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TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS



Ready To Strike.... Anywhere, Anytime

92 0010

Vol 5 No. 35

TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS

September 14, 1970

Former Division Unit Also Honored

Cav Receives Presidential Citation

By SGT MIKE CONROY

CU CHI - Two 25th Infantry Division units were presented the Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism at this base camp recently.

Receiving the award were 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry and Battery C, 6th Battalion, 77th Artillery.

General Creighton W. Abrams, commanding general United States Army Vietnam, presented the awards on behalf of President Richard M. Nixon.

The 3/4 Horse earned their distinction for action occurring on January 31, 1968. The Cav, supported by the 6th of the 77th (then attached to division artillery), "prevented the destruction of a vital allied base and virtually destroyed a vastly superior enemy force."

Blocking Positions

Before dawn, the squadron was alerted to move to blocking positions on expected enemy routes of withdrawal following a major Communist assault on Tan Son Nhut Air Base.

The ferocity and initial success of the enemy attack necessitated immediate deployment of C Troop to the threatened air base complex.

After a rapid, cross-country night move of approximately 15 miles, C Troop launched a ferocious night counter-attack which succeeded in separating the insurgents inside the base from the main body of the enemy force reinforcing through the breach in the base's perimeter defense.

Although temporarily disrupting the enemy attack, C Troop was heavily outnumbered and additional combat power was urgently required.

Accordingly, the remainder of the squadron's available fighting strength including Bravo and Delta Troops, and the supporting artillery of C Battery was marshaled to support the embattled troopers.

Counterattack

In the early morning hours, B Troop raced 28 miles over enemy controlled roads, smashing through five ambushes en route, to launch a counterattack in conjunction with C Troop.

According to the citation, "the rapidity of development, the ferocity of the attack and the accuracy of heavy volumes of supporting gunships and artillery fire caught the enemy by complete surprise, trapped major elements of his force and eventually resulted in his defeat."

Throughout the engagement, the squadron's supporting aircraft and its medical and supply personnel moved into and about the fire-swept area in a "magnificent display of courage, dedication and professionalism."

By late afternoon, the Cav had broken the determined regimental attack forcing the survivors to flee the area.

Triple Deuce Engages VC, Bags a Dozen

By SP4 FRANK H. SALERNO

CU CHI - Elements of the 25th Division's Alfa and Charlie Companies, 2nd Battalion (Mech), 22nd Infantry, recently doubled the enemies troubles by killing eight VC during sweep operations 12 miles north of here.

Engage Enemy

"It began when we engaged several enemy from our night defensive position," said Private First Class Billy Mann, a Charlie Company armored personnel carrier driver from Campbellsville, Ky. "We received no return fire, and, after checking the area, found nothing at that time."

"The next day we were on a sweep in this same area and located a newly constructed bunker and signs that the enemy had recently been there," said Private First Class Andy Wilda, an Alfa Company rifleman from Manitowoc, Wis.

Find Ammo

"Inside the bunker we found nine 82mm mortar rounds, twelve 82mm fuses and 360 pounds of rice in nine 40-pound bags," said Private First Class Chuck Weidner, of Alfa Company, from Hayward, Calif.

The men then decided to set up mechanical ambushes near the bunker, figuring the enemy might return there for the night. After setting up numerous claymore mines throughout the area, they returned to their night defensive position.

That night several mechanical ambushes were detonated only minutes apart at chow time. Asweep of the area produced two dead enemy, one AK-47 and a map.

Locate Graves

The following day, Alfa Troop 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry working with Triple Deuce units, located several graves, containing six recently killed V.C. Alfa and Charlie Companies, Triple Deuce, were credited with the kills.

"The enemy had apparently dragged these bodies off and buried them after our companies had engaged them that night," said a Triple Deuce rifleman.



COMUS HONORS CAV - General Creighton W. Abrams, commanding general United States Army Vietnam, presents the 69th battle streamer to the 3/4 Cav during ceremony at Cu Chi. (Photo by SP4 Joe Loper)

Uncovers Base Camp

Cav in Massive Sweep

By SGT MIKE CONROY

DAU TIENG - An element of the 25th Division uncovered a former enemy base camp while

4th Cavalry (McKensie's Raiders) teamed with the 984th Land Clearing Company in a month-long operation near a

involved in a massive land clearing mission recently.

Alfa Troop, 3rd Squadron, thickly-treed French owned rubber plantation north of here.

During the early days of the operation, the Cav uncovered a bunker complex, which, according to one of the men, "looked like a former enemy base camp."

In the complex, which consisted of ten steel reinforced bunkers, the Raiders removed several RPG rounds, one 155mm round, ten mine detonators and numerous booby traps.

The Cavalrymen also found numerous trails in the area which showed signs of very recent enemy activity. Fighting positions were found also. There, the Cav found unopened cans of food and empty ammo cartons for SKS, AK-47 and RPG rounds.

During the 31 days of the operation, the 30 Rome plows of the engineers cleared 3,576 acres of dense jungle.

"I can't give enough credit to the operators of the Rome plows," said Captain Arthur R. Melton, of San Antonio, Tex., Alfa Troop commander.

Quick Moving Enemy Not So Fast After All

By SP4 KRIS PETERSEN

CU CHI - Recently, near the Boi Loi woods north of here, the 25th Division's Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry, killed two members of an apparently fast-moving Viet Cong unit.

"The entire episode was amazing to say the least," recalled Platoon Sergeant Richard Carpenter, of Crandon, Wis. "We were moving into our night defensive position when we received a radio call from the CP (command post)."

"They said that ten VC were heading our way, the CP being about 700 yards from our position."

"We had quietly started to put out our claymores and prepare for them, when suddenly there they were—seven of them, walking in file right in front of us," remarked Sergeant Darce Chandler, from Commerce, Ga.

"The first thought that ran through my mind was that these guys must have been flying awfully low in order to get here so fast from that far away," said one Bravo Regular.

Nevertheless the platoon of Regulars surprised the enemy as they quickly opened up with machinegun fire, killing one of them.

Minutes later, back at the CP, what was thought to be the same group was spotted again.

They waited for them to get closer, then opened fire, killing one.

Decorated

SILVER STAR

CPT John R. Hayes Jr, Co A, 2d Bn, 34th Armor
1SG Gengoro Higa, Co C, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
SGT Bill G. Koch, Co C, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
SP4 Samuel Fleming, Co A, 2d Bn, 34th Armor

BRONZE STAR

CPT Frederic C. Gardner Jr, C Btry, 2d Bn, 77th Fld Arty
CPT John R. Hayes Jr, Co A, 2d Bn, 34th Armor
SPT Arthur A. Schultz, Co Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
1LT James F. Anderson, C Btry, 2d Bn, 77th Fld Arty
1LT Richard Brodbeck, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
1LT James C. Chambers, Co B, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
1LT Richard E. Dodson, Co D, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
1LT Albert C. Flagg, Co B, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
1LT Samuel Hargrove, C Btry, 2d Bn, 77th Fld Arty
1LT Thomas J. Morgan, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
1LT Harry W. Sandhusen, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
1LT John W. Van Volkinburg, Co B, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
1SG Lonnie M. Severson, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
PSG Jimmy L. Davidson, Co A, 2d Bn, 34th Armor
SFC Billie Hudson, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SFC Seuseu Mautonu, C Btry, 2d Bn, 77th Fld Arty
SFC Theodore Smith, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SSG Charles S. Blue, Co D, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
SSG John H. Childers, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SSG Douglas Evans, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SSG Fred Manske, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SSG Harry Wahl, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SSG William Wark, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SSG Frederick Washington, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SGT Dennis J. Harris, Co C, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
SGT Jesse Hunter, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SGT Thomas Jackson, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SGT Douglas H. Jenkins, HHC, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
SGT Carl R. Matson, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SGT Edward R. Mills, Co D, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
SGT James S. Moss, Co C, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
SGT Eddie R. Nix, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SGT Terry J. Payne, Co E, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
SGT Steven J. Runnels, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SGT Mikel G. Schow, Co D, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
SGT Michael W. Schroder, Co D, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
SGT Michael J. Tolbert, Co D, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
SP5 Michael Dempsey, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SP5 Donald Johnson, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SP5 Robert P. MacCaferri, Co D, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
SP5 Pete Wyshneff, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SP4 Paul Armstrong, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SP4 Kenneth D. Bouey, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SP4 Roger Bowman, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SP4 Robyn, P. Bryan, Co A, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
SP4 Stephen Cabrera, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SP4 Kenneth W. Choucolli, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SP4 Herschel R. Cook, Co B, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
SP4 Gary Dearing, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SP4 Dennis C. Dodge, Co B, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
SP4 John E. Fahey, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SP4 Roger Hatton, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SP4 Karl Koch, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SP4 Willis Kruger, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SP4 Roger Kummer, Co A, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
SP4 Tone Larkens, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SP4 Robert E. Lewis, Co A, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
SP4 Frederick Lukasavitz, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SP4 Michael Martinez, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SP4 Noel Martinez, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SP4 Keith H. Martin, Co D, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
SP4 Leonard Reggie, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SP4 Ronald Scott, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SP4 John C. Sherron, Co D, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
SP4 Terry Sperry, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SP4 Roger Strait, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SP4 Alford L. Walker, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SP4 Stephen R. Walker, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
SP4 Gernoth B. Young, HHSB, 3d Bn, 13th Inf
PFC Marc R. Brill, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
PFC Stephen L. Burden, Co D, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
PFC George Burnette, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
PFC Craig Candage, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
PFC Thomas Clark, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
PFC Felix Cobos, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
PFC Michael Conklin, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav

It Turns Them On

Just Say Magic Word

By PFC JIM HAWKER
CU CHI - "Scramble" is the first thing the operations officer says on the phone. It's repeated one more time in the shack, only louder. In seconds everyone is running for the choppers.

At the 25th Division's 25 Aviation Battalion "scramble shack," two flight crews are ever ready to move at the sound of this single, simple word.

They know they were needed immediately.

"The call from the unit in the field requesting the gunships normally takes ten minutes to clear the various and necessary channels," said Captain William C. Melvin, of Kansas City, Kan., leader of the attack support platoon of Bravo Company.

Shots A Must For DEROS

By SP4 SCOTT WATSON

Think about it.

Your DEROS calendar is almost completed. You're so short, you're next. There isn't even enough time to sham. The day that you've been waiting for is almost here.

And then it happens.

Just as you're clearing post, someone checks your shot record and it's not up to date. Now you may get to spend as much as an extra week here getting something that could have been taken care of weeks before.

The reasons for keeping an up to date shot record are simple. Besides being a necessity for the trip back to the world, it also is one of the chief means of keeping a check on your health.

Most people can't remember what shots they've had, moreover when they had them. The shot record is an easy way to keep track of both.

The Army requires that all US military personnel receive the following immunizations at the indicated intervals: plague and cholera every six months; smallpox once a year; typhoid and typhus every three years and yellow fever every ten years.

So why be hassled at the last minute? Have your shot record checked and cleared a good week prior to your DEROS date.

Is it worth ignoring? Think about it.



CHANGE OF COMMAND - In a recent ceremony, Lieutenant Colonel Robert N. Martin, of Dallas, took command of the 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry. LTC Martin, formerly X.O. of the 2nd Brigade, replaced Lieutenant Colonel Shepperd H. Phillips.

"We are usually in the air and on our way within three minutes after receiving the call," Melvin added.

In those three minutes, the men in the field don't have time to bite their nails or watch the

sky.

The chopper with the teeth, 52 rockets, 40mm cannon and mini-gun that bite, will soon arrive to do the job the men on the ground have grown to depend on.



Tropic Lightning Tots

The Commanding General Welcomes The Following Tropic Lightning Tots To The 25th Infantry Division—As Reported By The American Red Cross. Born To:

August 5

PVT Jeff Del Conyro, A 2nd Bn. 12th Inf. boy

August 13

CPT Donald Ryland, B 7th Bn 11th Arty, girl

August 14

SGT Reggie Petty, A 2nd Bn 14th Inf., boy

August 17

SGT Robert Irving, C 2nd Bn 12th Inf., boy

PFC Glenn Massey, B 125th Eng, boy

August 18

PFC Mario Gallegos, HHC 2nd Bn 34th Armor, girl

August 19

PFC Howard Hill, Co C 2nd Bn 22nd Inf., boy

August 20

SP4 Willard Williams, Co C 1st Bn 27th Inf., girl

August 21

PVT Robert Freeman, HQ Co A 725th Maint, boy

SP4 Edwin Dalton, E Co 725th Maint, boy

August 22

SP4 George Dubey, B 2nd Bn 60th Inf., boy

PFC Glenn Cox, 25th Admin Co., boy

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The TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS is an authorized publication of the 25th Infantry Division. It is published weekly for all division units in the Republic of Vietnam by the Information Office, 25th Infantry Division, APO San Francisco 96225. American Forces Press Service and Army News Feature materials are used. Views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army. Printed in Tokyo, Japan, by Pacific Stars and Stripes.

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PFC Dan Lowry 2/27	SP4 James Duran 3/13
SP4 Greg Duncan 2/27	SGT Jack Strickland 1/27
SP4 Ed Toulouse 2/12	SP4 Dan Davis 1/27
SGT Mark Rockney 2/12	SP4 Kris Peterson 3/22
SGT Mike Conroy 3/4 Cav	SP4 Frank Morris 1/5
SGT William Zarrett 4/9	SGT Bob Lodi 2/34
SGT Daniel House 4/9	SGT Dan Davis 1/27
PFC Irwin Pollis 269th	SGT Jack Strickland 1/27
SP6 Tom Watson 725th	SGT Byron Fites 4/23
SP4 William McGowan Diwarty	PFC Doc Pollis 269th



HOLD ON TO YOUR HATS - A group of regional and popular forces NCOs provide a different picture of a helicopter taking off. The group was in training at Cu Chi. (Photo by SP4 Howard Lavick)

Ambush Drops Four VC

Hounds Surprise Charlie

By PFC DAN LOWRY
CU CHI -- Mechanical ambushes and the alertness of several elements of the 25th Infantry Division's 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Wolfhounds paid off in four enemy killed north of here recently.

"We were setting up in our night defensive position when two Viet Cong were spotted heading towards us from about fifty meters away," said Private First Class David Adams, a Charlie Company rifleman from

Houston.

"We quickly opened up, dropping one and sending the other for cover. The next morning we found the one dead VC and a K-54 pistol."

Meanwhile, some distance away, an element of Bravo Company was baiting an area with mechanical ambushes.

Leaving "mechanicals" behind this particular night proved wise for the Bravo Hounds. Two enemy fell victim to the deadly claymores and two AK-47 rifles were captured.

Nearby a unit of Alfa Company was reconning their ambush patrol site.

"Five men from our night holding position were searching the surrounding area when they were pinned down by enemy fire," said Private First Class Sabino Parras, a rifleman. "The rest of us were able to join them shortly and help achieve fire superiority, driving the enemy force away."

A morning sweep uncovered one dead Communist.

At Thoroughbred Clinic

Line Medics Are Newbies

By SGT MIKE CONROY
CU CHI -- The "Thoroughbred Clinic" of the 25th Division's 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry, treats approximately 280 patients a week, said Captain Bryson V. Athlers, of Holly, Mich., the squadron surgeon.

Medical Welfare

The clinic is responsible not only for the medical welfare of the men of 3/4 Cav, but also the Rangers of F Company, 75th Infantry, and the 65th Engineer Battalion.

In addition to those cases treated at the clinic, there is a medical platoon consisting of seven medics who operate out of Fire Support Base Katum.

Also, within each troop, there is one senior medic. In addition, there is one for each platoon within the troop.

Newbies

The line medics are usually "newbies"—men who are still in the first six months of their Vietnam tour. They are responsible for treating everything from sore feet and

ringworm to less serious combat wounds.

The medic seldom gets credit or praise but he is always right on the spot if needed during enemy contact and he's always around when someone's not feeling good.

MEDCAPs

At the end of his first six months, he usually is transferred to the Thoroughbred Clinic, where, besides his normal duties, he also conducts frequent MEDCAPs (medical civic action projects).

According to one of the men, the Three-Quarter Horses' MEDCAP effectiveness is greatly enhanced by Specialist 6 Andy Elder, from Bloit, Wisc. Elder speaks Vietnamese fluently, thus enabling the MEDCAP team to

work more smoothly and avoid any misunderstandings that might normally occur.



WHICH WAY - Captain Sidney G. Herndon of the 2nd Battalion, 77th Artillery's shell report team, reaches into a crater to try and determine the azimuth of a mortar round.

It's Happening

STIFF NECK DEPARTMENT ...Every day a different flag flies above the headquarters of the 3rd of the 13th at Cu Chi. And every day, passing Clansmen take particular note of which flag it is. According to Command Sergeant Major Frank A. Monsees, it has long been a Clan tradition to fly the standard of a different state of the union each day in recognition of the men who are serving or have served with the unit from those states. Why is this so important to the Clansmen? Well, if their state flag is flying, they get the day off. But they have to discover the fact themselves and so inform their respective section chiefs. A man who fails to take note doesn't get the day off. As a result, every morning all eyes turn upward toward the flag pole as the men of the 3rd of the 13th seek their banner day.

SAY IT AIN'T SO, DAN...Few things can bring a soldier in Vietnam closer to home than a letter from his best friend. Sergeant Dan House of Detroit received such a letter recently signed simply "Fred." Fred is a 13 month-old dachshund. According to a reliable source, House made the unforgivable error of including several casual photos of his four-footed Vietnamese friends in letters to home. Fred, alas, discovered the photos and suspected that his one true friend had developed a split loyalty. He had good reason to be worried, considering that he had sent his master off to Vietnam with a bite on the nose that drew blood. But House isn't one to hold a grudge and offered a reassuring rejoinder to his friend Fred. "He won't have to worry much longer," House said. "I'm almost as short as he is."

AND NOW THE SHOE IS ON THE OTHER FOOT...From April until September 1968, Michael Fitzgerald from Kalamazoo, a student at the University of Michigan, worked in the offices of Senator Philip A. Hart handling, among other things, Congressional inquiries from soldiers of the Army. Fitzgerald would forward all inquiries to the Department of the Army for consideration. He's now PFC Michael Fitzgerald from Kalamazoo and working in the offices of the 25th Infantry Division at Cu Chi. His job? Fitzgerald handles Congressional inquiries. Only now, he acts on them on behalf of the Army instead of directing them toward his present employer. Fitzgerald's opinion of the Army's handling of Congressmen has changed some since he worked for the senator. "It's really changed quite a bit," he said. "I used to think that the Army really didn't take the inquiries too seriously. From working here, I know that they take them very seriously, giving them number one priority all the way down the line." He's worn the shoe on both feet. He should know.

NEW NAME ADDED TO HONOR ROLL...Specialist 4 Terry W. Nichols, a medical aidman with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry, has been named to the 25th Infantry Division's combat honor roll. Nichols was inserted along with his unit into an area of suspected enemy activity. Suspicions were correct and the unit was immediately pinned down. Several of its members took rounds. Nichols left his cover and moved from wounded man to wounded man administering first aid. When initial treatment had been completed, he coordinated the movement of the casualties to an area where they could be evacuated. He then returned to the forward area and personally evacuated two other wounded. Not a bad day's work. Not bad at all.

A SIX MILLION DOLLAR WIND...Hurricane Celia may become the third most costly hurricane in terms of disaster relief expenditures in the history of the United States according to the Red Cross. When the big wind blew into Central Texas, it blew out again leaving the area 6 million dollars the poorer. The Red Cross in Southeast Asia is now accepting contributions for the relief of the victims of the hurricane. If you would like to help out, drop by the Red Cross field office in your area and drop off a contribution. Help pick up the pieces back home.



The Girls of Cu Chi

SHY – This young lady was slightly shy and a bit embarrassed when asked to pose. "I no good looking enough for picture," she said.



PERT – This little pepper pot knows more English slang than most GI's. Getting into an animated conversation with her is "No sweat, GI."



CAGY – This sly nymph is a study in contrasts. The photographer would take her picture. He had to "hide himself" to capture the cagy lady's image.



Photos and Story By SP4 Howard Lavick.
The two GIs rode by in their 3/4 ton and let out that long, familiar wolf whistle. The pretty young girl walking nearby smiled shyly but spontaneously.

The old custom of girl watching is not limited to street corners back in the world. It is a well practiced past time here in Viet Nam. Cu Chi is no exception. Just be at the main gate some afternoon around 5 p.m.

Of the many girls working in the offices and shops around Cu Chi, most commute from Saigon each day. Their diversified backgrounds are evidenced by their wide assortment of clothing styles, ranging from native dress to very Western mini-skirt outfits.

Some of the girls have completed formal education and come from prosperous families. Others have relatives attending universities in the United States.

As with nearly all Oriental women, the Vietnamese are generally very shy with strangers. However, once you get to know them, they are eager to carry on conversations and their effervescent laughter brightens many a weary afternoon for the GI completing routine errands around base camp.

The girls are friendly and accustomed to working with GI's, having heard most of the lines and sweet talk. Still, they don't mind talking with a fellow if for no other reason than the enjoyment of "yacking", as one girl put it.

The girls will usually ask how much time you have left in Viet Nam and where your home is. Part of the girls' shyness stems from their limited English, but don't be surprised if they should throw out such phrases as "No sweat GI", or "Never happen."



PROUD - This Vietnamese Maiden is very aware of the importance of her personal appearance. She combed her hair for five minutes before letting the photographer take her picture.



CRAZY - These two comediennesses were hamming it up so much in front of the camera that it took 10 minutes for the photographer to get them to stand still for one shot.

ts. She fibbed about her name so that the
gone looking for another girl but "forced

Ask SGT Certain

DEAR SARGE: My favorite DA pamphlet tells me that the Army spells alpha as A-L-F-A. Alright, so why is the R & R debarkation area spelled Camp Alpha? Someone screwed up, huh?

Charlie Tango

DEAR CHARLIE: Don't be silly. Camp Alpha was named after PFC Sidney Alpha, a 25th Division trooper leaving for R & R in Hong Kong during a sapper attack on Tan Son Nhut. The sapper had just made it through the last wire when Sidney saw him. "You're not going to foul up my R & R," Sidney said. Then Sidney caught a live grenade and chased the sapper back over all five wires. On the request of his family, Alpha's remains were buried in Hong Kong.

DEAR SERGEANT CERTAIN: How come a Spec 4 without money can only send home 200 pounds of free baggage while a well-paid lieutenant can send home 500 pounds.

Light Weight

DEAR LIGHT: The question is silly. An enlisted man only needs his web gear and a few beers to be happy. You can't send Army issue home and there is plenty of beer in the States. A lieutenant needs to send home his teddy bear, his golden books and a year's collection of champagne corks. Besides, what can a Spec 4 without money buy?

DEAR SGT CERTAIN: They're just painted the quonset huts around division headquarters white with red trimming. Isn't this a little frivolous?

What No Blue

DEAR WHAT: No indeed. There is probably a very good reason. Perhaps they painted the Red Cross office and it made the rest of the place look dingy. Maybe the CG has a craving for peppermint. The chief of staff might be hinting that he wants the barber shop closer to his office. Or they ordered green but someone with a bizarre sense of humor switched paint on them. See, everything makes sense.



CLUCK, CLUCK - Alfa Company, 1st Battalion (Mech), 5th Infantry's very own "winged warrior" Specialist 4 Ben Orlando feeds his feathered friends. (Photo by SGT BOB LODI)

Soldiers Go to the Birds

Bobcats Are Chickenmen

BY SGT BOB LODI

Xuan Loc - "Chickenman" is alive and well in the 25th Infantry Division! In fact, the white-winged warrior has two counterparts in the 1st Battalion (Mech), 5th Infantry.

The dauntless duo, Specialist 4 Gen Orlando, of Florissant, Mo., and Specialist 5 Bill Owens, of Columbia, S.C., Bobcat cooks, don't spend their free

time fighting crime in Midland City, but they do have three pet chickens.

"We were given the rooster and two hens last May by an old woman who lived near Fire Support Base Wood," said Orlando.

"Since then they've been to Cambodia, back to Tay Ninh, and now here in Xuan Loc," added Owens.

Besides serving as mess hall mascots, the feathered creatures serve a more utilitarian purpose. Each morning at dawn the rooster sends forth a robust "cock-a-doodle-doo" awakening all to a hearty breakfast.

"We cook the breakfast," grinned Owens, "and we like to have a good turn out."

'Everyone Is Closer'

Sarge Likes the Boonies

By SGT BOB LODI

FSB LYNCH - The 25th Division has a motor sergeant who really knows his armored personnel carriers. He should, he's been babying them for the past 36 months.

Staff Sergeant Elton Lovett has spent nearly three full tours in Vietnam, the last two with the 25th's 1st Battalion (Mech), 5th Infantry.

Since 1968, Lovett, of Blythe Woods, S.C., has seen many

changes. The big difference has been in repairing tracks.

"My job is a lot easier now than in '68 mainly because parts for the tracks have become more readily available," he said.

The NCO has had no yen for base camp life.

"Everyone is closer out in the boonies," Lovett explained. "There is more spirit out there among the men and my job is more rewarding."

As far as his "babies" are concerned, the sergeant drew a comparison.

"I think the present diesel tracks are an improvement over the earlier gasoline models," he continued. "The diesel engine is much more durable and is better able to withstand the punishment that the terrain dishes out."

Lovett helped pioneer a new concept in APC driving while with the Bobcats called "extended laterals."

"Extended laterals" are metal extensions on the turning devices and accelerator," Lovett said. "They allow the driver to operate the vehicle without actually being inside it."

"We first thought of the idea while operating in heavily mined areas during 1968. Being on top of the driver's hatch has helped prevent the injuries which often result when a driver gets pinned in the hatch when a track hits a mine. They've saved a helluva lot of lives."



MY WHAT PRETTY, UM, EYES...And legs and arms and on and on. This shows you what three square meals a day and lots of sunshine can do for a body. Let's see. The good ol' Army gives us three square meals a day and there's certainly a lot of sunshine here in Vietnam.

Grunts Are Saddled With 'Mobile Homes'

By SP4 ED TOULOUSE

FSB WARRIOR - Infantrymen in Vietnam are "saddled" with many problems, few of which are as burdensome or as necessary as what some grunts refer to as an O.D. version of the mobile home—the rucksack, tropical, lightweight.

In a sense, the rucksack is the backbone of all leg units. However, this tubular-framed back pack is as notorious as it is valuable. Raw shoulders, aching backs, and a kicked posterior can usually be expected to highlight the end of a long day in the field.

General Store

But, despite such disadvantages, this seemingly parasitic companion pays its due. The average GI rucksack contains a variety of necessities

not unlike the stock of an old-time general store.

Nothing goes along just for the ride, but comforts are not spared. Found in the pack may be such concessions to civilization as books, writing paper and envelopes, soap, shaving gear, a toothbrush, ponchos and poncho liners, a change of clothes, insect repellent, radios, playing cards, canned food, a couple of rusted P-38s and perhaps an extra shoelace.

In addition to personal items, of course, is the usual mass of military gear.

Hard to Get Along With

The O.D. rucksack certainly has a conflict of personalities. As one GI explained it, "it's hard to get along with, but even harder to get along without."

China Beach—Someplace Else

By SP4 WILLIAM M. LANE

To a soldier in Vietnam, the best place to be is someplace else. Someplace else like Sydney, Tokyo or Hong Kong for Double R. Someplace else like home for good.

Now there is someplace else in Vietnam; a place with beaches instead of bunkers, night life instead of night patrols and steaks on barbecues instead of Cs in cans.

Someplace else is the China Beach in-country R & R center, a bit of world tucked into a cove near Da Nang. At China Beach, a soldier can shuck the war for three days to surf, swim, sail and sleep.

Nobody hassles anybody at China Beach. Nobody wears their rank on their swimming trunks or carries it into the weight room.

The only problems a soldier will encounter are determining how much sun to soak up, how much food to take in and how much beer to wash down.

One soldier from the 25th Division summed it all up.



SKIMMING THE WAVES -- This GI turned surfer makes it look easy to tame the waves at China Beach. Besides surfing, there are many non-water activities, such as miniature golf, tennis and indoor basketball.

"China Beach is a place where you can unwind and get away from the everyday hassle," he said. "The beach is fantastic. It reminds me of Diamond Head in Hawaii."

At Ease

"The people here go out of their way to make you feel at ease. They treat you as if you were a human being. Like a civilian. The meals are great. You get your choice of three entrees at lunch and dinner. And you don't have to go through messhall, stand-in-line stuff. You're waited on by Vietnamese girls."

China Beach was a local R & R site operated by the Navy before becoming the in-country sham center for all of Vietnam. Danny Barrett, who runs the reception operation, explained the philosophy of the 36 permanent party who run the show.

"We want people who come to China Beach to feel that they have nothing to do here that concerns any of the military services. They're here to forget where they've just come from. So, we try to maintain an entirely civilian atmosphere."

A civilian atmosphere means civilian clothes. The only soldiers in uniform are the 46 men who pull security for the center.

Late Breakfast

At China Beach, every building is now, or will soon be, air-conditioned. Maids change bed linen every morning. And the R & R site is one of the few places in this land where breakfast isn't served before the sun comes up. Soldiers can get their morning meal as late as 9:30.

And their first drink as early as 9 a.m. The bar opens when the sun is low in the sky and stays open long after it has dropped over the horizon. Sometime in between, there's a happy hour when beer flows free.

The sun shines strong this time of year at China Beach. Monsoon season doesn't begin until November. The beach is the prime attraction during the day. The grainy white sand stretches along a half mile of shoreline.

"I've traveled all over Europe, Africa, South America and the Caribbean," Barrett said. "I've yet to find a beach that is superior to this one."

St. Ange keeps 12 sailboats on the cooler-by-day, warmer-by-night water. There are four Boston Whalers, four Aerocraft and four Sunfish. "We also have a ski-boat," he said. "It usually goes out in the morning before the wind chops up the water."

Soldiers who get bored with swimming and sunning all day long will find many other ways to spend their time at China Beach. There's an indoor basketball court, a weight room, an 18-hole miniature golf course, tennis courts and a tape-music room. Footballs, basketballs, volleyballs and softballs can be checked out for the slinging, shooting, spiking and slugging.

Then there's always the bar.

Busy Nightlife

When the sun dies at China Beach, the clubs come alive. There's a floor show every night and, following that, two or three first-run movies. During his three days at the R & R center, a soldier won't see the same live group or celluloid story twice.

The 25th Division has 145 allocations to China Beach every month. Specialist 4 Sam Bogus, of Cleveland, Ohio, is the man at Cu Chi who decides which men from which units will go to China Beach when.

"When our allocations come in, we give a few to officers and 10 or so to the re-enlistment people," Bogus said. "The remaining 130 slots are divided among division units based on their relative strengths."

"Infantry line units get twice the allocations as do



THE WATER'S FINE -- At China Beach, the water temperature generally remains about 25 to 30 degrees below the air temperature. At night, you can't swim, but there is still plenty to do.

support and rear units."

Bogus advises soldiers who want to go to the in-country R & R center to contact their S-1 clerk. The clerk will initiate paperwork which must be in Bogus' at least 24 hours prior to the beginning of the R & R.

If and when the paperwork is approved, men going to China Beach will have to spend the inevitable day or two hitching rides, sitting through orientation sessions and meeting take-off times before they can bare their backs to the sun.

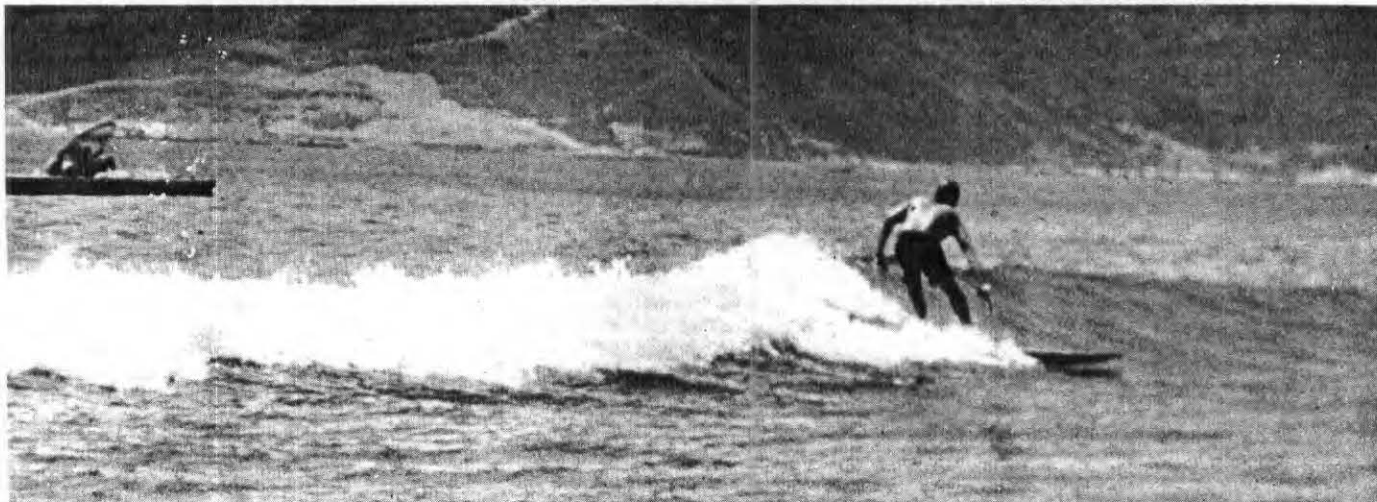
It's the individual's responsibility to get from his unit to Cu Chi. And he must be at the division base camp no later than 8:30 on the morning of his departure. At 11:30 a.m., he'll be trucked to Cu Chi's 8th Aerial Port. From there, he'll be flown to Tan Son Nhut Airbase.

Flight 848

Flight 848 from Tan Son Nhut to Da Nang takes off at 4 p.m. Two hours later, the bird will land and a bus will from China Beach will take R & R soldiers the last leg.

Travel time does not count against leave time. "Every man who goes to the in-country R & R center is guaranteed three full days at China Beach," Bogus said. "Really, from the time the man leaves his unit until he gets back, he'll probably have been away from five to seven days."

In between the coming and the going, soldiers get three glorious days of beach, bed and bar at a place that's one of the nicest in Vietnam merely because it doesn't feel, look or seem like Vietnam.



SURFS UP -- The surfing conditions at China Beach give all those who want to a chance to ride the waves. For those who are less talented, but still dig the sun, sea and air, there are many sailboats available for use as well as a half mile of sandy shoreline

to relax on. And don't worry about the weather, because the monsoon season doesn't start until November.

Busy Runway Now Quiet Strip

Rocket City Spirit Fizzles

By WADE GENTHNER
TAY NINH — The 25th Infantry Division's base camp here is no more. Oh sure, the buildings are still there, but the spirit that was "Rocket City" is gone forever.

The enemy never liked the

base camp. It sat astride one of his primary infiltration routes into the Saigon area. It thus became the target of almost daily rocket and mortar attacks. It was a tragically real base joke that a nighttime explosion

was automatically followed by someone saying: "That's Charlie's 2200 incoming-time to hit the sack!"

But it wasn't just the nighttime that was scary. The enemy would also set up rockets with delayed fuzes which would come ripping into the busy camp any time during the day.

There was a unique spirit that separated the Tay Ninh GI from all others. He was a little grimmer than the average, but he was still proud of his surroundings. Many had "Welcome to Tay Ninh, 'Rocket City' Vietnam" scrawled on walls and helmets.

Tay Ninh has been around for quite a while. It was originally a small French outpost after World War II and then was taken over by U.S. Special Forces during the early 1960's. But it wasn't until the 1st Brigade of the 25th Division took over that the base attained its present large size.

It was from here that operations Attelborough, Junction City, and other early forays into previously impenetrable VC strongholds were launched.

Tay Ninh was the end of the road then. It was the jumping off point for War Zone C. From here, one would either head into VC-infested areas or back towards the rear area at Cu Chi.

Supplies were brought in by convoy or fixed-wing aircraft and left via helicopter or on some GI's back.

Tay Ninh was also the staging area for 25th Division operations in Cambodia, but it was like the last gasps of a dying man.

The once-busy runway, where planes could often be seen lined up five-deep waiting for takeoff, is now a quiet strip handling but a few aircraft a day.

The PX area, once the scene of huge traffic jams—yes, traffic jams—now stands idle and barren.

The roads, normally slicked-down and paved, are now a dusty, rutted spider web of lonely pathways.

The rough-built hootches that once accommodated thousands of weary men just in from the fields are deserted and desolate.

Fire Direction Center Controls Cannoneers

By SP4 TOM BENN
"Hermit India, this is Scull Zero 2, FIRE MISSION! . . . Over."

Within seconds after these words crackle over the radio, six guns from the 7th Battalion, 11th Artillery, are zeroing in on the enemy. An important middle man between the grunts and the cannoneers makes it all possible. That middle man is the Fire Direction Center, or FDC.

To and From

There are several lines of communication to and from the FDC. One goes to the guns to pass on the all-important firing data. Another, of course, is to the forward observers who are actually artillerymen humping with the infantry. They call in fire when needed. Still another is connected to the battalion tactical operations center (TOC) where necessary clearance is obtained.

In order to get firepower support out to the riflemen as fast as possible, the FDC keeps constant track of units within its range of fire.

"It's a precaution so we can adjust fire for them," said one FDC worker at 7/11's Charlie Battery.

Helpful Tool

A helpful little tool in their work is the FADAC, or field artillery digital automatic computer. It's more commonly referred to as "Freddy," and computes necessary elevation, azimuth and range data for the guns automatically.

"We compute data on our charts and maps and little sticks

and things," according to Private First Class David Post, of Detroit, a member of Charlie Battery's FDC, "a guy on the FADAC does the same thing and we check our answers against each other."

This assures that the firing data will be accurate.

Clearance Complaints

Artillerymen seem to constantly complain about attaining clearance to shoot, but PFC Frank McCutcheon, of Detroit, also of C Battery's FDC, said "with contact, we don't have to worry about clearance, so it takes from 3-5 minutes to get rounds into the air. On any other mission though, it takes from twenty minutes to two hours.

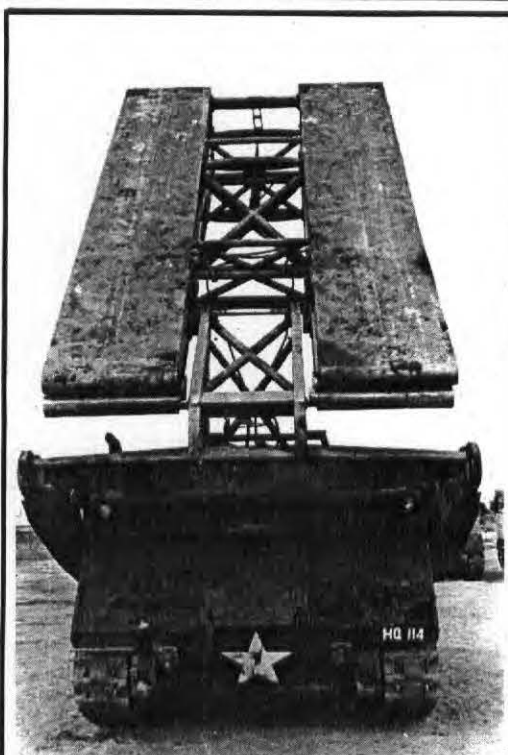
Ground clearance for fire missions usually comes from the liaison officer with the infantry unit. He is an artillery officer who coordinates between the with the infantry unit. He is an artillery officer who coordinates between the infantry and arty.

Air clearance comes from base camp.

"In order to shoot outside our area of operations, we have to get clearance from the surrounding units. This can take time," said another FDC worker.

Around the Clock

The FDC usually works in two twelve-hour shifts, with half of the ten-man section on duty at a time. This insures "around the clock protection."



EASY DOES IT — An 1,800 pound bridge comes tumbling down. But slowly. The 1st Battalion (Mech), 5th Infantry's "London Bridge" eases the span into place. (Photo by SP4 Rich Fitzpatrick)

London Bridge Helps

By SGT BOB LODI

XUAN LOC — Whenever the 25th Division's 1st Battalion (Mech), 5th Infantry finds a washed out culvert or a stream that its tracks can't cross, it calls on the "London Bridge."

The London Bridge in this case is not the British artifact now spanning a lake in Arizona. It's a bridge track. A bridge track is an armored personnel carrier modified to carry and position an 1800 pound bridge with a 36 foot span.

"Our battalion has another bridge track and one other battalion in the division has two," Lunquist said. "But these are the only ones I know of in Vietnam. It's hard to get parts. The mechanics have done an outstanding job of keeping the machinery in usable condition."

Although the bridges were not meant to be line tracks, they have traveled with the mech unit from Tay Ninh to Cambodia and then to Xuan Loc. And each of these areas the London Bridge and her sister the "Golden Gate Bridge" have more than proven their worth.

New Supply System Tested at Cu Chi

Triple Deuce Is Guinea Pig for VARP



VARPING — Men from Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion (Mech), 22nd Infantry are first to test Vietnam asset reconciliation procedures—simply called VARP—during a recent maintenance standdown. (Photo by SP4 Jay Hall)

By 1LT RICHARD HARRIS

CU CHI — New supply procedures currently being tested by 25th Infantry Division units will finally give them a chance to legitimize some of the non-TO&E equipment which troops seem prone to collect.

The program, currently being emphasized by USARV, is called VARP—Vietnam asset reconciliation procedures.

These procedures will make it possible to get that extra machinegun, those extra cots, or that unauthorized minigun on the property books, thus making it easier to get parts, service, ammunition and replacements for them.

A second part of the new program provides Division Support Command paperwork assistance for a no-questions-asked turn-in.

Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion (Mech), 22nd Infantry, was the first unit in the Division to test the new program. The trial run was conducted during it's maintenance standdown

recently, and seemed to satisfy everyone concerned.

Supply Sergeant Andrew Crane was pleased that he will now be able to get ammo and maintenance for the two miniguns, three butterfly-handled machineguns, and one automatic M-79 grenade launcher which his company had picked up along the way.

Division Supply was overjoyed with the two unauthorized \$250 oscilloscopes which turned up in the corner of a convex.

Said Lieutenant Colonel John Claybrook, division G-4 "everybody knows the units have extra equipment out there, and we just want to get the stuff on the books so that they don't bury it when an inspection comes along. VARP is simply, a realistic program."

"In order to get the units to co-operate, we give them help with the paperwork, and let them keep anything they think they need."