SOUTHERN CROSS
AMERICAL DIVISION

Vol. 4 No. 24 Chu Lai, Vietnam June 11, 1971

Weekly recap

196th Brigade kills 25

By Sp/4 Richard Kerr

DA NANG, (196th Inf. Bde. IO) – In schatter action during the week of May 12 thru 18, enemy soldiers were killed in the 196th Infantry Brigade's area of operation.

While working in the 196th Brigade's AO, Helix 17 observed 15 to 20 NVA evading toward a treeline. The small aircraft immediately processed an air strike on the enemy's position. The air strike caused the demise of 15 enemy soldiers and the distruction of two bunkers.

Company A, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, while in their night defensive position early that week, engaged and killed one NVA with small arms fire. Captured in the action was on K-54 pistol.

While working an area southwest of Da Nang that week, Ranger Team 07 received small arms fire from approximately 15 to 20 enemy soldiers. An air strike was processed and artillery was called in on the enemy's location. Co. A, 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., later swept the area, finding two dead NVA and numerous bunkers.

Co. A, 2nd Bn., 1st Inf. and B Troop, 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry, killed two NVA that week during a joint operation southwest of Da Nang. The first kill occurred when the two elements were sweeping the area and engaged a woodline with small arms fire and .50 caliber fire.

A search of the area revealed the dead enemy soldier. Upon continuing their sweep they came across four enemy structures and one bunker. A hand grenade was dropped into the bunker, killing the second enemy soldier. The four structures were searched and then destroyed.

While patroling an area south of Da Nang, A Troop, 1st of the 1st Cav., engaged five NVA with small arms fire. As a result two enemy soldiers were killed as the other evaded.

F Troop, 17th Cavalry, while working an area west of Da Nang, engaged two VC with small arms fire. As a result one enemy soldier was killed and the other wounded. The wounded VC was taken prisoner and extracted to 95th Evac.

Company C, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, while in their night defensive position, engaged three enemy soldiers with small arms fire. As a result two NVA were killed as the other evaded. One AK-47 rifle was captured in the action.

While on a search and clear mission, Co. C, 3rd Bn., 21st Inf., found one NVA killed by artillery. Battery B, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Artillery was credited with the kill for a fire mission in the area earlier in the month.

Later that week while moving to their night defensive postion southwest of Da Nang, Co. C of the "Gimlets" engaged and killed one VC with small arms fire. A rucksack containing miscellaneous items was recovered in the action.

'Honcho' nabbed

By SP4 Don Newton

LZ HAWK HILL (23rd Inf. Div. 10) – After being critically wounded by small arms fire, the VC (Viet Cong) leader would only say, "Go home, Americans." Moments earlier, this same VC Deputy Province Commander of Quang Tin Province had been taking part in a briefing with other VC in a hootch area southwest of Tam Ky.

Staff Sergeant Max M. Braithwaite (Charleston, W. Va.) remembers the incident well. He led several men from his platoon into the initial firefight, and later captured and disarmed senior captain Le Noi— the VC Deputy Province Commander, confiscating the captain's 9mm pistol.

"We heard the enemy talking not too long after we had walked down a hill and into some (flat land)," explained Braithwaite, the platoon sergeant for 2nd Platoon of Company A, 1st Battalion., 46th Infantry. "All of us immediately took cover."

The 23rd Infantry Division soldiers stopped about 30 feet from the voices as estimated by First Lieutenant James Redmond (Oak Ridge, Tenn.) platoon leader for 2nd Platoon and the man who was part of the small patrol which made the first contact.

The adversary ran into a volley of M-16 fire from Redmond, Braithwaite and other nearby "Chargers." A second enemy escaped via a neighboring hootch, while Noi attempted to escape through a rear door.

"The 'honcho' scrambled about half way up a hill before one of us shot him," recalled Braithwaite as he turned the captured enemy pistol over and over in his hands. "This 9mm pistol was on his hip, so we knew the guy was most likely an officer. However, he refused to identify himself and would only say, 'Go home, Americans'.

Noi lived as a result of quick action by Co. A's RTO (radio telephone operator) calling in a medical evacuation helicopter.

Captain Paul S. Spiellburg (Lexington, Ky.) Co. A's commander, coordinated the operation and watched the captured VC province commander as the enemy officer was lifted into the waiting "dust-off" helicopter.

Five days later, both captains were surprised to meet each other in Chu Lai's 91st Evacuation Hospital. "I was in the hospital to visit a couple of my men, related Spiellburg. "I looked around the ward, and there lay Noi.

"We shook hands and talked," continued Spiellburg. "He complimented my command, and said that I had a well disciplined, well coordinated unit–otherwise, we would never have captured him. Noi is a professional."

After his discharge from the hospital, the NVA/VC commander was recently placed under protective custody for further questioning.

SGT. gets medal

By PFC Larry Rich

DA NANG (196th Inf. Bde. IO) – When Master Sergeant Ben O. Musques (San Antonio, Texas) puts on his dress uniform, he can expect to receive more than a few stares and questions. Among his decorations is a green ribbon with verticle orange stripes on both sides and a bronze V device in the center. Unfamiliar to many Army personnel, the ribbon is the Navy Achievement Medal.

"I was awarded the medal during my first tour in the Republic of South Vietnam in 1968-69," the platoon sergeant of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, 196th Infantry Brigade, recalled. "I was working as a light weapons advisor with a group of South Vietnamese Regional Force and Popular Force troops in the delta area of Military Region Four."

"Operation Sea Lord was underway at that time," Musquez continued. "The object of the mission was to halt enemy movement through the area. We often worked in conjunction with the U.S. Navy."

"Sometimes Navy launches would pick up the advisory team and a group of South Vietnamese soldiers and transport us through the waterways," Musquez said. "We'd disembark and head inland while the boat would continue up the channel a little distance. The ship would then try to move through the channels parallel to our course."

Enemy units who tried to evade one of the searching parties would be likely to run into the other half of the combination. If one party ran into enemy opposition, the other group was close enough to lend support.

If the sergeant had to choose one incident which led to his award, he would probably decided on the time he was instrumental in saving the life of a Navy lieutenant.

"The boat came in with several wounded on board," he recalled. "I thought the lieutenant was dead at first, but in a situation like that you don't give up. I administered first aid and realized he was still alive. I rubbed his arms and legs to keep his circulation going and started to talk to him. I told him that the bird (helicopter) was on the way and that he was going to be all right. The RTO (radio telephone operation) had just started to call the dust-off, but he couldn't see that from where he way lying. He seemed to respond to my voice. I passed the word to the others to talk to and encourage the wounded, and stayed with the (LT.) until the medevac arrived."

Musquez did not know that he had received the award until after he had returned to CONUS and been assigned to Fort Polk, La., "I stopped in at the award clerk's office to see if they had received the paper work for my air medal," he sa] d, GGand they handed me the Navy Achievement Medal and citation. I never did get my air medal."

Project Help, Question of the Week
QUESTION: Can I get an R&R to Korea if I have a family there?
ANSWER: USARV 28-5. You may submit your reque] t for R&R to Korea thru your normal R&R channels as an exception to policy. You must fly to an R&R site such as Taipei and pay your own way from there to Korea.

Crossing the Song Thu Bon River in a sampan is just about a daily excursion for Sp/6 Joe Tarbell. (Security, Colm.), 29th Civil Affairs Company, Tarbell works with the local government official of Hiep Duc Territory in the 196th Infantry Brigade's AO (area of Operation). (U.S. Army Photo by Sp/5 Robert Spangler.)

CRIME DOESN'T PAY

Contrary to his plea ot not guilty, Private Ronnie Jones, F Troop, 17th Cavalry, was convicted by special court-martial on 16 May 1971 for willfully disobeying orders from his superior noncommissioned officers. Following announcement of the findings of guilty, he was sentenced to a bad conduct discharge and confiement at hard labor for three months. He is presently serving the sentence to confinement in the USARV Installation Stockade, Long Binh, RVN.

In Memory of...

FSB BRONCO (11th Inf. Bde. 10) – The 4th Battalion of the 3rd Infantry deeply regrets the death of Lieutenant Colonel Albert F. Coast, age 38 years. On 20 April 1971, LTC Coast was struck by the main rotor blade of a light observation helicopter. He was medevaced from the field and two hours later died as a result of head injuries at the 91st Evacuation Hospital in Chu Lai. He is survived by his wife and two children.

LTC Coast graduated from the Oklahoma State University with a Bachelor of Science Degree. His continued studies led to a law degree. He completed the Reserve Officers Training Course in college and was commissioned on 18 September 1954.

He took command of the 11th Inf. Bde.'s 4th Bn., 3rd Inf. on Oct. 5, 1970, and employed squad size saturation patrolling techniques in the Old Guard's area of operation. His tactics proved successful as the Mountainmen under his command killed 65 of the enemy in the Iron Mountain Operation.

Throughout LTC Coast's command the 4th Bn., 3rd Inf. maintained its status as jump battalion for the 23rd Infantry Division. Under his direction the battalion illustrated its mobility and fighting adaptability when OPCON to the 198th Infantry Brigade during 10 October 1970 to 7 November 1970 and when it participated in the Lam Son 719 operation, 29 January 1971 to 9 April 1971. The old Guard was accredited with 122 enemy KIA during Lam Son 719.

The record shows that LTC Coast accomplished his mission as a Battalion Commander, but his primary concern lay with the welfare of his men.

An appropriate eulogy can be best presented by the following excerpts from his memorandum notebook:

"SP4 Bemis (A Co) needs size 5 boots....SSG Erwin (D Co) needs a compassionate leave....check on 14-day leave policy for the troops, (ETG)"

These lines best describe Lieutenant Colonel Albert F. Coast, not only as the Commander of the Old Guard, but also as our fellow comrade in arms; now fallen.

Happy GI, no longer a 'grunt'

By SGT Tom Mano

DA NANG, (196th Inf. Bde. IO) – Private First Class Richard L. Savinen (Rockport, Mass.), remembers well the day he got out of the bush after six months of humping a 90 pound rucksack for Alpha Co., 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, 196th Infantry Brigade.

He heard the captain shout "Number 125".

"Holy smoke, that' me," he thought. What the hell do they want me for?"

"Savinen, if you can get on one of those birds bringing the men in, you've got yourself a rear job," barked the company commander.

"I just sat back on my ruck in the bird and thought about all the past combat assaults and eagle flights I had taken," recalled Savinen. "I was a pig (M-60 Machine gun) man, so I was always on one of the first choppers. It use to scare the hell out of me. While leaving, I was thinking, this is my last flight, this is my last flight."

Nothing could be further from the truth. Savinen doesn't fly into "hot AOs" anymore, but he does cover about 60 miles a day to make life easier for men in the 196th Inf. Bde. Being the brigade courier, he carries official division and brigade correspondence. Also in his courier's pouch are leave, ETS (estimated termination of Service) and DEROS (Date Estimated Return from Overseas) orders. Without these nobody would go home.

"You name it; we get it," said Savinen grinning. "We bridge the gap between brigade and division."

But flying isn't the only mode of travel Savinen uses to make his daily trip to Chu Lai and back. When bad weather sets in, he has to resort to a jeep.

"That's the worst ride I've ever had in my life," said Savinen, obviously irritated. "It's usually pouring and takes from five to six hours."

Once, half-way to Chu Lai, a bridge was blown up. A Vietnamese boy was waist-deep in the stream shouting, "No can do, GI, no can do," but Savinen was determined to make it.

"I just revved up the jeep, put it in four-wheel drive and plodded on," laughed the courier. "The distribution must go through."

Savinen says much of his incentive to "drive on" is transferred from his energetic superior, Captain Werner Chamberlain (Columbus, Ga.), adjutant for the 196th Infantry Brigade. "When he says to, you go," mused the PFC.

With only 30-35 days left in Vietnam, Savinen is turning his job over to Sergeant Craig W. Wolfe (Mound, Minn.) and Specialist Four Albert J. Tillis (Houston), also a veteran infantryman. In retrospect, Savinen says he has derived "beaucoup" self-satisfaction from getting the men their R&R and ETS orders. "I'm just glad I could do something constructive," he said smiling.

These cooks make the best of their facilities to provide a hot and nurishing meal for the troopers of Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, 196th Infantry Brigade recently operating near Hiep Duc. (U.S. Army Photo by SP4 Brad Mandel)

'Stretch', the lab technician

By Sgt. Thomas Mano

DA NANG (196th Inf. Bde. IO) – Plastered on the foor, a skull and crossbones greets you with a warning: "Swift, Silent, Deadly, Syphilis kills." Another sign beside it declares: "Nice people get VD....It isn't choosey."

Entering the room you see a 6-foot-5 body pouring chemicals into a large, white plastic pan. He turns and says with a Bela Lugosi smile, "May I help you?"

Since December Specialist Four Quentin "Stretch" M. McKennon (Miami, Fla.) has been the lab technician for Charlie Company, 23rd Medical Battalion assigned with the 196th Infantry Brigade. Within his reportoire of duties are testing urine, taking bloodcounts and recording reactions of chemicals on smears.

The lab technician's tests are essential to a doctor's diagnosis of some diseases. "In the absence of a lab, the only thing the doctor's would have to go on would be the symptoms and they aren't very definite," explained "Stretch".

One of the 72 tests McKennon performs is for gonorhea, more commonly known as "the clap". He maintains an apathetic attitude toward the "victim".

"I don't feel embarrassed like many of them do, nor do I feel animosity," related the lab technician. "I just look at it as more work. Not hard work, but work."

"Course, I'm glad they came in because it would be more pain and work if they didn't," continued McKennon. "It boils down to one less organism to worry about."

Malaria is another disease that falls under McKennon's microscope. A blood smear is taken and observed for a "ruby form with a blue dot."

"Stretch" says his worst job is testing for roundworms, ringworms and cysts. To do this he must have a fecal specimen from the patient. "Some guys even urinate in the bowl," he said laughingly.

McKennon only has three more months in the service. But if you come in during those 90 days, you can be sure he'll stretch his neck out for you.

Change of command for 198th's 14th Cav

By SP4 Thomas Boehler

CHU LAI (198th Inf. Bde. IO) -- Captain F. Cherrie assumed command of H Troop, 17th Cavalry of the 23rd Infantry Division's 198th Infantry Brigade recently, replacing Captain Paul R. Davis, who moves to a new job with the Division's 11th Infantry Brigade Headquarters.

Cherrie (Millville, N.J.) joins H Troop after serving at Bad Hersfeld, Germany, where he was the commanding officer of I Troop, 3rd Battalion, 14th Cavalry. On a previous tour in Vietnam Cherrie served as platoon leader of an armed helicopter platoon.

While serving as H Troop commander, Davis (Jackson, Mich.) received a Purple Heart and two Silver Stars. Operating along QL 9 near the Laotian border where H Troop was keeping the highway open for traffic, Davis' armored personnel carrier was hit by a rocket propelled grenade, wounding him in the arm.

He refused medical attention and led his men in two counterattacks in which the enemy was defeated and suffered heavy losses. For his actions Davis was awarded two Silver Stars.

In his farewell speech Davis cited the outstanding work done by the men of H Troop. He also thanked the cavalrymen for their excellent recent mission against enemy in the northern sector of South Vietnam.

Cherrie praised the spirit of the outgoing commander and men of H Troop. He also pledged his total support to continuing H Troop's success.

Present at the ceremony was Major Frederick I. Wilmoth (Harrisburg, Ill.). Wilmouth is commander of Task Force 23rd Cavalry, (Provisional).

A platoon leader of Charlie Co., 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry, 23rd Infantry Division makes a point from his map during a recent operation in the Ky Tra Valley. (U.S. Army Photo by 1Lt. Warren C. Mabie)

SGT. extends to save lives

By SGT. Thomas Mano

DA NANG (196th Inf. Bde. IO) – "Little John" may sound like a small bathroom to some people, but to a company in the 196th Infantry Brigade it denotes excellence and sarcrifice in battle.

Sergeant John F. Cannon (Pell City, Ala.) has spent 31 months, three weeks and four days in the jungles of Vietnam. Before he got a rear job 11 of those months were with Company A, 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry.

Cannon's first tour was with the 9th Division in Military Region IV in the Mekong Delta. A combination of friendship and concern for his fellow grunt provided the impetus for his eight-month extension.

"We had 27 guys who came into country together and were pretty "tight", said the infantryman. "We extended to conduct a training program to prepare men for the bush"

What's it like for men when they first set foot in the bush? Do they acquire a deep sense of apathy? "Nine times out of ten they don't," said "Little John". "Course, they have the jaws because they're out there, but most everybody just tries to learn every little thing."

When the sergeant first came into country, he was "on the tough side, jitterbugging and all that", but the hard living changed him quickly. He soon conceived what it was like to be associated with the same 100 odd guys every day and not be able to escape.

"It makes you realize you can get along with anybody and all races," said Cannon. "You get to see how a man really is."

Reflecting on his first firefight, "Little John" remembers a very embarrassing experience. "I had a bullet go through my canteen and thinking the dripping water was blood, I frantically called 'medic, medic", mused Cannon. "That medic dodged bullets to help me and like to beat me to death when he saw it."

Speaking from experience, Cannon knows the jungle can be rough. Two factors that really grate on your nerves are the climate and the desperation. "You definitely don't like the weather, but you know everything is out to get your blood; you're either looking to kill or looking to be killed."

What makes "Little John" return to the bush? What driving force makes him don his 90-pound rucksack and re-enter a world of possible death?

"I think I can be a help to all the guys out there and influence their idea of survival," said Cannon. "I relish the thought that this might be passed on and save somebody's life."

SOUTHERN CROSS
AMERICAL DIVISION

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'Project kids' makes many friends

Brigadier General Bertram K. Gorwitz, Assistant Division Commander (Support), registers approval of the merry-go-round-during a brief 'test drive'.

CHU LAI – The official title is "S-5" or "assisting the people of the Republic of Vietnam through cooperative civic actions projects", but at 1st Battalion, 14th Artillery Headquarters, it is better known as "Project Kids".

Project Kids, is a construction operation–ten full sets of playground equipment are being made for the village schools that surround Chu Lai (Headquarters of 1/14 Arty). The men of 1/14 have thus far produced two complete sets of playground equipment, including swings, see-saws, merry-go-rounds, slides and monkey bars. This construction occurs in addition to the regular daily duties, but no one has complained about the extra work yet.

"It's really great seeing their faces when we drive up with that playground gear," says 1st SGT. Tom T. Smith, who was with the project from the beginning. "We've made a lot of friends and left a lot of happy people."

The project was conceived by the men of survey, Headquarters Battery, SSG Donald Blow, SP5 Gene Gagner, SP5 Bob J. Grybko, SP5 William Hursey, SP4 Jay Kanemoto, and SP4 Randal Dahl.

"We wanted to do something for the kids, all of them. The men expressed a desire to participate in a meaningful project, something that counted. The equipment will last through thousands of children and make a lot of happy moments for all of them," commented SP4 Dahl.

The bright pastel paint finally dried early last week and preparations were made for a presentation ceremony at Ky Khoung School, outside An Tan.

The village was represented by the chief, school supervisor, principle, military advisor and of course, hundreds of kids.

Representing the 23rd Infantry Division were Brigadier General Bertram K. Gorwitz, Assistant Commander (support) of the Division, Col. Jack R. Sadler, Commanding Officer of 23rd Division Artillery and LTC Robert Ray, Commander of 1/46.

Summing up the aims of "Project Kids" in his speech, BG Gorwitz said, "The children of this village, of the Republic of Vietnam, are the future. We are glad to take some small part in their physical development and well-being."

It doesn't take the kids long to figure out the mechanics of see-sawing when a GI is around to lend a hand. Ky Khoung School, near Chu Lai, is the site of the new playground which received hundreds of child hours of use the day it was set up.

Mommasan watches her children join the gang to test the new slide. The slide is part of a set including see-saws, a merry-go-round, swing and monkey bars. This was the second of ten playground sets being prepared for public school children in the area around Chu Lai.

Story and Photos by
1LT Fred G. Vigeant

The school children pause from using their new playground equipment to listen to the 23rd Division Band under the direction of MSG Lloyd Byers.

Division soldiers work on different projects in the craft shop. Many varied areas of interest are offered.

A soldier works on a pair of leather moccasins in the leather department of the Chu Lai Special Craft Shop.

Craft shop--something for everyone

Here's an artsey-craftsey view of Specialist Four Dennis Whitaker, who runs the lapidary shop in the Crafts Shop.

The combination lounge-gallery is a good place to sit and relax, Craft magazines are available and works of art by 23rd Division soldiers are on display.

CHU LAI (23rd INF DIV I0) – Keep your cool and do something constructive, try the air-conditioned Chu Lai Special Services Crafts Shop.

The Crafts Shop is the biggest and best in Vietnam, and it needs more active participation. It is open every day from 1 p.m. to 10 p.m. for your convenience.

Most of its facilities are free, including a well equipped photo lab, fine arts shop, lapidary and jewelery shops, enameling and leather goods facilities, and plastic model kits.

There is enough equipment and space in the photo lab so you won't have to wait or be crowded. A color and ten black and white enlargers are available. At the present, Ektachrome color slides can be developed. In addition the Chu Lai Crafts Shop is the only such unit in Vietnam planning to do color printing.

You don't have to be an expert photographer either, Specialist Four Dave McCallister is there to instruct and help you. In civilian life he ran his own photo shop.

The fine arts and crafts section is handled by SP4 Ron Howard, who is quite apt in the various art projects offered. He will help you with paintings, tye-dyes, or anything you would like to make.

Painting supplies are free as long as you do the work in the Crafts Shop. You can purchase paint to take out of the shop. Any painting medium can be exercised, the choice is up to you.

The lapidary and jewelery shops are run by SP4 Dennis Whitaker. Complete facilities are offered, for the cutting of unfaceted stones. You can buy the stones at the Crafts Shop, at a reasonable price, or you can pick them up on the beach.

They also have settings, sterling silver and gold available for purchase in the sales store. Items which have been made by division personnel are on display throughout the Craft Shop to help you decide what you want to do and to show you what can be done with a little effort.

The leather shop is one of the most used areas of the Crafts Shop. Specialist Four Wayne Hawker is there to provide assistance whenever you need it.

You can make a varity of leather articles including belts, moccasins and sandles. The most popular seems to be the wide leather wrist bands.

Also there is an enameling shop where you can really get into difficult copper enameling or make a lot of ash trays, depending on your patience.

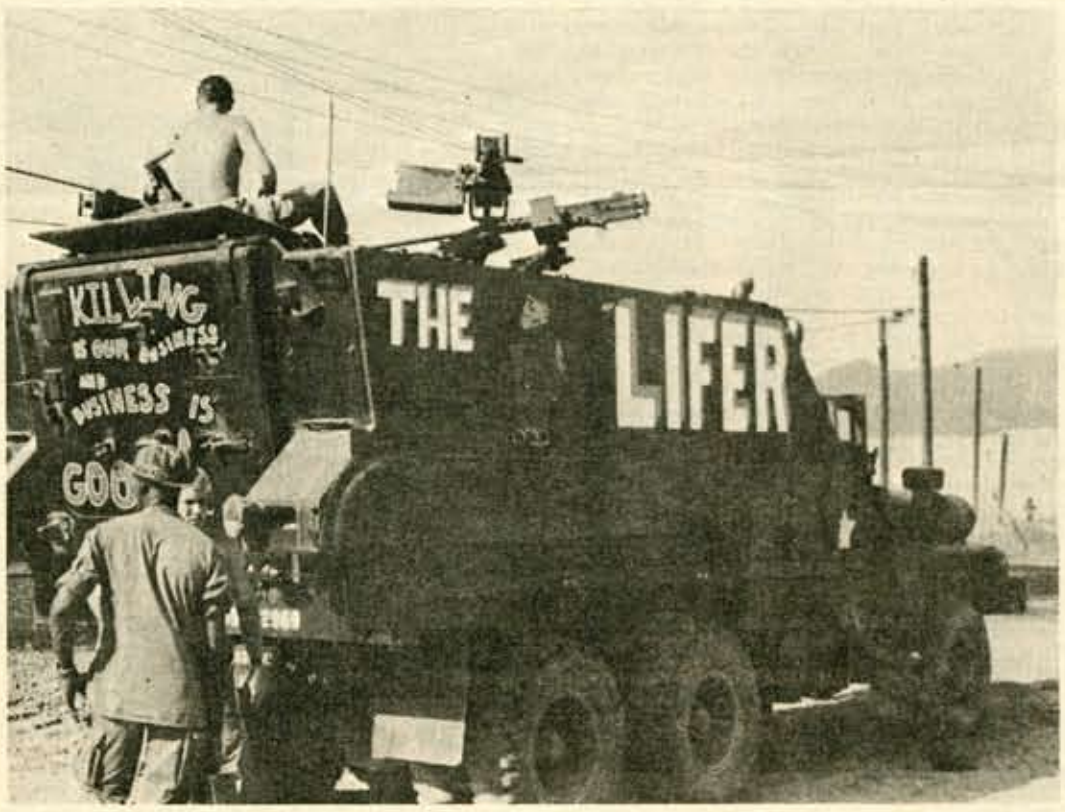
If you just want to see what can be done, there is a combination lounge-gallery where paintings, crafts and photography are displayed and on hand are almost every craft magazine.

The Crafts Shop is located in the 723rd Maintainance Battalion area next to the Divarty mess hall.

Story by
Sp/4 Rick Holloway
Photos by
Sp/4 Ron Cryderman

5th Bn., 46th Inf. stands down

A truck load of men from 5/46 take a last look at Chu Lai as they begin their trip to Da Nang.



The 5/46 equipment convoy was afforded some powerful excorts as witnessed here.

The endless line of vehicles and equipment belonging to 5/46 begins to form up just prior to departure for Da Nang.

The last of the convoy makes it's way to the gate and "on to Da Nang".

Photos by

Sp/4 Ron Cryderman

USAFI offers varied courses

By SP4 Greg Wright

FSB BRONCO (11th Brigade IO) – The united States Armed Forces Institute provides opportunities for todays soldier to expand his education.

Today a soldier may choose from a wide range of courses on the pre-high school, high school and college levels, as well as occupational and language courses. Regardless of a man's location USAFI has a representative to help him select and complete the courses of his choosing.

Pre-high school courses may be obtained for all levels below high school. These pre-high school courses are taught in classes supervised by qualified instructors or in individual study with the help of a tutor. An 8th grade equivalency certificate is available through General Educational Development (GED) testing.

On the high school level USAFI offers most courses available in civilian schools. These may be studied either in supervised classrooms or in individual study. Upon completion of study the GED high school equivalency is available.

College level courses from 44 colleges and universities in the United States are offered by USAFI. The student receives the same textbook used in civilian classrooms, workbooks or supplementary texts, and other materials relevent to the course. In addition a study guide is provided to aid the independent study.

Occupational courses are offered which may help a soldier increase his efficiency in his MOS or prepare him for a civilian vocation upon leaving the Army. These courses cover a wide range of skills.

USAFI's history started on 1 April 1942. The Army Institute was established to provide educational opportunities for enlisted men of the United States Army. Although the Institute grew from World War II, it's value was soon realized.

Since its beginning in 1942 USAFI has met with great success, enrolling well over 7 million military personnel as students. Regardless of career plans members of the armed forces should not fail to consider the possibilities of continuing or completing education with the U.S. Armed Forces Institute.

Staff Sergeant Homer L. Jarrell (Logan, Va.), vehicle inspector, checks out the front axle of a jeep at LZ Phoenix where B Battery, 3rd Battalion, 18th Artillery is based at Tien Phuoc. (U.S. Army Photo by SP4 Guy Winkler)

Engr's. improve Rawhide

By SP4 Kerry Baird

LZ RAWHIDE (26th Engr. Bn. IO) – During the first two weeks of May, a remarkable thing happened to Landing Zone (LZ) Rawhide, 15 miles south west of Da Nang. First Lieutenant Peter Mandle, (Pompton Lakes, N.J.) and 10 men of Alpha Company, 26th Engineer Battalion, 23rd Infantry Division, came to give the fire support base a "face lifting". Their primary mission was the construction of a forward refueling and rearmament complex for helicopter gunships.

In the first two days most of the complex was completed. Four refueling pads, two rearmament pads, three fuel storage sites and an ammo storage area were completed, and a 300 meter stretch of road was relocated.

In order to complete the project, the men had to spread 20,000 gallons of peneprime, a petroleum product used to stablize the compacted earth, over the complex to prevent the dust "storms" that accompany helicopter landings. The real work started when the engineers were told that the last shipment of peneprime would not arrive on schedule.

Having exhausted their supply of peneprime, the engineers cast about for other work. First they prepared sites for a Radar Operations Center, a radar trailer, and a 155mm howitzer position.

Next, they built three dugout positions for track mounted, twin 40mm "Dusters" followed by a parking lot extension for 3rd Battalion, 82nd Artillery vehicles. After that, four defensive bunkers were built and fields of fire were cleared in front of the bunkers.

Then the engineers found out that the hill was plagued by a water shortage. Water was being pumped from the Song Vu Gia River at the foot of the hill. The pumps were designed to "push" the water through a pipe line to the water tanks on top of the hill.

However, the pumps can only suck water 10 feet below the level of the pump. The water was 14 feet below the pump level though. A bucket loader was dispatched to the pump site and within 20 minutes had excavated enough dirt from the pumping site to allow the pump to function properly.

Back on the hill, the peneprime distribution truck was inoperable. But, men of Alpha Company had a ready answer to the problem. Four at a time, barrels of peneprime were loaded into the scoop of the bucket loader and holes were punched in the ends with a pick. This process resulted in splattering the unfortunate men from head to foot in the sticky black substance.

Then the bucket loader backed over the area to be covered, spreading an even coat of peneprime over the surface to the delight of all concerned.

While on LZ Rawhide, the engineers saw their first action. The enemy shelled the hill during the second and third days of the engineers stay. Specialist Five Bruce Brown (Phoenix, Ariz.), commenting on the constant use of the bunkers said, "If this keeps up, when I get home I'll probably build a bunker without thinking. And Mom won't even like me using her good pillow cases for sand bags."

When asked if he liked working at Rawhide, Staff Seargeant Patrick Cannon (Perkinston, Miss.), answered in the negative. "I'like it except for the rockets and I don't EVEN like them."

Understandably, the engineers would rather be on the giving end rather than the receiving end.

Meanwhile the peneprime hadn't arrived on the resupply convoy. "We can't go back to Da Nang till we get the last shipment of peneprime spread," said Mandle.

If it takes much longer, we can start looking for the Grand Opening of the Rawhide Hilton, built of course, by the Combat Engineers of Alpha Company, 26th Engineers Battalion.

Christmas came late for orphans

By SP4 Fred Abatemarco

CHU LAI (23rd Inf Div IO) – If it is true that Christmas comes only once a year, someone certainly didn't inform Mrs. Dorthy L. Alexander.

As the wife of Major William M. Alexander, executive officer of the 523rd Signal Battalion, 23rd Infantry Division, she might seem a far cry from the traditional St. Nicholas, but it is doubtful that anyone could convince the 400 children at the Quang Ngai Catholic Orphanage that their most recent benefactor was anyone else.

Mrs. Alexander recently spearheaded a drive in Seattle, Washington that produced over 2,000 pounds of clothing, sundries and toys for the orphanage. With the help of a local wives group, a number of churches and even the services of a moving firm and answering service, Mrs. Alexander amassed what is probably the largest single donation that the orphanage has ever received. When did the project have its origin? Last Christmas, naturally.

At the time, the 523rd Signal Battalion was acting as a sponsor for the orphanage. As the men became more familiar with the children, their visits became more regular and word of their endeavors naturally found its way back to the people at home.

Mrs. Alexander received the reports from her husband with avid enthusiasm, and before long she had the local radio station donating spot announcements for collections.

An indication of how successful her efforts were is the fact that a few strings had to be pulled with the Navy and the Air Force in order to transport the goods from the West Coast to Da Nang. And when a convoy recently visited the orphanage, they were only able to transport half of the bundles; the remainder to be taken at a later date.

'Wildcats' support 23rd Div.

By PFC William Hutchison

CHU LAI (23rd Inf. Div. 10) – On April 6th the "Wildcats", Alpha Company, 228th Assualt Support Helicopter Battalion, arrived in Chu Lai from the "Bear Cat" area near Long Binh, Vietnam. The "Wildcats" was the oldest "Hook" company in the III Corps. Operating with the older and slower "Model A Chinook" they accrued over 60,000 combat flight hours while with the 1st Cavalry Division.

The "Wildcats" are based in Chu Lai with their headquarters in Da Nang. They are working in direct support of the 24th Corps, 23rd Infantry Division and the 6th ARVN Regiment. Logging approximately 600 flight hours per month the "hooks" fly direct Combat Support (DCS) missions moving troops in and out of the field, transporting tons of ammunition, food and equipment to the troops in the field.

Down south Alpha Co. logged over 1,000 combat flight hours per month, again flying mostly DCS missions. There they also flew special "ladder missions".

Captain Ernest E. Tuggle (Montgomery, Ala.), the company operations officer, described them: "We would take our "hooks" out to pick up an infantry unit in an area where it was too thick to land our big birds so we would lower a 100 ft. ladder out the 'hook'. It was quite a job to hold that big bird steady while the 'grunts' scrambled aboard."

Another important mission performed was the "Tac E's" or combat essential missions, during which the "Wildcats" were called upon to carry emergency resupplies to beseiged friendly areas.

During these mercy missions, many in the black of night the CH-47S's carried ammunition or water into areas that were under enemy fire.

The company flew DCS in Laos, working 24 hours a day. They were the first "Chinooks" to fly into Laos during "Lam Son 719." There the "Wildcats" hauled troops and pulled a number of "ladder missions" while taking enemy fire.

An M-60 gunner of Charlie Co., 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry, 23rd Infantry Division totes his "Pig" through a shallow stream during a recent operation in the Ky Tra Valley. (U.S. Army Photo by 1Lt. Warren C. Mabie)

Beautiful, curvacious Julie Christie currently starring in "The Go-between", has performed in many a moving picture. We thought you might appreciate seeing her in an 'un-moving' pose.

Recon haltsa ambush

PFC Larry Rich

DA NANG (196th Inf. Bde. IO) – If fast reactions spell the difference between life and death on the battlefield, then the men of the Reconnaissance Platoon, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, 196th Infantry Brigade, will live up to their motto, "We Who Do Not Die".

Having killed an enemy soldier the previous day, the platoon was careful to expose itself as little as possible as they made a recent sweep west of LZ Hawk Hill.

Specialist Four Art Lerma (San Antonio, Texas) was walking point for a small patrol, when he noticed a path bordering and passing through a hedgerow. But the pointman made a new trail. After cutting through the hedgerow and pushing through a patch of elephant grass, the Texan found himself standing behind some enemy soldiers. They had set up an ambush along the regular trail.

Disregarding his own safety, SP4 Lerma stood fully exposed and fired into the enemy force. He stopped only to change 30-round magazines in his M-16.

Hearing the sounds of the fire-fight, First Lieutenant James F. Dowling (Honolulu, Hawaii), platoon leader, radioed for air support and led a group of men from their position to support the embattled squad.

Within minutes, helicopter from F Troop, 8th Cavalry, 16th Aviation Squadron (Blue Ghosts) arrived at the scene. The helicopter flight, consisting of two gunships, a light observation helicopter (LOH), and a UH-1H Helicopter (slick) containing a five man reactionary force, began searching the area for the fleeing enemy.

Spotting a well-hidden trail, the LOH pilot radioed the recon unit. The helicopter flew in a tight circle over the trail to mark the location for the ground troops.

The fact the trail was being used by the retreating enemy troops was soon evident. The doorgunner's bursts of suppresive fire were answered with return fire. Damaged by the enemy bullets, the chopper was forced to land.

The slick immediately landed the "Blue Ghost" reactionary force in a clearing near the downed aircraft. As the men attempted to reach the craft, they came under hostile fire.

The recon force requested the slick to pick up a group of men for insertion into the same area as the disabled helicopter and besieged reactionary force. While waiting for clearance, Lt. Dowling attempted to lead his men into the area by foot.

Coming under fire the men of Echo Recon pulled back to determine another approach. Suddenly, the "Blue Ghost" chopper radioed them to prepare for pick-up; the slick was going to transport them to the battle area.

Scrambling aboard the craft, Lt. Dowling and the rescue force were taken where the reactionary force had originally landed. Within minutes they were giving support fire for the "Blue Ghost" troops.

Splitting his force, Lt. Dowling and two of his men manuevered to the downed LOH. "I've never met two men happier to see anyone in my life," the platoon leader said. "The pilot and gunner were in a bad spot, and for a while it looked like the first people to get to them would be the enemy."

The small rescue force soon rejoined the recon and "Blue Ghost" ground forces. The combined firepower of the soldiers and gunships forced the enemy to retreat.

The entire fire-fight had lasted only a few minutes, but during that time the recon unit had served in many capacities, from patrol, to attack force, to rescue squad. In an ever changing war, the men "who do not die" had proven their adaptability.

Twenty-third Infantry Division infantrymen inspect a deserted ville southwest of Tien Phuoc during a recent patrol through the area. The troopers are with Delta Co., 2nd Bn. 1st Inf. (U.S. Army Photo by SP4 John Cushman)

USO plans 'flag fair'

By SP4 Rick Holloway

CHU LAI (23rd Inf. Div. IO) – Would you believe a six-legged race? How about a pie-eating contest?

These and many more fun filled games will be yours to compete in at the Chu Lai USO, Sunday, June 13th, from 1200 through 1600 hours.

The combined "rally round the flag FAIR" is sponsored by the service clubs around the Chu Lai area, including the USO, the Sandpiper Service Club, and the 16th CAG Service Club.

In addition to the aforementioned games there will be tests of skill in egg throwing, watermelon eating, tossing water balloons (no mention of whom at), a Demolition Derby where you get to bang up a 3/4 ton truck, basketball and volleyball games.

There will be live music from 1430 to 1600 for those of you who would rather just sit around and watch.

The girls making all this possible are from the USO: Renee Loustaunau, Donna Swope, and Sue Carlson; from the Sandpiper Service Club: Fern Wilgus and Ann Shoupe; and representing the 16th CAG Club: Kathy Phillips and Sue Goldenson.

Private First Class Stewart Moon (Garden City, Mich.) praises his dog "Chico" after the dog alerted to a decoy in a recent training excersise in Chu Lau. The two work as a team for the Americal Division's 198th Infantry Brigade. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Thomas C. Elmer)

Regulars find NVA camp

By SP4 Thomas F. Boehler

LZ DOTTIE (23rd Inf Div IO) – A luxury NVA training camp, complete with running water and anti-pollution chimney in the mess hall, was discovered recently by infantrymen from the 198th Brigade, west of Chu Lai.

A platoon from Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry, was moving through mountainous terrain to support another element of the company when they came upon the camp at the top of a small ravine. Upon searching the area, the "Regulars" found six structures, including a large mess hall.

"Another element had spotted a large group of enemy and we were moving into a blocking position," said Sergeant Gary Piper (Denver, Colo.), the platoon leader. "Our pointman saw one of the structures when we were about 100 meters away. Half of our element manuevered to surround the area and the rest moved in to search the camp."

A thorough search turned up simulated barbed wire defenses and 75 practice Chicom hand grenades. The infantrymen also found two chicken coops, latrines, and an enclosed lookout position in a tree.

"The place must have been a sapper training camp," said Piper. "It was built to last a long time. All the structures had basement type bunkers with trap doors over them and everything was camouflaged from the air as well as the ground."

Luxuries abounded in the camp. "The mess hall was really something," said Specialist Four Bob Skibo (Fayette City, Pa.), the radio operator. "It was big enough to seat 40 people and even had a built-in stove. The chimney was an engineering marvel. It had a bellows which blew smoke through a tunnel that had small holes opening to the surface. The smoke then filtered up through the trees and would be invisible from the air."

The "Regulars" burned the structures to prevent their further use by the enemy and requested air strikes on the area.

VOLAR puch is on in 'nam

FSB BRONCO (11th Inf. Bde. IO) – Demand is up, and one of the world's largest organizations is investing millions of dollars in testing innovations. And more people are investing their future in the opportunities.

The challange to meet increased quotas and yet maintain quality is being met by reenlistment NCOs like SSG. James Bobo who operates out of a red, white and blue office-hootch in the 11th Bde. Bobo, with a smile, pops up just about anywhere at anytime with a green ledger and an encyclopedia of Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) in his head.

"There is definitely a push on for more reenlistments," said Bobo. "Under the commander's signature quotas are being imposed, and career counselors at battalion and brigade level are exempted from extra duties. Also air transportation has been made readily available. By July 1, our monthly quotas will go from 1 percent of assigned strength to 2 percent."

Bobo is also placing importance on communication between career counselors and commanders at lower levels. "The battalion counselor is only one man and he can't get everywhere," explained Bobo. He said he is attempting to keep people informed, and cited instances where prospective reenlistees said "no" simply because they had the misconception that they would automatically be extended in Vietnam after reenlistment.

New emphasis is helping, and Bobo said the number of pending reenlistments has jumped higher in May than in any of his six months in the Brigade. Other general changes in Army policy have also contributed to the higher rate. "There is no restriction to MOS now," Bobo commented." "So we've had more people reenlisting as doorgunners and in the mechanical fields."

"He also cites the fact that more people are getting involved in reenlistment. Special ceremonies are held during the Brigade commander's formal briefings, and the 11th Brigade commander takes a keen interest in reenlistment, passing his advice to other commanders and excutive officers.

Another deciding factor reenlistment had been a chance for a rear job. Nearly 80 percent of the Brigade's reenlistment involve people moving from the field to train in another occupational specialty such as mechanic or doorgunner. Most of these soldiers are between 20 and 30-years-old, and in grades E-3 through E-5.

In the future, Bobo sees an enhancement of the job of reenlistment NCO recruiter because of VOLAR. "It is due to the fact that under the new concepts, the only way to come in the Army or stay in it will be through a recruiter or career counselor."

Already, he said, the Army has doubled the number of reenlistment NCOs in the U.S. from 2,500 to approximately 5,000.