tra was requested by the company to scare up enemy elements which might have been waiting in the brush of the other side.

After artillery peppered the east side of the river, Bravo Company moved the rafts to the river and began to inflate them for the "swing line" crossing.

Bad luck popped up as the rafts were being inflated for the crossing.

The first raft had two holes in it and was discarded. The "spare" one was inflated, but it too had several holes.

The necessary patch-work was performed on the spare raft as infantrymen and engineers pitched in to glue patches on the holes. The raft was too wet for gluing patches, so wooden pegs were inserted in the holes and covered with glue. It was ready for launching.

After tying one end of a rope to a tree, an attempt was made by Specialist 4 Daryl Hart of San Jose, Calif., to swim the other end to the opposite side and tie it to a tree in order to guide the raft across without being washed down stream.

The current of the 15-foot deep river caught Hart and swept him down stram, clinging to the life preserver tied to the end of the rope.

Hart was pulled ashore as Private First Class Walter Colon of New York City stripped down to make the long swim against the pulling current. He made it in about two minutes and tied the rope to a tree.

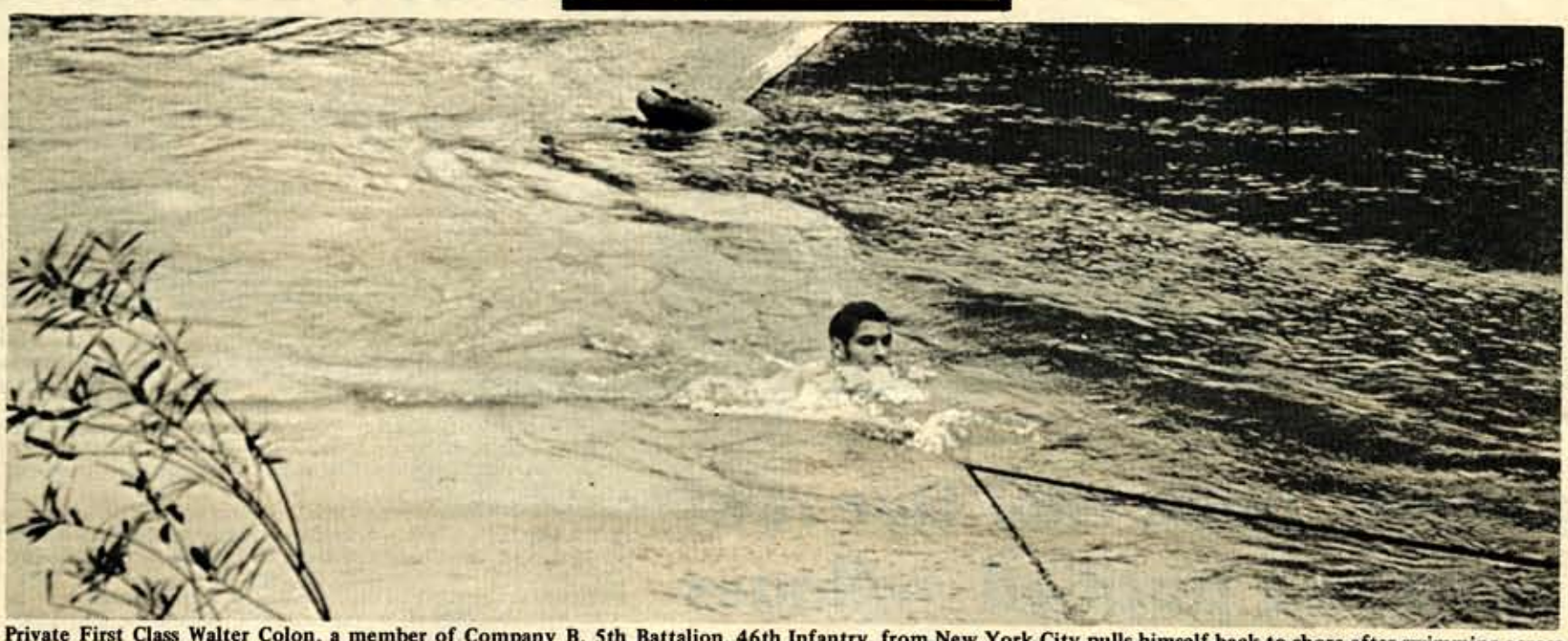
The "rubber ducky," as christened by the company, was lowered into the water for its historic crossing of the Song Ba Ky River.

Using one raft, ten trips were required to transport the company across the river.

Asked why a helicopter wasn't used to lift the men across the river to save more time, Cpt. Templar said, "Time wasn't the deciding factor in this mission. It was just to get the men across. Besides," he said, "It would have tied up a helicopter which is needed elsewhere."

The "rubber ducky" served its purpose as Company B scored a first for the 5th Battalion to cross a river without getting wet, except for Specialist Hart and PFC Colon.

Story and photos by SP4 Guy Winkler



Private First Class Walter Colon, a member of Company B, 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry, from New York City pulls himself back to shore after swimming across the Song Ba Ky River 14 miles west of Chu Lai.

The rubber raft gets loaded in preparation for its mission fulfillment.

The launching of the "rubber ducky" is a success as she is swing-lined across the Song Ba Ky River with Company B.

Captain Roger Templar patches up the "rubber ducky" after a hole is discovered in it.

Soldiers from Company B begin to inflate the makeshift craft for their first try.

The engineers pull the ducky to shore with soldiers of the company after crossing the river.

The rubber ducky holds up well transporting part of the company across the river. Who says the bush can't be fun?

Holiday cease fires Limit week's battle action

Continued from Page 1

Charlie Co. 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry killed a lone VC yesterday, spotted near a tree line, in an area north of Tam Ky.

That evening, Company A, 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry heard movement about 15 meters from their night defensive position, southwest of Tam Ky. They covered the area with M-16 fire, resulting in two NVA kills.

While on patrol southwest of Tam Ky, Delta Company, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry engaged five NVA with small arms fire. Two of the five were killed, and five packs were captured.

Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, while in their night defensive position killed an NVA, capturing an AK-47 and a pack, containing clothing and medical supplies.

A couple of days later, a lone VC was killed by men of Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry as he wandered into their day defensive position, south of Tam Ky.

While making a sweep of a structured area west of Tam Ky, Company A, 3rd Battalion 21st Infantry observed two VC to their front. They engaged with M-16 fire, killing one. Continuing the sweep, the discovered three graves containing VC killed by mortar fire. The kills were credited to a recom element of the battalion.

While on a visual recon mission yesterday, a gunship from F Troop, 8th Cavalry observed seven NVA soldiers. One was killed, as the others managed to evade.

GENEVA PARK

The Christmas cease-fire period brought light action this week as Operation Geneva Park accounted for seven enemy killed, four enemy captured, and two detained. The "Brave and Bold" of the 198th Infantry Brigade also captured several enemy weapons and found a rice cache.

Two enemy were killed by the "Professionals" of the 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry while conducting an eagle flight mission northwest of Chu Lai. Company A was inserted into a heavily vegetated area and, observed two enemy soldiers. The enemy were killed.

Combat was also light for the 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry as the "Ready Rifles" killed two enemy, wounded and captured one and found a deserted enemy basecamp.

Late in the week, Delta Company, working northwest of Tra Bong, engaged two evading enemy and killed oen while capturing two packs. In the same general area, the company found an enemy basecamp composed of 20 structures and bunkers. Inside the structures were numerous articles of clothing and cooking utensils, 18 Chicom grenades, and other supplies.

Charlie Company of the "Ready Rifles" accounted for the other battalion kill while working south of Chu Lai, during a brief firefight. The company wounded and captured an enemy soldier of an eagle flight mission.

The "Regulars" of the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry killed one enemy and detained three during the week. Several weapons and a rice cache were also confiscated.

Dashing towards the Medevac chopper from the Americal Division, these ARVN soldiers carry a wounded comrade to be flown back to Chu Lai for hospitalization.

Rallier pays off

By SGT Louis Miller

LZ DOTTIE, (198th Inf. Bde. IO) – Infantrymen from the 23rd Division's 198th Infantry Brigade recently learned that the Government's "Chieu Hoi" program helps decrease enemy forces in two ways.

The most obvious way was evidenced when a rallier turned himself over to H Troop, 17th Cavalry, thus giving the Allies in the area one less guerilla to fight.

But the big payoff came when the rallier volunteered to lead another Brigade unit to a Viet Cong resting spot and helped decrease the VC population by two more.

After turning himself in to H Troop, the rallier was extracted to a nearby firebase where he expressed interest in leading a U.S. patrol to a spot the felt several Viet Cong would be sleeping that night, The offer was taken and the rallier was taken to the field position of Echo Recon, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry.

"We didn't know what to expect from him at first," said 1st Lieutenant Thomas W. Tardy of Winona, Miss., the platoon leader. "He told us he wanted to walk point even though he knew we wouldn't give him a weapon."

The Recon platoon moved towards a new laager position and waited for dark to begin their search for the VC resting spot. During the wait, the rallier pointed out possible booby-trapped areas on a map.

When it got dark enough, the unit moved out, with the rallier moving at the head of the column.

"As he walked, he checked every hedgerow for booby traps," said Lieutenant Tardy. "Finally, after about a thousand meters, he halted and motioned towards a spot next to a wooded area."

Through the interpreter, the rallier told the lieutenant that this was the enemy resting point.

"I had my men drop their packs and move on line," said Tardy. "We had been there only a few minutes when we spotted about three enemy soldiers crossing a rice paddy to our front and moving directly towards us."

The enemy soldiers walked right up to the infantrymen's positions and, thinking the members of Recon. were other Viet Cong, began to speak to them. A split second later, the enemy realized they were talking to the wrong people.

The infantrymen opened up and killed two in the brief firefight. Captured were one AK-50 rifle, an automatic rifle, and eight Chicom hand grenades.

"I'd like to work with that rallier again," said the lieutenant. "He really knew what he was doing."

Intuition leads troops to NVA camp

By SP4 Zin Balaban

Hawk Hill, (196th Inf. Bde. IO) – Soldiers of the 23rd Infantry Division's 196th Infantry Brigade recently demonstrated how to intuitively find an enemy location and netted themselves two enemy kills and confiscated equipment as a result.

The 2nd platoon of Company D, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry spotted a ville half hidden by a clump of banana trees while heading toward their night defensive perimeter. At first glance it looked like any of the other villes passed through that day by the platoon.

"However, it looked suspicious to us," said 1st Lieutenant James R. Rhodes, the platoon leader from Sheridan, Wyo. "It was definitely too quiet."

A closer inspection revealed there were no inhabitants in the hootches.

"The silence and emptiness of the ville prompted us to investigate closer," continued the lieutenant.

Suddenly, they heard movement along the trail which entered the village from a different direction. They hid in bushes, silently awaiting the enemy. After a few moments, five NVA soldiers and one nurse, each carrying a pack and weapon, came into view. When they stopped, the 2nd platoon opened up with a barrage of small arms fire.

Sergeant Stephen R. Haynes, second squad leader from Fairfield, Ohio, was first to enter the ville afterwards.

"What immediately struck my eye were the scattered pools of blood," related Sgt. Haynes. "Then I spotted an AK-47 partially hidden by some brush."

Next, the 23rd Division infantrymen swept through the area of contact which revealed two dead NVA and an AK-47 rifle. Also captured in action were packs filled with rice, salt, and other foodstuffs plus various medical supplies.

Beer in Some Mess Halls

Army Directs Sweeping Changes To Make Life 'More Attractive'

WASHINGTON (AFPS) — Beer of the Day may soon rank with Soup of the Day on some Army mess hall menus.

Chief of Staff General William C. Westmoreland has given approval for 3.2 beer to be served at evening meals in non-combat areas at the discretion of unit commanders.

The order to relax restrictions on beer, which also authorizes beer vending machines in barracks, was issued at an Army Commanders Conference in Washington, D.C. The policy change was part of a number of actions taken by Gen. Westmoreland to make service life more attractive and to remove "unnecessary irritants."

Other actions included:

- Eliminating passes and sign-in and sign-out requirements;
- Calling a halt to bed checks, except for individuals undergoing punishment; and
- Dropping locally-imposed restrictions on distances individuals may travel while on pass.

Gen. Westmoreland, who earlier said unnecessary troop formations are "detrimental to morale," formally labeled reveille as unnecessary except for ceremonial, training, or other special occasions.

The chief of staff ordered commanders to reduce waiting time and to speed up handling of personnel actions. At the installation level, he said, an interim response to any personnel questions should be given within 24 hours.

Eliminate evil enemy, taxman unemployed

By SP4 Zin Balaban

HAWK HILL, (196th Inf. Bde. IO) – According to a well-known expression, there are only two things in this world a man had to do; and those are to die and pay taxes. Now, thanks to men of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, of the 196th Infantry Brigade, villagers of an area northwest of Tam Ky won't have to worry about the "pay taxes" part for a while.

It all started when 23rd Infantry Division soldiers of Company C's 1st Platoon were heading towards their night defensive perimeter. The point man, Private First Class Daniel Malter of Cleveland was first to enter the ville.

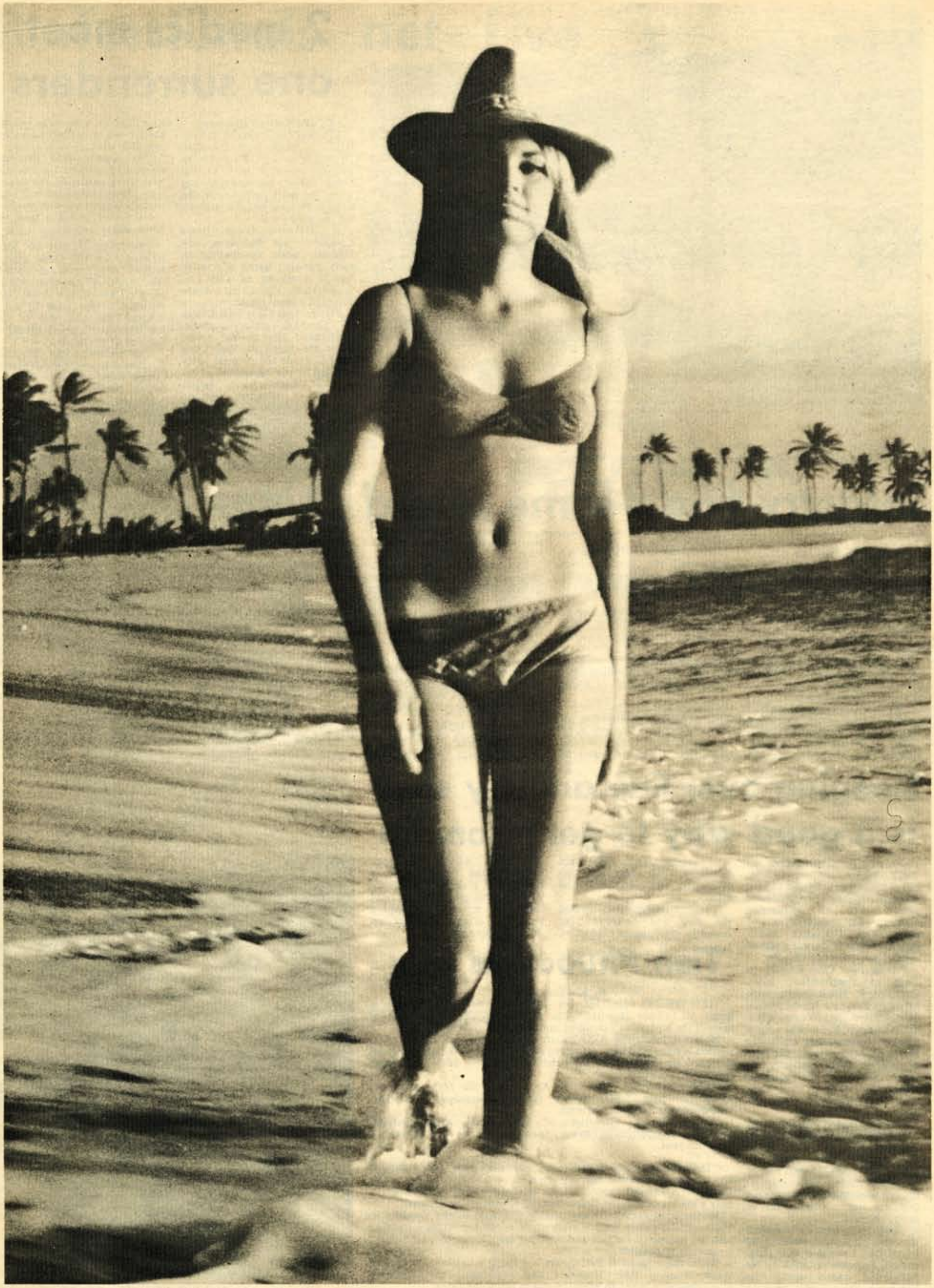
"I started to circle around the back of this hootch, when I saw a papa-san trying to run away ," said PFC Malter. "I grabbed him just as he was about to enter a tunnel."

The papa-san was carrying a small black notebook and approximately 20,000 piastres. Also, found in the area were four NVA ponchos, an aid bag and an NVA rucksack filled with rice.

Not having an interpreter on hand, the platoon took the suspected Viet Cong to their night defensive perimeter in order to obtain more information.

A radio summons to Company E's reconnaissance element, who had night laagered not far from 1st Platoon, brought forth a few men with their Kit Carson scout to question the detainee.

Glancing through the notebook, the Kit Carson Scout immediately announced that the man was the local Viet Cong tax collector and that the notebook contained a list of people from whom he planned to collect taxes. The Viet Cong was subsequently extracted to Landing Zone Baldy, a firebase west of Tam Ky.



I don't know how you feel about it, but as far as we're concerned, pretty Susan Barker can walk along our beach anytime she wants to!

A helicopter from the 23rd Infantry Division lifts off after dropping supplies to a company of infantrymen in the field. (U.S. Army Photo by PFC James Dunn)

2 medics meet, one surrenders

By SP4 Terry Williamson

LZ DOTTIE, (198th Inf. Bde. IO) – A medic from the 23rd Division's 198th Infantry Brigade recently met a Viet Cong medic face-to-face, and when the meeting was over, the enemy decided he was working for the wrong side.

A platoon from Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry while conducting an early morning search of a small hamlet southeast of Chu Lai, found three Viet Cong soldiers sitting in a small house.

Private First Class John Cvitak of Omaha, platoon medic, intercepted the enemy medic when the surprised Viet Cong tried to evade the surprise party planned by the "Regulars".

First Lieutenant James O'Brien of Houston, platoon leader, set up a semi-circle blocking force in front of the small hamlet. He then sent a searching party to check out a row of houses. PFC Cvitak stationed himself behind a small structure on the edge of the hamlet where a trail led to the row of houses.

"We walked into the first house and noticed three armed Viet Cong sitting on the floor," said Lieutenant O'Brien. "They began firing at us and we took cover a short distance from the house and returned fire."

The firing did not last long, however, as the three enemy soldiers tried to escape before the "Regulars" could close in on them. Two of the Viet Cong managed to get away by going through the rear side of the hamlet, using a small tunnel in the rear of the house.

The enemy medic also used the escape tunnel, but his chosen escape route proved to be the wrong choice. He ran up the small trail which led to his unannounced meeting with his counterpart.

PFC Cvitak saw the Viet Cong running down the trail with a bag containing the wares of his work. PFC Cvitak hid behind the small structure and waited for the unsuspected meeting.

The Viet Cong came pounding by the small structure and medic to medic, the two came crashing to the ground as PFC Cvitak lunged on the enemy from his hiding place.

"I just grabbed him when he came running by," said PFC Cvitak. "I saw him coming, and I was ready for him when he came down the trail."

Lieutenant O'Brien and Sergeant Aubry C. Cooper of Auburndale, Fla., who had chased the Viet Cong up the trail, added to the consternation of the captured medic, and he politely removed a pistol belt containing five Chicom hand grenades and handed them to PFC Cvitak.

Infantry find some weird things

By SP4 Terry Williamson

KY TRA, (198th Inf. Bde. IO) – Infantrymen from the division's 198th Infantry Brigade recently discovered two unusual finds northwest of Chu Lai. The first find probably destroyed a highly turned-on party of the NVA, and the second completely baffled the infantrymen.

While conducting concentrated patrols in an area unfamiliar to them, infantrymen from Charlie Company, 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry, found more than 40 pounds of marijuana hidden in a large tunnel.

The marijuana had been stacked in brick fashion and was ready to use. The same day, the "Professionals" found an old abandoned bus sitting in a thickly vegetated area with no apparent signs of access roads or trails in the area.

"We have found small amounts of marijuana before, but never so much at one time," said Specialist 4 Mickey Stillsmeyer of Minneapolis. "But that bus–we're still trying to figure that one out."

The "Professionals" found the marijuana stacked in neat rows and bundles, each about the size of a house brick. The patrol destroyed the marijuana, and each member of the unit took his turn making jokes about how they had ruined a party for the NVA.

The bus appeared to have been abandoned years ago, and was stripped of all essential moving parts. But the most disturbing question remained, how did it get there?

"There were no roads anywhere in sight, and as far as I could see, there were no trails around," said Specialist Stillsmeyer. "I know the bus probably dates back to when the French were here, and there could have been a road a long time ago, but there is no sign of one now."

Everyone had an opinion about the relic, ranging from an NVA helicopter carrying it in to just a plain reckless driver in the past, but none of the opinions really made much sense.

Someone even suggested that someone had driven the bus there after smoking some of the marijuana, but that theory was dismissed too.

"We didn't bother the bus in any way," said the specialist. "We wanted to leave it just like it was so when someone else comes through the area, they'll get the same puzzled fooling we had."

Sleeping over live artillery shell is a good way to get insomnia

By SP4 Terry Williamson

KY TRA, (198th Inf. Bde. IO) – What was intended to be a peaceful night's sleep almost urned into an explosive nightmare for an infantryman of the 23rd Division's 198th Infantry Brigade during a recent mission northwest of Chu Lai.

Private First Class Edward A. Toss of Binghamton, N.Y., Company B, 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry had tied his hammock between two trees to catch a few hours of sleep, but he had a little trouble sleeping that night. He may have been psychic–the next morning a fellow infantryman rudely woke up PFC Ross to inform him that he had slept over a live artillery round all night.

"We had moved into our night defensive position after dark, and it was raining. I checked the area out, but I just must have missed the round. I didn't sleep too well during the night, as though something was telling me this was not a good place to sleep," he said.

The infantryman had searched the area the night before and found two trees that were close enough together to hitch up his hammock. After tying the hammock around the trees he made a rain shelter from his poncho to escape the pounding rain.

"I really leaped from that hammock the next morning when they told me about it," he said.

The "Professionals" cleared the area and destroyed the round in place, using explosives.

Private Ross's hammock supports, the trees, failed to survive the blast which literally tore the trees apart. But the next night, the infantrymen slept a lot better, after a careful search of his sleeping area.

Tien Phuoc has arty

By SP4 Guy Winkler

TIEN PHUOC, (23rd Inf. Div. IO) – Ears ring from thundering blasts of 155mm Howitzers, the acrid smell of burning powder invades the nostrils as a cloud of smoke engulfs the battery.

Moments later, the RTO shouts, "All rounds on target". The mission is successful as a platoon of enemy soldiers six miles away lie victims from artillery fire from the 3rd Battalion, 16th Artillery at the fire support base here.

Since arriving in Vietnam in April 1967, the 3/16 ARty has annihilated over 2,000 enemy soldiers, wounded 1,000 and destroyed over 18,000 structures.

Captain James Kilpatrick of Pine Bluff, Ark., Battery Commander, says that his battery is responsible for over 200 enemy dead this year.

"The enemy's location is detected either by radar, actual sight or Hoi Chanh information that is given after the one-time enemy rallies to the FVN," said the captain. Once this information is gathered, it's only a matter of minutes before "smoke is brought on Charlie."

Monsoon rains are uncomfortable for any soldier fighting in Vietnam. Knee deep mud is everywhere as the constantly pounding rain has no mercy for wet and shivering men. Helicopter air support is virtually impossible.

When the men of B Battery are not firing a mission, the time is spent cleaning their Howitzer and performing the necessary maintenance required to keep the gun in firing condition.

There are times between missions, however, when waiting seems to never end as time drags on for hours and sometimes days before the call is received for artillery support.

A soldier from the 23rd Infantry Division sets his sights of an M-79 grenade launcher toward a suspected enemy position. (U.S. Army photo by PFC James Dunn)