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## THE 198TH INFANTRY BRIGADE

In May of 1967, the Department of Defense announced the formation of a new infantry brigade which would be sent to Southeast Asia. The new unit, the 198th Light Infantry Brigade, was to be formed from personnel of the 1st and 2nd Armored Divisions at Fort Hood, Texas, and would be trained at Fort Hood prior to deployment.

Although it was referred to as a "new" brigade, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 198th Infantry Brigade, had originally been formed in the Organized Reserves in Pennsylvania in 1921, and was made an organic element of the 99th Infantry Division. In the early stages of World War II, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 198th Infantry Brigade, was redesignated as the 3rd Platoon of the 99th Cavalry Troop and was ordered to active duty in Europe with the 99th Infantry Division. The unit fought in the Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace, and Central Europe Campaigns, was cited by the Belgian Army for action at Eisenborn Crest and the Ardennes, and was awarded the Belgian Fourragere. After the war, the unit was placed in the Reserves, and the 3rd Platoon of the 99th Cavalry Troop was again designated as Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 198th Infantry Brigade.

Shortly after the Defense Department's announcement of the activation of the 198th, the Brigade began training at Fort Hood under Colonel James R. Waldie, the first Brigade Commander. During the training, emphasis was placed on jungle fighting techniques and air mobility-- skills necessary to fight the guerilla war in Vietnam. In August 1967, Colonel Waldie accepted the Brigade's colors from Brigadier General Ralph L. Foster, Assistant Division Commander (Support) of the 1st Armored Division at the Brigade's first formal review. At this review, the motto of the Brigade-- "Brave and Bold"-- was also unveiled. It had been penned by Colonel Waldie and approved by the Army's Department of Heraldry.

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In October 1967, the Military Transport Ships USS Gordon and USS Upshur brought the Brigade from Oakland, California to Danang, Vietnam. At Danang, the Brigade boarded LST boats which transported the "Brave and Bold" to Chu Lai, where the unit came ashore on October 22. Four days later, the 198th was assigned as an integral unit of the recently activated Americal Division.

At this initial deployment, the Brigade consisted of 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry; 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry; 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry; 1st Battalion, 14th Artillery; H Troop, 17th Cavalry; and the 555th Engineer Battalion. In time the Brigade would lose the 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry, but would gain the 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry. The 1st Battalion, 14th Artillery was later reassigned to Americal Division Artillery but still supports the Brigade. The 555th Engineer Battalion was redesignated Company B, 26th Engineer Battalion, and it too still supports the Brigade. Presently, the Brigade is composed of its Headquarters and Headquarters Company, three infantry battalions, one cavalry troop, a scout dog platoon, and a chemical detachment.

About half of the men in the newly arrived Brigade received their in-country training at Chu Lai from the 196th Infantry Brigade, while the remainder of the "Brave and Bold" went to Duc Pho for training with the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division. The 198th troops at Duc Pho remained there until the arrival of the 11th Infantry Brigade in December 1967 at which time they rejoined the rest of the 198th at Chu Lai. Meanwhile, the 196th Infantry Brigade redeployed from the Chu Lai area to relieve the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division and the 198th relieved the 196th in place.

The first major operation launched by the 198th was Operation Muscatine, a multi-battalion maneuver begun in December 1967 in the northern areas of Quang Ngai Province. Joining the Brigade were elements

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of the 2nd ARVN Division and the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division.

During the operation, which lasted until June 1968, the 198th relieved the 2nd ROK Marine Brigade and assumed full responsibility for the Koreans' tactical area of responsibility (TAOR).

During the TET holiday period of early 1968, Viet Cong and North Vietnamese troops launched their largest offensive of the war. Particularly hard pressed were the northernmost areas of I Corps Tactical Zone around Hue and Danang. The 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry, along with other units, deployed to the Danang area to reinforce the Allied positions around the populous city. For its part in repulsing the enemy attacks and conducting operations in the new area, the "Regulars" of 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry were awarded the Valorous Unit Citation.

In March 1968, 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry joined the Brigade and the 198th continued to operate with four infantry battalions until July 1969 when the 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry was reassigned to another Brigade.

In April 1968, Operation Burlington Trail was begun by elements of the 198th. With the assistance of 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry, the road from Tam Ky, capital of Quang Tin Province, to Tien Phuc, a Special Forces outpost and a district capital in Quang Tin Province, was opened. When the operation had ended in November 1968, 1,948 enemy had been killed and 545 weapons captured.

In August 1968, a Viet Cong terrorist attack on Son Tra, a fishing hamlet in the Brigade's area, destroyed 454 homes, killed 88 persons--73 of them civilians, and wounded more than 100 individuals. Immediately, a company of the 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry was assigned to secure the hamlet while members of the Brigade and the Americal Division went to work to rebuild Son Tra. The 198th donated 50 tents, 60 pounds of clothes, and food for the dislocated people while the 26th Engineer Battalion

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used their heavy equipment to clear and reconstruct the hamlet. By the time they were finished, 42 ten-family housing units, a school, a market place, and an aid station were all constructed.

In January 1969, Operation Russell Beach was initiated on the Batagnan Peninsula, south of Chu Lai. The operation was a massive pacification effort designed to eliminate VC units, base areas, materials, and members of the Viet Cong Infrastructure. The 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry joined with a battalion of another brigade to form Task Force Cooksey (named after Brigadier General Howard W. Cooksey, Assistant Division Commander of the Americal Division who commanded the Task Force). US Marines, Navy swiftboats, and elements of the 2nd ARVN Division also took part in the operation.

The peninsula, long a Viet Cong stronghold and the birthplace of the Viet Minh movement over two decades ago, was isolated from the mainland by a cordon set up by Task Force Cooksey, and 12,000 innocent civilians were relocated. Refugees were screened at a center near Quang Ngai City and 250 members of the Viet Cong Infrastructure and over 200 Viet Cong soldiers were apprehended. The combat phase of the operation claimed the lives of an additional 210 Viet Cong and the capture of numerous quantities of enemy equipment.

In February 1969, the Americal Division was reorganized along the Reorganization of Army Divisions Plan, and the designation Light Infantry Brigade was replaced by 198th Infantry Brigade.

In March 1969, the Brigade and the 6th ARVN Regiment embarked on Operation Geneva Park, an operation still in progress. The mission is to eliminate the enemy forces within the TAOR while stressing pacification and combined US/ARVN operations.

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In August 1969, an element of 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry, found themselves hailed as heroes by the residents of a hamlet near Quang Ngai City. The unit had located, in an abandoned Buddhist Pagoda, a 200-year old bell and a three-foot yellow statue of Buddha which the villagers of Son Loc had been missing for several years. The return of these two items and several other religious artifacts marked the return of the proper religious worship for the villagers which they had been unable to have for several years. The villagers showed their appreciation by honoring the 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry, with a two-hour parade in which over 1500 people marched through the streets of Quang Ngai City to the hamlet of Son Loc.

With the beginning of the dry season in March 1970, a three-pronged effort was initiated against the 48th Viet Cong Local Force Battalion, a long time occupant of the Batangan Peninsula, and other VC units in the area. First, pacification efforts were intensified with three new hamlets established in the area during the spring and summer of 1970. By September, over 5000 persons had moved into these new hamlets.

Secondly, a massive road construction and upgrading program was begun by the 39th Engineer Battalion with the objective of opening up isolated areas of the Batangan Peninsula. Vietnamese District and Provincial Forces provided security for the engineers.

The third phase of the operation was a massive land clearing project on the peninsula by the 59th Land Clearing Company. By the first of October, nearly 13,000 acres of land had been cleared, denying the enemy his tunnels, caches, and bunkers and uncovering many enemy mines and booby traps.

Meanwhile, the 198th Infantry Brigade conducted similar operations along the Tra Bong Road. The road, stretching from QL-1 fifteen miles south of Chu Lai to Tra Bong District Headquarters, was until recently

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just a narrow, dirt path. In May 1970, a convoy utilizing vehicles from the 23rd Supply and Transportation Battalion and Division Artillery, with convoy security provided along the route and within the convoy by H Troop, 17th Cavalry and 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry, reopened the road which had not been used in over a year. Presently, Company B, 26th Engineer Battalion and the 103rd ARVN Engineer Battalion are upgrading 30 kilometers of the road to make it an all weather road. Concurrently, the engineer company has cleared a portion of the land along the road, eliminating the enemy hiding places and ambush sites.

A mission the Brigade has retained is patrolling the "rocket pocket", a large area west of Chu Lai where enemy rocket attacks are launched against Chu Lai. In May 1970, after a large rocket attack on the base, C Company, 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry, combat assaulted into the rocket pocket and captured 43 Communist rockets with timing devices set up on bamboo aiming stakes. The rockets, which were all camouflaged, were disarmed and evacuated by the company.

Beginning in the last week of June 1970, the 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry established a foward command post at Ky Tra, northwest of Chu Lai, and began extensive combined operations with Vietnamese District and Provincial Forces from Ly Tin District and Quang Tin Province. Combat operations in the Ky Tra Valley operations have been highly successful with over 100 enemy killed and more than 40 weapons captured.

Additionally, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry has been conducting combined operations with the 6th ARVN Regiment southwest of Chu Lai. The operations have been aimed at the 406th Sapper Battalion and local Viet Cong forces. These operations have been extremely successful in pre-empting enemy attacks on Provincial outposts and pacification hamlets. A technique of operation employed by all units of the Brigade which

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seized the initiative from the enemy was the initiation of saturation patrolling and ambushing.

The Brigade has also placed great emphasis on denying rice to the enemy. Night patrols sent out by companies of all three battalions have interdicted enemy soldiers attempting to make their way into villages or towards rice caches to gather food for their units. Reacting swiftly to timely intelligence, maneuver elements search out suspected locations for hidden enemy rice caches. Often units of the Brigade are used to secure rice fields as civilian farmers harvest their crops. A large role in the rice denial program has been played by the Brigade's Psychological Operations Section, which broadcasts messages to the local population urging them to report enemy attempts to extort rice from them and promising GVN support to the farmers if they report these attempts.

Pacification efforts have not been confined to the Batangan Peninsula. Two pacification hamlets begun in October 1969 and one begun in March 1970 have been completely turned over to GVN authorities with the Brigade's troops being withdrawn and American-trained local Vietnamese Forces remaining for security. A large part of the pacification program is the Medical Civic Action Program (MEDCAP), administered by battalion surgeons and aidmen, often in cooperation with Vietnamese military and civilian medical personnel. From March to September 1970, the Brigade has held nearly 200 MEDCAPs with over 10,000 people being treated.

Combined operations with Vietnamese Regional and Popular Forces form another part of the pacification and Vietnamization programs. Combined operations are used not only as a means of eliminating enemy forces, but also as a training vehicle in small unit tactics for the local Vietnamese forces. In the pacification areas, combined operations, in which the Regional and Popular Forces receive instruction on weapons,

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tactics, radio procedures and adjusting artillery are conducted daily.

The success of this training was evidenced when local forces, securing two pacification hamlets alone after the departure of Brigade troops, twice successfully defended against enemy attacks on the hamlets.

Throughout its three years in Vietnam, the missions and accomplishments of the 198th Infantry Brigade have been as varied as its area of operations. Whether opening a road through thick jungle terrain, securing a pacification hamlet along the coastal plain, searching the inland mountains for the enemy and his base areas, or providing medical attention for sick children and comfort to homeless adults, the Brigade has performed in an outstanding manner and has lived up to its motto-- "The Brave and Bold".

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## 198TH INFANTRY BRIGADE COMMANDERS

Colonel James R. Waldie	May 1967	-	June 1968
Colonel Charles B. Thomas	June 1968	-	Dec 1968
Colonel Robert B. Tully	Dec 1968	-	May 1969
Colonel Jere O. Wittington	May 1969	-	Nov 1969
Colonel Joseph G. Clemons	Nov 1969	-	July 1970
Colonel William R. Richardson	July 1970	-	present