



# the CHARGER

196<sup>TH</sup> LIGHT INFANTRY BRIGADE (SEP)



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## RTO Invents New Speaker

Know-how, ingenuity, and a dollar's worth of radio components were all PFC Leonard Williams needed to build his own field radio speaker system.

PFC Williams is a radio telephone operator with Co. A, 3rd Bn., 21st Inf., 196th Lt. Inf. Bde.

Thinking that the size and weight of the Army's standard radio telephone speaker could be improved for field operations, PFC Williams decided to build a replacement for it. In a small C-ration can, he installed a three-ounce speaker.

The result? His new speaker weighs some 15 ounces less than the conventional Army speaker. It uses a transistorized amplification system.

Thus far, the RTO has baptized his invention through three operations. "It's very handy in the field," he says. "It's pocket hold, doesn't get tangled up in the jungle, and makes it possible for me to perform other jobs while monitoring the radio."

Captain Emil Gregg, A Company's commander and whom PFC Williams is RTO also has a high regard for the gadget. "It has such a great volume that the RTO doesn't have to be as close to me and I can still hear the transmission. Even during a rain-storm, you can hear clearly any communication from higher headquarters."

## CLOSE CALLS AT DAU TIENG

Close calls were the order of the day for several soldiers of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade recently, as they continued their push through the Dau Tieng area on Operation ATTLEBORO.

Chaplain (Captain) Nathaniel Giannatasio took time off from a sweep with the "Gimlets" of the 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, to watch Air Force jets blast Viet Cong positions to his front.

Later, as he got ready to move out, he saw that he had been sitting on a three-foot poisonous snake for the past half-hour. Captain Russell DeVries, Company C commander, came to his rescue and shot the snake.

Not far away, another light brigadesman encountered a similar experience. "We were under fire and I dove into a ready-made prone shelter," said PFC William E. Chajnowski of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry. "I felt movement under me and thought it was a bunch of red ants. The fire died down and I changed positions. As I started to deepen my position, I saw then that I had been resting on a two-foot snake. I cut him in half."

As night fell, Sp4 Rudy H. Petrovsky moved his position with Co. B, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, in total darkness.

The next morning, he reached for some C-rations from his pack. With his rations, the surprised soldier withdrew a large tarantula, which he killed immediately.

"Grenades were flying everywhere," recounts SGT Paul N. Sears of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry. "One landed next to me and a wounded buddy. It was a dud. In another

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## CWO RECEIVES MEDAL FOR VALOR

Chief Warrant Officer Adrian J. Sipple of Headquarters, 196th Lt. Inf. Bde., was awarded the Air Medal with "V" Device for successfully evacuating nine wounded soldiers in the vicinity of Ap Long Village on Sep. 19, 1966.

In the early hours of morning Chief Warrant Officer Sipple of Little Rock, Ark., responded to an urgent call by the 4th Bn., 31st Inf., to evacuate sixteen wounded men.

Dense fog hovered the ground and rain coupled with darkness obscured his vision. To complicate the already daring situation, the terrain allowed only one helicopter to land at a time and with the radio of his aircraft out of operation it only magnified the danger.

Even with the absence of a crew chief and door gunner during heavy ground fire, Chief Warrant Officer Sipple blindly guided his craft into position and evacuated the wounded soldiers to the brigade clearing station.

# CURIOSITY REAPS HUGE DIVIDENDS FOR "GUARDIANS" SILVER STAR TO 2/1<sup>ST</sup> PLT. LEADER

Lulls in battle can cause a soldier to become restless and arouse an urge to seek excitement. Such a lull and an urge by two light brigadesmen of Co. B, 2d Bn., 1st Inf., 196th Lt. Inf. Bde. caused just that excitement.

PFC Irvin Roswell, of Huntington, W. Va., and PFC Kenneth Turnene, of Dayton, Ohio, did not realize their adventurous curiosity would lead to one of the biggest battles of the Vietnam war.

Members of Co. B's third platoon, the light brigadesmen had been occupying a position approximately four miles south of Dau Tieng, along the Saigon River, with their platoon. "We had been in this area for about three days with very little contact," related PFC Roswell. "Having operated in the area for about two weeks before, I was somewhat familiar with it. The night before, I heard what I thought to be the sounds of oxen to the front of my position, so the next morning I decided to take a look.

"As Turnene and I left our perimeter and approached this village, we saw several things that made us a little suspicious. First, there were two dogs hanging around a house, and the building had been destroyed were being rebuilt, so were tunnels."

"When we looked in one of the buildings, we found a tunnel that had a room and a lantern, very much

like a miner's lamp. The room was about 10 feet by 10 feet. In it was a table that looked like an operating table, a few medical supplies, and a diary.

"All the writing was in Vietnamese, so we really didn't know what it was, but we did see the words "penicillin" and "streptomycin."

Being alert as they were curious, PFC Roswell, an automatic rifleman, and PFC Turnene, an assistant machine gunner, hurried back to Company B with their find.

The results of their find is now history. Contained in the diary was information which led the 2d Bn., 1st Inf., and other units of the 196th Lt. Inf. Bde. to the biggest rice cache of the war (over 1,000 tons), plus a sizable sum of salt, munitions, bicycles, and construction materials. It also turned the 196th's operation ATTLEBORO into one of the biggest battles of the war.

Summing up their experiences, PFC Roswell stated, "We really didn't know the importance of what we had found, but we were taught to always turn in everything we found."

Maybe, when the tempo of battle allows the men to recollect their experiences, each night silently and casually think to himself, "You know, I started it all."

A second Lieutenant, who with complete disregard for his personal wounds and safety directed the defense and evacuation of several wounded members of his platoon, was awarded the nation's third highest award for valor—the Silver Star Medal.

On the morning of Nov. 5th, Lt. Caleb R. Mills, (Melina, Tenn.) first platoon of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, 196th Lt. Inf. Bde., was occupying a defensive perimeter when it was attacked and pinned down by heavy automatic weapons and mortar fire. Numerous casualties were sustained. Lt. Mills directed his platoon's defense, an enemy mortar round landed in his command post, wounding him, his platoon sergeant and his radio-telephone operator. Though suffering from severe neck wounds, Lt. Mills assisted in giving others medical treatment. After he had evacuated the wounded men, he continued to command his platoon and help in evacuating casualties from adjacent units.

The Lieutenant stayed in command of his platoon until ordered to report to the rear for medical care, where it was determined that he would have to be evacuated to a hospital for further treatment.

READ AND PASS ON



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CG.....Brig. Gen. Richard T. Knowles  
OIC.....Captain Marshall B. Randall Jr.  
Editor.....Lt. Richard A. Steinhausen Jr.  
Assoc. Editor.....PFC Robert J. Mc Intyre  
Staff Artist.....PFC Brian C. Bardwell

# THE 3/21ST RESCUES CIVILIAN IRREGULARS IN 'BLACK VIRGIN' TAKES MOUNTAIN BATTLE

Nui Ba Den towers 3,232 feet above the grassy plains of Tay Ninh Province, South Vietnam, 65 miles northwest of Saigon. For years this majestic peak has been an impregnable stronghold.

In a recent search and destroy operation on the mountain involving elements of the 196th Lt. Inf. Bde's 3rd Bn., 21st Inf., supported five companies of the Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) on a sweep to clear the enemy from their dug-in positions on the western slope.

Air strikes and brigade artillery pounded the enemy positions continuously for an hour before two CIDG companies moved out to assault the mountain fortress.

The CIDG companies inched their way through the dense undergrowth and bamboo thickets at the base of the mountain. Almost immediately, the two companies became separated in the thick foliage. As they began the treacherous ascent, the men grabbed plants and clawed at the ground for a foothold up the steep and virtually impassable terrain. For every inch of ground, an ounce of sweat was lost on the rugged "Black Virgin" mountain.

Progress was slow and soon exhaustion took its toll on the game, but tired CIDG troops. Orders

came forward to abort the mission and return to the base of the mountain.

One CIDG company began its slow descent of the mountain. Unknowingly they were heading into an enemy trap. As the company reached a small clearing, the enemy opened up with a murderous barrage of automatic and small arms fire. Surprised, the CIDG hit the dirt and returned the fire as enemy grenades rained in all directions.

CPT. Russell DeVries, commander of the 21st Infantry's Company C, was monitoring the radio set and could hear the fire fight on the mountain. Without hesitating, he ordered his company to set up a blocking position to assist the withdrawal of the CIDG forces.

"My third platoon could hear shooting and someone screaming," recalls CPT. DeVries. "There were several wounded men just up ahead. The CIDG force was having difficulty evacuating the wounded in the thick terrain."

"LT Gregg Mikesell, 3rd platoon leader, was the first to see the wounded men, without hesitation he charged forward with four of his men, and with fire pouring in from all sides, carried the wounded to safety."

While the 3rd and 4th platoons set up their

blocking positions, the 1st and 2d platoons secured a landing zone to evacuate

the wounded. After all casualties were evacuated, Captain they were heading into an enemy trap. As the company pulled out the enemy fire intensified. Fire rained in from all directions, momentarily pinning down the two platoons.

CPT. Moylan S. Chew, bn. operations officer, recalls, "As CPT. DeVries left his position, and enemy let loose with a burst of automatic fire, peppering the ground behind him. I thought sure he was going to get hit. I couldn't see the enemy but apparently he could see me because I felt two bullets whistle past my neck. I hit the ground and fired a burst in the direction of the sound, hoping to keep him from firing at Captain DeVries."

At the same time 30 meters away, one soldier was wounded in the arm by enemy fire. As he fell to the ground, he emptied his magazine into the chest of his attacker, killing him on the spot.

As the enemy melted into the jungle hiding places, Captain DeVries regrouped his company and moved his men overland.

Today, "Charlie" knows he is no longer safe in his mountain sanctuary.

## TROOP F BALLAD HONORS CAVALRY

Soldiers throughout the years have long come up with songs that not only help pass the time of day, but also help to express their emotions and esprit de corps.

Troop F, 17th Cavalry, 196th Lt. Inf. Bde., is no exception. It, too, has a song of its own, thanks to PFC Anthony V. Speranza

of Howard Beach, N.Y. The 23-year-old grenadier put it this way: "We often go out on two or three-day operations. Trying to stay awake at night in my foxhole, I make up songs in my head. This song is about our troop and what we go through." Appropriately called "F Troop," the ballad is sung to the tune of "This Land is My Land." With the assistance of SGT. David M. Morris of Queens, N.Y., one of the scouts in the troop, who sings and plays the song on his guitar, it is becoming increasingly popular among the cavalry troopers.

JOYOUS XMAS FOR "POLAR BEARS" YOU KNOW THAT COUNTS

The men of the 196th Lt. Inf. Bde's Co. D, 4th Bn, 103rd Inf., are going to have a joyous Christmas this year, thanks to a letter written by their first sergeant.

The company's top soldier, James Robbins of Jenkins, Ky., got an early Christmas spirit and wrote to nine different companies back in the states requesting the prices of Christmas decorations and the cost of mailing.

It wasn't long before he received a reply from all nine companies. One reply, from a company in California, carried with it a surprise the sergeant had not expected.

He received a free of charge from Manshaw's Department Store in Whittier, California, "well over \$300 worth of Christmas decorations" and a Santa Claus suit. The company had even paid the cost of mailing the items.

Sergeant Robbins wrote to Manshaw's after a friend had recommended the company.

"I was so surprised," said the sergeant, "That I ran around showing the decorations to everyone in the battalion.

The decorations included three artificial trees, 15 boxes of tree ornaments, nine sets of lights, wall decorations, angel hair and artificial snow.

"This company is the greatest," boasted Sergeant Robbins. "It makes me feel good to have companies like this in the states. I plan to have everyone in the "Delta Devils" Company sign a letter of thanks and when I get back in the states I'll personally go to the firm and thank them.

In a letter to Sergeant Robbins, the company said, "This is our way of saying Merry Christmas—and hurry home."

IT'S WHO THAT COUNTS

SHORT CUT ALMOST

TO THE END OF HIS LAST

"I'll never take a short cut again as long as I live," exclaimed PFC Ruben Lee (Jersey City, N.J.) of his experience with a VC mine while on a search and destroy operation with the 196th Light Infantry Brigade's Company B, 3rd Bn., 21st Infantry.

"We had set up our temporary base camp for the night. My squad leader told me to go to the platoon CP to get water for my squad. On the way back, I decided to take a short cut through the tall grass and underbrush separating my squad's position from the CP.

"About halfway through, I heard a small explosion behind me. At first I thought I had been fired at so I hit the ground. The next thing I knew the entire squad was moving toward my position. They, too, had heard the explosion."

"My platoon sergeant, SFC Holland Estopp (Norwood, Ohio), moved up to my position to see if I was hurt. He immediately spott'd a hole in the ground near where I was laying with smoke coming from it. He told me he thought it was a mine."

"With his bayonet, SGT. Estopp probed around the hole and uncovered a 60mm mortar round with a Chinese fuze. The fuze had exploded when I stepped on it but had not detonated the mortar round. When I realized what had happened and what would have happened if the round had gone off, I got pretty shaky. Believe me, I've learned my lesson. I'll go the right way from now on."

Buy  
US BONDS



("Close Calls" cont.)

instance, the sergeant fired twenty rounds to cover a man running to his rear. As he watched the man dash for cover, he heard something behind him. He swung around, and caught a VC grenade and threw it back to its sender. Moments later, a VC snipers bullet ripped a grenade off the sergeant's belt, leaving him uninjured and still fighting.

PFC Tom Aubrey of Company B, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry, was moving fast through the jungle, carrying his machine gun and dodging punji pits. In his haste, his foot caught on a vine. He stumbled and fell toward a deadly punji pit. Luckily, an ammunition box broke his fall leaving him with only a pair of broken glasses and a minor leg wound.

Another trooper moving through the jungle spotted a VC lying on the trail before him. The soldier, PFC Eugene Hazard, radioed back to his company, Company C, 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry, for instructions on what to do with the seemingly dead VC. Suddenly, the VC raised up and threw a grenade at the soldier. The grenade fell dead and so did the VC.

It was after dark when Sp4 John M. Doyle of Company D, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry, was pulled into a tight perimeter in the thick jungle. His position was about six inches from the man next to him. Dawn broke after a quiet night. Specialist Doyle saw that he and the man next to him had been sleeping beside a small dud bomb which could have detonated with the slightest pressure.



# Buffaloes Upset Mortar Cart

## OFFICERS SELECTED RETENTION

Platoon Sergeant Dennis Collins, B Company, 2d Bn., 1st Inf., 196th Lt. Inf. Bde., obviously appreciates irony.

Recently he attempted to help out the men of his mortar platoon and at the same time throw a burn on Charlie by using a captured VC cart, complete with water buffaloes, to haul the platoon's mortars back to the command post.

Leading the buffaloes like a native farmer, the sergeant from Copperas Cove, Texas, had the situation well in hand until he approached the mortars. Then his platoon started cheering him on with yells of "Ride 'em, Cowboy!" In Vietnamese, this might have gotten by, but the buffaloes panicked at the English and Spanish and headed off at full gallop, into the sunset.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, the platoon members carried the mortars themselves.

### XMAS TREE

Captain Charles B. Griffiths, the 8th Support Battalion's S-1 officer, scored another "First" within the Army's first light infantry unit.

Captain Griffiths, of Manassas, Va., can boast that he has received the first Christmas tree in the 196th Lt. Inf. Bde.

The artificial tree, about eight feet high, was sent by Captain Griffith's wife, Mary, and his two children. The children told their mother that "If we are going to have a Christmas tree, so is Daddy," said CPT. Griffiths.

Along with the tree, the traditional ornaments were also sent to Griffiths.

"I plan to set the tree up in the battalion area. There will be a trimming ceremony on the 24th of December," CPT. Griffiths said jokingly.

Headquarters, Military Assistance Command, Vietnam has published guidance on the selection of officers for retention in the command beyond one year. Primarily affected are officers who are or may be assigned to advisory positions.

Officers selected will be extended for tours up to 18 or 24 months. Both commissioned and warrant officers will be considered for selection.

The new MACV Directive, Retention of Selected Officers Beyond Normal Tour, dated 3 October 1966, applies to officers of all services who are assigned to Hq MACV and the advisory groups.

The directive states that "The retention of experienced or uniquely qualified officers beyond the normal tour in Vietnam is considered essential for accomplishment of currently assigned or future missions of MACV."

Commanders and staff chiefs at each level may evaluate officer performance and recommend for selection or retention those who have demonstrated the potential for responsibility or have critical skills.

The directive states that officers will be encouraged to extend voluntarily, but when necessary they will be retained involuntarily. Officers may apply for selection.

Selected officers will be granted 30 days ordinary leave with space required travel to Conus after completion of at least nine months of their tour.

MACV J1 advises that the bill now before Congress to grant 30 days free leave to personnel who extend their Vietnam tours has not yet been approved.