

PHOTOGRAPHER: SP5 BRYAN K. GRIGSBY
SUBJECT: COMBAT TRACKER TEAM STORY
DATE: 18-20 FEBRUARY 1969
FILM: SIX ROLLS EKTACOLOR "S" 120(TOTAL EXP 65)
CAMERA: HASSELBLAD SN: TR 83697
DCS: 200-19C-69-VN

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COVERAGE OBJECTIVE

THE OBJECTIVE OF THIS COVERAGE IS TO DOCUMENT THE COMPOSITION, EMPLOYMENT, AND COMBAT RESULTS OF COMBAT TRACKER TEAMS IN THE REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM. THIS IS A TEAM INITIATED PROJECT. SINCE SOME OF THE ACTIVITIES ARE DIFFICULT TO ILLUSTRATE GRAPHICALLY WITH PHOTOGRAPHY ALONE, EXTENSIVE USE OF NARRATION SHOULD BE USED. THE NARRATIVE PROVIDED ON SOUND TAPE TOGETHER WITH THE DOCUMENTS ATTACHED TO THE CAPTIONS SHOULD BE OF ASSISTANCE IN WRITING A NARRATIVE. POSSIBLE USES FOR THIS FILM INCLUDE NEWS RELEASE, FILM REPORT, TRAINING, AND DOCUMENTATION.

SUMMARY

ON 18-21 FEBRUARY 1969, THE COMBAT TRACKER TEAMS (CTT), 4th INF DET, (WAR DOG PROVISIONAL), LOCATED AT CAMP ENARI, APPROX 48 KILOMETERS SOUTH OF THE CITY OF PLEIKU, RVN, CONTINUED TO PROVIDE U.S. LINE UNITS WITH TRACKING CAPABILITIES THAT ENABLE THESE UNITS TO RE-ESTABLISH CONTACT WITH ENEMY ELEMENTS AFTER CONTACT HAS BEEN BROKEN. BESIDES RE-ESTABLISHING CONTACT WITH ENEMY ELEMENTS, THE CTT ALSO PROVIDE IMPORTANT INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION ABOUT ENEMY UNITS THROUGH TECHNIQUES PERFECTED BY AMERICAN INDIANS IN THE EARLY FRONTIER DAYS. THE INFORMATION GAINED BY THESE TEAMS CAN BE USED TO ATTEMPT TO BLOCK OR INTERCEPT THE ENEMY, USING GROUND FORCES OR AIR POWER. TYPICAL TYPES OF INFORMATION THE CTT GATHER ARE; SIZE OF ENEMY ELEMENTS, DIRECTION OF MOVEMENT, TYPES OF EQUIPMENT BEING USED, TROOP MORALE, AND TYPES OF WOUNDS THE ENEMY MAY HAVE RECEIVED.

ALTHOUGH TRACKER DOGS ARE USED, THE MEN THEMSELVES ARE HIGHLY TRAINED IN THE ART OF VISUAL TRACKING AND IN MANY CASES ARE MORE EFFECTIVE THAN THE DOGS. THE TRACKER DOGS ARE LABRADOR RETRIEVERS, USED BECAUSE OF THEIR HIGHLY DEVELOPED SENSE OF SMELL AND ABILITY TO CONCENTRATE ON ONE TRACK FOR EXTENDED PERIODS.

THE COMPOSITION OF A TYPICAL TRACKER TEAM IS FIVE MEN; A TEAM COMMANDER, VISUAL TRACKER, TRACKER DOG HANDLER, COVER MAN(WHO IS ALSO A TRAINED VISUAL TRACKER), AND A SCOUT DOG HANDLER. ALTHOUGH NOT ORGANIC TO THE TEAM, A SCOUT DOG TEAM IS OFTEN ATTACHED. THE SCOUT DOG IS USED TO ALERT THE TRACKER TEAM WHEN THEY HAVE LOCATED A ENEMY ELEMENT AND ARE WITHIN STRICKING DISTANCE TO IT. ALTHOUGH THE CTT LOCATE THE ENEMY, THEY DO NOT NORMALLY ENGAGE HIM. INSTEAD THEY RELY ON FIRE SUPPORT FROM THE INFANTRY UNITS BEHIND THEM. ONCE CONTACT IS MADE, THE CTT MOVES TO THE REAR AND IS TRANSPORTED BACK TO THEIR BASE CAMP TO AWAIT FURTHER MISSIONS.

ONE OF THE BIGGEST PROBLEMS THE CTT ENCOUNTER IS THAT THE UNITS THEY WORK WITH USUALLY DO NOT KNOW HOW TO USE THEIR SERVICES CORRECTLY. SPEED IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE AND THE CTT HAVE TO RELY ON TRANSPORTATION FROM THE UNITS THAT CALL FOR THEM. MANY TIMES THE TRANSPORTATION IS SLOW IN PICKING THEM UP AND LATE IN TAKING THEM BACK TO THEIR BASE CAMP WHERE THEY COULD BE ON CALL FOR ANOTHER UNIT.

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MASTER CAPTION:

ON 18-21 FEBRUARY 1969, THE COMBAT TRACKER TEAMS, 4th INF DET(WAR DOG PROVISIONAL), LOCATED AT CAMP ENARI, APPROX 48 KILOMETERS SOUTH OF THE CITY OF PLEIKU RVN, CONTINUED TO PROVIDE U.S. LINE UNITS WITH TRACKING CAPABILITIES THAT ENABLE THESE UNITS TO RE-ESTABLISH CONTACT WITH ENEMY ELEMENTS AFTER CONTACT HAS BEEN BROKEN.

USING TECHNIQUES PERFECTED BY THE AMERICAN INDIANS IN THE EARLY FRONTIER DAYS, THESE HIGHLY TRAINED TRACKERS CAN FOLLOW A MANS OR A UNITS TRAIL OVER THE MOST DIFFICULT OF TERRAIN. FOOTPRINTS, BLOOD, CIGARETTE BUTTS, IMPRINTS IN THE SOIL OF A MANS BODY OR HIS EQUIPMENT, DISCARDED RATIONS, THE NUMBER OF BREAKS TAKEN ALONG A PARTICULAR TRAIL, EVEN A LATRINE, CAN ENABLE THESE TRACKER TEAMS TO PIECE TOGETHER AN IDEA OF THE SIZE, DIRECTION, FIGHTING EFFECTIVENESS, AND MORAL OF A INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP BEING TRAILED.

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ROLL ONE

1. NG
2. SLATE.
- 3-8. AFTER RECEIVING A MISSION CALL FROM THE FIELD, A TEAM OF TRACKERS AND THEIR DOGS LOAD UP ON THE BACK OF A 2½ TON TRUCK, TO BE TRANSPORTED INTO THE COMBAT AREA.
9. A TEAM OF TRACKERS AND THEIR DOGS WAIT AT A HELIPORT FOR TRANSPORTATION TO THEIR NEXT COMBAT MISSION.
- 10-11. A TEAM OF TRACKERS AND THEIR DOGS BOARD A HUEY HELICOPTER FOR TRANSPORTATION TO A COMBAT MISSION.
12. A HUEY HELICOPTER LIFTS OFF FROM A HELIPAD WITH A TRACKER TEAM ON BOARD TO BE TRANSPORTED TO A COMBAT MISSION.

MASTER CAPTION: SAME AS ROLL ONE.

ROLL TWO:

1. SLATE.
- 2-5. A HUEY HELICOPTER FLIES THROUGH AN EARLY EVENING SKY.
- 6-10. A DOG HANDLER WITH THE COMBAT TRACKER TEAM WAITS WITH HIS DOG AT A HELIPAD FOR A EARLY EVENING FLIGHT TO A COMBAT MISSION.
- 11-12. A COMBAT TRACKER TEAM DOG HANDLER AND HIS DOG MOVE ALONG A PERMITER POSITION IN THE EARLY EVENING LIGHT.

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MASTER CAPTION: SAME AS ROLL ONE

ROLL THREE

1. SLATE.
2. A RADIO OPERATOR TALKS TO A HUEY HELICOPTER AS IT LANDS WITH A COMBAT TRACKER TEAM ON BOARD.
3. A RADIO OPERATOR MAINTAINS RADIO CONTACT WITH OTHER UNITS DURING A OPERATION IN THE FIELD.
4. A RADIO OPERATOR MAINTAINS CONTACT WITH AIR SUPPORT ELEMENTS AS A SMOKE GRENADE "POPS" IN THE DISTANCE.
5. WITH THE AID OF HAND SIGNALS FROM THE GROUND A HUEY HELICOPTER CONTAINING A COMBAT TRACKER TEAM MAKES A LANDING IN THE FIELD.
6. UNDER A HEAVY GUST OF DUST A COMBAT TRACKER TEAM DEPARTS A HUEY HELICOPTER TO JOIN UP WITH A INFANTRY UNIT IN THE FIELD.
7. SGT WILLIAM CAIRY(LONGVIEW,TEX.), TRACKER TEAM COMMANDER, CONFERS WITH A INFANTRY PLT LEADER DURING A ROUTINE TRACKING MISSION.
- 8-9. AFTER COMPLETING THEIR MISSION A COMBAT TRACKER TEAM BOARDS A HUEY HELICOPTER TO BE TRANSPORTED BACK TO THEIR BASE.
- 10-12. ~~80~~ A COMBAT TRACKER TEAM MOVES ALONG A TRAIL LEFT BY FLEEING ENEMY ELEMENTS.

MASTER CAPTION: SAME AS ROLL ONE.

ROLL FOUR

1. SLATE.

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ROLL FOUR CONT.

2. SP4 HOLLIS WALKER(ADEL,GA.), DOG HANDLER, AND HIS TRACKER DOG, "SKIPPER", WAIT FOR THE ORDER TO MOVE FORWARD DURING A TRACKING MISSION.
3. A COMBAT TRACKER TEAM WAITS AT THE BEGINNING OF A POSSIBLE TRAIL, FOR THE WORD TO MOVE OUT.
4. SP6 SAMUEL L. SWAIN(OMAHA,NEB.), MOTION PICTURE PHOTOGRAPHER, USA SP PHOTO DET,PAC., RECORDS ON FILM THE ACTIVITIES OF A COMBAT TRACKER TEAM IN THE FIELD.
- 5-6. A COMBAT TRACKER TEAM SETS OUT ON THE TRAIL OF FLEEING ENEMY ELEMENTS DURING A ROUTINE MISSION.
- 7-12. A COMBAT TRACKER TEAM MOVES ALONG A TRAIL LEFT BEHIND BY FLEEING ENEMY ELEMENTS DURING A ROUTINE OPERATION IN THE FIELD.

MASTER CAPTION: SAME AS ROLL ONE.

ROLL FIVE

1. SLATE.
- 2-3. SGT WILLIAM CAIRY(LONGVIEW,TEX.), TRACKER TEAM COMMANDER, BRIEFS A INFANTRY PLT LEADER AS TO HIS TEAMS FINDINGS DURING A TRACKING MISSION.
4. SP4 HOLLIS WALKER(ADEL,GA.), DOG HANDLER, GIVES HIS TRACKER DOG, "SKIPPER", A DRINK FROM HIS CANTEN DURING A BRIEF PAUSE IN THE TRACKING MISSION.
5. A TRACKER TEAM HUGS THE GROUND AFTER AN ALERT HAS ANNOUNCED THE PRESENCE OF ENEMY ELEMENTS NEAR BY.
6. AS A COMBAT TRACKER TEAM REMAINS ON THE ALERT, INFANTRY PERSONEL MOVE FORWARD TO CHECK OUT A SUSPECTED ENEMY POSITION.

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ROLL FIVE CONT.

- 7-9. AN INFANTRY SOLDIER CHECKS OUT THE BODY OF A DEAD NVA REGULAR WHOS FINAL FLIGHT WAS TRACKED BY A COMBAT TRACKER TEAM.
9. SP4 RICHARD JOHNSON(FLINT,MICH.),VISUAL TRACKER INSPECTS A DISCARDED FIELD DRESSING WHICH INDICATES THAT THE MAN THEY ARE TRACKING IS WOUNDED. PFC BILLY HOUSAND(LORIS,S.C.), COVERMAN, ALSO AN EXPERIENCED VISUAL TRACKER PROVIDES SECURITY FOR THE VISUAL TRACKER AS HE EXAMINES THE FIELD DRESSING.
10. SP4 RICHARD JOHNSON(FLINT,MICH.),VISUAL TRACKER, DISCOVERS A BLOODY FIELD DRESSING LOST BY A FLEEING ENEMY SOLDIER AS HIS COVER MAN PFC BILLY HOUSAND(LORIS,S.C.), COVER MAN, PROVIDES SECURITY.
11. SP4 RICHARD JOHNSON(FLINT,MICH.),VISUAL TRACKER, AND PFC BILLY HOUSAND(LORIS,S.C.), COVER MAN, MOVE PAST A LARGE LEAF WITH BLOOD ON IT, INDICATING A WOUNDED MAN RECENTLY PASED THAT WAY.
12. SP4 RICHARD JOHNSON(FLINT,MICH.), VISUAL TRACKER, INSPECTS A BLOODY FIELD DRESSING LOST BY A FLEEING ENEMY SOLDIER DURING A TRACKING MISSION IN THE FIELD.

MASTER CAPTION: SAME AS ROLL ONE.

ROLL SIX

1. SLATE.
- 2-3. DURING A DAILY EXERCISE PERIOD, A SCOUT DOG RUNS THROUGH A TUNNEL AS PART OF HIS EXERCISES.
- 4-5. DURING A DAILY EXERCISE PERIOD, A TRACKER DOG RUNS UP $\frac{1}{2}$ AND OVER A LADDER OBSTACLE.
6. DURING A DAILY EXERCISE PERIOD, A SCOUT DOG RUNS UP AND OVER A LADDER OBSTACLE
7. DURING A DAILY EXERCISE PERIOD, A TRACKER DOG RUNS THROUGH A OBSTACLE COURSE.
8. NG

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9. DURING A DAILY EXERCISE PERIOD, A TRACKER DOG JUMPS THROUGH A OBSTACLE
10. DURING A DAILY EXERCISE PERIOD, A TRACKER DOG GOES THROUGH A OBSTACLE COURSE.
11. DURING A DAILY EXERCISE PERIOD, A SCOUT DOG JUMPS OVER A OBSTACLE.
12. DURING A DAILY EXERCISE PERIOD, A TRACKER DOG JUMPS OVER A HURDLE TYPE OBSTACLE.