

OUR HISTORY

This history deals with the activities, personell, and accomplishments of Company C (Ranger), 75th infantry during the period 1 February 1969 through October 1971, and Company E (Long Range Patrol) 20th Infantry (Airborne) from 25 September 1967 through 1 February 1969 which preceeded the designation of Company C (Ranger), 75th Infantry.

Throughout history the need for a small, highly trained, far ranging unit to perform reconnaissance, surveillance, target acquisition, and special type combat missions has been readily apparent.

In Vietnam, this need was met by instituting a Long Range Patrol program to provide each major combat unit with this special capability.

Rather than create an entirely new unit designation for such an elite force, the Department of the Army looked to its rich and varied heritage and on 1 February 1969 designated the 75th Infantry Regiment, the present successor to the famous 5307th Composite Unit (Merrill's Marauders) as the parent organization for all Department of the Army designated Long Range Patrol (LRP) units. The parenthetical designation (Ranger) in lieu of (LRP) was given and the units were identified by letters. As a result, Company E (LRP), 20th Infantry (Abn), assigned to First Field Force Vietnam became Company C (Ranger), 75th Infantry. The 5307th was organized on 3 October 1943, and trained for deep penetration missions behind enemy lines in Japanese-held Burma. On 10 August 1944, the 5307th was consolidated with the 475th and the combined unit was designated the 475th Infantry Regiment and was designated as a long range penetrating force. The 475th was inactivated on 1 July 1945 in China. On 21 June 1954, the 475th was redesignated the 75th Infantry Regiment and activated in Okinawa on 20 November 1954 and remained active until 21 March 1956.

On 25 September 1967, Company E (Long Range Patrol), 20th Infantry (Airborne) was activated and assigned to I Field Force Vietnam, commanded by Lieutenant General William B. Rosson. The unit was orionally formed in Phan Rang by procuring combat veterans from the 1st Brigade (LRRP), 101st Airborne Division, along with personnel who were scheduled to join the Military Police Brigade. Additional assets were also drawn from the replacement detachments.

Company E was orionally commanded by Major Danridge M. Malone. The unit was to provide long range reconnaissance, surveillance, target acquisition, and special type missions on a corp level basis. In addition, the company had the capacity to operate as a platoon size force and conduct regular recon-in-force missions. They were known as Typhone Patrollers, taken from the codeword Typhone favored by I Field Force headquarters.

On 15 October 1967, Company E was placed under operational control of the 4th Infantry Division, and was relocated to the Division's base

camp at Camp Enari in the western Pleiku Province. The company trained through December and phased its four platoons through ten day preparatory courses, followed by sequential attendance at the MACV Recondo School in Nha Trang, which was run by Special Forces cadre, at two week intervals. Each Platoon concluded their training with a one week field training exercise outside the Special Forces camp at Plei Do Mi in the Central Highlands. The first platoon completed its program on 1 December and the entire company was declared combat operational on 23 December 1967.

Company E was organized for 230 men, broken down into four platoons of seven six-man teams each. A headquarters section handled all the administration and logistics and a communications platoon was responsible for the vital radio contact with the teams.

Although the company was designed to field two active platoons while the other two platoons trained and prepared for further missions on a rotating basis, it wasn't long before every platoon was tasked with their own mission at the same time.

Each platoon consisted of a platoon leader (2nd Lt.), a platoon sergeant (SFC), the seven teams and communications support as required. Active platoons were deployed to mission support sites, such as Special Forces camps and forward fire bases.

Each team was structured for a team leader (SSG,SGT), an assistant team leader (SGT,SPC), a radio operator (SPC,PFC), and three scouts (SPC,PFC) and were designated by platoon and team number within the platoon. Second platoon, team 1 would be team 21. As time went by and personnel were rotated out, for a variety of reasons, it was not uncommon for a team to consist of five men or less and to be led by a specialist (E-4). Also due to limited available resources it was not uncommon for a platoon to deploy with only three six-man recon teams. This did not keep the teams from completing any assigned mission, and after training together as a team the men were capable of handling each others duties and positions regardless of their rank. On some occasions two or more teams would be combined (two-teamer) for specific missions such as a reaction force, prisoner snatch, or downed aircraft search/recovery (SAR).

In January 1969 the Army reorganized the 75th Infantry under the combat arms regimental system as the parent regiment for the various infantry patrol companies. On 1 February, Company C (Ranger), 75th Infantry, was officially activated by incorporating the Company E "Typhone Patrollers" into the new outfit. The rangers were known as "Charlie Rangers" in conformity with C in the ICAO phonetic alphabet. Company C continued to operate under control of I Field Force and was based at Ahn Khe.

From 4 to 22 February 1969, three platoons rendered reconnaissance support for the Republic of Korea 9th Division in the Ha Roi region and two platoons supported the Phu Bon province advisory campaign along the northern provincial boundary from 26 February to 8 March. Company C then concentrated its teams in support of the 4th Infantry Division by

reconing major infiltration routes in the southwestern HINES area of operations until 28 March. During the first part of the year, teams also pulled recon-security duty along the ambush prone section of Highway 19 between Ahn Khe and the Mang Yang pass.

During March 1969, Lt. Gen. Charles A. Corcoran assumed command of I Field Force and an enhancement of ranger capability was begun. Company C constructed a basic and refresher training facility at Ahn Khe and conducted a three-week course for all non-recondo-graduate individuals during April. The company then used the course for new volunteers before going to the MACV Recondo school. In late April, Company C shifted support to the 173rd Airborne Brigade's Operation WASHINGTON GREEN in northern Binh Dinh Province. Company C assisted Company N by conducting surveillance of enemy infiltration routes that passed through the western mountains of the province toward the heavily populated coastline.

Most Company C assets remained in Binh Dinh Province in a screening role, but at the end of April one platoon was dispatched for one week in the Ia Drang Valley near the Cambodian border. This was followed by two platoons being kept with the ROK Capital Division on diversionary and surveillance operations thru mid July.

On 21 July the company received an entirely new assignment. Company C was attached to Task Force South in the southernmost I Field Force territory operating against Viet Cong strongholds along the boundary of II and III Corp Tactical Zones. The company, now under the command of Maj. Bill V. Holt, served as the combat patrol arm of Task Force South until 25 March 1970.

The Rangers operated in an ideal reconnaissance setting that contained vast wilderness operational areas, largely without population or allied troupe density. Flexible patrol arrangements were combined with imaginative methods of team insertion, radio deception, and nocturnal employment. Numerous ambush situations led Company C to anticipate an opportunity to use stay-behind infiltration techniques. As one team was being extracted, another team already on the chopper would infiltrate at the same time on a stay behind mission. The tactic was to be very successful. The company operated in eight day operational cycles and used every ninth day for "recurring refresher training." The teams rehearsed basic patrolling techniques varying from night ambush to boat infiltration. Ranger proficiency flourished under these conditions, and MACV expressed singular satisfaction with Company C's results.

The Viet Cong had taken advantage of the "no man's land" of Binh Thuan and Binh Tuy provinces straddling the allied II and III corp tactical zones to reinforce their Military Region Six headquarters. Company C performed a monthly average of twenty-seven patrols despite inclement weather in this region and amassed a wealth of military intelligence.

On 1 February 1970 the company was split when two platoons moved into Tuyen Duc Province and then rejoined on 6 March. Numerous team

sightings in the Binh Thuan area led to operation HANCOCK MACE.

Company C was moved to Pleiku city on 29 March 1970, and placed under operational control of the aerial 7th Squadron of the 7th Cavalry where they conducted thirty-two patrols in the far western border areas of the Central Highlands.

On 19 April the company was attached to the separate 3rd Battalion, 506th Infantry and relocated to Ahn Khe, where it was targeted against the 95th NVA Regiment in the Mang Yang Pass area of Binh Dinh Province.

The rapid deployments into Pleiku and Ahn Khe provided insufficient time for teams to gain sufficient information about new terrain and enemy situations prior to insertion and they sometimes lacked current charts and aerial photographs. Company C effectiveness was hindered by poor logistical response, supply and equipment shortages, and transient relations with multiple commands. These difficulties were worsened by commanders who were unfamiliar with ranger employment. Thus, the rangers performed routine pathfinder work and guarded unit flanks as well as performing recon missions.

On 4 May 1970 the company was opconned to the 4th Infantry Division. The following day Operation BINH TAY I, the invasion of Cambodia's Ratanaktri Province, was initiated. Although ranger fighting episodes in the BINH TAY I operation were often fierce and sometimes adverse, the operation left Company C with thirty patrol observations of enemy personnel, five NVA killed, and fifteen weapons captured. On 24 May 1970 Company C was pulled out of Cambodia and released from 4th Infantry Division control.

Four days later they were rushed to Dalat to recon an NVA thrust toward the city. Their recon produced only seven sightings but an enemy cache was discovered containing 2,350 pounds of hospital supplies, and 50 pounds of equipment. They remained in Dalat less than a month before being sent back to rejoin Task Force South at Phan Thiet.

May, June and July of 1970 were described by the new commander of Company C, Maj. Donald L. Hudson, as involving a dizzying pattern of operations. The company operated in Binh Thuan, Lam Dong, Tuyen Duc, Pleiku, and Binh Dinh provinces during this time. Twenty-seven days were devoted to company movements with sixty-five days of tactical operations, each move necessitating adjustment with novel terrain, unfamiliar aviation resources, and fresh superior commands.

On 26 July 1970 Company C was transported by cargo aircraft to Landing Zone English outside Bong Son and was returned to the jurisdiction of the 173rd Airborne. The company supported operation WASHINGTON GREEN in coastal Binh Dinh province with small unit ambushes, limited raids, and pathfinder assistance for heliborne operations.

During August the "Charlie Rangers" attempted to locate and destroy the troublesome Viet Cong, Khan Hoa provincial battalion, but

were deterred by Korean Army jurisdictional claims. The mission became secondary when the 173rd discovered a large communist headquarters complex at secret base 226 in the Central Highlands and on 17 August the 2nd Brigade of the 4th Infantry Division moved into the region and Company C was attached for reconnaissance.

In mid November 1970 Company C was attached to the 17th Aviation Group, and it remained under either aviation or 173rd Airborne Brigade control for most of the remaining duration of its Vietnam service.

Following the inactivation of I Field Force at the end of April 1971, Company C was reassigned to the Second Regional Assistance Command, and on 15 August was reduced to a brigade strength ranger company of three officers and sixty-nine enlisted men.

The I Field Force rangers were notified of pending disbandment as part of Increment IX (Keystone Oriole-Charlie) of the Army redeployment from Vietnam. Company C (Airborne Ranger), 75th Infantry commenced final stand-down on 15 October 1971 and was reduced to zero strength by 24 October. On 25 October 1971 Company C was officially inactivated.

Company C (Airborne Ranger), 75th Infantry are entitled to the following:

Campaign Streamers:

Vietnam: Counteroffensive Phase VI
Tet 1969 Counteroffensive
Summer-Fall 1969
Sanctuary Counteroffensive
Counteroffensive Phase VII
Consolidation I
Consolidation II
Cease Fire

Decorations:

Vietnam: Valorous Unit Award
(One award)
Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross w/palm
(Two awards)
Republic of Vietnam Civil Actions Medal/First Class
(One award)

Traditional Designation: Charlie Rangers

Motto: Sua Sponte ("Of their own accord")

Distinctive Insignia: The shield of the coat of arms.

Symbolism of the coat of arms: The colors; blue, white, red and green represent four of the original six combat teams of the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional), which were identified by a color code word. The unit's close cooperation with the Chinese forces in the China-Burma-India Theater is represented by the Sun symbol from the Chinese Nationalist Flag. The white star represents the Star of Burma. The lightning bolt is symbolic of the strike characteristics of the behind-the-line activities.

RANGER Designation:

Rationale - The rationale for selecting the 75th Infantry as the parent unit for all DA authorized Ranger Units is as follows:

(1) Similarity of missions between those missions performed by Merrill's Marauders and those currently assigned to and envisioned by the new Ranger Companies' operations deep in enemy territory.

(2) It returns to the rolls of the active Army Regiment having a distinguished combat record and a unique place in the annals of the United States Army.

(3) It provides the Ranger Companies and the United States Army with a common regimental designation identifying an uncommon skill.