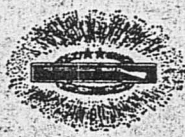


Merry Christmas - 1967

**Museum
Displays
VC Wares,
See Page 4**

TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS



Ready To Strike.... Anywhere, Anytime

**MG Mearns'
Christmas
Message,
See Page 2**

Vol. 2, No. 50

25TH INFANTRY DIVISION, VIETNAM

December 18, 1967

14 Enemy Killed Via Eagle Flights

DAU TIENG — During four days of Eagle Flights 5 kms northeast of Dau Tieng a unit of the 3rd Bde, 25th Inf Div killed fourteen Viet Cong and detained seventeen suspects.

The contact was a result of a heliborne operation by the "White Warriors" of the 2nd Bn, 12th Inf, during operation Atlanta.

On the first day the battalion, under the command of LTC Dean Tice, was heli-lifted for a cordon and search of Village Thirteen in the Michelin Rubber Plantation and resulted in negative contact with the enemy.

After setting up their night

defensive perimeter, the battalion had its first contact when Delta and Charlie Co's ambush patrols accounted for the first kills of the four-day operation, resulting in three VC killed.

Moving under cover of darkness early the next morning, the two companies again cordoned the village, while search teams from the Reconnaissance Platoon moved in and conducted a house-to-house search. The search resulted in detaining 17 suspects.

After extracting the detainees back to the brigade base camp, the battalion was again airborne and lifted to another LZ where the Warriors set up their battalion perimeter.

Early the next morning the battalion's position was pounded with 40 rounds of 82mm mortar fire, which was followed by a ground attack.

The Viet Cong, using grenades, RPGs and AK-47s, advanced as close as five meters but the White Warriors repelled the enemy from their well prepared positions.

Sweeping the area beyond the

(Continued on Back Page)

25th Units Continue To Rout Enemy In 'Iron Triangle' Opn

2ND BDE—Operation Atlanta infantrymen ripping into the one-time enemy sanctuary of the Iron Triangle have killed 74 Viet Cong and captured enough weapons to arm an enemy company. (As of Nov. 30.)

In addition, since the mid-November start of the operation, the 2nd Bde troops have captured more than 100 tons of rice and destroyed numerous enemy munitions stockpiles.

The operation, brigade officials explained, is designed to destroy what they consider a major Viet Cong base for Hau Nghia, Binh Duong and Tay Ninh Provinces.

They described the Triangle as a vital center for communist rear service, logistical and command and staff echelons.

The total body count for Atlanta was reached through a series of brief but heavy skirmishes which so far have taken 14 American lives and wounded 63 more soldiers.

Captured Rice Caches Now Pay For Buildings

2ND BDE — Fifteen tons of rice captured during Operation Atlanta in the Iron Triangle is paying for new buildings and feeding hungry refugees in the

district capital of Ben Cat.

Elements of the 25th Inf Div's 2nd Bde recently captured more than 100 tons of rice in several massive caches deep in the Triangle, then distributed it to several towns in Binh Duong and Hau Nghia Provinces.

Ben Cat, in Binh Duong Province, lies several miles to the northeast of the former Viet Cong stronghold.

1LT John A. Rutledge, intelligence adviser for the district, said government forces there used the rice to feed refugees and to pay laborers for work on various construction projects.

"We now have a rice reserve, and it helps us out a lot," he said. "The Popular Forces here uses it as a rice supplement, and it helps us feed the refugees."

Participating in the operation are members of the 1st and 2nd Bns, 27th Inf "Wolfhounds," and the 4th Bn (Mech), 23rd Inf.

Engineers from the 27th Land Clearing Team and the 65th Engrs mowing Rome plows and bulldozers, have levelled an average of almost 400 acres a day in the operation's land clearing phase.

Air strikes and artillery barrages have accounted for many of the communist losses, as well

Related Story Page 7

as uncovering thousands of meters of trench line, tunnels and base camp complexes scattered throughout the area.

Since the opening day of Atlanta when a company of the 1st Bn, 27th Inf, was attacked by enemy riflemen as it touched down on a landing zone, Operation Atlanta has been punctuated by quick, brief contact.

All three infantry battalions have met with sporadic enemy resistance as they approached

(Continued on Back Page)

Aviation Bn Donates To Orphans

Two recently orphaned children were presented with 17,000 piasters from the men of Alpha Co, 25th Avn Bn.

Tran Thi Rien, mother of the two children, worked in the company's mess hall. As she was coming to work on the morning of Dec. 1, from her village of Xu Nam Hung, she was killed in an automobile accident.

PVT Willard Overturf of Benton, Ill., heard about the tragedy. "I decided something should be done for her children because she had worked here in the company. I talked to several of the men and began collecting money. Everyone got wind of it and the money started coming in," he said.

Overturf and PSG Richard Harbey of Jamaica, N.Y., drove to Xu Nam Hung and presented the 17,000 piasters to the children and their grandmother.

Lucky He's A Bad Shot

1LT Hugh Bell, a helicopter pilot with the 25th Inf Div says he knows how it feels to be a sitting duck, a bullseye and a clay pigeon all rolled into one.

The Decatur, Ga., native was flying command ship for the Div's 2nd Bde during a combat assault 63 kms northwest of Saigon when he spotted 20 armed Viet Cong fleeing the assault site.

As Bell threw the ship into a low level orbit, his door gunner

fired to pin the VC force down until the infantry could react.

"All of a sudden," said Bell, "a VC stood up in the clear, took careful aim right at me, and fired. The round snapped past without hitting the ship and the VC was killed later in the battle."

"I've been shot at plenty of times before," Bell said later, "but that was the first time I was looking right down the barrel when the VC aimed and fired. It was a weird feeling."

First Sergeant Harman Is Former "Golden Knight"

By SP5 Hugh Wyatt

A flair for parachuting out of an airplane and landing on a six-inch disc on the ground has won SFC Richard C. Harman a place in the annals of skydiving.

Harman, who is from Enid, Okla., is the first sergeant of the 187th Aslt Hel Co based at the 25th Div's 3rd Bde base camp at Tay Ninh.

"I was stationed with a medical evacuation unit in Illesheim, Germany, back in 1961," explains Harman, "and although it

was a small place, it did have a club. In the beginning, jumping was something to stay in shape."

But the sport soon became more than just "something to do" for Harman.

"It's very habit forming," he remarked. "Actually, parachuting is so involved that it never becomes boring. Every time you're in the air, you learn something and you find that there's something else you don't know."

A year and some 78 jumps

later, Harman took his first fling at competitive parachuting. In a meet at Augsburg, Germany, he placed second in the overall competition and first in style.

After this auspicious debut, he compiled a record impressive enough for him to be named to the Army Parachute Team—the "Golden Knights."

Harman and his teammates practiced rigorously in 1964 — jumping up to six times a day and over 300 times that year—preparing for the International Sport Parachuting Competition,

held every four years.

"Sport jumping started in Russia in the '30s and for a long while they had the field all to themselves," Harman explained. "The United States first competed internationally in 1956 and now it's usually a three-way fight between us, the Russians and Czechoslovakians."

The long hours of practice

Christmas artwork by J.W. Robbins of the Pacific Stars & Stripes Art Department.

lived more than "Golden Knight" in 1964. When the world competition ended, they had broken 38 of the 123 existing marks. Harman himself set records for accuracy in the 600 and 1,000 meter jumps, becoming the first to hold two marks at one time.

Harman's records illustrate why, although sport chutists may fall hundreds of meters, the competition often is decided by decimeters.

(Continued on Back Page)

Decorated . . .

Silver Star

CPT Johnny C. Trammell, Co C, 4th Bn, 23rd Inf
Distinguished Flying Cross

1LT Hubert J. Bell Jr., Co A, 25th Avn Bn

WO1 James Barry, Co B, 25th Avn Bn

SP5 Melvin L. Andrews, Co B, 25th Avn Bn

SP4 Edward T. Lyons, Co B, 25th Avn Bn

Bronze Star Medal (Heroism)

CPT Jerome A. Pogorzelski, B Trp 3rd Sqdn, 4th Cav

CPT Michael E. Wikan, HHC, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf

1LT Samuel C. Finster, Co D, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf

1LT Karl Babi, Co D, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf

SGT Bobbie L. Mitchell, Co A, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf

SP5 Manual Niz, Co D, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf

SP4 Ronnie N. Conn, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf

SP4 Guy T. Jones, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf

SP4 Garry L. Bradac, Co B, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf

SP4 Thomas F. Abram, Co A, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf

SP4 Walter C. Bossard, Co A, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf

PFC Richard A. Porter, Co A, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf

Bronze Star Medal (Merit)

SFC Calvin Carter Jr., HHC, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf

SGT Curtis Williams, Co B, 2nd Bn, 12th Inf

SGT Henry R. Scott, HHC, 2nd Bn (Mech), 22nd Inf

SGT Reginald J. Long, HHC, 25th Inf Div

SP5 William B. Tafoya, HHC, 25th Inf Div

SP5 Richard L. Herrman, 25th Admin Co

SGT Henry E. Brown, Co E, 65th Engr Bn

SGT Norman J. Chaput, HHC, 2nd Bde

SGT Robert E. Hiburger, Co C, 2nd Bn, 12th Inf

SGT Rex L. McDonald, Co A, 1st Bn, 27th Inf

SGT Robert R. Mullin, Co B, 125th Sig Bn

SGT Roger D. Fee, Co A, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf

SP5 Donald R. Finley, 25th Admin Co

SGT Duane A. Foss, Co A, 1st Bn, 27th Inf

SGT William F. Guy, Co A, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf

SP5 Raymond L. Merrell, 25th Admin Co

SGT Benny L. Raby, Co A, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf

SGT Joe R. Silva, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf

SP5 Walter R. Sivek, 25th Admin Co

SP5 Eugene R. Terenzi, Co A, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf

SP5 Marshall R. Thomas, 25th Admin Co

SP4 James A. Cato, Co A, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf

SP4 James C. Grant, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf

SP4 Teddy J. Hammer, 25th Admin Co

SP4 Erskine McCray, Co A, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf

SP4 Preston C. Scisco, Co A, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf

SP4 Howell R. Sherlin, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf

SP4 Vivian Smith, Co A, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf

SP4 Gilbert L. Spurlock, Co B, 1st Bn, 27th Inf

SP4 William P. Gillespie, Co A, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf

SP4 Fred E. Haase, HHC, 2nd Bde

SP4 David S. Kenny, HHC, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf

SP4 Ralph Masters, Co A, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf

SP4 Bobby Odom, HHC, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf

SP4 Antonio S. Ramirez, HHC, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf

SP4 Bobbie Stevenson, Co A, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf

SP4 Harvet F. Wagner, HHC, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf

Army Commendation Medal (Merit)

SP5 Malave R. Escala a, Co B, 25th S&T Bn

SP5 Donald D. Hughes, HH&S Btry, 3rd Bn, 13th Arty

SP5 Ernest M. Rubin Jr., 25th MP Co

SGT Willie P. Thomas, Co D, 3rd Bn, 13th Arty

SGT James D. Cooper, Co B, 65th Engr Bn

SGT Wymon M. Kelly, Co A, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf

SP5 Patrick R. Manning, HHC, 4th Bn (Mech), 23rd Inf

SP5 Floyd Loyd, HHC, 25th Sup & Trans Bn

SP5 Neil C. Thompson, HHC, 4th Bn (Mech), 23rd Inf

SP4 Mar., 2nd Bn, 12th Inf

SP4 Willie Burgess, Co D, 2nd Bn, 12th Inf

SP4 Arnold Collins, Co B, 2nd Bn, 12th Inf

SP4 Peter L. Cullen, Co C, 2nd Bn, 12th Inf

SP4 James E. Delucia, Co D, 4th Bn, 9th Inf

SP4 Richard E. Defreitas, Co B, 2nd Bn, 12th Inf

SP4 Willie Durham Jr., Co A, 25th S&T Bn

SP4 Patrick C. Chino, HHC, 2nd Bde

SP4 Martin K. Coor, 25th Admin Co

SP4 Mark R. Daley, HHC, 4th Bn (Mech), 23rd Inf

SP4 Ervin E. Eckman, Co B, 25th S&T Bn

SP4 Carl D. Evans, 25th Admin Co

SP4 Roy C. Ewell, Co A, 65th Engr Bn

SP4 Danny R. Feimster, 25th Admin Co

CG's Christmas Message

Men of the 25th Division:

This is the Christmas Season. A great part of our world is commemorating the birthday of Him who is called the Prince of Peace. During this season more than at any other time of the year, gifts and greetings flow in a great interchange between men as they strive to share with others brotherhood and fellowship. In our far-away homes, families and friends are thinking of us, praying for us, praying that we come home safely, and soon.

You and others like you are praying and more—you are putting your lives and bodies squarely in the path of the aggressor, offering yourselves fully to protect the human right and freedom of a besieged people and, in effect, of the world. You are presenting to the world for all ages another tremendous panorama of American Youth, leaving the comforts and opportunities of our great country, ranging across oceans, striking down unjust aggression. Your shining example and your willingness to sacrifice are indeed a Christmas gift which a grateful world accepts from you and may well treasure forever.

I cheer the spirit with which you accept a life in mud and jungle. I admire the stamina with which you endure long days and nights of endless toil, fending and fighting all the while, and I praise the courage that enables you so boldly to face the uncertain dangers of this guerrilla warfare. Men such as you will not be conquered. May God bestow His Christmas grace upon each of you.

F. K. MEARNS

Major General, USA
Commanding

For GIs Abroad

Red Cross Gifts Readied

SAIGON — Preparations for the world's biggest Christmas party of 1967 are complete.

Host of the party will be the American Red Cross. Guests will be GIs around the world, with the heaviest concentration in South Vietnam.

The Number One Red Cross Christmas effort is the 550,000 ditty bags which volunteers in Red Cross chapters began filling last summer and which now have arrived in Vietnam for distribution during the holiday weekend.

The objective of this Red Cross project is to provide a gift-bag for every U.S. servicemen in South Vietnam whom they are able to contact. The bags are made of red and green nylon and the men will be able to use them as carry-alls for their personal belongings, as their grandfathers and fathers did in World Wars I and II and Korea.

The bags contain such items as ballpoint pens, stationery, games, books, tapes for recording messages home, and other useful articles.

Patients in U.S. military hospitals around the world as well as in South Vietnam will receive gifts in ditty bags or Christmas stockings which will be hung on every patient's bed on Christmas Eve. Christmas ditty bags will also go to patients aboard the U.S. Navy hospital ships REPOSE and SANCTUARY off South Vietnam.

Hospitals and recreation center-clubmobile units in South Vietnam are sponsored on a year-around basis by Red Cross chapters which monthly send them magazines, paperback books, musical instruments and

See Photo Page 8

other recreational articles. The shipments arriving this month will stress the Christmas note, with holiday decorations included.

In Vietnam, the Red Cross staff in hospitals and recreation centers are making every effort to provide enough tapes so servicemen can record and send

messages home. A supply of instant cameras and film is on hand to enable many hospitalized and able-bodied servicemen to have their pictures taken to be sent home.

The Red Cross is trying to have Christmas as much like home as possible in a tropical country where there are no evergreens to remind Americans of their own land, it was pointed out. To the extent that they are able, patients in hospitals do the holiday decorating of wards and hallways, with the Red Cross providing the materials. American Red Cross volunteers serve patients in military hospitals around the world.

TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS



Ready To Strike Anywhere, Anytime

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MG F. K. Mearns	Commanding General
MAJ Bernard S. Rhees	Information Officer
1LT Larry Rottmann	Officer-in-Charge
SSG Dave Wilkinson	Editor
SP4 Dave Cushman	Editorial Assistant

Cathy Says . . .



"From the appearance of the base camp I'd say that there's a lot of trash being thrown on the ground instead of being put in trash barrels. Please fellows, throw papers and cans in the proper place. If you're walking around and see paper or cans lying on the ground, take just a second to pick it up and throw it in a trash can."

PFC Has New Love For Helmet

1ST BDE — It isn't the most comfortable headgear ever designed, but PFC Robert Lupo of Bravo Co, 4th Bn, 9th Inf, could care less, he wears his steel pot religiously.

Loves Headgear

The medic's affection for his helmet stems from a recent incident in the HoBo Woods. While conducting a search and destroy mission, Lupo's squad drew small arms fire from a fortified bunker screened by thick underbrush. With the rest of the men, Lupo began scanning the area for the exact source of the fire.

"I had just raised my head, when I heard a buzz and then a sharp 'click,'" explained the medic, who is from New York City. "I figured one of Charlie's weapons had misfired or jammed."

Under pressure the Viet Cong broke contact, and the U.S. troops returned to their perimeter for the night.

Close Call

"That evening I had a splitting headache," Lupo recalled, "and when I took my pot off I found out why—one of Charlie's rounds had hit my helmet, leaving a big gash in the side. That's why you'll never see me without my pot. I figure aspirins are a whole lot better than brain surgery."

Artillery Battalion Aids Viet's Family

DAU TIENG — To aid the family of a young Vietnamese girl killed by a Viet Cong mortar round, a 25th Div soldier collected over 100 dollars from the members of the 2nd Bn,

25th Commander Presented RPG

DAU TIENG — In a brief ceremony held at the forward base camp of the 2nd Bn, 12th Inf, recently, Battalion Commander LTC Dean Tice presented MG F.K. Mearns with an almost untouched RPG-7 recoilless rifle.

The weapon was captured by Bravo Co during a heated battle 8 kms northeast of Loc Ninh where the "White Warriors" killed 94 Viet Cong.

During the fierce fighting which took place, SGT Jerald Daniels of Long Beach, Calif., noticed the three-man team manning the RPG crawling towards his position. Waiting until they came into range of his Claymore, he then signaled to SP4 James Graham of Lancaster, Ohio, to detonate the mine which killed all three of the approaching Viet Cong.

After being presented the war trophy, MG Mearns thanked the two men for the weapon and commended them and the battalion on their outstanding victory.

77th Arty, here recently.

When Ti, a 13-year-old Vietnamese girl, was killed by enemy mortars during an attack directed at the 3rd Bde, 25th Div, base camp less than 50 meters from her home, SP4 Donald Young of Berkeley, Calif., asked for permission to aid the family with funds collected within his battalion.

Young, a member of the 2nd Bn, 77th Arty, first brought his idea to the attention of 1LT Daniel R. Lane of Pocatello, Idaho, the battalion civil affairs officer, who in turn approached the battalion executive officer, MAJ William H. Randolph.

"I thought Young had a fine idea. We received full cooperation from the battalion commander to the privates in the individual batteries," Lane commented.

At 1 p.m. that day donations began to roll in from all the batteries. In less than three hours Lane and Young had collected over 100 dollars for Ti's family, and presented the money to the family.

Ti's father was overjoyed in his sorrow. Through the use of an interpreter he told Lane and Young "thanks."

The house in which Ti met her death was full of mortar fragments and parts of roofing torn off when the Viet Cong mortar hit dead center. Ti was killed instantly, the rest of her family received minor injuries.

Company Moves, KPs Too

1ST BDE — Two companies of the 25th Div recognized some familiar faces when they arrived at their new home in Tay Ninh, some 80 kms northwest of Saigon.

Fifteen Vietnamese women, all mess hall employees, decided to move right along with the 4th Bn, 9th Inf.

"When they saw us packing," explains CWO William Wargo Jr., supply officer for the battalion, "they seemed to be quite disappointed. Several asked if they could come with us."

Wargo made inquiries at the Cu Chi and Tay Ninh office and found that there were no obstacles to the women moving.

"It went as smooth as could be," says Wargo. "They moved one day and started back to work the next."

All 15 of the employees are living in a hamlet just outside the Tay Ninh base camp.

GI Athletes Train

Army athletes are training for 1968 winter Olympic games at Grenoble, France, Feb. 12-27. Some 30 in training already have been selected for participation or have been asked to compete to become members of U.S. team. Army also reports that \$17,000 in voluntary contributions have been turned over to Olympic Fund.

Detained Viets Receive Treats

DAU TIENG—The ice cream had melted a little in the hot morning sun, but the 92 Vietnamese awaiting the helicopter which would take them back

to their village didn't waste any time finishing the treat.

Detained during a recent cordon and search of the village of Thanh An, 72 kms northwest

of Saigon, the people were brought to Dau Tieng where Vietnamese National Police checked their identities. Most had been held because they lacked identification cards.

During the two days at the refugee camp located in Dau Tieng, the detainees—eight men, 31 women, and 53 children—were provided food and shelter by the 3rd Bde, 25th Inf Div Civil Affairs Office.

After the identities were checked, transportation in the form of a CH-47 "Chinook" helicopter took the people back to their homes, but not before ice cream was given to the children and cigarettes to the adults.

Gifts Via Sponsors

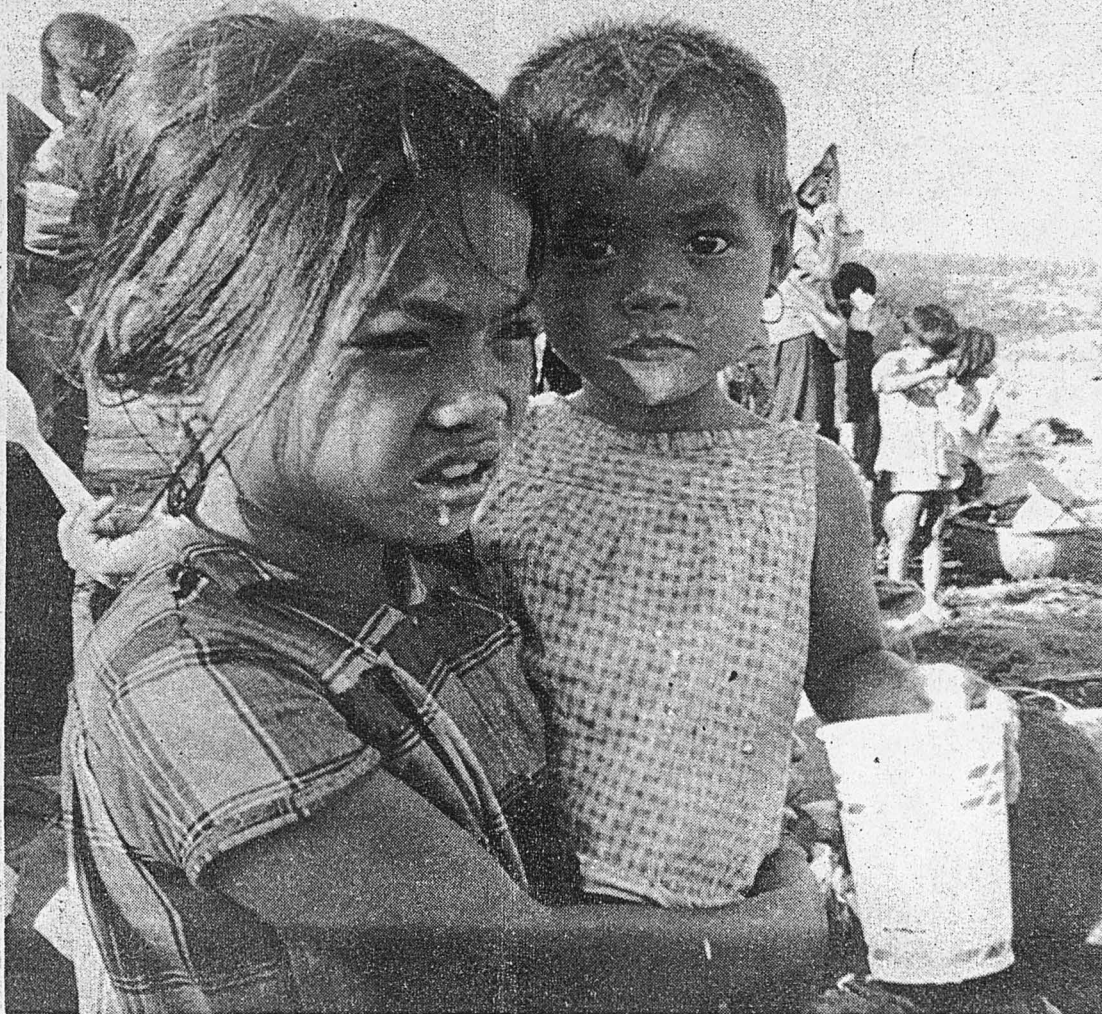
2ND BDE — The Christmas season has started early for a 25th Inf Div soldier who volunteered his unit to be sponsored by a California city.

SP4 Thomas Walsh of Whittier, Calif., a mail clerk for the 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf, has received more than 150 Christmas packages and is scheduled to get 1,000 lbs of books and magazines by Christmas Eve.

Sending the gifts are the citizens of King City, Calif., and surrounding communities.

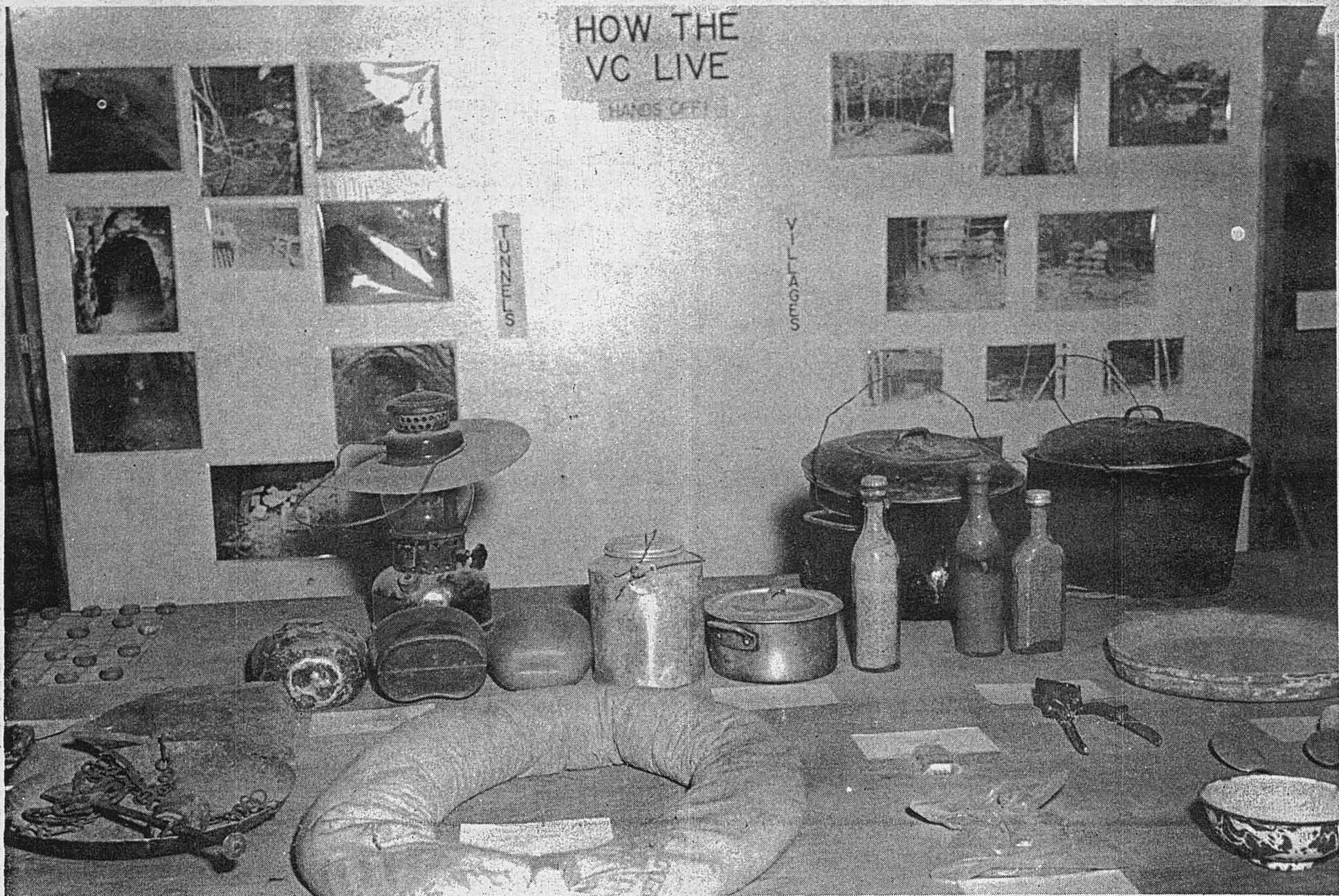
Walsh's sister-in-law is heading the program, dubbed Operation ROSE (Remember Our Servicemen Everywhere).

Walsh said the program started when he answered his sister-in-law's question if any unit over here would like to be adopted."



MMMMM GOOD—Ice cream drips from the chin of this little Vietnamese girl but she doesn't seem to care. These two children were a part of the group of detainees given treats by the 3rd Bde. (Photo by 1LT Ralph Campbell)

Cu Chi Museum Displays Viet C



VC SUPPLIES INCLUDE A LAMP, CHICOM CANTEEN, COOKING POTS, TEA POTS, SAUCE PAN AND A MONTHS RICE SUPPLY IN CIRCULAR CARRIER.



TWO SOVIET ANTI-TANK GRENADE LAUNCHERS (RPG-7) CAPTURED BY BRAVO TRP, 3RD SQDN, 4TH CAV.



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Cong Wares

Story by PFC Richard Adams

Photos by SP4 John Seymour

Know your enemy! A necessity for survival in Vietnam, this subject is the object of intensive education and instruction of the Army in Vietnam. Taking the program one step further, the 25th Inf Div has built a museum at their Cu Chi base camp.

Viet Cong weapons, medical supplies, clothing and food, even propaganda posters are but a few of the items on display in the division's museum. One of the few museums in the country, this is a comprehensive study of the means and tools with which the Viet Cong wages war and survives in the jungle.

All weapons and material on display have been captured by men of the 25th Div. Each unit or soldier who has captured a weapon is credited by the museum, with a sign giving their name and the date and operation in which the weapon was captured.

Col Jasper J. Wilson, chief of staff, is credited with the original idea for the museum. When he arrived at Cu Chi, he asked if there was any sort of display of the weapons used by the Viet Cong. The colonel suggested that if not, one should be constructed. The 25th Inf Div Museum was officially opened Oct. 7, 1967.

There are many men in the division who have been wounded, shot at, and have never seen the weapons used. Since its opening in October the museum has averaged 100 visitors each day. Upon arrival to the division all replacements are encouraged to spend some time there getting to know the enemy they will soon face in the field.

Each piece has its own special story. The surgical instruments were made in the United States for foreign aid distribution. They were taken from the VC in a field operation. The Israeli 9mm ZI submachine gun is the standard sub-machine gun for the Israeli Army. It was captured by Co C of the 2nd Bn, 27th Inf, March 16, 1967.

Many countries are represented by the captured weapons on display. A French 7.5mm M29 model machine gun was taken by the 2nd Bn, 14th Inf, during Operation Manhattan. One of the most interesting weapons according to Maj William M. Farlow, deputy intelligence officer, is the Soviet anti-tank grenade launcher (RPG-7) which was captured Sept. 12, 1967. Farlow said, "It is a very new and startling weapon in the enemy command... a very potent one." The Russian grenade launcher was captured by SSG David Xanten of Co B, 3rd Sqdn, 4th Cav.

In other parts of the museum crude home made weapons are displayed. This is sometimes called the war of booby-traps. The museum has its share of these. Farlow said, "Many men in the division have been shot by a cross bow like the one displayed. It is old fashioned and looks inconsequential, but is extremely deadly."

The clothing display features Ho Chi Minh sandals. This type of sandal is made from old automobile tires. Viet Cong masks range from United States and Russian types to unorthodox home made devices, consisting of a plastic bag which slips over the head and a piece of hospital gauze covering the nose and mouth.



SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS. POISON ANTIDOTES AND VITAMINS A, C AND K ARE USED BY VC.



(L TO R) CHICOM 7.62MM RIFLE, ISRAELI 9MM SUB-MACHINE GUN, AND SOVIET 7.62MM RIFLE.



GREEN FATIGUES AND BLACK PAJAMAS ARE SOME OF THE UNIFORMS WORN BY THE VC. AMMO PACKS AND WEB GEAR ARE ALSO STANDARD EQUIPMENT.



MAN OH MAN—We found this young thing on the floor the other day (her photograph that is) and haven't the slightest idea who she is. We think anyone who would just leave her lying there should be put away. (Ed.)

Arty Air Advisor Units Warn Pilots Of Firings

DIV ARTY—The extensive use of close support artillery and aircraft in the Vietnam War has created problems in maintaining safety for planes and helicopters operating in artillery fire zones. To improve safety measures the 25th Inf Div artillery has set up a network of radio stations, called Artillery Air Advisory Units (AAAUs), to warn aircraft of artillery fire.

One such station is maintained at Go Dau Ha by radio operators of the 3rd Bn, 13th Arty. The five-man team of the Go Dau Ha AAAU monitors the airwaves 24-hours a day seven days a week. In the tiny radio bunker artillery data is plotted and all aircraft in the sector are constantly advised of any changes.

Since its inception several months ago the unit has become self sufficient, operating off batteries if outside electrical sources are cut off.

SP4 Harold Upton, team chief of the unit recalls with pride, "One time Charlie mortared the fire support base for almost an hour but the station never went off the air."

Upton, from Voorhessville, N.Y., emphasized the close liaison his unit maintains between aircraft and artillery units.

Almost Gets The Point

DAU TIENG—Quick reactions on the part of a 3rd Bde, 25th Div, soldier saved him from painful injury recently when he fell into a concealed punji pit only to catch himself before being impaled on the sharp stakes.

While searching a trio of Viet Cong buildings found by the 3rd Bn, 22nd Inf, SP4 Vern H. Hatcher, a tunnel rat from Oletz, Ohio, was moving along a trail

They Huff And They Puff And Blow Jungles Down

2ND BDE—Huffing and puffing and blowing their way through acres of jungle, U.S. and South Vietnamese forces are steadily clearing a Viet Cong-ridden area 32 kms northwest of Saigon.

The "huffing and puffing" comes from Rome plows and bulldozers razing long stretches of thick hedgerow and heavy forests.

The "blowing" erupts when U.S. engineers, unable to level the brush with their plows, blast it sky high with bangalore torpedoes and reels of detonation cord.

It all started in early October, when members of the 25th Inf Div's 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf, Charlie Co of the 65th Cbt Engr Bn with support from the 554th Engr Bn, and South Vietnamese Popular Forces teamed to turn the dense woods into open fields.

Target area for the project

was the terrain around Thai My village, better known to Tropic Lightning soldiers as "Dodge City" for the VC resistance they have frequently met there.

Each member of the joint effort had its own special duty. The infantry secured the operational area for the engineers. The engineers razed the area.

The Popular Forces took charge of the evacuating and relocating families who lived in the areas to be cleared.

Operating under the control of the division's 2nd Bde, the infantrymen first moved in to establish a forward base camp near Thai My.

Accomplishing this, they conducted search and destroy operations throughout the area, cleaning it of Viet Cong before the engineers and their vulnerable equipment arrived.

"The going was a little rough at first," said LTC Fremont B.

Hodson of Atlanta, Ga., the infantry battalion commander.

"We encountered many types of booby traps, causing some casualties. But with the thorough searching we found many more before they were detonated."

Several weeks after the operation began, residents who would have been endangered by the advancing plows had been relocated. The engineers moved in.

For them, previous jobs such as the levelling of the Boi Loi and HoBo Woods, operating in a forward area was a new experience.

"It was construction platoon turned combat engineers," explained ILT Charles Snyder of York, Pa., operations officer for the engineers.

"We had a lot to learn about field operations, but under the circumstances, I believe we adapted ourselves to the new situation very quickly," he said.

While the 5th Inf "Bobcats" formed a protective screen, bulldozers and Rome plows began their systematic advance into the thick underbrush and woods, at times clearing as much as 5,000 meters a day.

Still, they had to be discriminating. The engineers constantly skirted expanses of fruit trees and croplands, spared for the villagers who would eventually return.

Unlucky Number Lucky For Them

DAU TIENG—A thirteen man ambush patrol from the 3rd Bde, 25th Div, doesn't consider the UNLUCKY NUMBER to be anything but LUCKY for them, after their patrol had sprung an ambush which killed four VC.

The patrol had set up its ambush site some 200 meters from the night defensive perimeter of the battalion located northeast of Dau Tieng. Earlier the battalion's position was pounded by 40 mortar rounds followed by a ground assault which was repelled.

"The VC must have been hit hard by the battalion's lines," related SGT Charles LeVan, "because when we sprang our ambush we sure heard them coming."

The VC were carrying their dead and wounded off when the patrol was alerted by the yelling and screaming of the enemy.

"When they moved into the killing zone we opened up with everything we had; we hit them hard, they didn't know what was happening," said LeVan.

Transfer Request Gets Fast Results

DAU TIENG—Becoming bored with his duties as a personnel management specialist, SP4 Robert Van Norton from Johnson City, N.Y., decided he would like to try something more exciting—and he found it.

The 3rd Bde, 25th Div, soldier, assigned to the 2nd Bn, 77th Arty, requested reassignment to an infantry unit. Four days later he was told to report immediately to 1LT Stephen P. Gammon, a forward observer from Dallas, Tex., also assigned to the 2/77th Arty.

"You are going to be my RTO (Radio Telephone Operator)," Gammon said. "Grab your gear—we've got a Snoopy (OH-23G helicopter) waiting on us. We've got to replace an FO and RTO who have been hit."

Moments later they were in the air and enroute to the area

where the infantry was being hit.

"When we first got in the air I could see fires and explosions from where the fighting was," Gammon said.

"As we got closer," Van Norton commented, "I could see dustoffs trying to get in to evacuate the wounded."

The chopper pilot hovered above the fighting looking for an opening to drop his flares in. No opening was in sight and tracer rounds were coming so close that you could reach your arm out of the chopper and grab one, Van Norton said.

After circling the area repeatedly trying to find a point from which to drop the FO and RTO the chopper pilot again hovered, watching for an opening.

"I was pretty scared. What really scared me was when the chopper took a hit," Van Norton said. "All of a sudden it would begin to flutter—it would only last a few seconds, but I was never more scared in my life."

After trying for over 20 minutes to get the chopper down, with no success, Van Norton said he was prepared for the worst.

"It was then the artillery began firing airbursts in the area," Gammon said, "The pilot must have decided it was getting too hot finally—that's when we left."

"And it wasn't a minute too soon," Van Norton commented.

Still Time To Order Yearbook

The 208 page color and black and white yearbook is the story of the 25th Infantry Division from October 1966 to October 1967.

It follows the Tropic Lightning Division operations through the Boi Loi and Ho Bo Woods, the Michelin and Filhol Plantations and the many nameless but not forgotten swamps and rice paddies.

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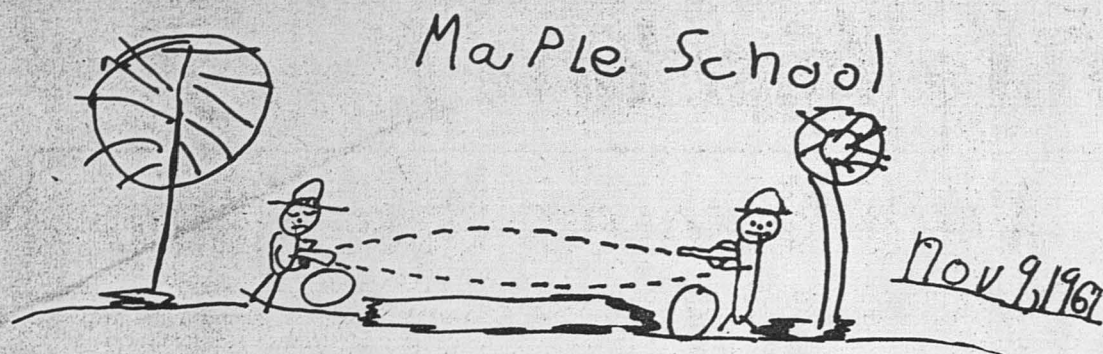
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25th Infantry Division

1966-67 Yearbook



Dear Friends in Vietnam I like you
 Very much I like To Play guns BUT
 Your Job is much more important
 To our Country

BY - Mike Hall

FROM HOME—The above letter was sent to all Tropic Lightning Troopers by third graders from Maple School in Los Angeles. It typifies the feelings of many Americans back home, even though written by a child. We might also add that a Maple School teacher has a boyfriend in Vietnam. (Ed.)

Regional-Popular Forces On Defensive and Offensive

DAU TIENG — "The main thing is to give the people here a good life and to rebuild all the things the VC have destroyed," stated CPT Phan Manh Tuan, Tri Tam district chief and commander of some 250 Regional Forces and Popular Forces troops located in and around the village of Dau Tieng. Working toward that goal, the RF-PF soldiers are responsible for the security of Dau Tieng. Outposts, manned 24 hours a day, ring the village on the South, West and East. The Northern section of the village borders on Camp Rainier, base camp of the 3rd Bde, 25th Inf Div.

"The RF-PF Forces are capable of both defensive and offensive combat operations," said MAJ John C. Burke of San Carlos, Calif., head of MAOV Advisory Team 91 which is stationed at the Tri Tam District Headquarters. "They not only engage active VC but also work against the infrastructure in the area."

In addition to their defensive role, the Vietnamese soldiers

play an important part in interdicting Viet Cong supply sources by working with U.S. Forces and the National Police in resources control. Various checkpoints on roads leading out of the village are manned by the combined teams and prevent excessive food stuffs and other supplies from falling into Viet Cong hands. Records of all supplies leaving the village are kept to insure the effectiveness of the program.

Working with the Tropic Lightning soldiers in cordon and searches of outlying villages has been effective. While the U.S. soldiers ring the village to be searched, Vietnamese teams composed of RF-PF troops, Chieu Hoi representatives and Vietnamese National Police personnel move into the village instructing the people on the procedure to be used in the searching of the village. The

presence of the Vietnamese personnel relieves much of the tension involved with such operations.

If the members of the village are to be resettled to a secure area, RF-PF troops aid in the preparation of the people to be moved — explaining why they are to be evacuated and to where. Operations such as these are taking the former "safe havens" of the outlying villages away from the Viet Cong.

"The working relationships of the U.S. and RF-PF troops here have improved greatly in combined operations," commented Burke.

Combat operations, however, are only a part of the RF-PF role in Dau Tieng. In trying to give the "good life" to the people, the citizen soldiers assist with civic action programs in the village.

Miss Raye Escapes VC Ground Attack

Singer and three-war USO entertainer, Martha Raye, was recently plucked from the U.S. camp atop Nui Ba Den mountain by a helicopter which landed while the camp was under enemy fire to make the rescue.

Miss Raye, along with the three female members of her troupe from the USO Show "Hello Dolly," had stopped off at the Special Forces and 25th Inf Div communications camp to visit with the men when a firefight between a U.S. patrol and an unknown size VC unit erupted just outside the perimeter.

The camp commander, concerned for the safety of his guests, and not sure of the guerrilla's intentions, decided to call for an immediate evacuation by helicopter of the "VIPs."

His radio message was monitored by a Huey "Slick Ship" from the 187th Assault Hel Co which was returning from a combat mission. The helicopter had just inserted a unit from the 4th Bn, 9th Inf, on a combat assault and was passing by the mountain on its way back to Tay Ninh. The aircraft commander, 1LT Gerhard Weis, from Milwaukee, decided to attempt the rescue, since his helicopter was closest to the camp.

The helicopter plunged through the swirling clouds that encircle the peak, and made a perfect landing on the camp's tiny landing zone. As the aircraft touched down, a feminine figure in tiger stripe fatigues and green beret bounded across the LZ and leapt aboard, closely followed by the three other young ladies. The pilot, WO Jay Bashline, from Pittsburgh, suddenly recognized who the VIPs were. "Hey, it's Martha Raye," he announced to the crew. A moment later the helicopter lifted off and made an uneventful trip to Tay Ninh, where the important passengers breathed a sign of relief.

Enemy Sampan Scuttled

2ND BDE — "It was a perfect ambush," commented the soldier as he recalled the river and the sampan with the machine gun mounted on its bow.

"We waited until they were right in the middle of the kill zone. Everyone was quiet, nobody moved. Then we opened up."

The platoon of Delta Co, 2nd Bn, 27th Inf "Wolfhounds," part of a 25th Inf Div task force, had been sweeping through the Iron Triangle.

It was the opening day of Operation Atlanta, a 2nd Bde mission to destroy the Viet Cong stronghold just north of Saigon, and so far the company had made no contact.

The ambush patrol had moved along the bank of the Saigon River just after dark. For several hours, they remained motionless, watching the flickering shadows on the moon-lit river.

Finally, around midnight, the flank position spotted movement, quickly but silently alerting the rest of the patrol.

On the river, an enemy sampan drifted downstream, its heavily armed crew apparently unsuspecting the Americans presence.

"We could see three of them, sitting in the boat, and they had a machine gun on the bow," said SGT Dennis Feldkirchner of Oregon, Ill., a squad leader. "They didn't seem worried about the possibility of ambush, either."

When the sampan came within 25 meters of the shore, Feldkirchner said, "We opened fire with everything."

The three guerrillas aboard were cut down before they could even return fire.

The bullet-riddled sampan sank as it swept downstream in the strong current.

25th Presented Hawaiian Flag

The Hawaiian state flag was recently presented to the 25th Inf Div during a ceremony at Ft. DeRussy in Honolulu. Receiving the flag on behalf of MG F.K. Mearns, 25th CG, was CPT David Cooper.

The presentation was made by Mr. Eu and Mr. Lau, president and secretary, respectively, of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Hawaii.

Also on hand was the 1967 Hawaiian Narcissus Queen.

The flag was donated as a reminder that Hawaii is still the home of 25th Inf Div.

"Little Duke" Saves Platoon

2ND BDE — With a steak and a toast, members of a 25th Inf Div rifle platoon thanked a scout dog named "Little Duke" for alerting them to the presence of a Viet Cong base camp.

The scout dog, walking the point on a search and destroy mission during the 2nd Bde's Operation Atlanta, alerted the 2nd Bn, 27th Inf "Wolfhounds," patrol only 30 meters from the enemy fortifications.

According to SP4 David M. Monger of Fountain City, Ind., the German Shepherd's handler, "Little Duke" scented danger to the front.

The patrol halted and machine gunners moved through the dense Iron Triangle jungle to the front of the formation where they could see enemy to their front.

When the Americans realized they were vastly outnumbered, they withdrew, calling in artillery and air strikes on the Viet Cong base camp.



FIRST MISSION—MAJ William Ballinger (shown in the cockpit) watches a wounded soldier being removed from his aircraft after the first dust-off flight made by the newly arrived 159th Medical Detachment. The unit, under the command of MAJ Raymond Jackson arrived in Cu Chi Oct. 27. Other crew members on the first flight were: WO pilot William S. Asselin; SP4 Chester Curley, crew chief; and SP4 Robert Clement, medic.

JOIN THE
 STAR-SPANGLED
 FREEDOM PLAN

SIGN UP FOR U.S.
 SAVINGS BONDS/
 FREEDOM
 SHARES

Mele Kalikimaka

(Merry Christmas)



IT'S ALMOST TIME—A sleigh and reindeer aren't suited to Vietnam, so Santa Claus has taken charge of this helicopter to deliver some of the 550,000 Red Cross ditty bags (related story on page 2) sent to U.S. servicemen here. Filled by Red Cross volunteers across the U.S., the bags contain toilet articles and personal items. (Photo by Mark Stevens)

Arty In Triangle

DIV ARTY — For the first time in the war, U.S. artillery units are pounding the enemy from a fire support base inside the Iron Triangle, 40 kms north-northwest of Saigon.

A forward fire support base has been established by Bravo and Charlie Btrys of the 6th Bn, 77th Arty, 25th Inf Div Arty; and two II Field Force artillery units, Alpha Btry, 1st Bn, 27th Arty and Alpha Btry, 7th Bn, 8th Arty.

The artillery moved into the Iron Triangle as the 25th Div launched Operation Atlanta.

Atlanta is the second operation in the Iron Triangle for the 25th Div. In January a combined sweep was carried out by elements of the division, 173rd Airborne Bde, 196th Lt Inf Bde, and the 1st Inf Div. Artillery support for that operation, called Cedar Falls, came from bases outside the Triangle.

First Sergeant Was "Knight" ...

(Continued from Page 1)

Dropping from his plane, he had to aim for a five and one-half inch bullseye on the ground. On the first of two jumps from 1000 feet, Harman hit the disc dead center, and fell a little more than a foot away on the second.

Such accuracy may seem uncanny, but it's not uncommon for the 187th's first sergeant. Harman has hit dead center 120 times in his career—seven of eleven times in the French International meet in 1966.

The dedicated parachutist has

even managed to squeeze in a few jumps while in-country.

"I have my equipment with me," Harman said smiling, "it always goes where I go. So when a friend told me about the Saigon Parachute Club, I was able to go down and make one or two jumps."

The club's drop zone is 8 kms north of the city, about 500 meters from the spot where the 187th received heavy ground fire during an operation last August. At the time, some of the badly damaged ships had

to land in the drop zone.

"The club sends out a platoon to secure the area, before it does any jumping," said Harman, "but if you handle your chute wrong, you're out of the secure area. You don't think about these things when you're in the air, but I did notice that everyone tended to be very accurate."

With three months left to his tour here, Harman is debating whether to extend or return to the states and try for the U.S. team that will compete in the 1968 International.

Hauoli Makahikihou

(Happy New Year)

Mech Uncovers Base Camp

2ND BDE—Mechanized infantry units of the 25th Inf Div's 2nd Bde uncovered two massive Viet Cong base camps during a recent search and destroy mission deep in the Boi Loi Woods.

Elements of the 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf, located the base camps the morning after communist gunners poured automatic weapons and recoilless rifle fire at them as they were moving to a new patrol base.

LTC Fremont B. Hodson Jr.

Eagles ...

(Continued from Page 1)

perimeter that morning, the battalion accounted for 10 VC killed. Two weapons were found, an AK-47 rifle and a Russian-made carbine.

The U.S. soldiers also captured 275 rounds of AK-47 ammunition, 9 M-79 rounds, 10 Chi-com grenades, medical supplies, documents of the National Liberation Front, 2 gas masks and numerous pieces of field equipment which were left by the fleeing VC.

of Atlanta, Ga., battalion commander, speculated one enemy camp "was used as either a large training center or a staging area."

The other, smaller camp "was used as an outpost for the big one," he said.

The 2nd Bde troops came under heavy fire late in the afternoon as they crashed through the twisted brush of a fire lane running deep into the Boi Loi Woods.

They returned fire with .50 cal. machine guns, small arms and the heavy guns of supporting tanks, but pulled back be-

cause of approaching darkness and then pounded the area with airstrikes and artillery.

A search the next morning led to the discovery of a communist base camp containing 11 fortified sleeping bunkers, a kitchen, five 50 lb shaped charges, 250 lbs of rice and more than 200 meters of trench line connected to fighting positions and command centers.

Pressing on, the infantrymen discovered a massive camp capable of housing more than 750 men in 50 fortified underground bunkers.

Each bunker, furnished with wooden cots, housed 15 men.

Iron Triangle Opn ...

(Continued from Page 1)

Viet Cong base camps or supply points.

In one case, a company of the 2nd Wolfhounds received heavy fire from across a jungle clearing as it moved into what was supposed to be the new battalion base camp.

Calling for reinforcements, a mechanized infantry platoon

from the 4th Bn, 23rd Inf, and two tanks from the 2nd Bn, 34th Armor, cut through the center of the Wolfhound lines, killing three Viet Cong and capturing two Chinese carbines.

Searching through the battlefield, the infantrymen uncovered 16 communist bodies in shallow graves, more than 70,000 lbs of rice and a North Vietnamese flag.

Two days later, another small Viet Cong force attacked elements of the 23rd Inf, who immediately assaulted the enemy positions, killing three communists and capturing an RPG-2 rocket launcher and an AK-47 assault rifle.

Although the probing ground troops have turned up a total of 80 enemy weapons, by far the largest find came when Delta Co of the 2nd Bn, 27th Inf, uncovered a 55-gallon drum outside their base camp.

The drum, unearthed by a bulldozer clearing a fire lane, contained 65 brand-new Chinese carbines, two .45 cal. submachine guns and a pistol. All were still wrapped in protective grease.

On several occasions, the 2nd Bde infantrymen have trapped Viet Cong elements in their base camps, then gunned them down as they attempted to escape.

Two companies of the 1st Bn, 27th Inf, killed one enemy and gunships supporting them killed four more as a communist force attempted to slip between the assaulting Wolfhounds.

Throughout the operation, the task force troops have destroyed thousands of meters of tunnels and trenches, as well as 20 separate base camps.



BICYCLE BATTALION—Well, not really, but it is a new ground mobile concept for members of the 25th Inf Div's 1st Bn, 27th Inf "Wolfhounds," as they begin what looks like a potentially monstrous traffic jam. The 2nd Bde soldiers used the captured VC bicycles to transport ammunition, supplies and themselves throughout their base camp. (Photo by SP4 Bruce Daprich)

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