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roadsides of all growth throughout Vietnam, making it more difficult for the Viet Cong to ambush military vehicles and tax civilians.

The land-clearing concept was developed to deny easy movement of the enemy by cutting wide swaths through the jungle.

The heavy equipment clears the roadsides of all growth in areas where the VC operate. It also clears dense, unpopulated jungle to create open fire areas and to make it easier for spotter planes and helicopters to detect enemy movement.

Troops Aid Family of Dead Viet

RACH KIEN, Vietnam (IO)—A company of the 3rd Bn., 39th Regt., 9th Inf. Div., recently collected \$76.27 for the family of a dead Republic of Vietnam Army officer.

The Vietnamese lieutenant was seriously wounded by an enemy booby trap as the American unit took part in a recent joint operation two miles south of here with the 3rd Bn., 46th Regt. He was evacuated but died en route to a hospital.

"When I heard he had died," said Capt. Donald L. Holmes, 27, B Co. commander, "I asked his commander for information about him because he was an outstanding soldier."

Holmes learned the man was a North Vietnamese who had volunteered to fight with government forces. He left a wife and four children.

The captain decided to take up a collection in his company. The money was turned over to the soldier's commander, who presented it to the family.

The widow sent a note of gratitude.

'Black Cats' Set Records

PHU LOI, Vietnam (IO)—The "Black Cats" of the 213th Assault Support Helicopter Co. have set two major logistics records despite bad weather.

The "Black Cats" flew more hours in one month and hauled more cargo tonnage in one day than any Chinook company in the Army.

Programmed for 880 flight hours per month, the company flew 1,418 Chinook flight hours during August. On Aug. 12, in support of 1st Inf. Div. Arty, the "Black Cats" hauled a mammoth 597 tons.

Assigned a land-clearing mission in support of the 9th Inf. Div. Their mission was to clear a strip 200 meters wide east from the intersection of Route 15 to link with clearing operations being conducted from Blackhorse by the 15th Eng. Bn. Co. A's 2nd Platoon cleared a 12-kilometer tract through the jungle and then constructed a road in its center.

During the first week of the operation, sporadic sniper and automatic weapons fire was received by the clearing party.

A Rome plow cutting through the jungle during the second week surprised a party of VC setting up an ambush with a recoilless rifle team. Men from the 9th Inf. Div. killed one VC and captured the recoilless rifle. Near the end of the operation, three Viet Cong bodies were found in a bunker that had been crushed by the Rome plows.

In Operation Emporia, which began in August, the 86th Eng. Bn. (Combat) was assigned another land-clearing mission. Co. B was to clear portions of Route 20 of all jungle growth along its sides. The highway is used by villagers in that area as the main route into Saigon. The VC, knowing this, would hide in the jungle growth and demand payment from South Vietnamese civilians using the route.

During the first phase of the operation, the engineers cleared 680 acres of light jungle and medium to heavy rubber trees. In the second phase, the Rome plows and bulldozers cleared 900 acres of medium to heavy jungle with trees seven feet in diameter.

During the second phase, Co. B also constructed a Popular Forces camp for the Vietnamese.

The engineers destroyed 12 VC tax collection bunkers during the first two phases of the operation.

Phase three started in the last week of August and Co. B was given the mission of clearing the roadsides from Gia Ray to the junction of Route 1.

The Rome plows and bulldozers cleared all vegetation for 300 meters on both sides of the road. They also cleared an area 300 meters wide around the village of Soui Cat at the request of Vietnamese officials.

A total of 2,481 acres of land was cleared during the third and fourth phases of the operation.

100 Mission Member

CAM RANH BAY, Vietnam (OI)—Capt. Billy Gough has entered the 100 mission club in the 557th Tactical Fighter Sqdn., Cam Ranh Bay AB. Gough qualified by completing 100 combat missions piloting the F4C Phantom jet over North and South Vietnam.



Colonel Gets Red Welcome

Lt. Col. John Mitchell (right), inspects the tail fins of 60mm mortar round that hit near his Con Thien command bunker shortly after he took over as the embattled outpost's new commander recently. Unidentified demolition officer shows him the shrapnel retrieved from a nearby crater.

(AP Radiophoto)

Lightning Bolts Shock GIs by Arriving Twice

CU CHI, Vietnam (IO)—Lightning struck twice in a 25th Inf. Div. forward base camp recently, giving two sergeants some shocking combat stories to tell.

Men of the 1st Bn. (Mech), 5th Inf. started tightening tent ropes and covering supplies as monsoon storm clouds rolled over their camp.

Medics in the "Big Angel", the battalion aid personnel carrier, lowered their tent flaps to shut out the rain.

"We were all sitting around," explained Capt. Edward DeHass, battalion surgeon, "when all of a sudden, ZAP! The next thing anyone knew, we were all lying on the floor."

Seconds later, a soldier ran into the aid station shouting, "Hurry, a man's been hit by lightning at the command post."

"Evidently the guy didn't think it odd that we were all laying on our backs with dazed looks on our faces," said Sgt. 1.C. Arlie Wolfrum, the medical platoon sergeant from San Antonio, Texas.

"I managed to pick myself up

and hobble over to the command post," he said.

There he found a radio operator, Staff Sgt. Steve Riga of Portsmouth, Ark., sitting on the floor nursing a burned lip.

Riga had been talking on the phone when a ball of fire leaped off the set.

"I've been chewed out on the phone before, but this is the first time I've been knocked over it," Riga joked.

Wolfrum returned to his aid station to treat the others. "One was hurt seriously," he said later, "but we do have some stories to tell about lightning striking twice."

Spotter Hits '1,000'

BINH THUY, Vietnam (OI)—Air Force Maj. Theodore King, 39, has completed 1,000 hours of actual combat time while flying 602 missions as forward air controller (FAC) in the tiny O-1 Bird Dog. The major reached this milestone when he returned to Binh Thuy for aircraft servicing by 22nd Tactical Air Support Squadron (TASS).