A nightmare with the Viet Cong ends

By SGT Terry Williamson

A small Vietnamese boy was recently relieved of the tensions and terror of living under Viet Cong control, and in the process, made an everlasting friendship with an infantryman from the 198th Infantry Brigade.

Company D, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry, acting on intelligence reports of possible enemy activity in a small hamlet southwest of Chu Lai, conducted a night raid on the hamlet that accounted for ten Viet Cong killed and the freedom of a small boy.

During the night attack, the small boy stole an AK-47 rifle from his captors and hid it in a rice storage room at the rear of his house. The child then hid in a bunker in his home until the fighting was over.

After the firefight, in which the "Ready Rifles" killed ten VC, the boy approached Specialist 4 Ronald Jones of Tyler, Tex. Jones saw that the boy was tired and weak and offered him some C-rations. The youngster eagerly devoured the contents of the can, and then began pulling at the arm of his newly-found friend.

"I was guarding some of the detainees we had received during the fight while the child was eating some of the food I had given him," said Specialist Jones. "I didn't know what he wanted, but I knew he wanted to show me something, so I went along with him."

The boy went into his home, entered the storage room, and urged his friend to follow. Specialist Jones admitted he was uncertain about entering the house alone after the contact his unit had just had.

"I told him to come back, but I could hear him rumbling around in the back of the house," said Jones. "When he came out, I got quite a surprise."

The boy returned holding out an AK-47 rifle for his American friend. The specialist took the weapon and tried to find out more about how the child got it. It was then that the weeks of terror were unveiled by the boy.

The boy's parents had left him at their home while they made a trip to Quang Ngai City. The Viet Cong soon entered the village and began living in his house by night and forcing the child to carry rice for them.

"We learned that the boy was forced to do all kinds of tasks for the Viet Cong," said Specialist Jones. "He said that he had tried to steal a weapon many times, but was unsuccessful until that night."

The boy was sent to Chu Lai for further questioning and was to be reunited with his family. He was eager to get his first helicopter ride.

"I'll always remember that kid," said Jones. "He was so tired and scared. "His ordeal must have been a real nightmare."

Specialist 4 Robert Smith of Lindon, Kan., a member of Charle Company, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry crouches cautiously with his M-60 machinegun during a recent operation of the 196th Infantry Brigade. (U.S. Army Photo by PFC Stephen Belfeld)

SOUTHERN CROSS
AMERICAL DIVISION

Vol. 4, No. 8 | Chu Lai, Vietnam | February 19, 1971

More than just a holiday

By SP4 Greg Wright

FSB BRONCO (11th Inf. Bde. IO) – As the Year of the Pig begins, many Americans in Vietnam see the Tet Lunar New Year Holiday only as a time of waiting for enemy activity or as a period of inconvenience with dirty clothes and no hootch maids.

Tet is something more, however. For the Vietnamese it is a tradition of great significance, marking transition from one year to the next in the 12-year lunar cycle. It is a time of celebration for both the close of the old year and the beginning of the new. It is a time of great hope and expectation and preparation for the coming year and traditionally a period of general harmony when good behavior is essential.

The Tet holiday as it is celebrated today officially lasts for three days. The first day is devoted entirely to ancestor worship. During this time homage is paid to the ancients from whom this life was inherited.

The second day calls for visiting and paying respects to elders, friends, and relatives still living. Visitors on this day are given a warm welcome and hospitality is lavish. According to tradition the first visitor of the day will indicate whether the new year will be good or bad. If this person is happy there will be prosperity and happiness until next Tet. If, however, he is not well-treated and is not satisfied the coming year will be bad.

The third day of Tet is reserved for mourning those who died recently. Friends and relatives who died during the past year are honered with prayers and wishes for well being in another world.

Although not officially a part of Tet, a fourth day is usually added to the holiday. On this day servants and employees are given a monetary bonus and allowed to take a day or rest. No work or house cleaning is accomplished during this time, for it is understood that these affairs must be put in order before Tet begins.

In preparation for these days of celebration all debts should be paid so the new year may begin without obligation. It is necessary that new clothing be worn to start the new year, and if possible old money should be exchanged for new. It is best to display generosity before and during the holiday. Fireworks are used to drive away evil spirits, and mirrors are fixed to doors to keep these spirits from entering.

Thus, Tet is a combination of celebration, mourning, hope, and preparation. For the Vietnamese it is a fresh start and a chance to right old wrongs and correct past errors.

Perfect plan accounts for 6

By SGT Terry Williamson

LZ STINSON (198th Inf. Bde. IO) – The plan was perfect– so perfect that not even the enemy's unexpected behavior could disrupt it– and six Viet Cong were killed in a recent night raid by an element of the 198th Infantry Brigade.

A platoon from Company A, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry conducted the after-dark raid on a small hamlet south of Chu Lai which was reported to be harboring enemy soldiers at night. The "Ready Rifles" had taken elaborate precautions in their planning to insure nothing would go wrong with the operation. At first, the raid went exactly as planned and everyone was in his position waiting for illumination to be processed from a nearby firebase, but then the eenemy became little impatient.

"We had already set up a cordon around the village and were just waiting for the illumination rounds," said Specialist 4 Robert Doctor of New York City, a rifleman. "But then I saw two Viet Cong come out of a structure in front of me. They saw me, so it was too late to wait any longer."

The enemy soldiers were not prepared to wait any longer for the illumination either. One of them ran around to the back of the building, apparently to warn the other Viet Cong in the area. The other enemy grabbed a weapon hidden near a tree.

Specialist 4 Ruben Scott of Woodbine, Ga., and Specialist 4 Ben Nicholson of Hattieville, Ark., began firing into the enemy position. The Viet Cong had time only to fire a few rounds.

The "Ready Rifles" took a closer look and found that they had killed the enemy and captured an AK-47 rifle. Specialist Nicholson also found that two other Viet Cong had been killed in the brief firefight.

"Two of the enemy we had killed had tried to take cover behind a tree, and I didn't even see them when we began firing," Specialist Scott said. "It's a good thing we got them, because they could have caused us a lot of trouble in the dark."

A hand grenade was found near the two Viet Cong, and the "Ready Rifles" began a more thorough search. By then, the illumination rounds were filling the sky with light.

"We knew there were more VC in the hamlet because I had seen one run around the side of the building when the firing started, said Specialist Doctor. "We were very careful as we moved through."

Private First Class Phillip Holtzclaw of Washington, D.C., part of the tight cordon around the hamlet, spotted three enemy soldiers attempting to evade across a rice paddy to a woodline. The private fired into the area and the "Ready Rifles" began pouring machinegun and rifle fire in support.

The cordon element then swept the rice paddy and found all three VC had been killed. An enemy pistol and three hand grenades were also found. Meanwhile, a full field pack was found by the search element in the small hamlet.

"It would have been better if the Viet Cong had waited until we had gotten the illumination we wanted," said Doctor. "But I think we did pretty well under the circumstances. We got what we came after."

Division Recap

Light action nets 53

By SP4 Steven Elschlager

CHU LAI (23rd Inf. Div. IO) – Action in the 23rd Infantry Division area of operation was light last week with 53 enemy kills, several caches uncovered and over 60 enemy structures destroyed.

GENEVA PARK

Gunships and infantrymen from the 23rd Division's 198th Infantry Brigade combined to kill 30 enemy soldiers during the week, including a major action in which 15 Viet Cong were killed southeast of Chu Lai.

An aero rifle platoon from Delta Troop, 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry, killed 15 Viet Cong in the major action of the week. The aero platoon combat assualted into an area southeast of Chu Lai, and engaged a large number of enemy soldiers. The "Blues" killed 15 Viet Cong and wounded two in the extended action. Also captured in the action were four AK-47 rifles, a carbine rifle, a 9mm pistol, nine hand grenades, seven full AK-47 magazines and nine enemy packs. The wounded enemy soldiers were extracted to a Chu Lai hospital, and the captured equipment was also extracted to Chu Lai.

Infantrymen from the 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry, with

(Continued on Page 6)

Crime doesn't pay

Specialist 5 Lethell May of Company B, 23rd Supply and Transport Battalion, was convicted by general court-martial on January 25, 1971 for murder and assault with intent to commit murder. His punishment was dishonorable discharge, forfeiture of all pay and allowances, confinement at hard labor for 35 years and reduction to the lowest enlisted grade.

HELLO... PROJECT HELP?

Project Help, Question of the Week

Question: Is there going to be a massage parlor in Chu Lai?

Answer: Yes. February 10th is the target date and it will be located close to Division Support Command Headquarters. The cost is to be announced by the management later.

11th Brigade mess hall is number one

By 1Lt. John W. Peterson

FSB BRONCO, (11th Inf. Bde. IO) -- Even though there are no crepe suzettes, no wonder worked with rations, an 11th Infantry Brigade mess hall just tied for first place as the best combat mess in Vietnam. The mess hall has one very special ingredient in every meal--a personal touch.

Headquarters Company mess hall of the 11th Brigade's, 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry moved up to the top Vietnam-wide recognition after first topping four other messes in XXIV Corps.

A three man inspection team from USARV Food Service recently spent the afternoon of the 12th of January at the 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry meticulously observing each step in the preparation of the dinner and supper meals. At the conclusion of their inspection the inspectors rated the Old Guard Mess Hall with 80 ¼ points out of a possible 100, putting them in a tie for the best mess hall in Vietnam.

Now comes the evaluative eyes of USARPAC (U.S. Army Pacific) inspectors and opportunity to receive the Best Combat Mess Hall award of the worldwide Phillip P. Connelly Competition for Excellence in Army Food Service.

Headquarters Mess personnel did not do a lot of extra work to prepare for inspectors because of a collective philosophy of keeping everything clean and providing a holiday meal everyday.

The personal touch can be seen in every serving and food tray. There are mashed potatoes dashed with neatly sliced lemons, an attractive food line decorated daily with bright red, green and yellow roses made from mashed potatoes dipped in food coloring; and a garnish just on the foods and salads.

Staff Sergeant Miguel Munoz of San Jose, Calif., mess sergeant, is practical with the attractive manner in which the food is served. Asparagus spears, for instance, are laid dress-right-dress in the serving pan so full portions are served and the spears fo not become mushy from a serving spoon.

Surprising to many who are used to one type of salad per meal, five different salads are available at the noon and evening meal. And it is all done within the normal ration request.

"We don't cook for the mess sergeant or ourselves," offered PFC Roger Carr of Dover, N.H. "We cook chow for the majority...and plenty of it."

Munoz emphasizes "troop acceptability" everyday and makes a few innovations in meals to please those who eat in the mess. "We don't put slices of pork or beef on the serving line, but instead slice the whole roast on line as the men come through so each sees what kind of cut he's getting," he said.

Split preparations are not unusual. Steak, for example, is served the way a man likes it. Some may ask for their steak to be cooked with onions; Munoz sets up a separate grill near the serving line to make it possible.

Behind the atractive serving line are the other keys to a winning mess hall, and a sign hung over the preparation tables states it best: "Clean as you go." Soup and gravy ladles, serving forks and spoons shine on display.

The large field ranges look readied for a CMMI (Command Maintenance Management Inspection) and cooking cabinets are scoured twice a day. All pots, pans racks and tables are scrubbed after every meal, and the refrigerators are emptied and cleaned daily.

"The people here volunteer to do a lot more than their own job," said Munoz, and he pointed to a man building cabinets in the back room. "He's our ration truck driver," Munoz commented, "but today he volunteered to build shelves for us after he finished his own duties."

As perishables arrive at the mess hall they are dated so fruit and vegetables are rotated properly.

The leadership of Munoz and his shift leaders has played an important role in recognition as the number one mess hall. Munoz believes in cross training and giving his men the knowledge to do their job.

First Cook SP4 Lenore King of Cleveland explained, "The NCOs are a great boost. Everyone wants to work and believes we can be the best." King plans to attend an Army cooking school after he returns to the States.

"Win or lose," said Munoz, "we still have a lot of self-satisfaction from doing what we're doing."

Youngsters from a near-by Vietnamese village watch a wave of the South China Sea as it rushes toward their feet. (U.S. Army Photo by SP5 William Hayes)

It's the Americal March

By MSG William Turner

It may not make the top ten in popularity, but for the lonely and tired soldier, its music for the soul, music to work by or as the late Ernest Hemmingway said; "I sing this song when I need music inside myself to go on."

The Americal March as we know it is in actuality the "Dogface Soldier," the official song of the 3rd Infantry Division in Germany, and the unofficial song of all infantrymen.

Written by two infantrymen; Ken hart, a former newspaperman and Bert Gold, a former sign painter, the "catchy" tune has found its way to Vietnam and into the hearts of infantrymen in the Americal.

For those of you not up to date on the lyrics, they are printed below for you to sing along with the band as they give you music for the soul:

I wouldn't give a bean
to be a fancy pants Marine;

I'd rather be a Dog Face Soldier like I am.
I wouldn't trade my old OD's
For all the Navy dungarees.

For I am the walking pride of Uncle Sam.
On all the posters that I read it say's
The Army builds men.

But they're tearing me down to build me over again.
I'm just a Dog Face Soldier
with a rifle on my shoulder
And I eat raw meat fo. breakfast everyday,
So feed me ammunition; Keep me in my old division
For your Dog Face Soldier Boy is Okay, Okay,
Your Dog Face Soldier Boy's okay.

West Point ho!

By SP4 Steven Elschlager

CHU LAI, (23rd Inf. Div. IO) – The United States Military Academy Preparatory School (USMAPS) at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, is now accepting applications for the 1971-72 academic year, beginning in August 1971.

Enlisted candidates are prepared by the preparatory school for Regular Army and Enlisted Reserve appointments to West Point. One hundred ninety six of 241 enlisted graduates from the last class gained admittance to the U.S. Military Academy. Enrollment for next year will be approximately 300.

Soldiers selected for USMAPS attend the prep school in an active duty status. The course lasts approximately 10 months with primary academic emphasis being in the English and Mathematics areas. Leadership development also is stressed.

This program offers a splendid opportunity for qualified enlisted personnel. Applications should reach USMAPS before 30 June 1971. Additional information may be obtained by consulting AR 351-12 or by writing the Commandant, USMA Preparatory School, Fort Belvoir, Virginia 22060.

Reenlistment 'trouble shooter' can help

By MSG William Turner

CHU LAI, (23rd Inf. Div. IO) – They call him the "trouble shooter" of the 23rd Infantry Division Reenlistment Office and for Sergeant First Class James E. Owen, Division Career Counselor, the title fits like a glove.

As operations sergeant, his duties are varied, screening records, interviewing and inspecting, but his primary job is to see that the paper work for personnel reenlisting is ready and financial matters coordinated for prompt bonus payment on the day of reenlistment.

Sergeant Owen started his reenlistment and career counseling as an extra duty while assigned to an artillery unit. This first exposure made a lasting impression, and between an infantryman, the 17-year Army veteran entered the Career Counselors Course at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Ind.

"Our best advertisement is a satisfied customer. We do our best for the Americal soldier when he walks through the door to reenlist or seek information."

"When a man comes in for counseling, we realize he has a skill the Army needs. He knows he has something we need and through options, schools, Conus or Overseas assignments, we are able to retain a large percentage of our qualified personnel", Owen said.

Serving in his second tour in Vietnam, compared reenlistment and career counseling to that of a new and used car salesman.

Sergeant First Class James E. Owen, Division Career Counselor stands beside his favorite saying on the front of his office. Known as the trouble shooter, he can help you. Why not stop in for a chat? (U.S. Army Photo by SP4 Ed Briedenbach)

SOUTHERN CROSS
AMERICAL DIVISION

THE SOUTHERN CROSS is an authorized, unofficial weekly publication of the Americal Division Information Office for division units in the Republic of Vietnam. It is printed by the photo-offset process by Pacific Stars and Stripes, Tokyo, Japan. 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 SF 96374. Tel: Chu Lai 2414. The editors reserve the right to edit all contributions.

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In a race against time

By Capt. George F. Bennett

LZ HAWK HILL, (196th Inf. Bde. IO) – "You couldn't see the mountains. We usually use LZ West as a guide to LZ Siberia, but this time we couldn't see West," stated Chief Warrant Officer William H. Payne, of Cape Cod, Mass., at the completion of a Medevac mission on December 31st.

An urgent request for the medical evacuation of several U.S. personnel was received merely 12 hours before the start of the allied cease fire, on the last day of 1970. The men had been injured by a VC mine.

On that eventful day with hazardous flying weather, combined with the treacherous terrain, a normal flying mission would not have been attempted in the 196th Infantry Brigade Area of Operations.

However, this was not a normal aviation assignment, American lives were lying in the balance. This was a Medevac mission. Warrant Officers Payne and Thomas L. Robinson of Sacramento, Calif., were highly dedicated and qualified dust-off pilots. Only the slightest possibility of success was needed for them to test the law of averages. Their feelings were amply summarized by Private First Class Guy D. Enfinger of Molino, Fla., the crew chief; "We wouldn't have attempted anything, but an urgent mission."

The sky was overcast with a ceiling of 600 feet, visibility was limited, plus winds were gusting sharply when Payne and Robinson lifted off at Company C, 23rd Medical Battalion on their rescue mission.

Upon departure from LZ Hawk Hill, the pilots requested illumination to guide them to the pickup zone at LZ Siberia. Since LZ West was the highest terrain feature, flares were to be sent up from there.

"The normal time to complete the mission is 20 minutes. Because we couldn't see, the entire mission took two hours and 15 minutes," said Robinson.

While one of the aviators flew the helicopter, the other along with PFC Enfinger and Specialist 4 Byron Beauduy of LaVerne, Minn., kept a constant vigil for obstructions and enemy forces.

"On several occasions, the enlisted men were forced to lean out of the aircraft to see anything," continued Robinson.

They could see only the glow of flares when finally spotting the Hiep Duc Valley Roadd Then by flying low level over the valley floor, Siberia was located.

After some tricky maneuvering, visual contact was gained with the ground element.

With the aircraft commander checking the instruments and calling out instructions, the medic and crew chief straining to pin-point the precise location of the injured, Robinson was able to set the ship down.

Beauduy, the medic, leaped from the aircraft and assisted in loading the injured. Payne felt there was little chance for a second trip so all were loaded at once.

Flying back to Hawk Hill was even more perilous. Visibility was better, but the elements were still against them. Not only was the aircraft drastically overloaded, but fuel was running low. Once again the pilots met and defeated the law of averages. By flying dangerously low, Payne and Robinson were able to negotiate the route back to the 196th Brigade fire base.

Once back at Hawk Hill the wounded were treated and further evacuated to Chu Lai. Because of the intrepid acts of Dust-off Crew 601 the wounded men's lives were spared. This crew had lived up to the 236th Medical Detachment motto, "Strive to save lives."

Ky Tra receives a phone system

By SGT Terry Williamson

KY TRA, (198th Inf. Bde. IO) – Despite three meddling mountains, the signal section of the 198th Infantry Brigade has closed the "communications gap" between this once remote forward command post and Chu Lai.

Before, the small outpost, manned by the 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry had only radio communications with the Chu Lai, but now anyone in Southeast Asia can call Ky Tra with a Class A phone.

The brigade's signal office installed the four voice channel system in only three days, but technical difficulties at first looked like the whole operation would be impossible with the method used.

"We're real proud of the system we have created," said Captain Robert L. Irving of New York City, Brigade signal officer. "But on paper, it just looked like it wouldn't work."

With the textbook still flying out the door from which it was thrown, the signal crew set up antennas to send and receive radio shocks from Ky Tra to Chu Lai. The air waves would then be transmitted into the Ky Tra and Chu Lai land line systems to complete the relatively simple communications link-up.

Textbook still said the idea wouldn't work because of the three mountains in the direct line between Ky Tra and Chu Lai. The scrubbed textbook said that radio waves wouldn't penetrate solid terrain obstacles.

"We're not exactly stupid, and we know all of the rules, but you might say we caught the waves on the re-bound," Capt. Irving said. "The radio waves do not penetrate mountains, but they don't exactly stop there either."

The mountains caused the radio waves to start tumbling which caused loops that reached high and low points. Ky Tra happened to be under the low point of a beautiful loop. The result is ungarbled telephone communications for the outpost.

"This is another first for the signal office," said Irving. "This is the first time that Ky Tra has had telephone service, and we are glad to add this extra luxury."

The new system will be useful in many ways. Better coordination can be made with the units of the 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry, and Regional Force units in the area. Also infantrymen and artillery personnel will have an outlet to call Chu Lai in case they can solve some of their problems by telephone.

Much of the burden will be taken off the radio communications, and the radio system can be centered toward tactical operations instead of carrying the entire load.

Infantry soldiers from the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry, working in an area of Quang Tin Province, northwest of Chu Lai, prepare their position for the night. (U.S. Army Photo by PFC James Dunn)

Vietnam, a land of numerous rivers and streams often disrupts troop operations with its natural barriers. PFC Pat Durbin, of Memphis gets the better of Mother Nature as he paddles his way across steam during a recent operation of the 196th Infantry Brigade. (U.S. Army Photo by PFC Stephen Belfeld)

196th chaplain leads 4 different lives

By Capt. George F. Bennett

LZ HAWK HILL, (196th Inf. Bde. IO) – Priest, Missionary, Athlete, Protestor–four titles which may be used to amply describe Chaplain (Capt.) John J. Bauer of Baltimore, the assistant brigade chaplain, 196th Infantry Brigade.

The terms mentioned above are almost inseparable as Father Bauer goes about the tasks of providing spiritual and emotional guidance to the 1500 Catholics of the brigade.

Father Bauer uses his keen interest in athletics as an important part of his priestly duties stating, "The use of sports is one of the best ways to work with young people."

Not only has he used this interest while in the Army, but also while working as a missionary in the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. It was while serving as a missionary that Father Bauer was first approached by the Baltimore Orioles to be an unpaid consultant scout. Even now, each time he returns home to Baltimore, he stops in to see the Orioles and reports on any baseball talent he might have seen.

This year in Vietnam is the first in the last 36 that he has not played either baseball or softball. As he said, "Baseball would be my secondary MOS." In fact just prior to graduation from the seminary, Father Bauer had to choose between the priesthood and professional baseball.

Father Bauer is most ddfinitely a protester. His protest took two years to become finalized. It took him two years to gain approval to become an Army Chaplain.

This priest's complaint is against various members of the clergy who are opposed to the military efforts of the United States.

Father Bauer is relatively qualified to comment on morale since he spends a large percentage of his time working directly with the field soldiers.

He also had learned to live without the material benefits of life. By serving as a missionary in the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico he has become well acquainted with poverty and a poor standard of living.

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Operation Buddy aids Vietnamization

By SGT Matt Gryta

CHU LAI, (23rd Inf. Div. IO) – For quite some time Sergeant First Class Pham Van Diem has been a good Giam Dinh Quan Xa for the 813th ARVN Ordinance Company.

Today he is an even better motor vehicle inspector thanks to his participation in the 23rd Infantry Division's "Operation Buddy."

SFC Diem is one of 69 soldiers from the ARVN I Corps Logistic Command stationed in Quang Ngai City who have participated in the program since its inception two months ago. "Operation Buddy" is designed to give Vietnamese troops further training on equipment used in their military occupational specialties.

Living and working with the men of Headquarters and A Company, 723rd Maintenance Battalion and the 57th Transportation Battalion for a two-week period, the ARVN's learn American methods of organizational maintenance and direct support activities.

To ddte, "Operation Buddy" has provided on-the-job training in small arms repair, typewriter repair, generator repair, welding, wheeled vehicle maintenance and inspection, electronics equipment repair, bulk petroleum storage and issue and heavy equipment maintenance.

"Because of the language barrier, we frequently have to communicate with the ARVN's by the show and tell method," noted Specialist 5 Gerald L. Gates of Alumrock, Pa. An office machine repairman, Specialist Gates has two Vietnamese soldiers assigned to work with him during each training cycle.

"I visually point out the trouble with the equipment," he explained, "and then show them how you go about correcting the problem. So far they've all picked up what I'm trying to teach them really well."

"The ARVN's are uptight about their work and came prepared to learn," commented Specialist 4 Thomas J. Holman of Omaha, a radio repairman with the 57th Transportation Battalion.

"The program has made our men feel very important," said Staff Sergeant Luong Tri Huong. "They are all very interested in their jobs and eager to learn and improve their skills."

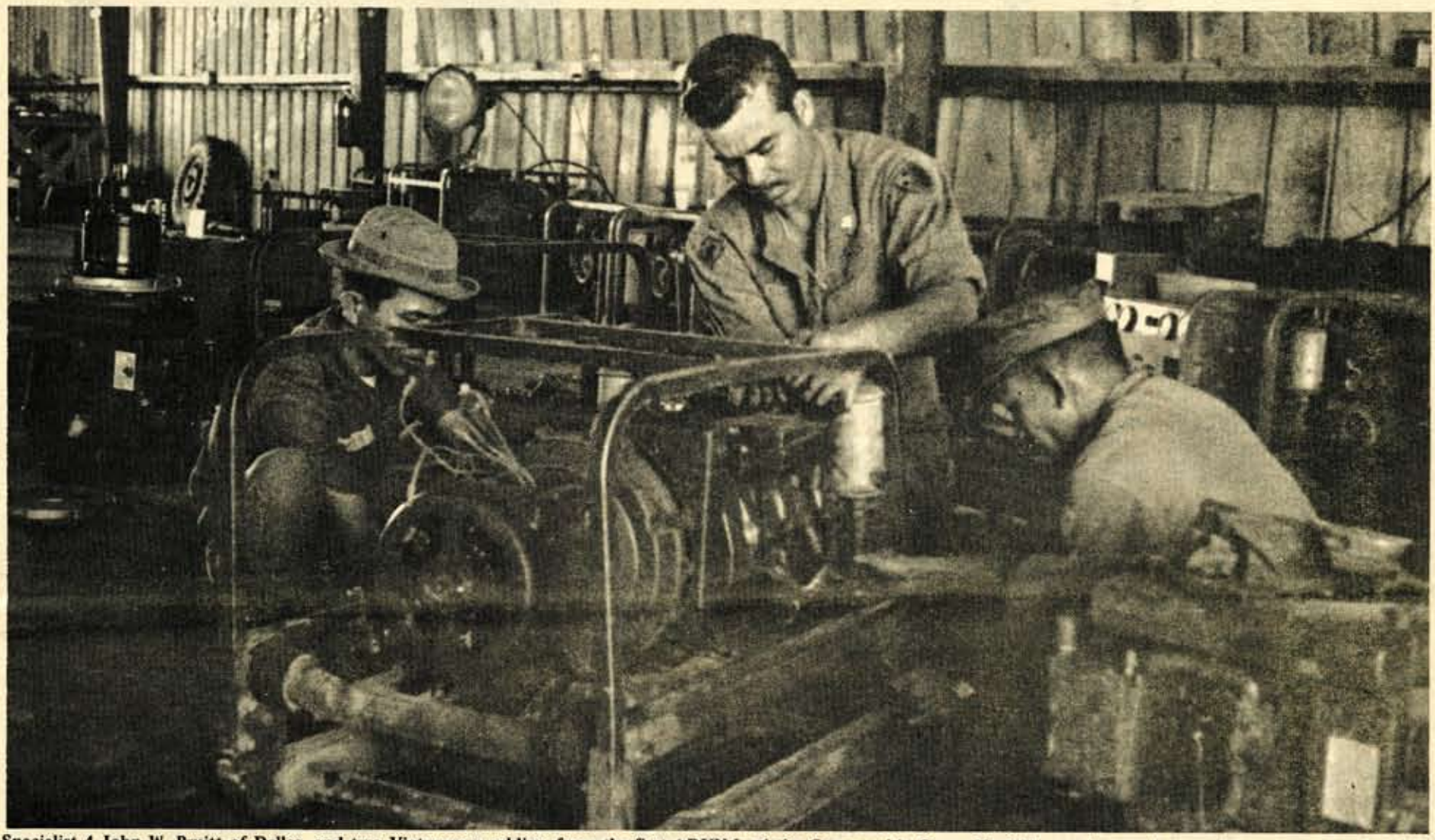
Sergeant Huong is one of three interpreters from the ARVN Liaison Office in Chu Lai assigned to "Operation Buddy".

Observers have noted the enthusiasm of the Vietnamese as the key to the success of the program.

"The ARVN's have constantly attempted to make the most of the program and in doing so have made our men more eager to teach them," noted Captain Philip C. Schlachter of Cincinnati, project officer for the 723rd Maintenance Battalion.

"This has proven to be a fine and valuable program," said Lieutenant Colonel Frank Francois of New Orleans, Commanding Officer of the 57th Transportation Battalion.

"As we have seen it, it can work and is continuing to work for the benefit of both ARVN and American forces. I would expect increased participation in the program as we continue to phase down because it has proven its usefulness in terms of the transfer of American force operations to the Vietnamese," LTC Francis concluded.



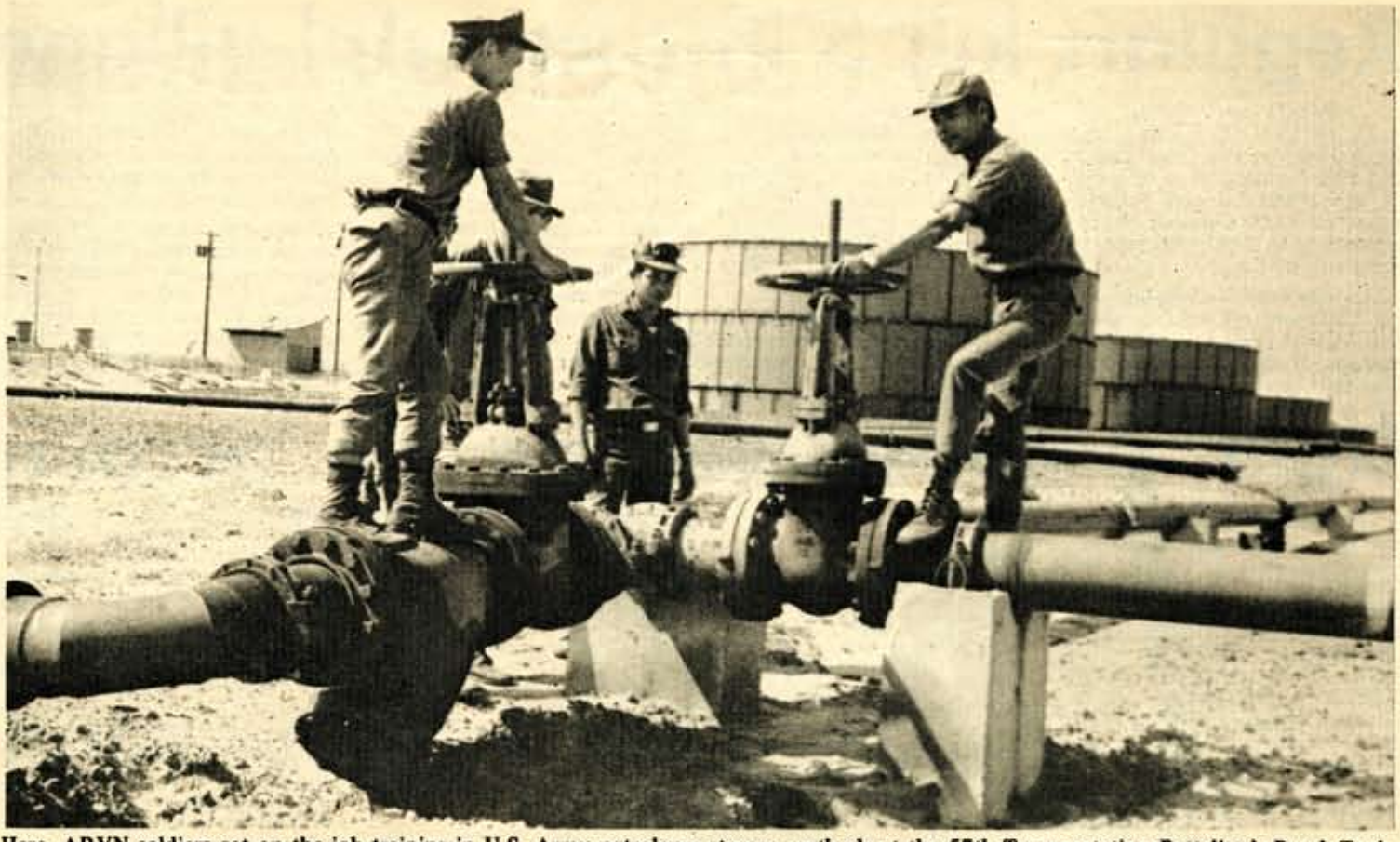
Specialist 4 John W. Pruitt of Dallas, and two Vietnamese soldiers from the first ARVN Logistics Command in Quang Ngai City work on an inoperative generator in the 723rd Maintenance Battalion's Generator Repair Shop.

Sgt. Alfred Baynes of Newport News, Va., points out the source of the malfunction in an M-60 machinegun to three ARVN soldiers working in the 723rd Maintenance Battalion Armament Shop.

In the 723rd's Office Machine Repair Shop Specialist 5 Gerald L. Gates of Alumrock, Pa., works on the skeleton of a typewriter with one of the ARVN soldiers participating in Operation Buddy.

Photos by

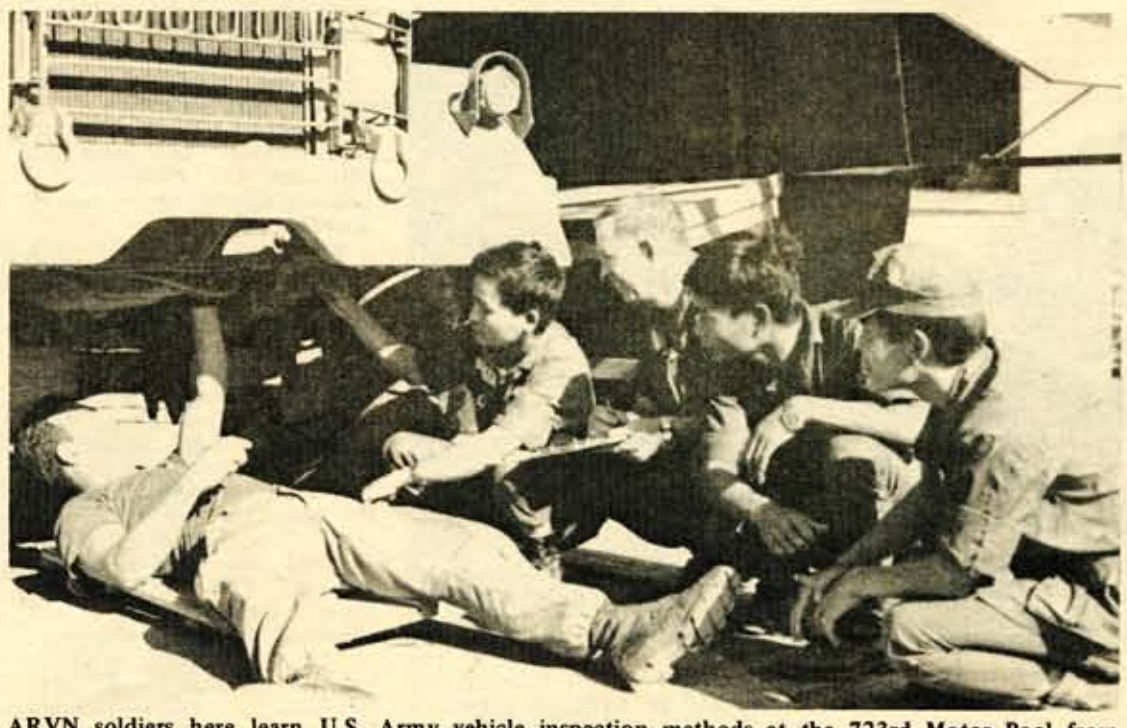
SGT Matt Gryta



Here, ARVN soldiers get on the job training in U.S. Army petroleum storage methods at the 57th Transportation Battalion's Beach Tank Farm.

Specialist 4 Thomas J. Holman of Omaha advises an ARVN radio repairman on the intricacies of American communications equipment in the 57th Transportation Battalion's Electronics Maintenance Shop.

In the motor pool of the 723rd Maintenance Battalion's Automotive Section, Specialist 4 George F. Furrester of New York City and two ARVN trainees get the engine of a two and a half ton truck into tip-top shape.



ARVN soldiers here learn U.S. Army vehicle inspection methods at the 723rd Motor Pool from Specialist 5 Roger Holobaugh of Columbus, Ohio.

Regulars kill 5 in successful village search

By SGT Louis Miller

LZ DOTTY, (198th Inf. Bde. IO) – Five Viet Cong were killed and two captured as an element of the 198th Infantry Brigade made an early morning search recently of an abandoned hamlet south of Chu Lai.

An element of Company A, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry had left their night defensive position at first light to search deserted hamlets suspected of harboring Viet Cong Guerillas by night. The infantrymen of the "Regulars" found what they were looking for at the first hamlet they searched when the company's Luc Luong Scout (formerly Kit Carson Scout) spotted seven enemy soldiers hiding near a hedgerow.

After a brief exchange of hand grenades, the enemy bolted and moved into a nearby structure containing a bunker and, the infantrymen found later, a brick wall in the rear which blocked any possible escape.

"One of our men, Sergeant Michael J. Knox of Olney, Ill., made his way to the side of the structure and tossed in a grenade," said Private First Class Don L. Hayes of Palmyra, Tenn., a rifleman with Company A. "Then the enemy started throwing grenades back at us."

As the "Regulars" opened up with a barrage of small arms fire, other elements of the company moved into blocking positions to prevent any escape.

"Our Luc Luong Scout then told us to stop firing because he wanted to talk to the enemy," said PFC Hayes. "They exchanged a few words and two of the enemy came out with their hands up. They had been wounded by our grenades."

"Finally we heard no more noises from the building so we moved up to check it out," said Specialist 4 Larry Carrico of East St. Louis, Ill., a radio operator. "Inside, we found we had killed all five VC."

Found with the bodies were six greandes, a home-made booby trap, three packs and assorted field equipment. The two wounded Viet Cong were evacuated to a Chu Lai hospital.

Light action in division ao accounts for 53

(continued from page 1)

the aid of gunships, killed 11 Viet Cong south of Chu Lai. The "Ready Rifles" also destroyed several military structures and confiscated over 2,000 pounds of enemy rice.

The "Ready Rifles" of Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry, engaged a group of enemy soldiers at a distance of 50 meters. Four enemy were killed and two AK-47 rifles, and a rucksack were captured in the action. Later, the infantrymen engaged another group of Viet Cong and killed one enemy soldier with small arms fire and wounded another.

Early in the week, Delta Company found a structure containing 200 pounds of unpolished rice, 65 pounds of corn, and four baskets of grain. Nearby, the "Ready Rifles" found a tunnel containing 20 rounds of ammunition, 100 pounds of rice, and four enemy packs. In the same area, Delta Company found a military structure that had seven seperate rooms. Each room had a fireplace and beds. In the attic, the "Ready Rifles" found an SKS rifle and an automatic rifle.

The next day, Delta Company found another military structure. Inside the "Ready Rifles" found a homemade rocket launcher and 2,000 pounds of rice. The rocket launcher and rice were destroyed. Later, Delta Company found 200 pounds of rice, 50 rounds of small arms ammunition and a magazine.

Gunships from the 116th Aviation Company observed and engaged three evading Viet Cong south of Chu Lai. The gunships killed two of the enemy soldiers. An element of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry, was inserted into the area and killed another, Two automatic weapons and six Chicom hand grenades were captured in the action.

While on patrol, Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry, observed and engaged a group of Viet Cong killing one and wounding another in the action. Two carbine rifles and two magazines of ammunition were confiscated.

While in a night defensive perimeter, Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry, detected movement 20 meters to the west of their position. The "Ready Rifles" engaged with small arms fire. At first light the infantrymen found one dead Viet Cong. Later in the week, Charlie Company engaged and killed one Viet Cong soldier, capturing an automatic rifle.

The "Regulars" of the 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry, confiscated several enemy weapons during the week, and received a large amount of enemy munitions from Vietnamese civilians southeast of Chu Lai.

Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry, while in a day laager position, received a large amount of enemy munitions from several Vietnamese children. The children turned over five mortar rounds, 90 rounds of rifle and machine gun ammunition, a hand grenade, an anti-tank weapon, and a three pound fragmentation device. The "Regulars" blew the munitions in place.

Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry, detained two Vietnamese southeast of Chu Lai. Neither of the detainees had identification, and one was carrying a pack and the other was carrying 100 pounds of rice.

Later, Bravo Company found a Viet Cong body that had been killed by artillery fire. The kill was credited to Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 82nd Artillery.

Two members of Company C, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry stay behind a terrain feature for a moment and check the area out before moving on during a recent operation of the 196th Infantry Brigade. (U.S. Army Photo by PFC Stephen Belfeld)

While on patrol, Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry, found an RPG round, an empty AK-47 magazine, one gallon of gasoline, and two NVA ponchos lying under a tree. Nearby Alpha Company found two AK-47 rifles, three hand grenades and a pistol belt.

The "Professionals" of the 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry, killed one Viet Cong and uncovered an enemy base camp during the week northwest of Chu Lai.

Alpha Company, 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry, found an enemy base camp which was in the construction stages. The "Professionals" found 20 carbine rifle rounds, two small bottles of gasoline, and three bunkers at the camp site. All of the items were destroyed, and artillery was processed in the area.

Early in the week, Alpha Company killed a Viet Cong as he neared their day laager site northwest of Chu Lai. Alpha Company also found and destroyed six military structures with bunkers.

Charlie Company, 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry, found a military structure that contained a tunnel. Inside the tunnel the "Professionals" found an artillery round and a Chicom hand grenade. The structure, tunnel and military items were destroyed.

In other action in the 198th Brigade's area of operation, F Troop, 8th Cavalry, observed several camoflauged structures southwest of Chu Lai. The gunships received small arms fire from the area. The gunships engaged the enemy with minigun fire and killed one enemy soldier. F Troop also observed and destroyed 30 bunkers and 10 military structures with rocket fire during the day.

An aero rifle platoon from F Troop, 8th Cavalry, was inserted in an area southwest of Chu Lai, and killed one enemy soldier.

IRON MOUNTAIN

Combat activity remained moderate this past week as the 11th Bde.'s Jungle Warriors accounted for 14 enemy kills with the 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry accounting for nine of the kills.

The 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry led with the most kills as they killed nine of the 14 enemy in the 11th Infantry Brigade area of operation this past Engaging the suspected area, the infantrymen accounted for two Viet Cong kills. Enganing the suspected area, the infantrymen accounted for two Viet Cong kills. Operating along the coast northwest of Quang Ngai City, Bravo Company detected two enemy at 150 meters. The infantrymen engaged them, resulting in two enemy deaths. Bravo Company, operating southwest of Minh Long, found two NVA kills after searching an area of contact from the previous night. Maneuvering in the mountains northwest of Ba To, Alpha Company engaged and killed two North Vietnamese soldiers at 75 meters. Delta Company made the final kill for the 4th Battalion when they engaged a lone NVA near the Song Ve River southeast of Minh Long. The NVA was killed as a result of the action.

The 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry also set the record for destroying 29 of the 51 enemy structures destroyed in the 11th Brigade this past week.

Approximately 400 pounds of unploshed rice, one enemy carbine, two enemy pistol belts and 20 pounds of tobacco were captured by the 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry during this past week.

The 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry were credited with the remaining five enemy kills, in the 11th Brigade as Alpha Company, working in the lowlands northwest of Duc Pho, observed six to eight enemy soldiers moving away from their position. Engaging with small arms and M-79 fire, the infantrymen racked up four Viet Cong kills. A pistol belt, flashlight and three ponchos were captured as a result of the action. The remaining kill was made by Bravo Company, maneuvering in the lowlands southwest of Mo Duc, as they engaged and killed a lone Viet Cong.

The 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry accounted for one captured Viet Cong who was wounded in the action, as they were making a sweep of the mountains southwest of Quang Ngai City.

Recon of the 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry found an enemy training site while patroling the foothills southwest of Quang Ngai City. The training area was used by a company size sapper unit. It contained 12 large bunkers and several small ones. The training area long with several training aids were destroyed after a throughal search of the area.

Sweeping an area southwest of Quang Ngai, Recon of the 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry, discovered an enemy laager position containing one AK-47, one Chicom hand grenade, seven packs, an assortment of rice, salt, tobacco, fish and some heroin.

Alpha Company, 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry discovered an NVA hospital located in a cave southeast of Duc Pho. The entrance of the cave was booby trapped with 60mm mortar rounds.

Operating in the foothills south of Duc Pho, Alpha Company, 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry found two base camps. A total of 20 structures, five spider holes and one bunker were inspected and destroyed by the infantrymen.

Patroling an area west of Sa Hay Nh, Alpha Company, 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry discovered one hut, a bunker and a tree observation post. Later, in the same area, the infantrymen found an enemy base camp with 25-30 bunkers along its perimeter.

Sweeping an area west of Minh Long, elements of Bravo Company, 123rd Aviation Battalion, accounted for the deaths of eight enemy soldiers and also destroyed four enemy structures. Gunships of Bravo Company also engaged and killed a lone Viet Cong in the foothills south of Duc Pho.

HAWK HILL

In light action this past week the 196th Infantry Brigade soldiers killed nine enemy soldiers and uncovered several caches.

Early this week Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, while on patrol west of Tam Ky, detained six Vietnamese females and two males. The detainees led the "Gimlets" to 400 pounds of rice. The rice and the Vietnamese males were extracted to LZ Center. The females were taken to Tien Phuoc.

While on patrol later this week, Alpha Company, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, discovered two Viet Cong killed by artillery. Battery A, 3rd Battalion, 16th Artillery was credited with the kills.

Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, while on patrol west of Tam Ky, observed and engaged two Viet Cong with small arms fire, killing one and wounding the other. The wounded VC was extracted to LZ Hawk Hill.

While on patrol west of Tam Ky this week, Charlie Company, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry, found a grave containing one NVA killed by artillery. The kill was credited to Battery C, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Artillery.

While on a search and clear mission southwest of Da Nang, Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry discovered an ammunition cache containing 23-57mm recoiless rounds, three 82mm mortar rounds, 24 AK-47 magazines with 800 rounds of ammunition, seven RPG rounds, five RPG boosters and two unidentified mines.

Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, while on patrol this week found three structures containing 110 pounds of rice and 20 pounds of corn. The supplies were extracted to LZ Young.

Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry had an unusual visitor outside their perimeter, this week, a Viet Cong with a Chieu Hoi leaflet in his hand. He surrendered to the "Professionals" who were located southwest of Da Nang. The second hoi Chanh in two weeks to voluntarity give himself up to Alpha Company.

While in their night defensive position southwest of Da Nang Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry, engaged and killed one North Vietnamese soldier.

Gimlets find regimental size camp

By SGT Matt Gryta

LZ CENTER, (23rd Inf. Div. IO) – The heat of the double-canopied terrain made the situation uncomfortable, and the tension made things almost unbearable as the small 196th Infantry Brigade patrol inched its way single-file up the middle of a dried-out creek bed on a hill in "Happy Valley" northwest of Tam Ky.

Such caution proved vital for the Reconnaissance platoon of the 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, for this mission would not end until the capture of a regimental size NVA base camp.

The "Gimlets" first heard about the enemy enemy encampment several days before their initial contact.

"One of our night patrols was moving near a hamlet in the valley when they heard all kinds of talking, and one of the voices was male," said 1st Lieutenant Joseph D. Barrett of Burlington, N.C., platoon leader.

"The men surrounded the hootch area and, after laying low for a time, moved into the huts. In one of them they found a man sleeping in his hammock. He slept so soundly that they had to holler at him several times."

Back in the night laager he told Recon's interpreter, Staff Sergeant Kien Quan, that he wanted to rally because his baby was ill, and he wanted to get his family to Tam Ky. He then told the interpreter he could lead them to the base camp of the 704th NVA Regiment.

"After we fed him breakfast he walked over to where I was sitting, reached down and picked up my map and began orienting it using terrain features," explained Lt. Barrett. "It was uncanny, but he actually pinpointed our location to a more exact degree than I had."

Late that afternoon the rallier guided the platoon to a hidden trail, which was actually a dried-out creek bed, at the foot of a nearby hill.

The creek's bank stood fifteen feet high in some places, and the men had already uncovered eight ingeniously concealed fighting positions in the hour and a half it had taken them to quietly move some three hundred meters up the only accessible "trail" to their objective.

"It looked like a perfect spot for an ambush," noted Private First Class Keith Keller of Crete, Neb., a grenadier. "Only this time were in the kill zone."

Walking point for the 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, Reconnaissance platoon was Sergeant Bill Milburne of Harriman, Tenn., along with their rallier and an interpreter.

"After hearing some scattered rifle fire far to our rear I put my M-16 on automatic, and we really began moving slowly–like fifty meters in five minutes," said Sergeant Milburne.

Their progress came to a dead halt when Milburne "smelled" trouble near a bend in the creek. His intuition, finely honed after months in the bush, paid off. Less than 15 meters away sat an NVA guard.

"It was just luck that I happened to step around the corner and fire a burst before he knew what hit him," said Milburne.

After removing four Chicom grenades and a pack from the guard's body, movement was detected to the right front of their location, and the patrol started back down the hill.

"At the base of the hill we found the source of rifle fire which we had heard," said Lt. Barrett. "A two-man security force I posted there had killed a two-man NVA resupply party about fifteen minutes after we had gone up."

The resupply party had been carrying enough polished rice, tea and potatoes to feed over twenty troops for several days. Recon now knew they were approaching the enemy base camp their rallier had told them about.

After the recon artists returned to the hamlet where their rallier lived, an air strike was called in on the suspected enemy location. Bombardment from the air caused four secondary explosions, while numerous small arms rounds also were heard cooking off.

The next morning, after their first probe of the enemy location followed by the air strike, the "Gimlets" rested until mid-afternoon, when Lt. Barrett took out a patrol to check our results of the aerial assault.

"Just after we had passed the spot where Sergeant Milburne shot the NVA guard we began to receive small arms fire directly from our rear," said the lieutenant. "We could hear four weapons firing, and it looked like an attempt to cut us off and surround us."

The infantrymen hit the dirt and immediately returned fire. Then they silenced the enemy with a few well-placed grenades.

Halfway up the trail they found a hastily discarded pair of sandals and a pack containing a large quantity of food stuffs. It appeared the enemy had sent a second resupply party up the trail.

A sudden torrential downpour hampered further activity, so the patrol moved off the hill.

Another airstrike was processed on the enemy site the next morning which led to another probe.

"This time we approached the enemy camp from the top of the hill," explained Lt. Barrett, "We found fresh NVA boot-prints along the trail. More importantly, we spotted two Chicom grenades hooked to vines growing on the outskirts of the site.

"In the aftermath of the air strikes the best we could determine about the place was that it was a large overnight station for troops moving through the valley."

The soldiers found ten partially destroyed hootches and two completely destroyed structures, including two large mess halls and one hootch which housed three ten-foot long tables and a gunrack. Scattered around the camp were ten NVA rucksacks.

Keeping their word to the rallier, Vietnamese refugees were escorted from the man's hamlet the next morning. With Specialist 4 Johnny Hill of Dallas walking point while carrying a Vietnamese baby in his right arm and a chicken tucked under his left, the party walked to a landing zone where a helicopter flew them to the security of a nearby firebase.

We can't tell you much about the girl, but the chess set is carved out of bone and represents a combination of classical design modified and ancient Mandarin. (Photo courtesy of Peter Gowland Studio)

Heroin addict talks about cold turkey

By SP4 Guy Winkler

CHU LAI, (23rd Inf. Div. IO) – "My wife would really be hurt if she knew about me. I don't know if I will ever be able to tell her."

That's what a PFC from the 23rd Infantry Division told two Army journalists in an interview about his ordeal with heroin and his fight to overcome the drug through the division's Drug Amnesty Program.

In an effort to curb drug abusers and promote the successfulness of the division's Drug Amnesty Program, the PFC, who will remain anonymous, submitted to "tell it like it is" to warn others of the consequences of being "hooked" and the agony of Cold Turkey.

Easy to Get

"Heroin is easy to get in Nam," says the soldier. "It's real easy to get. You can get it from the mama-sans, the hootch maids who come in to work, or you can go to the street and buy it from the school kids.

"The availability of drugs here in Nam definitely causes people to turn on. And it's so cheap; even if you're on PFC pay, you can still get by and sometimes you can even come out ahead by selling it."

The PFC admits that boreddm in a rear area job and the lag-time between things to do to keep occupied, is one of the primary reasons for turning to drugs. "Out in the bush, you're so scared all the time, you just don't care. But back here in the rear, there's so much lag-time in your work that it's so easy to say, 'Oh, what the hell, stock it up'." He says that "back in the world" if he were offered some heroin, "I'd jump back about 10 feet and say, 'get away from me'."

The former addict says that a couple friends started him "snorting" heroin and that he was taking between a cap and a cap and a half a day at four dollars per cap, which would have cost him about forty or fifty dollars per cap in the U.S. "I was getting strung out and it didn't seem to make much sense to quit at the time. There just wasn't any boost to stop and I really didn't want to stop. I was hooked."

On the Ward

In his book "Drugs From A To Z: a Dictionary," Richard R. Lingeman says, "The addiction of Heroin consists of craving for the drug, tolerance to the effects of the drug so that increasing amounts are needed, a compulsion to continue acquiring the drug, a preoccupation to the point where obtaining a supply dominates the user's entire life, and a high tendency to relapse after the drug is withdrawn and seek it again. Addiction is invariably accompanied by physical dependence, which sustains and intensifies it, for the avoidance of withdrawal symptoms and anxiety is a powerful motive–perhaps the most powerful–to continue taking the drug."

Fortunately, 21 days before he was to leave for Hawaii on R&R to meet his wife, the PFC decided there was more to live for than a daily "fix." "I ran out of heroin one night and I was off for 24 hours. I thought if I was off for that long, I might as well go all the way, so I asked if I could sleep it off in the ward of the 23rd Medical Battalion, where I was admitted under the Amnesty Program."

He had made the decision and now faced the toughest part of his journey to overcome heroin: Cold Turkey.

"I wasn't sure I could make it when I first came to the program, but you see, everyone has to make up his own mind. You have to come to some position within yourself. You either have to do it or don't, and the only way to do it is Cold Turkey.

"The hardest part of going on the ward is the first 36 hours. I couldn't stay still and had to keep moving around. I got stomach cramps, the back of my legs ached and I began to perspire heavily."

For almost two days he suffered the indescribable pain of resisting a drug which could have eventually led to his death!

Author Lingeman says that "mainlining" heroin often leads to "...infection from unsterile needles, resulting in serum hepatitis, abscesses, or tetanus. Gradually the addict's veins become scarred (collapsed veins) and he uses those on his wrist, feet, and neck; older addicts who have run out of veins revert to skin popping, and their bodies become covered with sores."

"The way I feel now," says the rehabilitated PFC, "If someone asked me if I wanted a hit, I know I would have enough guts to say no. If I did accept, the whole thing would be a complete waste. It just wouldn't make sense to go through Cold Turkey and then go back and shoot it up."

Amnesty Working

If a person abusing drugs turns himself in to the proper authorities before he gets "busted" and has no drugs on his person at the time, he will receive treatment for his problem without punishment and no permanent record will be kept to follow him through civilian life. The proper authorities to contact would be a chaplain, the provost marshal or a doctor.

"I can say that this program is working. I've seen people come off the wards unhooked, and I know I can do the same," says the soldier. "I don't feel any desire for the drug now and I don't want her to know.

"The Amnesty Program is a good idea and I think if they keep pushing it that it will work for even a greater percentage of GI's. Sure, you can throw a guy in jail for drugs, but he'll either go completely insane or become unresponsive to the treatment. If you show someone that you are trying to help him with his problem, he'll appreciate it."

This is one man's success story in his battle with drugs. But it isn't over; he still has a few months left in Vietnam and heroin is still readily available and cheap to buy. However, accorddng to Lingeman, "In New York City and addict needs $10,000 a year to support his habit, meaning he must steal and resell, at one-fifth their value, $50,000 worth of goods. Drug users account for about one-fourth of the crimes against property and 1.2 per cent of crimes against persons."

To troopers in the field dinner usually comes in the form of C-rations. Carrying this evening's epicurean delight, this trooper with Company C, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry, moves along a trail in the 196th Infantry Brigade AO. (U.S. Army Photo by PFC Stephen Belfeld)

Army issues soldier a wife

By SP4 Kenneth Perry

LZ BRONCO, (11th Inf. Bde. IO) – Specialist 4 Gregory Miller of Sarasota, Fla., had remained a crefree bachelor for 21 years until the Army decided that if he was going home, he should have a wife to meet him. His Deros orders lists as his next of kin a wife named Linda, and mention that she is living in his old apartment. All this came as a surprise to Miller, but after he started thinking about Linda waiting for him back in his old apartment, he can hardly wait.

Unfortunately, Miller's earlier request for an extension had just been approved, but he's indicated that he may apply for a compassionate leave. "I sure would like to see what my Army-issued wife looks like," he said. "I just hope that she isn't O.D. Green."

Professionals find enemy cache thanks to a used NVA poncho

By SGT Terry Williamson

KY TRA, (198th Inf. Bde. IO) – An apparent oversight by North Vietnamese soldiers and the good sight of a U.S. pointman were all the ingredients necessary for an element of the 198th Infantry Brigade to capture an enemy weapons cache on a recent operation northwest of Chu Lai.

The cache–consisting of two machineguns, three other automatic weapons, three rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), 25 mortar rounds, and several boxses of machinegun ammunition–was found after Specialist 4 Jessie Spivey of Winslow, N.C., a pointman with Company A, 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry spotted an NVA poncho when he moved into a small clearing in the midst of a heavily vegetated area.

At first, SP4 Spivey, like all pointmen, was a little uncertain about the unexpected obstacle in his path. "I saw it there in the clearing and thought there just might be someone under it," he said. "It looked as if someone had made a shelter to keep out of the rain."

Specialist 4 Rick Lowman of Fontana, Calif., acting squad leader, believing the poncho might be a sign that the area was booby trapped, decided to set up a perimeter around the poncho until the entire area could be checked out.

The "Professionals" then made a thorough search for booby traps and enemy personnel, but turned up nothing, and the men began believing that some careless enemy soldier had just forgotten his poncho.

"When we checked out the area, our thoughts turned to looking under the poncho and seeing if there was anything under it," said Staff Sergeant Paul Spangler of Montgomery, Ala., the platoon sergeant. "I just had the feeling there w something under it."

Specialist 4 Larry Kisner of Friendsville, Md., took a rope and tied it to the top of the poncho and backed off a good distance before unveiling the prize underneath. "I was afraid the poncho might be booby trapped," he said. "I'm always leery of the enemy leaving us something for nothing."

But the enemy, evidently thinking that the thickly wooded area was a safe place to stash their weapons, did leave the infantrymen something for nothing, and when the unveiling occurred, the weapons were exposed.

"I'm sure the NVA left the weapons there just for a short time," said SSG Spangler. "I sure would have liked to see their faces when they realized they were gone."

The weapons, all later extracted to Chu Lai, had a small amount of surface rust, but were all in good condition, except for one machinegun which had a faulty trigger mechanism.

Also captured was one slightly used NVA poncho.

1st Lieutenant Jeffery Hasleft, Company B, 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry discusses surrounding terrain features with a local Regional Force Vietnamese soldier while working an area in Quang Tin Province west of Tam Ky. (U.S. Army Photo)