

Three Hot Chans Lead Way

1st Strike Troopers, PFs Trap VC

LZ SALLY — With precision timing so vital that a five-minute delay would have meant sure failure, 2nd Brigade air cavalrymen and Popular Forces (PF) soldiers of Quang Dien District overran a Viet Cong stronghold recently north of Hue.

The lightning maneuver netted 13 Viet Cong dead by body count, three detainees and a variety of captured weapons.

There were no friendly casualties.

The startled Viet Cong were still eating breakfast when the first Huey-load of PFs swooped in at grass-top level. One insurgent dropped his rice and reached for his rifle, but the PF's shot him from the still-howering helicopter.

Fleeing their little hamlet, six Viet Cong ran straight into three

platoons of Co. B, 1st-Bn, 502nd Inf. The harried enemy soldiers were easy targets for the air cavalrymen, who were arranged in three blocking positions outside the enemy stronghold.

"First Strike" Battalion operations officer, Maj. Sid Shachnow, Salem, Mass., "fathered" the "Hammer and Anvil" joint operation. Co. B played the anvil, speed-marching 3,000 meters

in 30 minutes to block possible rear exits.

The hammer was three platoons of PFs shuttled in on the "First Strike" resupply helicopter from Quang Dien district headquarters only a mile away.

"Speed-marching," explained Shachnow, "is when you leave behind everything but your weapon, water and ammunition, and go like hell."

Because the Screaming Eagles and the PFs arrived simultaneously, and from different directions, the Viet Cong were immediately trapped in the three tiny hamlet clusters on the northern fork of the Song Bo river.

"If either group had been just a few minutes late, the Viet Cong would have escaped," said Capt. Robert Selzer, leader of

the MACV advisory team at Quang Dien. Selzer helped coordinate the operation with the PFs.

The helicopter, a "Black Widow" of the division's 188th Assault Helicopter Co., pulled triple duty as a taxi, command and control ship, and later as a gunship. The aircraft crew caught three Viet Cong trying to escape across a rice paddy. After giving the trio a chance to surrender, the Huey's door gunners were forced to kill the fleeing insurgents.

The Allies learned of the enemy presence from six former Viet Cong, who had surrendered to the PFs the previous night. The ex-terrorists volunteered to lead the PFs against their former comrades.



CAUTIOUS ADVANCE—Sgt. Johnny W. Seals, Birmingham, Ala., of the division's C Co., 2nd Bn., 502nd Inf., advances cautiously along a road near Hue during Operation Nevada Eagle.

(Photo by Spec. 5 Richard McLaughlin)

2nd Brigade Dentist Aids Local Educator

LZ SALLY — "We must have done a good job because a few days later she came back with a friend," said Spec. 5 William Rumshock, Greenville, Fla., of the division's 326th Medical Bn. here recently.

Rumshock was talking about Sister Mary from the nearby Catholic Church at PK-17, an ARVN compound.

"About a week earlier the sister had come in escorted by a military policeman," said Capt. John Carpenter, Helena, Mont., 2nd Brigade dentist. "A note she carried written by the parish priest explained her problem."

Sister Mary was an elementary grade school teacher and

pain from a bad tooth had driven her to distraction, making her unable to teach.

"I could tell she was nervous," Rumshock said. "We must have seemed strange and frightening to her with all our equipment and curious faces poking out of every corner."

But Sister Mary's painful tooth was soon removed and the change in her was instantaneous. She bubbled over with gratitude and extended a "thank-you" to everyone she saw.

Moments later she was again seated in the back of the military police jeep, this time waving happily. School at PK-17 reopened the next day.