

IVY LEAVES IN BAMBOO

Claymore

When they wanted German soldiers to keep their distance from the foxhole line in World War II, 4th Infantry Division GIs set out antipersonnel mines. One standard antipersonnel mine, the metallic M2A4 "Bouncing Betty" flew into the air when somebody kicked it off, exploded, and rained steel on nosey German night patrols. Demanding all the respect of a rattlesnake, the Bouncing Betty had to have a safety pin cautiously inserted before an Ivyman could disarm it.

By the time the 4th shipped out to Vietnam's Central Highlands, combat troops carried the new Antipersonnel Mine M8A1 Claymore, named after a wicked Scots broadsword. Like a broadsword, the deadly Claymore mine cut down everything at a man's height in a 60 degree arc. Unlike the older Bouncing Betty, a soldier could control the Claymore's firing with an electrical device. Defending an artillery position at night, eyeballing a jungle trail for North Vietnamese regulars, one squeeze of the Claymore's firing handle and a 4th Division trooper "blew away" the enemy. Propelled by 1½ pounds of explosive, the Claymore expended 700 death-dealing steel pellets for over 50 yards.

There were other ways to "zap" the enemy with the 3½ pound fiberglass Claymore. One could arm it for non-electrical firing and move a greater distance from the small antipersonnel mine. Only 8½ inches long, 1 3/8 inches thick, and 3½ inches high, it could be

activated by pull type firing devices and trip wires much like the Bouncing Betty.

The Claymore mine provided 4th Infantry Division soldiers in Vietnam one more weapon with which to survive. Like their predecessors in World War I and World War II, no Ivyman went into Pleiku Province expecting a picnic.

WFS

Sources: Constance Mc Laughlin Green, et al The Ordnance Report-
ment: Planning Munitions for War (Washington, DC, 1955) p 392

LT Gen John H. Hay, Jr, Tactical and Materiel Innovations
(Washington, DC, 1973) pp 9, 53.

FM 23-23, Antipersonnel Mine M18A1 and M19 (Claymore)

January 1966