SOUTHERN CROSS
AMERICAL DIVISION
Vol. 4, No. 31 Chu Lai, Vietnam Aug 6, 1971

Air Force nurses' wings are angelic

By PFC Larry Rich

CAMP REASONER, (196th Inf. Bde. IO) – The Air Force has always been connected with the idea of wings, but as far as a group of villagers south of Da Nang are concerned, the wings of two Air Force nurses are angelic.

First Lieutenants Mary A. Miller (Katharus, Pa.) and Penny J. Spalding (Princeton, Ill.,) were among the Air Force medical personnel who volunteered for a recent inter-service Medical Civic Action Project (MEDCAP) with the 196th Infantry Brigade.

A small convoy of Army and Air Force vehicles left Da Nang and traveled into the rural area outside the city. Wherever the MEDCAP stopped, the nurses were surrounded by groups of astonished children and interested women. This was the first time that most of them had ever seen an American woman.

Easy smiles and a readiness to answer questions soon erased the natural shyness of the villagers. They were just women talking about whatever women talk about.

Tables were set up and the MEDCAP got underway. The doctor and nurses worked on serious diseases and internal disorders while the other tables had medics cleansing cuts and extracting teeth.

"Eight days ago the ARVN's had a large battle with communists in this area," First Lieutenant George N. Monsson (Chicago, Ill.) assistant S-5 (Civil Affairs) for the 196th Inf. Bde., told the Air Force personnel. "A number of homes were destroyed in the fighting and some people lost all their possessions in the destruction, so we are coming at a time when our help is really needed."

Besides the medical aid, there were clothes to be passed out to the now homeless villagers. Food supplies captured from the communists were also distributed.

Working closely with MACV and the S-2 laison team from the 196th Inf. Bde.'s 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, the S-5 insured that the supplies were distributed.

Hundreds of people received medical treatment during the afternoon, some came on crutches and one was carried on a litter. Working through interpretors, the doctor was able to question the patients about the symptoms and give detailed instructions for using the medicine they received.

"I've only been here a month and a half," Miller said, "but I'm amazed at how the people trust and come to us. They are quite open and friendly."

The people knew that the MEDCAP was there to help them. If there was any doubt, they soon learned what every GI knows. American women have winning smiles and an easy way of making friends.

EM Club gets roof

By SP4 Mark A. Schulz

CHU LAI, (23d Inf. Div. IO) -- Enlisted men saw the completion of a roof over their club last month as the final chore of tarring holes in the old tin was completed.

Delta Company. 26th Engineers coordinated with 23d Infantry Division (Americal) Repair and Utilities (R & U) on the project. Some two to five personnel from R and U and six to eight personnel from Delta Company worked almost daily on the project.

Sergeant Joseph Szulewski, acting platoon sergeant, said the roofing project was begun the week of June 13, but work was delayed several times because other building projects had a higher priority.

Construction materials for the project were scrounged from old buildings, except for two-by-fours. Much of the wood and tin was taken from the old 23d S and T building, being torn down near Gate 1.

The EM Club project began June 14 as two-by-four crossbeams were constructed, and supporting four-by-fours were bolted to the floor to support two large roof beams. A tin roof was added and holes in the roof were tarred.

The front of the club was screened-in and boarded up.

CHU LAI, (23d Inf. Div. IO)--Specialist Four Tim Vincent (San Diego, Calif.) walks a beam on the roof of the Enlisted Mens Club here. Vincent and other personnel from the 23d Infantry Division (Americal) Repair and Utilities division were doing the work project on the EM Club, reusing wood and tin from torn down building in the Americal area. (U.S. Army Photo by Sp/4 Jimmy J. Stallings)

'7 & 7' program effective Oct. 1

CHU LAI, Special – A modified MACV R&R program--combining seven days of R&R and seven days of leave--will go into effect beginning October 1, it was announced here recently.

The new policy, referred to as the "Seven and Seven Program," will allow service members to take one of the two authorized seven-day leaves in conjunction with a seven-day R&R to Hawaii.

During this 14-day period, personnel may be authorized to visit CONUS. Participants in the program, which is available to all U.S. military personnel as well as eligible civilians, will be flown to Hawaii and back at government expense on special R&R aircraft.

Upon their arrival in Hawaii, servicemen may fly at reduced commercial rates to the U.S. or they may spend any portion or all of the "7&7" period in Hawaii. Only persons participating in the "7&7" program may continue to the United States.

In order to participate in the U.S. travel portion of the "7&7" program, the individual must show evidence of a confirmed ticket for return air travel to Hawaii.

In essence, a soldier could meet his wife in Hawaii, spend four or five days there and then fly home to the United States, spending the remainder of his combined leave and R&R at home. An alternative could be to fly home first and then return to Hawaii with his wife a few days prior to his scheduled return flight to RVN.

Those taking advantage of the program must make the return flight to Vietnam 14 days after their arrival in Hawaii. Officials pointed out that this program is not authorized for other R&R sites, and travellers must fly from RVN to Hawaii and return on aircraft specifically designated for the program.

It was also pointed out that while the wearing of civilian clothing enroute to and from Hawaii is authorized, service members must be in proper uniform for onward travel to the United States at reduced commercial fares.

Personnel planning to participate in the program must complete the "7&7" prior to 120 days of their normal rotation date, and they may not begin earlier than the first day of their fourth month in country.

Persons who extend their tours for a period of six months may combine their subsequent R&R and seven-day leave under this program. Those desiring to take a normal seven-day R&R to Hawaii rather than take advantage of the "7&7" program may do so.

Officials added that those personnel who will have used their normal R&R or 14-day leave will not become eligible for this program when it becomes effective.

The new modified program does not affect the current R&R and leave options, it was emphasized by a spokesman from the 23d Inf. Div. G-1 section. The regular R&R and the 14-day leave authorization will remain in effect.

23d Infantry Division
PROJECT HELP, Question of the Week
QUESTION: I am DEROSing in the first week of August. Will I get a full month's hostile fire pay?

ANSWER: If you are PCSing from Vietnam, you will get a full month's hostile fire pay. If you are ETSing, you will be paid according to the number of days spent in country during your last month.

Command change for — 1/52nd Inf. —

By PFC Mike Cassidy

FIREBASE STINSON, (23rd Inf. Div. IO) – Major Robert F. Snyder took command of the 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry in a brief ceremony presided over by Major General Frederick J. Kroesen, commanding general of the 23rd Infantry Division (Americal).

Major Charles E. Getz, the retiring commander of the 1st Bn., 52nd. Inf. stepped down after a distinguished tour in Vietnam. Snyder was battalion executive officer before his promotion to battalion commander.

Several awards were made to Getz before the formal change of command. Kroesen presented to Getz two Distinguished Flying Crosses, Silver Star, and Legion of Merit Medal. Also Colonel Pham Van Nghin, commanding officer of the 6th ARVN Regiment presented to the Major a Cross of Gallantry with gold star.

This is Snyder's second tour in Vietnam. During his first tour he was an advisor with the United States Military Assistance Command. He recieved his first of three Bronze Stars for the heroism he demonstrated while working with the 179th Regional Forces of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam.

In 1953 he graduated from the Infantry Officer Camdidate School at Fort Benning, Ga. His military training also includes Jump Master and Intelligence Reconnaissance schooling. In March, 154, he began a sixteen month tour in the Republic of Korea. He served with the 1st Battalion, 31st Infantry as platoon leader and reconnaissance officer.

He returned to civilian life in 1956. At the Long Beach State College he majored in political science. In-1964 he went to the Univevsity of Arizona until shortly before his return to the Army in 1967.

New Secretary of the Army Robert F. Froehlke reviews members of the 3d Infantry (The Old Guard), accompanied by Col. M.E. Lee, commander of troops, following the ceremony in which he was sworn into office by Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird.

ARVN's graduate from 723rd Maint–'Project Buddy'

By SP4 William Hutchison

CHU LAI (23rd Inf. Div. I0) – Every three weeks or so, the 723rd Maintanence Battalion has a graduation ceremony.

Graduation ceremony? That's right, right here in the Republic of Vietnam---diplomas and speeches--the works.

These graduation ceremonies bring to an end a three week period of training for soldiers of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN). Called "Project Buddy", this instruction is conducted by the men of the 723rd, for 16 or so students who receive on-the-job training in such fields as welding, small weapons maintenance, typewriter repair, warehouse operation, small radio repair, artillery mechanics, generator repair, five ton wrecker operation, heavy engineer equipment repair and wheeled vehicle mechanics.

For three weeks these selected students stay in special barracks in the battalion area and work with GIs to learn how to operate or maintain company or battalion size equipment. On a one-to-one basis these men work hand and elbow with their American instructor.

Though just ordinary GI type mechanics, these instructors do a fantastic job of producing competent workers out of their students. To overcome the language barrier the mechanic shows the student the problem and how to repair it, all by doing it first himself and then giving the student a try at it.

"They catch on pretty fast and can usually handle the job after the first few days or so," stated Specialist 5 Robert A. Sutcliffe (Deerfield, Ohio), a wrecker operator, who has trained four students in the operation of his truck. "After only a couple of trys at the controls they can drop the hook right into my hand," he added.

Specialist five W. T. Wood (Olive Branch, Miss.) who has helped train 20 students during his tour as a wheeled vehicle mechanic, stated that: "The students we get know pretty much what is going on when they get here, real smart fellas. We just ort of put the finishing touches on their training during the three weeks here."

Since "Project Buddy's" formation in November of 1970, approximately 150 students have gone through the 723rd's program. In the beginning they were just wished a fond farewell and sent back to their units---scattered throughout the Quang Ngai and Quang Tin provinces.

Now thanks to Captain Philip Schlachter (Cincinnati, Ohio), the project director, the students can look forward to taking part in a graduation ceremony and receiving a diploma from the Department of the Army attesting to the successful completion of training in their special field.

The battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Sidney J. Crabtree and Major Tran-Dinh-Trong, I Area Logistics Commander for Quang Ngai and Quang Tin were also present to say a few words to the graduates. Refreshments wrapped up the event, as the men are eager to return to their old units.

For the men of the 723rd, "Vietnamization" is happening. They can proudly point to their fine record of producing competent mechanics through "Project Buddy", which is now the Army's oldest program of its kind in the Republic of Vietnam.

SOUTHERN CROSS
AMERICAL DIVISION

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Reporter returns from Da Nang

Editors Note: This is the second and final part of SP4 Sam Rousso's report on why a story wasn't written. Last week, we traveled with Sam to Da Nang, where he got off the helicopter at the wrong place. That was the start of his trouble. When he finally got to the 196th Light Infantry Brigade, 23d Infantry Division (Americal)--after a detour to the Da Nang Military Police (MP) station--no one had ever heard of the person he was supposed to interview. It was decided he should return to Chu Lai.

By SP4 Sam Rousso

CHU LAI, (23d Inf. Div. I0) – I was taken over to the Brigade S-1 and issued some travel orders. "There's a Hook headed for Chu Lai at 4," I was told.

The rain which had started at mid-morning hadn't let up yet. I got to the helipad in plenty of time. I had my travel orders, my camera and my "Official U.S. Army Correspondent" shoulder patch. None of these were to do any good.

I looked at my watch. Not yet 4, and the rain seemed to be coming down harder. There was no space left in the CONEX being used as a control tower, but there was a chair in front, so I sat down. The Hook at 4 p.m. turned into a Slick at 6 p.m. I was thoroughly soaked, as was everyone else. Then I found out there were only four seats on the Slick, and I had sixth priority. I stood and watched in sodden silence as four of the five people ahead of me boarded and took off.

I looked down, and saw a symbol, I picked up a nut and a bolt and screwed them together--a perfect symbol for the day.

Keeping with the tenor of the day, I had to hike the mile or so back to the 196th Information Office (I0). By the time I got there, I knew without even looking--they were closed--and the rain just kept on coming. Not knowing whether to laugh or cry, I did neither. I thought.

It was raining and starting to get cold. Night was coming on--strong. Obviously I had to find shelter. To do that, I would have to find someone who would believe my story--or I would be spending the night, at least, in the shelter of the nearest MP station.

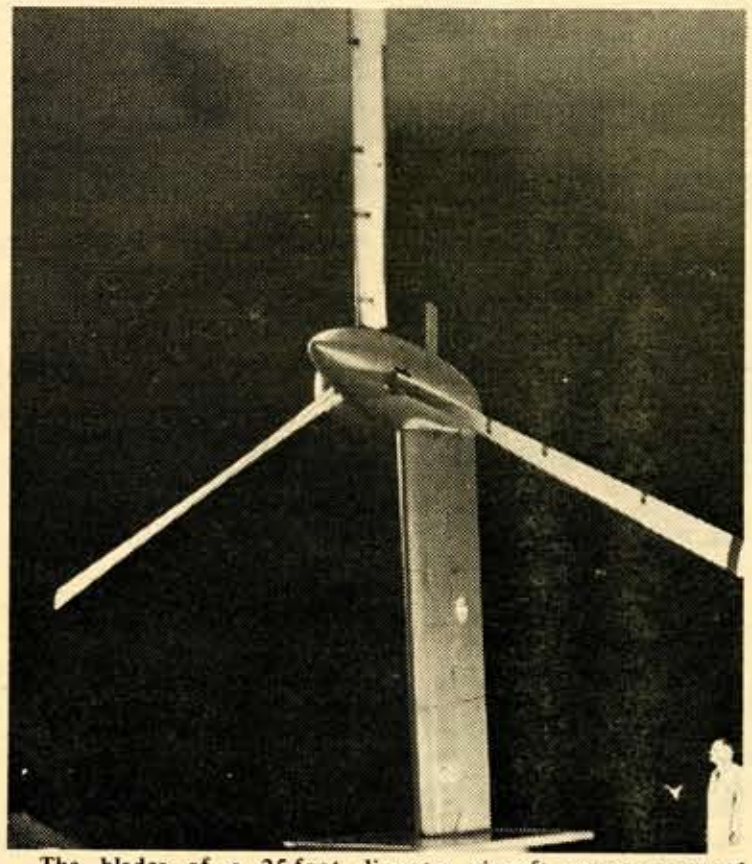
Luckily S-1 was still open. Even more luckily, the guy who issued me the travel orders was there. So, I spent the night in the Brigade S-1 hootch.

I woke up the next morning to the sledge hammering of tropical raindrops on the roof. I figured that since the rain hadn't let up yet, it wasn't anywhere close to doing so. After breakfast, I made my way back to the 10th Public Information Detachment (PID). To say the least, they were astonished to see me. Efforts to get me back to Chu Lai were frantic--and futile. I even tried to catch the 4 o'clock Hook or the 6 o'clock Slick, but Even the CONEX control tower was closed down. I was starting to imagine myself stuck in Da Nang for the durtaion.

Around noon, it stopped raining long enough for me to get something to eat. I was pondering my next move when Sergeant Tom Mano asked me if I minded going back by truck. I was just desperate enough to agree.

One hour and forty-five minutes later, after one of the most hair-raising rides of my life, I was back in Chu Lai. Among the highlights of the ride were being scared witless by soldiers of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam who were shooting fish. (I just heard the shots at first–I didn't know who was shooting or at what) and creeping through villes, hoping we didn't hit anybody or anything.

All in all, it was three days.



The blades of a 25-foot diameter aircraft proprotor stand motionless after breezing through tests in a wind tunnel at a simulated speed of 408 knots. The proprotor is being considered for use both during vertical take-offs and forward flight. The National Aeronautical and Space Administration and the U.S. Army Aeronautical Reasearch Laboratory conducted the test at Ames Reasearch Center, Moffett Field, Calif. (Photo courtesy Bell Helicopter Co.)

'Tae Kwon'-unarmed combat

CHU LAI (23d Inf. Div. IO) – A group of 15 pajama clad Americans and one Korean face each other, their feet are bare, their faces grimace in concentration.

They snap to attention and salute—"Tae Kwon" echoes throughout the Special Services gym, as another of the nightly classes in the Korean art of self defense begins.

Fifteen members, or so, of the Americal Division, under the tuliage of Sergeant Ahn Jong Hoo, a Republic of Korea Marine, are learning the art of "Tae Kwon-Do", a form of Korean Karate. Their instructor holds a 5th degree Black Belt in this ancient form of unarmed combat.

Clad in their "gi"—a traditional loose-fitting exercise suit, the men are run through the many different moves of this complex art. Hoo moves among the group barking out commands and correcting the positioning of his students arms or legs. Balance is important.

Tae Kwon-Do originated approximately 1350 years ago, during the Silla Dynasty in Korea. Translated from Korean "TAE" literally means to kick or smash with the feet, or a jumping kick; "KWON" means a fist, chiefly to punch or destroy with the hand or fist; "DO" means the art, way or method. Put it all together and you come up with the techniques of unarmed combat for self defense, involving punches, jumping or flying kicks, blocks and dodges with the hands and feet to destroy the opponent.

To the Korean people it represents more than the mere physical use of skilled movements. It also implies a way of thinking and life particular in installing a spirit of strict self imposed discipline of noble, moral conduct.

Throughout the classes Hoo maintains rigid discipline, the men snapping to his commands, shouting loud enough to shake the gym and putting themselves wholeheartedly into the sport. After only a few minutes the sweat starts to run and the muscles go taunt, faces are grim. Another command. The group whirles as one and snaps into a "double knife block". Then still another command, and so on.

As the night progresses the men divide off into pairs to try breaking holds and throwing their opponents. All the actions are precise and to the command.

The highlight of each evening comes when some of the more advanced men show their skills by demonstrating flying kicks. Leaping over three of his fellow students, the kicker would strike a punching bag driving it back a considerable distance.

Sergeant Hoo, showing complete control over his body, ran toward the bag, leaped, roled over in the air and struck the bag with such velocity that for a man, the blow would have meant instant death.

Major Charles R. Smith (Camden, S.C.), one of the classes most advanced students, holds a 1st degree Brown Belt, having trained for more than a year and a half. As a student gets better, he passes from the novice White Belt, through the degrees of Blue Belt and Brown Belt, to the coveted Black Belt, the sign of an acknowledged expert.

Besides being a student, Major Smith also assists in the instruction of newer members of the class.

Smith stated that; "Tae Kwon-Do, for me, is a great way to stay in shape, especially when I am tied to a desk every day. Also being such a little guy, I thought it might be a good thing to learn—so I won't be pushed around."

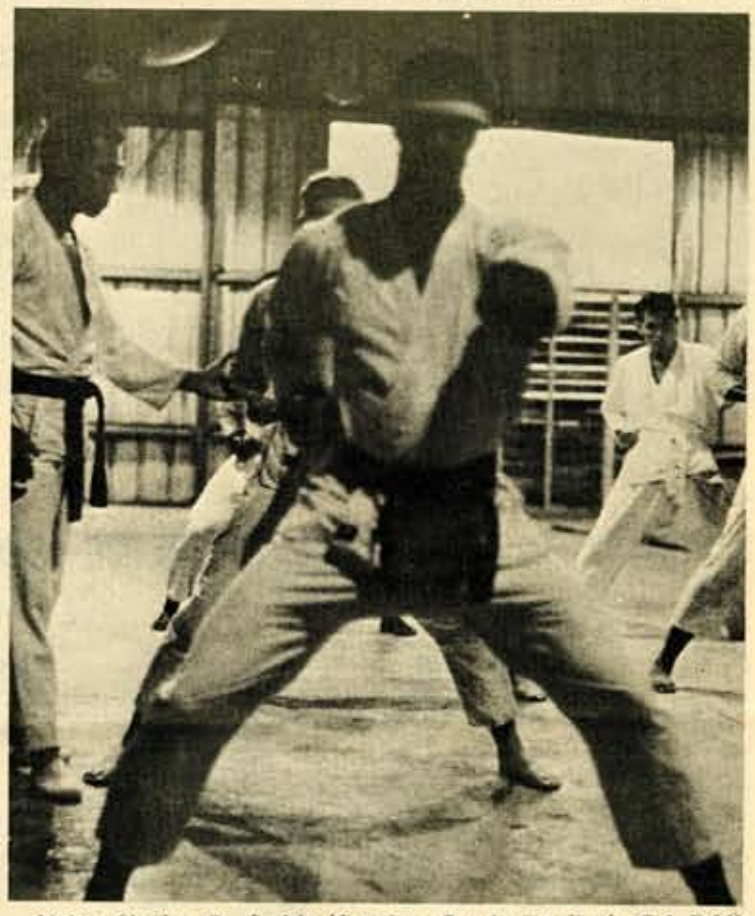
If you have ever seen Major Smith, who is G-3 DOT (Director of Training), you would wonder who, this side of Joe Fraizer, would even raise their voice at him.

Story and photos

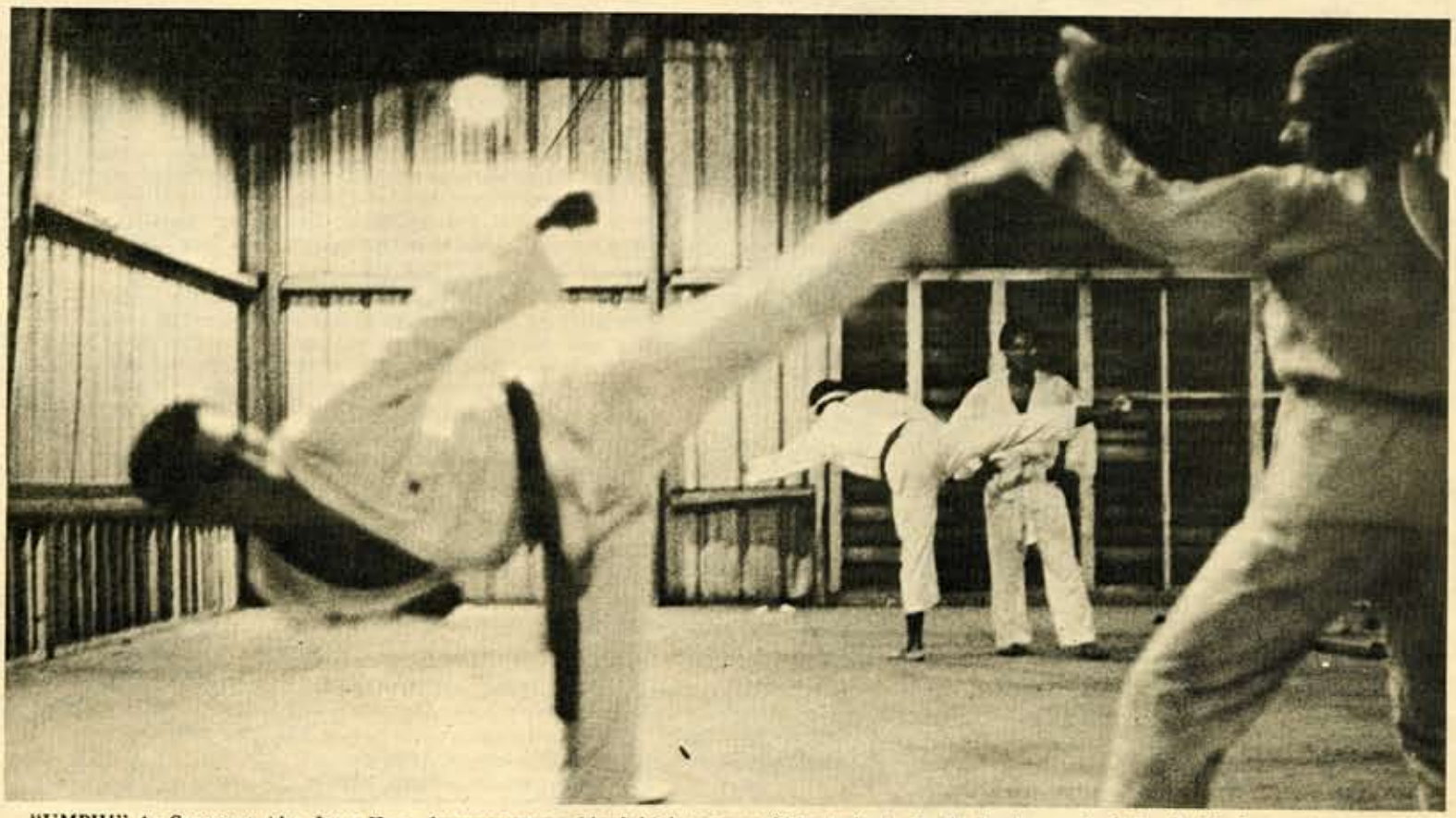
by

Sp4 William Hutchison

After only a few nights of instruction in "Tae Kwon-Do," a Korean form of self defense, these beginners desplay remarkably good form as they run through the various steps of this complex variation of karate.



Major Charles R. Smith (Camden, South Carolina), G-3 DOT (Director of Training), looks ready for anyhting as he holds one of the many offensive positions of "Tae Kwon-Do," a form of Korean karate.



"UMPH!" As Sergeant Ahn Jong Hoo, demonstrates a block kick to one of his students. In the background, Major Smith demonstrates another type of kick---all used to defeat an oppenent in "Tae Kwon-Do."

Ame

Contestants cross the starting line at the beginning of the mile and a half cross-country run.

To add a little incentive to the contest the company commanders and 1st Sergeants took their places at the head of the ropes.

Story and photos by Sp4 Randy Bombard

By SP4 Randy Bombard

CHU LAI (23d Inf. Div. IO) – It was a little bit of the "world" for the 23d Infantry Division (Americal) this Fourth of July.

Ceremonies, complete with marching band, speeches, athletic contests, barbecues and plenty of refreshments were available for all.

The day began with a ceremony held on the Division parade field, where the Americal Band played and a roll call of the 50 States was road. The benediction was given by Chaplin (Major) Richard L. D'Arcy, assistant division chaplin.

Later, approximately 600 G.I.s took advantage of the sun and warm water at the USO beach to be treated to a skydiving exhibition by 1st Lieutenant Porter Turpin from the 7th Psychological Operations Battalion, Detachment 3, located in Quang Ngai, two floorshows, a cookout and a free banana split.

The men of the 26th Engineers Battalion had a day they will long remember. Their festivities started at 1100 with the dedication of a memorial to their fellow engineers, who have given their lives during the war. The memorial was constructed by men of Bravo Company and is a beautiful tribute to their fellow soldiers who have fallen in battle.

A plaque was placed on the memorial with the following inscription "In solemn salute to those brave men for whom there will be no homecomming". The names of the men will appear on smaller plaques surrounding the memorial along with the 26th Engineer Battalion and Americal crests.

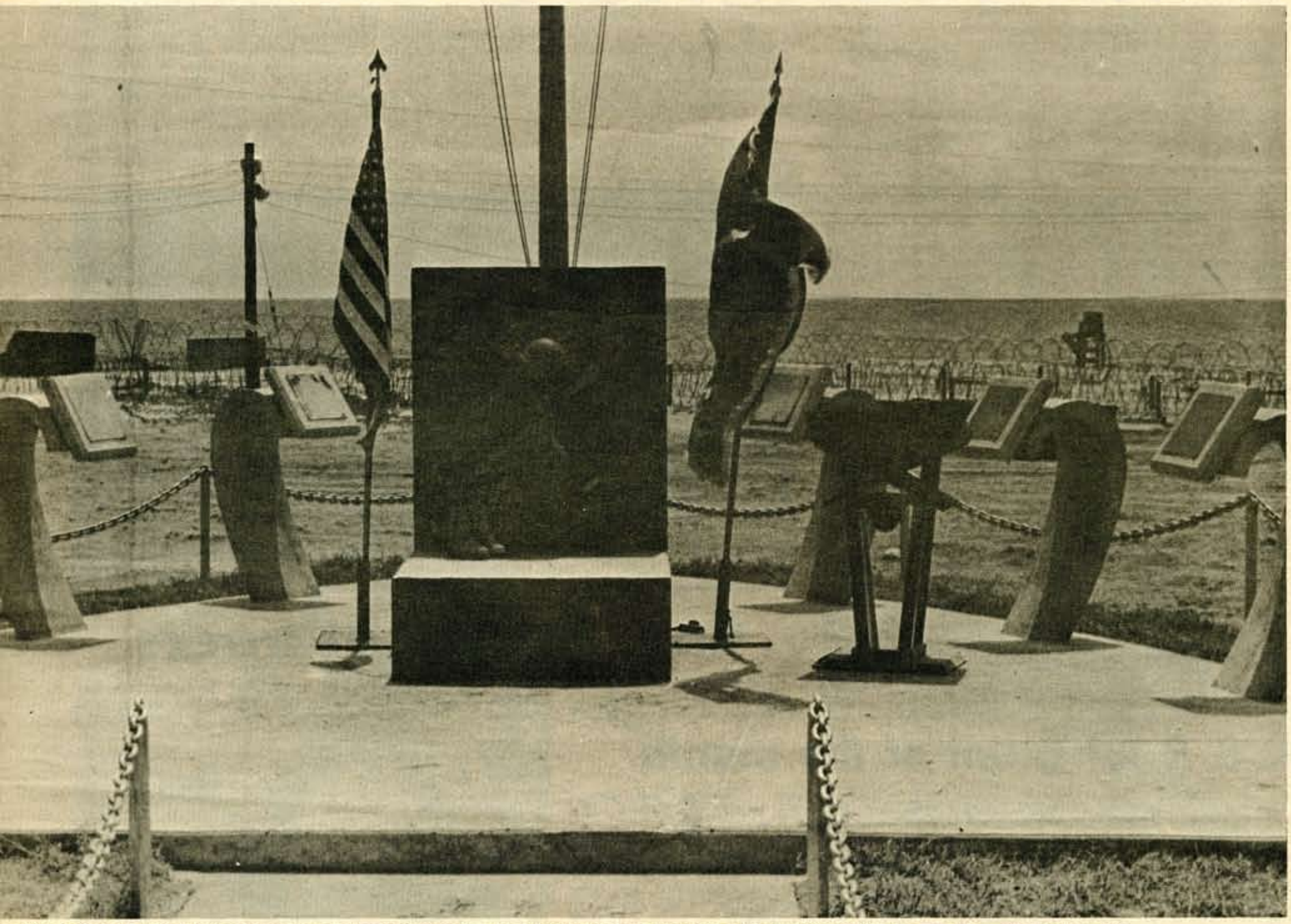
Next came the athletic contests, which saw teams representing each engineer company, compete in a number of athletic contests ranging from volleyball to a log cutting contest. Between events there was plenty of time to enjoy the beach and the water or sit in the shade of the battalion park and enjoy a cold soda or beer.

In the afternoon there was a barbecue held at the battalion park and the beach.

At an awards ceromony later in the day, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas A. Sands, the 26th Engineer Battalion commander, presented the winners of the different events with a trophy. The day was concluded with a floorshow by the "Jill Virdelle Show & The Brass Band" from the Philippines.

The men o
inscription

rical Division celebrates the 'Fourth'



he 26th Engineer Battalion have constructed a memorial dedicated to their fellow engineers who have given their lives during the war. The memorial bares this
solemn tribute to those brave men for whom there will be no homecoming".

Making the chips fly, a contestant takes a final swing during the log cutting contest.

During a July 4th celebration, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas A. Sands, commanding officer 26th Engineer Battalion, 23d Infantry Division (Americal) receives a friendly dunking from his men. His smile attests to his good humor and the spirit of the occasion.

'Thunder Run' tremendous success

By SP4 Sam Rousso

CHU LAI (23d Inf. Div. IO) – With the completion of Operation Thunder Run June 9, Vietnamization in Quang Tin Province, at the southern end of Military Region I, has taken a large step forward.

On the surface, Thunder Run wasn't much. Just a 23-vehicle convoy travelling about 30 "clicks"--approximately 18 miles--from Tam Ky to Hiep Duc.

But it was the first time in two years that such a feat was undertaken, much less accomplished. And it was done totally and completely by Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces (RVNAF) and civilians. MACV Advisory Team 16 assisted in the planning of Operation Thunder Run.

Along the Thang Binh road, main route of the convoy, the bridges weren't able to support anything bigger than a Honda. In addition, the road was scarred with ruts and craters.

Realizing that the road was vital if they were to continue living in the western part of Quang Tin Province, the people of Thang Binh and Hiep Duc districts went to work. They filled in the craters and ruts in the road and rebuilt the bridges to the extent that a 2½ ton truck could safely traverse nearly all of them. It took six months to complete the job.

From June 7 until the convoy left Tam Ky at 9:30 a.m. June 9, the route underwent constant visual reconnaisance (VR). The VR revealed that one bridge near Hiep Duc needed upgrading and another was impassable.

On June 8, timbers were sent by Chinuck to Hiep Duc to upgrade the first bridge. To replace the impassable bridge, a 15-foot dry span bridge was borrowed from the 23d Infantry Division's engineers. It was planned that the bridge should be emplaced by the Vietnamese when they came to the crossing site.

Meanwhile, extensive security measures were being taken. In all, five separate elements were used; Popular Forces (PF) units from Thang Binh guarded the road from QL-1 to a point just east of Nui Loc Son; a Regional Forces (RF) company group, which was responsible for the area extending from the PF's area to a point about 6 kilometers east of Hiep Duc. RF and PF units from Hiep Duc secured the rest of the road.

In addition, a platoon of U.S. Cavalry was deployed at the base at Nui Loc Son and Vietnamese Cavalry was deployed in Thang Binh as a reaction force. Forward Command Post (FCP) for the operation was at Nui Loc Son. In charge of the operation was the Province Chief, Colonel Tho. The Province Senior Advisor, Colonel Robert Wagner, was also at the FCP.

The security forces swept the area for mines, uncovering eight to thwart an enemy plot to stop this important Vietnamization project. The minesweeping was one of the first completely independent road clearing operations by the ARVN's in the province. The road was cleared by 9 a.m. June 9–a half-hour before the 23-vehicle convoy left Tam Ky.

The convoy encountered minor difficulty at a place called Square Lake, where a homemade bridge proved hard to cross. It took an hour to traverse the bridge.

Smooth sailing was then the order of the day until the convoy reached the site where the dry span bridge was to be emplaced.

After a 45-minute delay for bridge emplacement, the convoy proceeded into Hiep Duc.

The more than 4,000 persons who live in Hiep Duc were skeptical. They couldn't believe that the vehicles had actually driven from Tam Ky to Hiep Duc. Operation Thunder Run actually demonstrated to these people that the province really cares about them.

After unloading in Hiep Duc, the convoy began the return trip. The dry span bridge was picked up by the Vietnamese after recressing; in the interim, the other bridge was repaired by local civilians–otherwise, the return trip was without incident.

Operation Thunder Run was successfully completed at 7:30 p.m. June 9, when the convoy returned to Tam Ky.

Dressed for the occasion this dozer operatior from the 26th Engineers, 23rd Inf. Div., seems to be weathering the heat on the Minh Long Road well. (U.S. Army Photo by CPT John J. Hollingsworth)

Eng. ferryboat tracks

By SP/4 Kerry R. Baird

CHU LAI, Republic of Vietnam (26th Engineer Battalion) – On 22 June elements of A Company and E Company, 26th Engineer Battalion, 23d Infantry Division (Americal), were called to the Song Bu Gai River near LZ (Landing Zone) Rawhide to solve a big problem. B Troop, 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry was on the west side of the river and wanted to cross it in order to stand down for a few days.

C Troop was on the east side of the river and was supposed to take over for B Troop. However, the river was swollen by heavy rains and all the shallow fords were impassable.

They waited for nearly a week for the water to go down, but when it didn't they called the 26th Engineers. After making a recon of the river for possible new fords, the engineers decided that the quickest way to move the two Cavalry units was with a raft.

The orders were given and the very next day Echo Company bridge trucks were sent north from Chu Lai loaded with parts for an M4T6 raft. The trucks were met at the crossing point by engineers from Alpha Company and the work began immediately.

The 27 foot Bridge Erection Beats and the raft were assembled. That afternoon the engineers began to ferry the "tracks" across the river. The quick response of the 26th Engineers to the call for help illustrated their great versatility and their high state of readiness.

R & R for grunt of the month

By SP4 David A. Rea

DA NANG, Republic of Vietnam (196th Inf. Bde. IO) – If you carried a 90 pound rucksack in 110 degree heat, or rain so hard you just say screw it, because you can't get any wetter, what would three days of lying on a beach, eating steaks and sleeping between clean sheets mean to you?

To a company in the 196th Infantry Brigade it's a dream, but one that can come true if they win the "Grunt of the Month" award.

"The purpose of the event," explained Captain Elmer M. Nelson (Grahm, Tex.), company commander of Charlie Co., 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, "is to raise morale as well as reward a deserving soldier."

"We're trying to give the men something to work for, a personal reason to excel in doing their job," added First Sergeant Kenneth M. Dennis (Spring Lake, N.C.), "Top" of Charlie Co.

And they are giving the men plenty of reason to be chosen Grunt of the Month. Who would not try to excel when there is a three day R&R, an excellent endorsement for promotion, and of course, the customary plaque at stake?

In the first step of selection each platoon sergeant and platoon leader confer to pick a man from their platoon. The four men are then sent before a board to answer numerically-valued questions, the total of which determines the lucky vacationer.

The questions are very diversified. The range from "Who is the Secretary of the Army?" to "What is the maximum effective range of an M-79 for a point target?" and even encompass thoughts like "What famous musician recently died?" Besides being motivated in the field, the competitors must also be well-rounded people intellectually.

This month's grunt is Specialist Four Russell A. Swonger (Spooner, Wis.), the pick of Charlie's 2nd Platoon. When asked what he thought of the whole concept, Swonger stated, "I like the idea. It's going to give everyone the incentive to try a little harder and to do their job better."

"I might have had a little more motivation than the rest," continued Swonger. "I have a birthday coming up soon and with that R&R, I can spend it out of the bush."

A soldier from C Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry signals one of the Huey (UH-1H) helicopters where to land. Charlie Co. had just spent two weeks on combat operations about 10 miles south of FSB 4-11 and was being air lifted back to their Battalion firebase. (U.S. Army Photo by 1LT Henry G. Grambergu Jr.)

Say that again please, Alpha Co. or Alpha Bn.?

By SGT Tom Mano

DA NANG (196th Inf. Bde. IO) – What's the next unit above a platoon in the Army? Most will say a company, but over 100 infantrymen here will swear it's a battalion.

This confusing turn of events is what one encounters when one visits Alpha "Battalion", 4th Bn., 31st Inf., 196th Infantry Brigade.

"Our signs were changed from Alpha Co. to Alpha Bn. back in June of 1970," said First Sergeant James Harris (Baltimore), a veteran "Top" of Alpha Bn. "It seemed that every mission from clearing firebases to building latrines was given to us."

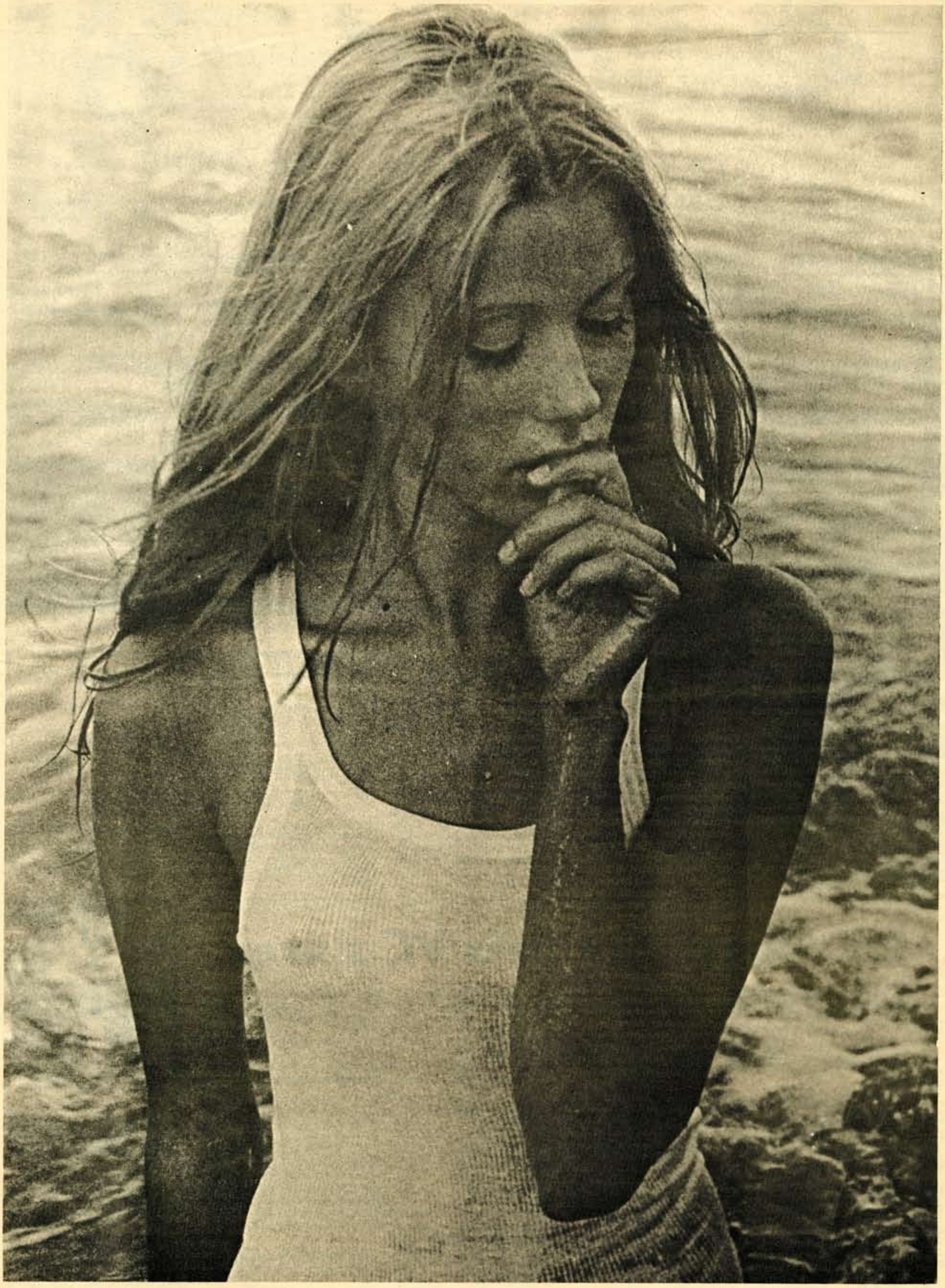
From a flat piece of ground, Alpha built Firebase Ghosttown. Moving tons of red clay, the men dug chest-high holes and set in reventments. When LZ (landing zone) Siberia needed repair, Alpha Bn. was the first to be called. Bunkers were built and the RFs (regional forces) were supervised by Alpha.

"It's very much like a baseball game; you tend to play your best players most," commented Harris. "Because Alpha did the best job, we got most of the missions. It may not have been fair, but that's just the way it was."

What about the men? What about the grunts with their 90 pound rucksacks who had to hump that many more clicks (kilometers) and dig that many more holes? It seems that human nature would dictate that they be irritated, and at first they were.

"Sure, they were mad; that's understandable," mused Harris. "But after Alpha Battalion got their name, the troops began to feel more cocky and confident. The recognition helped pay them back for all the work they did."

Working in a new area of operations now, Alpha Bn. continues to live up to its name. It's said that when somebody asks an Alpha grunt what unit he's from, the answer is always delivered with a smile.



Once Clark Gable took off his shirt in the 1939 movie called It Happened One Night. He revealed to his adoring public that he wore no undershirt. During the next month undershirt sales in the U.S. went down as much as 30 per cent. Our young lady likes to wear undershirts unfortunately. Oh well, maybe one night she will watch the late show, see that Gable flick, and join that shirtless 30 per cent.

Membership plaques for the members of the 1000 Hour Accident Free Flying Club hang on the wall of the 123d Aviation Battalion's briefing room. These club members presently account for more than 67,000 hours of accident free flying. (Photo by Sp4 Randy Bombard)

WO Anderson joins club with accident freeflying

By SP4 Randy Bombard

CHU LAI, (23d Inf. Div. IO) – Warrant Officer 1 Jeffery Anderson (Pasadena, Calif.) has become the newest menber of the 123d Aviation Battalion's "1000 Hour Accident Free Flying Club." One thousand hours of accident free flying is an accomplishement that anyone who has flown an aircraft can appreciate.

Anderson was presented a "Certificate of Achievement" by the commanding officer of the 16th Aviation Group, Lieutenent Colonel Martin R. Visser, commander of the 123d Aviation Battalion, representing his membership in the "1000 Hour Accident Free flying Club." His plaque will join the others which hang on the wall of the battalion briefing room.

The 1000 hours of accident free flying is truly an outstanding accomplishment, when you consider that most of this time has been logged while under combat conditions, which would not normally be found anywhere else in the world today.

The objective of the club is to give recognition to the pilots who have, through skill and conscientious flying, attained the 1000 hour accident free flying mark. Club members resently account for 67,000 hours of accident free flying, a clear statement in itself of the high quality and standards of the men of the 123d Aviation Battalion.

Soldier meets college pal

By SP4 Ralph J. Winter

CHU LAI, (11th Inf. Bde. 10) – "I didn't believe it at first when Phil walked into the S-1 office," said Specialist Four Michael Stusse (Hyannis, Mass.), driver for the 3d Battalion, 1st Infantry commanding officer.

Phil is Phil Christenson, Stusse's roommate while they attended college in Washington, D.C. "We' hadn't seen each other for two years and I was really taken by surprise," stated Stusses.

Christenson flew to Chu Lai from Cam Ranh Bay, where he is on a special assignment. Christenson works for the State Department and is on the staff of the American Embassy at Vientienne, Laos.

Christenson spent two days in Chu Lai as the guest of the 3rd. Bn., 1st Inf., "Legionnaires" and he and Stusse were able to renew their friendship.

25 Women are held VC slaves

By Sgt. Tom Mano

DA NANG, (196th Inf. Bde. 10) – Many people think slavery has become a thing of the past. Recently, a desperate attempt was made here to free 25 women from the yoke of human bondage.

Everything depended on the thoughts of one girl. Her words would be broadcasted to the VC soldiers who held the women telling them to rally for they would be treated well and not to "die a needless death."

The girl rallied to the GVN (Government of the Republic of Vietnam) after six of her masters had been killed in contact with Company B, 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry. After being treated with penecillin for cellulitis (jungle rot), she told the men how who had been forced to guide the VC soldiers since the fall of last year. She also told of 25 other women who were being forced to do the same thing.

While still with the company she agreed to lead them to two bunker complexes. In the six bunkers that the men came upon, they saw recent signs of life. Fires were still burning around many fighting positions, but little was found inside the structures, so they were destroyed.

The girl was evacuated to the battalion's rear area where she was interviewed by the S-5 (psychological operations officer) for possible psyop exploitation. After further medical treatment she was urged to broadcast.

"She didn't have to do it," said First Lieutenant Robert D. Boydston (Kansas City, Mo.), S-5 for the battalion. "but we told her that we might be able to save some of her girlfriends."

"We plan on broadcasting the message via a Helix (OV-10 Aircraft) to the area of operations where she was found," continued Boydston. "We'll tape-record it, use it later and also drop about 40,000 leaflets with the message on them."

Just then the radio crackled and the Helix came on. "Do you read me?" asked the pilot.

"Rodger, good copy," replied Boydston.

"We can give you 40 minutes of broadcast time, is that enough?"

"Max affirmative," answered the S-5.

Sitting the girl in a chair beside the radio, Lt. Boydston placed the receiver in front of her mouth. She started to speak faintly, but a friendlly hand motion from a nearby interpretor showed her what she was doing wrong, and immediately her voice gained more conviction.

"This is your friend..... Please give yourselves up to the U.S. Forces immediately. The U.S. Forces know your locations and failure to rally will be certain death to all of you. Rally now. You will be treated fair and good by the U.S. Forces as I have been. Rally now. Don't die a needless death."

During the entire 40 minutes the girl repeated this message aided by sips of coke. When she finished, there was a look of satisfaction on her face.

The results of the broadcast may not come in for a long time, but a girl and an S-5 team will always know they have done their best to combat slavery by the VC soldiers.

On July 11, Private First Class Randall K. Hill, HHC, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry. 11th Infantry Brigade, was tried by Special Court-Martial for wrongfully possessing heroin. He was found guilty and sentenced to be discharged from the service with a bad conduct discharge, to be confined at hard labor for for five months and to be reduced to the grade of Private (E-1)