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INFORMATIONAL SERVICES OFFICE
1st Marine Division (Rein), FMF
FPO San Francisco, California 96602

Release No. 493-66
By: Cysgt James J. Oggerino

Chu Lai Press Center
Tele: Devote 41

Snake

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHU LAI, Vietnam, Dec. 1 -- Death tugged at his trouser leg but Marine Captain George F. Kuettner, 32, didn't answer the call.

The Captain, assistant division adjutant, Task Force X-Ray, 1st Marine Division, was walking toward the Communication Center. It was dark and he was in a hurry.

He stepped on what seemed to be a stick. Suddenly there was movement beneath his foot. With it came a sharp tug on his trouser leg, just above the boot.

Captain Kuettner entered the Communications Center, obtained a flashlight and with the help of other Marines made a search of the area to confirm his suspicions.

A three-foot green bamboo viper was found.

"It was obvious it had eaten," the captain said. "That's probably why it was sluggish and didn't move at my approach."

The viper was killed and taken to the aid station where it was identified.

"So deadly is its venom," Captain Kuettner said, "That had I been bitten I would not have been able to walk the seven steps to the Communication Center entrance."

-USMC-

EDITORS note: Capt Kuettner's home town omitted at his request. His parents think he's on Okinawa and he has no desire to shake them up.

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Release No. 494-66
By: Cpl David Hines

Chu Lai Press Center
Tele: Devote 41

hot water shower

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHU LAI, Vietnam, Dec. 1 -- "A little thinking goes a long way," SSgt Willie L. Golden, 35 (Akron, Ohio), Maintenance Chief, 3rd Amphibian Tractor Battalion, 1st Marine Division, proved recently.

One evening last month, Sergeant Golden headed for the showers. Though it was a cool evening he looked forward to his nightly rinse.

Until he turned the water on.

The cold spray chilled his spirits. Then and there he decided the cold water showers "had to go."

Recruiting two volunteers, he set to work on project "hot shower."

Using a saw here, and welding there, a 55-gallon drum and seven feet of 3/4 inch copper tubing were converted into a hot water system. Dripping diesel oil is ignited and the tubing becomes a heating coil.

"When our troops come in from the field they look forward to a hot meal," Sergeant Golden said. "And now they also have a hot shower to come home to."

Sergeant Golden is more than willing to explain to interested parties how to assemble the heater.

-usmc-

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INFORMATIONAL SERVICES OFFICE
1st Marine Division (Rein), FMF
FPO San Francisco, California 96602

Release No: 504-66
By: Cpl. Ira L. Taylor

Chu Lai Press Center
Tel. No: Devote 41

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHU LAI, Vietnam, Dec. 6 -- The discovery of a Viet Cong psychological operations center and 5,000 anti-American pamphlets highlighted "Operation Sutter," concluded today by the 1st Battalion, Fifth Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division.

Moving under cover of darkness and heavy rain, the Marines entered an enemy-controlled area northwest of Chu Lai Nov. 30. Information volunteered by a Viet Cong defector served as a basis for the operation, according to Maj. Richard J. Alger (New York, N.Y.), battalion operations officer.

A night march to the first objective was organized to take the enemy by surprise. Braving typhoon rains and mountainous jungle trails, the Leathernecks drove the VC out of the area and destroyed their cave and tunnel complexes.

Sniper fire failed to slow the Marine advance as they crossed rivers and rain-swollen rice paddies. Artillery and mortars blasted the sniper positions when bad weather hampered air support. The dense jungle provided the enemy with concealment and a ready means of escape from Marine firepower, but a team from 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, flushed 12 VC out of hiding and called in artillery on the fleeing guerrillas.

During "Operation Sutter" the 1st Battalion found 15 Vietnamese refugees, who were escorted out for resettlement in a pacified area.

The week-long operation left 13 VC dead. One Viet Cong prisoner was taken, and six suspects were detained. Marines captured 11 enemy weapons.

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INFORMATIONAL SERVICES OFFICE
1st Marine Division (Rein), PMF
APO San Francisco, California 96602

Release No: 503-66
By: MCpl Philip Hamer

Chu Lai Press Center
Tel: Devote 41

Captured families

CHU LAI, Vietnam, Dec. 4 -- Two new families arrived in Phuoc Thuan village Nov. 29. Tired but happy, they told of their liberation from Viet Cong captivity by Marines of "B" Co., 1st Bn., Seventh Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division.

The Viet Cong carried out a long-standing threat in the hamlets of Van Tuong (1) and (2) by kidnapping the families of Vietnamese Popular Forces (PF) soldiers stationed in Phuoc Thuan. They hoped to use the captives as hostages in an attempt to end cooperation between the PFs and the Marines, who have worked well together against the communists.

Reports of the capture reached the Marines on Nov. 28. A rescue operation was organized and the company moved out at midnight toward Van Tuong. After a night march of 5,000 meters search and blocking elements were set up. The search was under way before dawn.

Two VC were killed as the Marines moved through the area. One was armed with an American rifle.

When the hamlets were secured the people were assembled. As the PFs identified their families hamlet officials explained the rescue operation to the villagers.

"B" Co. escorted the liberated families back to Phuoc Thuan, where a civic action program is underway to get the people back on their feet.

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Release No. 505-66
By: Cpl Ira Tayler

Chu Lai Press Center
Tel. No. Devote 41

Close Call

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Chu Lai, Vietnam, Dec. 7 -- PFC Leonard Roberson (Redmond, Wash.), considers himself a very lucky man.

The 19-year old Marine from Weapons Platoon, Charley Co., 1st Bn., 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, was on Operation Sutter when his platoon was hit by sniper fire from two sides.

"We were crossing a rice paddy when they (snipers) opened up on us. The bullets were hitting all around me and were pretty close," Roberson said.

An hour later the Marine opened his pack for a meal of 6 rations and discovered a bullet hole in one of the cans. A sniper's bullet had gone through the side of his pack, into the can, and out the back of the pack.

"I guess you might say I'm pretty lucky," he said. "That's one can of chow I didn't mind losing."

-usmc-

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1st Marine Division (Rein), FMF
APO San Francisco, California 96602

Release No. 508-66
By: Cpl David Hines

Chu Lai Press Center
Tele: Devote 41

soap suds

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHU LAI, Vietnam, Dec. 9 — In the future, Pfc. David L. Handle, 20 (Chicago, Ill.), a rifleman with "D" Co., 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division will check his pockets before heading out on patrol.

During Operation Sutter, Handle's platoon encountered a river. After insuring that it was shallow enough to ford, the Marines headed for the other side.

About half-way across a steady stream of bubbles started following Handle. When he stepped out of the water on the other side, he found that both legs were engulfed by suds.

He reached into the pockets on his jungle utilities to determine the cause and pulled out two very used bars of soap.

-USMC-

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INFORMATIONAL SERVICES OFFICE
1st Marine Division (Rein), FMF
FPO San Francisco, California 96602

Release No. 509-66
By: LOp1 Philip Hamer
Phoned in to MSgt. Wilson

Chu Lai Press Center
Tel. No. Devote 41

Refugees

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHU LAI, Vietnam, Dec. 9 -- On 8 December, elements of the 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, while on a search and destroy operation west of Tam Ky were approached by 42 Vietnamese villagers who requested to leave the area with the Marines because of heavy Viet Cong taxation and constant VC harassment.

While on patrol, the Leathernecks found 1,000 pounds of rice which was distributed to the villagers, who will carry it out when they are evacuated to a Refugee Center.

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Release No. 511-66
By: Capt James J. Uggierino

Chu Lai Press Center
Tele: Devote 41

awards

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Chu Lai, Vietnam, Dec. 13 — Major Peter E. Hilgartner, commanding officer, 1st Bn., Fifth Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, presented 13 awards and decorations to members of his command during formal ceremonies here Dec. 12.

In all, the major presented one Bronze Star Medal and 12 Purple Heart Medals.

Sfc William Mielecki, 18 (Millside, Ill.), was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for "heroic achievement while serving as Company Radio Operator of Company A during Operation Colorado."

Major Hilgartner presented Purple Heart Medals to: 1stLt Jerome H. George (Des Moines, Iowa); 2ndLt Jimmie L. Adkins (Crossett, Ark.); Lance Corporals Paul O. Butler Jr., 19 (New York, N.Y.), Donald B. Ringsted, 20 (Addison, Ill.), Leonard V. Petersen, 2 (Redwood City, Calif.), Leo C. Stewart, 20 (San Antonio, Texas) and Jack W. Wilds, 21 (Knoxville, Tenn.).

Purple Heart Medals also were presented Privates First Class Spencer H. Caldwell, 18 (Indianapolis, Ind.), Raymond Compton, 23 (Pasa, Ariz.), Robert J. Gildow, 20 (Springfield, Ohio), William H. Motherman, 20 (Christiana, Tenn.) and Carl E. Nixon, 22 (Whitefield, Okla.).

In addition, the major presented 10 Marines with warrants promoting them to the rank of sergeant.

-name-

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INTERNATIONAL SERVICES OFFICE
1st Marine Division (Rein.), MCR
PPO San Francisco, California 96602

Release Ref 515-66
By: Sgt. Mike McQuaker

Chu Lai Press Center
Tel No: Dervote 41

marine platoon overrun

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHU LAI, Vietnam, Dec. 14 -- An estimated platoon of Viet Cong attacked and overrun a Marine platoon outpost on a hill five miles southwest of Chu Lai in the early hours of Wednesday morning, Dec. 14.

The VC attacked the outpost on Hill 51 at 0500 following a barrage of recoilless rifle and mortar fire that never ceased during the attack. They overrun two positions manned by the 1st Platoon, Mike Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division and kept the Marines pinned down with grenades and automatic rifle fire.

Charging up a draw in front of a machine gun bunker, the VC first annihilated the bunker and moved to a burning communications tent that had been set afire by a recoilless rifle round.

The Marines could not see them because of the smoke of the burning tent and did not want to risk firing because of wounded Marines still in the area.

Eight to 10 VC were all that were seen and they were observed to be wearing green uniforms and were very well equipped. ~~They were also seen~~
~~spelling supplies located in the burning tent.~~

The attacking force suffered no casualties.

Reinforcements for the Marines arrive at approximately 0530 by Onco and Amphibian Tractors.

Marine casualties were heavy.

-usmc-

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INFORMATIONAL SERVICES OFFICE
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APO San Francisco, California 96602

Release No: 517-66
By: Sgt. Mike McQuaker

Chu Lai Press Center
Tel No: Devote 41

times are tough

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHU LAI, Vietnam, Dec. 14 -- The Montagnard villagers of Co Rok have had a tough time of it lately.

First, a jet air strike almost leveled the village hamlet several miles southwest of Quang Ngai last September. Then October monsoon rains washed away their bridge over the Sang Tra Giang River.

Co Rok is located atop a small bump of land in a narrow river valley between two high mountains. One side of the Montagnards' hill is a free firing zone because it is used extensively by Viet Cong passing through the area.

Targets were spotted one day early in September and Marine jets raced into the strike zone. Some of their bombs accidentally fell on the village.

Immediately aid was rushed to the hapless villagers. Doctors treated and evacuated the wounded. Food and building materials were airlifted by Marine helicopters and the rebuilding began.

A month later heavy rains turned the lazy Sang Tra Giang into an angry torrent that snapped the bridge from its moorings and washed it down river.

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A team from the 1st Engineer Battalion, 1st Marine Division rebuilt the bridge.

It will take time to fully amend the mistaken bombing. But the people of Co Rok now realize that whatever happens to them, whatever the reason, help will be on its way each and every time.

- usmc -

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**INFORMATIONAL SERVICES OFFICE
1st Marine Division (Rein), FMF
FPO San Francisco, California 96602**

Release No: 518-66
Telephoned to CIB
Via Div ISO

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CC
Chu Lai Press Center
Tel. No: Devote 41
15 Dec. 1966

Information requested by CIB
Answered by XO, 3/5

Question (1)

What positions were over-run -- outposts? listening posts? How many men were in them?

Answer (1)

A bunker on the perimeter.

Question (2)

What hill were they on? How long did they man it? Is it in old 2/7 area?

Answer (2)

An un-numbered hill west of Hill 69. It is manned on a recurring basis.

-USMC-

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INFORMATIONAL SERVICES OFFICE
1st Marine Division (Rein), FMF
APO San Francisco, California 96602

519-66
Release No: ~~07-66~~
By: Sgt. Mike McCusker

Chu Lai Press Center
Tel. No. Devote 41

Viet Cong Kill

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHU LAI, Vietnam, Dec. 16 -- Four Viet Cong were killed and 15 suspects captured yesterday when a Marine aerial observer spotted them setting up an ambush against ground troops who were moving into an area 15 miles southwest of Quang Ngai.

First Lt. William A. Berry, Austintown, Ohio, an aerial observer with the 1st Marine Division, was reconnoitering the area just ahead of a company from the 7th Marine Regiment during an operation which is presently in search of a large Viet Cong force.

"We were flying east of the Song Va u River," the 24-year-old Berry said later. "From my position behind the pilot I spotted about 15 cattle with a line number of people. Suspiciously, because it usually takes three or four to handle that many cattle, we checked and after the third pass, 20 Viet Cong suddenly broke into a run away from us and headed for a tree line that bordered the river.

"We confirmed they were definitely Viet Cong when they started shooting at us."

Berry radioed the company which was still about 800 meters away and informed them of the find, promising to keep the VC busy until Marines could arrive.

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"They sure got there fast," Berry said.

"They were a good bunch. They swept right through the area."

Four of the VC were killed and 15 suspects were captured hiding in holes.

"This is the most rewarding flight I've had in Vietnam," Berry said. He has been here five months.

"We love to work with these guys on the ground and when we can give them a good target, after maybe a lot of discouraging walks that net them nothing, it makes our job mean a lot more than I can put into words," Berry concluded.

-USMC-

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FPO San Francisco, California 96602

Release no: 525-66
By: Sgt. Mike McQuaker

Chu Lai Press Center
Tel No: Devote 41

and team

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHU LAI, Vietnam, Dec. 19 -- Artillery sounds screamed over the mountain of Nui Tien and like giant fists smashed into a thick grove of trees crowding against a bend of the muddy Song Tra Khuc River.

Smoke curled into the angry gray sky as the explosions reverberated across the valley and reached the men on top of Nui Tien.

Second Lieutenant Steven Hinds glanced through the bulging eyes of his "battery commander's scope," a big green pair of 12-power glasses mounted on metal stalks looking something like a praying mantis.

The Viet Cong had been caught by surprise. The dead littered the grove but Hinds could see men still up and moving.

The 23 year old Forward Observer from Big Pine, Calif., called for another concentration and the big guns located in Quang Ngai boomed again - rounds once more shrieked over the mountain and the hammer blows exploding thousands of steel fragments chewed up men and trees.

Then there was silence except for the sounds of a firefight several miles away. A wind chased rain over Nui Tien and peasants far below the mountain worked undisturbed in their swampy rice paddies.

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Tattered rolls of smoke dissipated above the pulverized grove.

Soon vultures would circle above.

Hinds was one of five Americans on Mui Tran, sharing the bony crest with a conglomerate of Korean Reconnaissance Marines with half-bald "Mohawk" haircuts; a platoon of Korean Four Deuce Mortars, and a whole village of Montagnard tribesmen, their women, children and dogs.

All Marines, the three yankees were an artillery observer team from the 4th Battalion, 11th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division. The other two were from the 1st Anglico Company and their main job was guiding resupply helicopters onto the windy, dangerous and microscopic landing zone that fell away into cliffs on either end.

Mui Tran is a lone sentinel bulging from a river valley tiled with hundreds of watery rice paddies shining like a glassy mosaic. The slopes are steep and covered with jungle, barbed wire and booby traps against enemy attack. There are only two accessible trails down the mountain and the Koreans and Montagnards use them for patrols and raids into the Viet Cong controlled valley.

The mountain commanded the marshy plain. From its crest there was an unhampered view for almost five miles in every direction and because of this, it made an excellent observation post.

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A mile to the south the sluggish yellow-brown Song Tra Khuc curled on its way to the sea. A bastion of tall cloud covered mountains walled in the west five miles away and a low range of hills partially blocked the east. Several months ago the Marines had fought some of their bloodiest battles in Quang Ngai Province on these small hills and just a few weeks before the Korean Marines charged head-on into a regiment of hard-core Viet Cong.

Hinds had called over a hundred fire missions for the Koreans before the shattered VC had finally escaped into the western mountains, moving past Nui Tran under cover of darkness.

"It was strange being up here watching the fighting in these hills only a couple thousand meters away," Hinds remarked. "We were a part of it, calling arty strikes - but it was a lot like watching a war movie on color television."

Surrounding his sandbagged outpost which was perched on the highest knob of the mountaintop, the Montagnard village hugged the narrow ridge. It was a fantastic cluster of straw huts, sandbagged bunkers, barbed wire and deep mortar trenches that criss-crossed throughout the entire village.

Looking like a ship's mast, a wooden flagpole stood almost on the center of the crest. When it wasn't ruining the Koreans and Montagnards raised their country's flag - but on this rainy day only the ropes dangled from the crossbeam.

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The Montagnard men all wore the green uniforms of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam and took turns in the tall bamboo and sandbag lookout bunkers leaning over the edges of the cliffs. Their women cooked and chattered with local gossip; their wide-eyed children ran around yelling and laughing, chasing after their fat barking dogs. Pigs squealed, chickens clucked and sometimes a confused rooster crowed.

A team of Korean Recon Marines wearily reached the top after the long steep climb from the valley. They had raided a village surrounded like an island by rice paddies and captured several just as tired prisoners who were led into a hut for interrogation.

Hinds had been on Mui Tran for over a month. His 23rd birthday passed while he was on the mountain as did the 20th of his assistant F. O., PFC Anthony Yamadelli from Long Island, N. Y. There was one other man in the team, LCpl. Vernon "My Favorite" Martian from Minot, N. D., the radioman who carried the targets to guns located several miles away.

"We can call our shots to guns in Quang Ngai, Bien Son or Chu Lai," Hinds said looking once more through the scope. "Every 15 minutes we wheel the glasses around a full 360-degrees looking for targets like impatient VC who can't wait for darkness. We usually catch 'em early in the morning just before dawn or at dusk."

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He pointed towards the river.

"Where we just fired there's reported to be a battalion of VC. That bend just beyond is the fording point they normally use to cross the river. Sometimes we catch them and sink their boats or drive them to land and trap them in the trees where we can pour in the artillery."

He focused the glasses on the yellowed ruins of an old French fort. "A Vietnamese company with American advisers used to operate out of that place. The VC overran it a year ago, killing the Asians and taking the Americans prisoner. They've never been heard from since..."

Two dots in the eastern sky became growing helicopters that drowned his words. Green smoke popped from a grenade and tumbled over the windy barren patch of ground the first blind was already approaching.

PFC Carl E. Wheeler, from Auburn, N. Y., and PFC Rudy Borguetta, who hails from Newport, R. I. and who had just completed airborne school before arriving in Vietnam, guided the wind-buffed chopper in with the use of arm and hand signals, correcting every error of approach as it arose.

Several Koreans ran to the copter and unloaded cases of rations and ammunition. Maybe, the pilot stunted the engine against the wind and struggled back into the sky to circle while his partner landed.

The second chopper was loaded with bags of rice for the Montagnards and the villagers carried them off.

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With the exception of the powerful four deuce mortars firing for effect on a rock their crew were determined to disintegrate 2,000 meters away, the rest of the day passed in normal, lazy routine.

Hinds took a break from moving the countryside with his 12-power glasses and wandered down one of the trails a hundred yards or so to take a "shower" at a brook that spilled from within the mountain. Rocky trips along the steep path and in the shower area were disengaged for him by a Montagnard who stood watch with a rifle in case a sniper wanted to make the shower a little more exciting.

No VC were on the move at dusk. Hinds sat in his sandbagged bunker which was cluttered with bright orange and red mail bags, rifles and packs and cases of C-rations. He lit a cigarette from a candle and settled back with a can of ration coffee.

Just after dark a hand flare popped and eerily lit up the mountainside. From other mountain outposts miles in the distance could be seen other flares. It would go on all night.

"Now it begins," Hinds said quietly. "They will move around us all night. Sometimes we can spot a few of them and call in a strike. Ever so often a couple will try to climb the mountain to find a way through the mines. They usually get blown up or somebody tosses a hand grenade in their laps."

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"They would have a hell of a time taking this place," he continued after a few swallows of the cooling coffee. "It would take more than a battalion to do it and it wouldn't really be worth the trouble except maybe to say: 'We took Nui Tran.' It would cost them an awful lot of men and if they ever did get up here they wouldn't be able to hold it - artillery would blast them right off."

Some of the Montagnards and Koreans were gathered in a candle-lit hut toasting each other with the local whiskey and their chatter reached the bunker.

"These Montagnards," Hinds laughed. "This particular bunch has been up here nine months. Soon they'll probably want to go someplace else. They're always wandering around, drifting from one mountain village to another. Before they leave, by some kind of mutual agreement that's been going on for hundreds of years, another bunch will come down from the mountains, cross the valley and take them over these positions."

"Until then...." He smiled and shrugged. "Nui Tran is their home and they will defend it with their lives if it ever comes to that."

A strong wind splashed rain across the mountain and the men in the sandbagged trenches encircling the crest put on their rubber ponchos. Lights from the huts in the valley were extinguished one by one as the people gave it up for another day.

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add 7-7-7-7-7-7-7-7

Hostile eyes took a last look at the mountain that contested their control of the valley. Now just a solid hump against the dark, angry sky, it dominated their every move with explosive authority and they both hated and were afraid of it.

A column of Viet Cong forced to cross the valley only under the cover of night silently cursed Nui Tran as they stumbled blindly through the heavy rain.

- u s n o -

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FPO San Francisco, California 96602

Release No. 526-66
By: Cpl Ira Taylor

Chu Lai Press Center
Tel. No. Devote 41

Operation

CHU LAI, Vietnam, Dec. 19 -- A search and destroy operation conducted south of Quang Ngai City by elements of the 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, continues today with no heavy contact with the enemy.

The operation that started December 12, has netted 17 VC KIA, 4 VC WIA, 4 VCC, 16 VCS and 1 Vietnamese Mallier. The Marines have also captured 10 tons of rice, 6 weapons, and 80 pounds of ammonium nitrate.

The Lea thernecks moved through valleys and covered hill slopes driving the Viet Cong into the mountains where Artillery and Naval Gun Fire pounded suspected strongholds.

Enemy contact has consisted primarily of sniper fire from the villages and hamlets before the Marines swept through.

Marine casualties were described as light.

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Release No: 528-66
By: GySgt. James J. Oggerino

Chu Lai Press Center
Tel. No. Devote 41

Night Ambush

CHU LAI, Vietnam, Dec. 19 — The old moon was bright and pretty to behold. But elements of the 1st Bn., 2nd ROK Marine Corps Brigade setting up a night ambush 15 miles south of Chu Lai Dec. 17, preferred the added security of darkness.

The night before two Viet Cong were seen to the front but the necessity of maintaining secrecy prevented the patrol from firing.

The sun was barely over the horizon when sharp eyes spotted two Vietnamese figures approaching from a half-mile away.

A Korean Marine, seemingly appearing from nowhere, visibly surprised the Vietnamese, who were later released when they no longer threatened the patrol's security.

Moving swiftly the patrol entered a hamlet known to be sympathetic to the VC. A search proved negative.

While moving to the next hamlet the patrol was taken under fire by VC snipers 500 yards away. Later, one suspect was apprehended.

While no enemy were killed, one thing was obvious, the VC had a deep respect for the ROK Marines and ran whenever he appeared.

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Release No. 533-66
By: Cpl David Hines

Chu Lai Press Center
Tele: Devote 41

Vietnam first

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHU LAI, Vietnam, Dec. 20 -- DT3 William E. Shaffer, 21 (Prescott, Ariz.), has become the 1st Navy Dental Technician to be decorated for heroism while serving with Marine units in Vietnam.

Shaffer was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal Dec. 15 by Brigadier General William A. Stiles, Commanding General, Task Force X-Ray, 1st Marine Division, for his heroic actions while serving with Headquarters, 5th Marine Regiment, during Operation Colorado in August.

During the operation the regiment was brought under intense hostile mortar and recoilless rifle fire. One of the tents in the CP area was hit, killing one Marine and wounding eleven others.

Upon seeing the disaster, Shaffer rushed to the tent, braving the heavy incoming fire, and began administering first aid. He went to the aid of a Marine with a gaping hole in his chest and quickly put his hand over it to prevent suffocation, and held it there until the ^{man} was evacuated.

-MEMO-

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PO San Francisco, California 96602

Release No: 535066
By: Cysgt James J. Ciglerino

Chu Lai Press Center
Tel: Devote 41

Santa Claus

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHU LAI, Vietnam, Dec 21 -- What! You don't believe in Santa Claus? *Several hundred* That's too bad because ~~300~~ Marines and Na vyment whose names appeared on 1st Marine Division Special Orders during the period Dec. 8-11, can tell you otherwise.

and they are only part of the hundreds of personnel who will receive special 30-day leaves for extending their overseas tour. This does not include personnel who have arrived recently and who may extend in the near future. They also are eligible for the 30 days free leave.

The Special Orders also indicated the estimated cost of travel to the government, also part of the deal.

A breakdown of the 215 names indicated the estimated cost of travel ranged from "none" to \$1164, with the tab averaging out at \$554.24.

Investigation revealed that those whose names had "none" next to them are spending a leisurely holiday on Okinawa.

The high scorer with \$1164 originally intended to spend his leave in Germany but has since changed his mind.

Those in the \$704 group are on the east coast. Two of these are 1fc Michael E. Ranniar, 20, and Cpl. Kenneth C. Wood, 20.

#More-

Santa Claus 2-2-2-2-2-2
Cagierino

Manniar, a postal clerk with the Division Post Office at Chu Lai, plans to spend his 30 days at home with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Keith of 975 Tinton Ave., Bronx, N.Y. He extended to cut down his chances of being ordered to Vietnam for a second tour of duty. When he returns to the United States he will have less than a year to do in the Corps.

Wood, a trouble shooter with the 7th Communication Bn., 1st Marine Division, plans to surprise his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Nathan C. Wood, Pleasant St., Bellingham, N.H.

His main purpose in extending was to save money and perhaps later on buy a car. He has friends in his unit who are going to spend their 30 days taking in the sights of the exotic Far East in such cities as Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok.

Cpl. Kenneth J. Malinowsky, 19 (Albany, Ore.), Motor Transport, Fifth Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, also elected to spend his leave in Bangkok. He extended because "I'll be in the United States the rest of my life."

The majority of the 215 names selected at random are already enjoying their extension leaves. Some will take leave in January, others as late as May or June. But no matter when, where or why, one thing is certain, they'll have a ball.

INFORMATIONAL SERVICES OFFICE
1st Marine Division (Rein), FMF
APO San Francisco, California 96602

Release No: 537-66
By: Cpl. Ira Taylor

Chu Lai Press Center
Tel No: Devote 41

medoap

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHU LAI, Vietnam, Dec. 23 -- "These are the people who really need medical treatment. We can't do much for them out here because we don't have the facilities, but at least they know we want to help them."

These were the sentiments expressed by Lt. J. J. Ryan, MC, USN, 29, (Pottsville, Pa.) as he examined and treated villagers of Ma Son hamlet, a few miles southwest of Quang Ngai City.

The "medoap" took place during a break in a battalion sized operation conducted by elements of the 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division.

"Doctor Ryan" and his staff of corpsmen set up a temporary Battalion Aid Station wherever the battalion set in. With the help of a Vietnamese interpreter, the word was soon spread through the village. Minutes later the villagers came one by one to be treated. Again through the interpreter, the villagers related their ills to the corpsmen, who treated everything from tropic ulcers to a chronic kidney ailment.

"At first they are almost reluctant to trust us," Dr. Ryan said. "That's where the interpreter comes in handy. He explains what we want and what we're doing and almost immediately they warm to us."

"A 'Thank You' is not necessary. You can see it in their faces."

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INFORMATIONAL SERVICES OFFICE
1st Marine Division (Main), FMF
FPO San Francisco, California 96602

Release No. 546-66
By: Sgt Mike McCusker

Chu Lai Press Center
Tele: Devote 41

keyser town

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHU LAI, Vietnam, Dec. 23 -- It rained the day "Keyser Town" held its Christmas Party.

The weather had been beautiful for four days, a welcome break in the midst of the monsoons. Then it changed the very day it should have been its clearest.

SSgt. William F. Keyser grumbled at the rain. He had over a thousand pounds of gifts donated by the people of his hometown, Waukegan, Ill., to give to the people of the Tie Thay Village.

Keyser, a civil affairs chief for the 1st Tank Battalion, 1st Marine Division, had worked with the villagers for several months. At first he was distrusted and even laughed at. But Keyser was a man who just naturally liked people and his personality was infectious.

It wasn't long before he was the favorite son of the villagers. He did many things for them. The greatest thing he did was allow them to make their own decisions. He knew that good intentions many times fell short of their goal, especially if they were forced upon the recipients.

He had planned a long time for this Christmas Party.

He wrote a letter to a columnist who wrote for the Waukegan paper, the News-Sun. His letter to Bernice Just, in her column "Just about People" was reprinted in its entirety.

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keyser town add 1-1-1-1-1

It was an impassioned plea to help less fortunate people in a land torn by war and poverty.

Keyser asked for clothes, medicines and toys for the children. The response was immediate and overwhelming.

The whole city of Waukegan got into the act.

Led by the Marine Corps League detachment there, of which Keyser was a past president, several civic organizations joined with hundreds of local citizens to send more than 1,000 pounds of clothing, tooth brushes, medicines, toys and candy to the villagers of Tich Tay.

The project was called "Operation Keyser Town."

Keyser's first reaction was to convince the villagers that the gifts came not from him but from a whole city in a people-to-people program.

Everything was ready on the morning of Thursday, Dec. 22, the day scheduled for the party.

But it rained and Keyser was worried that it would spoil both the party and damage the gifts.

Slowly at first, the people gathered in the earthen, tree shaded yard of the village schoolhouse. They came from all parts of the village, a rambling cluster of hamlets spread out over sand dunes and low hills. Two of the hamlets were on the other side of the gray An Tan River, but the people crossed in their flimsy boats.

The party went on as scheduled.

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keyser town add 2-2-2-2-2-2

The children were lined up and played games for a while before they were given their candy and toys. Presentations were made to local dignitaries and the gifts were passed to people who were wearing their only set of clothes.

Despite the weather, there could not have been a happier gathering. Keyser was the happiest of them all. The party he had worked so hard to make a reality was a success.

He wished the people of Waukegan, 10,000 miles away, could be here to see what they had made possible.

He owed it to all of them.

INFORMATIONAL SERVICES OFFICE
1st Marine Division (Rein), 198
APO San Francisco, California 96602

PROJECT KEYSER TOWN

GOOD NEWS

Christmas Party in the village of Tich Tay

10 A. M., 22 Dec. '66

1,369 lbs. of gifts donated by citizens through Marine Corps League of
Waukegan, Ill.

Reprint from "Midwest Reporter," December, 1966:

TIC TAC TOW FOR TICH TAY

A projected Christmas party for the children of Tich Tay, a tiny hamlet near Chu Lai, has snow-balled into a major people-to-people operation for the citizens of Waukegan, Ill.

Early in October, SSgt. William F. Keyser, the civil affairs chief for the 1st Marine Division's 1st Tank Bn., wrote a letter to Bernice Just, columnist for the Waukegan News-Sun, telling her that he planned the party for the many friends he had made while working with the 865 people of the hamlet.

Bernice, in her column "Just About People," picked up the sergeant's plan for "anyone who would be willing to help with the party," and before long Waukegan had made the project a city-wide affair. Several civic organizations volunteered to help.

KEYSER TOWN

add 1-1-1-1-1-1-1

A graduate of Waukegan Township high school and a former commandant of the Marine Corps League detachment there, Keyser in his letter, suggested that the League might be willing to organize the operation.

Tony Cresperis, the present commandant, organized collection points. The citizens are donating gifts and collecting clothing, medical supplies, tooth brushes, tooth paste, and soap.

In the beginning the drive was called "Operation Tich Tay Tee," but pride in a hometown boy caused the sponsors to change the name to "Project Keyser Town."

Keyser said that he is receiving stacks of mail from individuals and groups congratulating him on his work and offering to send items to the hamlet.

A typical letter is one from a department store clerk who wrote and told Keyser that the employees had pooled their money, bought unsold summer clothes and donated them to "Operation Keyser Town."

Disclaiming any credit for his hometown's enthusiasm, Keyser said, "It's Waukegan's way of sharing their Christmas holiday with the citizens of Tich Tay."

Last May when the 1st Tank Bn. moved nearby, Keyser was assigned responsibility for winning the people to the side of the government of Vietnam and turning them into friends of the Marines.

(more)

KEYSER TOWN

add 2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2-2

He coordinated the civic action program of the battalion in Tich Thy digging five wells, providing medical aid, constructing and improving five roads, and creating of small businesses to bolster the economy of the hamlet.

He arranged for movies once a week, a totally new experience for the villagers.

One night, Keyser said, three Viet Cong guerrillas in the hamlet decided to go out and round up more Viet Cong to ambush the villagers while they watched the movie. The movie has an average attendance of 400.

When the guerrillas crept to the other side of the river, they got interested in the movie and sat down to watch it. They evidently liked it so much they failed to carry out the attack, he said.

Keyser and members of the tank battalion are typical of the Marines in the Chu Lai and Da Nang areas who are winning the war by winning the hearts of the Vietnamese.

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INFORMATIONAL SERVICES OFFICE
1st Marine Division (Rein), FMF
APO San Francisco, California 96602

Release No: 547-66
By: Cysgt James J. Oggerino

Chu Lai Press Center
Tel: Devote 41

Xmas Party

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHU LAI, Vietnam, Dec 24 -- Vietnamese adults had as good a time as the children during the Christmas party held by Marines of the 1st Bn., Fifth Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division at Ky Chanh market place Dec. 22.

Prior to the official opening of the party, attended by some 200 Vietnamese, Nguyen Huy Chuong, hamlet chief, explained why Americans celebrate Christmas. He then introduced the guest of honor, Maj. Peter L. Hilgartner, 1st Battalion commanding officer, who wished the villagers a Merry Christmas.

The major then presented gifts to village and hamlet chiefs at the party.

Next an all-girl choir from Dien Pho (1) sang Vietnamese songs. They were accompanied on the organ by their tutor, Lt. Anthony E. Fathman, 26 (St. Louis, Mo.), 1st Battalion surgeon.

Other entertainment included a Vietnamese folk dance (Hoi Thi), by six Vietnamese girls, a rendition of "When the Saints Come Marching In" by a female vocalist, a school boy choral group, and movies.

At the conclusion of the party, during which there was plenty of refreshments, the elders gave gifts to the children.

The gifts, provided by Marines, were piled beneath a seven-foot prefabricated tree sent to SSgt Robert B. Fletcher, 32 (Sebastopol, Cal.), administration chief, H&S Co., 1st Battalion, by his parents. Also spread out beneath the tree were packages forwarded by community members of Sonoma Valley, Calif.

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Xmas party add 1-1-1-1-1-1

The party was made possible through the cooperation and coordination of Nguyen Huy Chuong, Ky Chanh hamlet chief, and Capt. Gary L. Guertner, 26 (Denver, Col.), 1st Battalion civil affairs officer.

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INFORMATIONAL SERVICES OFFICE
1st Marine Division (Rein), FMF
APO San Francisco, California 96602

Release No: 549-66
Change of Command
By: Cpl D. A. Hines

CHU LAI, Vietnam, Dec 25 -- LtCol. Dean E. Saslinger assumed command of the 3rd Bn., Fifth Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Dec. 23. He replaced Maj. James T. Elkins, who has been designated commanding officer of the 1st Motor Transport Bn., 1st Marine Division.

Prior to assuming his present command, Colchel Saslinger was Executive Officer of the Seventh Marine Regiment.

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Release No: 550-66
Change of Command
By: Cpl D. A. Hines

CHU LAI, Vietnam, Dec. 25 -- Maj. James T. Elkins assumed command of the 1st Motor Transport Bn., 1st Marine Division Dec. 23.

He replaced LtCol. Russell E. Johnson, who has been reassigned as Executive Officer of the Seventh Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division.

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Pearson
Release No: 552066
By: Cysgt James J. Ogerino

Chu Lai Press Center
Tel: Devote 41

CHU LAI, Vietnam, Dec. 26 -- Lt. Paul W. Pearson, CHC, USN, was awarded a Navy Commendation Medal for heroic achievement during Operation Wyoming, Aug. 10.

LtCol. John J. Rootloff, commanding officer, 2d Bn., Seventh Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, made the presentation.

Chaplain Pearson's citation reads in part..."While serving as Battalion Chaplain with the Second Battalion, Fifth Marines....a patrol entered an unknown mine field and triggered a mine. In the resulting explosion eight Marines were seriously wounded. With complete disregard for his own safety, Lieutenant Pearson unhesitatingly moved into the hazardous area and started administering first aid until Navy Corpsmen arrived on the scene."

A 1956 graduate of McKendree College, Lebanon, Ill., Chaplain Pearson attended the Garrett Graduate School of Theology, Evanston, Ill.

On graduating from the seminary in 1960, he became the pastor of the Methodist Church in New Berlin, Wis.

He entered the Navy as a chaplain in March of 1962.

Since his arrival in Vietnam in December of 1965, the 36-year-old chaplain has served as a battalion chaplain with the 2nd Bn., Fifth Marine Regiment; the 2nd Bn., Seventh Marine Regiment, and with Force Logistic Supply Group - B.

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Pearson add 1-1-1-1-1
eggerine

The chaplain's other medals and decorations include a Purple Heart Medal for wounds sustained during Operation Wyoming.

The son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Pearson, 115 Elmwood, West Frankfort, Ill., he is the husband of the former Marilyn S. Fox. The couple live at 136 Circle dr., Herrin, Ill.

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END NOTE: Written by request for: Methodist Commission on Chaplains
3900 Wisconsin Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20016

INFORMATIONAL SERVICES OFFICE
1st Marine Division (Rein), FMF
FPO San Francisco, California 96602

Release No. 553-66
By: 2nd Lt. C. E. Tyler
Phoned into CIB Dec. 27B

Chu Lai Press Center
Tel. No. Devote 41

operation continues

CHU LAI, Vietnam, Dec. 27 -- Five hours after the Christmas truce ended, elements of the 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division continued a search and destroy operation 27 miles south of the Chu Lai combat base.

A Marine reconnaissance team spotted an estimated 200 well equipped Viet Cong. Artillery, naval gunfire and HU-1E (Huey) gunships from the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing were called in to fire on the VC.

At dusk, a company of Leathernecks were lifted into the area. The Marines killed 15 oVC while sweeping the narrow valley at the foot of a large mountain range five miles inland from the coast.

They continued their sweep after dark while a flare ship and artillery kept the Viet Cong territory well lit with illumination rounds.

LCpl. Patrick J. Gooch, 20 (Salinas, Kan.), a fire team leader with the assault company said, "I spotted two VC in a trenchline and I opened fire, killing both."

At almost the same time, LCpl. George T. Edwards, 19 (Los Angeles, Calif.) saw two more well armed Viet Cong. He killed them with grenades.

LCpl. Henry A. Rios, 21 (Woodland, Calif.), accounted for three more of the enemy.

By this time the Viet Cong were returning heavy fire with small arms and grenades.

(more)

operation
add 1-1-1-1-1-1

Artillery accounted for two more VC killed and two wounded. Huey gunships killed two VC, bringing the total to 19.

The total since the beginning of the operation that started Dec. 12, is 64 VC killed, 23 wounded, and 10 captured. In addition, 19 VC suspects were apprehended and one rallier turned himself in. Ten weapons, 17 tons of rice, numerous documents, grenades and equipment were also captured.

There were no Marine casualties during this action. Marine casualties since the beginning of the operation have been very light.

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