



October 15, 1970

Vol 2, No 9

Delta Company Escape Ambush

A thirsty NVA soldier gave Gimlet infantrymen forewarning of a well-planned enemy ambush recently and paid for the mistake with his life.

A winding stream bed nine miles south-west of Duc Pho led Delta Company along a triple-canopied mountainside suspected of harboring a platoon-size element of an NVA sapper battalion.

"We soon came upon a recently-used clearing which must have been a sapper training site," recalled Sergeant Thomas Mansbridge (Ft. Lauderdale), squad leader for the lead platoon. "We discovered several mock ChiCom grenades and about ten partially constructed bunkers."

Fresh footprints on trails leading from the camp prompted a cautious examination of the surrounding area. Sergeant Mansbridge walked point for the third

Alpha Kills Three

A small unit of Company A on a night reconnaissance patrol 3 miles south of Duc Pho killed three Viet Cong recently and confiscated several hand grenades and one AK-47 rifle.

"We had intelligence reports suggesting the presence of a small band of VC operating near the hamlets south of LZ Debbie," explained patrol leader Sergeant Michael Goblet (Aurora, Ill.) "Six of us left Bridge 104 after dark and marched into the flooded rice paddies, hoping to catch a few of them off guard."

The soldiers had moved 2000 meters in a driving rain under heavy cloud cover when contact was made. "We walked into the middle of about twenty of them," added Specialist Gary T. Welcher (Sylacauga, Ala.). "Luckily nothing happened at first. The visibility was very poor and they acted as if they thought we were friendlies."

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platoon and led the company 150 meters down another stream where movement was heard to their front.

"The column halted and a couple of us moved forward to investigate," explained Mansbridge. "Thirty meters downstream we met an NVA soldier filling his canteen. He quickly stood up, dropped his canteen and stared at us in wonder for those few seconds before I shot him."

An angry response to the rifle shot was immediately forthcoming as a deafening roar of intense enemy automatic weapons fire, echoing along the banks of the stream, signalled the premature initiation of an ambush.

"They were certainly ready for us," continued Mansbridge, "but they didn't expect us to come so soon. There were at least 50 of them--maybe as much as one hundred--well emplaced on both sides of the draw waiting for us to enter their kill zone. When we didn't--thanks to their careless OP--they cut loose with all they had and withdrew."

Minh is a former North Vietnamese soldier whose feelings about the war are similar to those of many expatriated Americans living in a foreign country, and his dreams are the dreams of the universal soldier: He wants to go home.

In 1967, at the age of 18, Minh was drafted to fight in a war he did not understand. His story is not unique. He is only one of 156,000 returnees from the communist ranks who has forsaken the "Peoples' War of Liberation" and rallied to the side of the Government of Vietnam.

But Minh is from Hanoi, North Vietnam, and he, like his American counterpart in Canada or Sweden, may never be able to return home.

In July, 1969, Minh rejected the ideology of the Lao Dong (Communist) Party and committed himself to a possible lifetime of separation from his family and homeland by volunteering for service as a Kit Carson Scout with the AMERICAL Division's 11th Infantry Brigade.

"Some in Hanoi will say I am a traitor," began Minh. "I have not betrayed the Vietnamese—I am working for their betterment. The Saigon government has promised that they want to improve my country, and I believe them. That is why I have abandoned the ways of the North."

"I did not want to come south," continued Minh. "They sent me anyway. I asked permission to continue at the school and they refused. 'No', they said, I was to be a 'Chien si' (soldier). There was nothing I could do. I would lose face if I ran away."

Following his induction, Minh was sent to an army training camp near Bac Giang, 100 miles north of Hanoi. "I stayed there five months. They said I would be sent to fight in the south. When I returned I would be a hero."

Minh spent 100 days moving down the Ho Chi Minh Trail with the 30th Battalion of the 3rd NVA Division to establish bases of operation in the jungles west of Quang Ngai. One warm afternoon, while Minh was searching for water, he was detained by a patrolling element of the 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry.

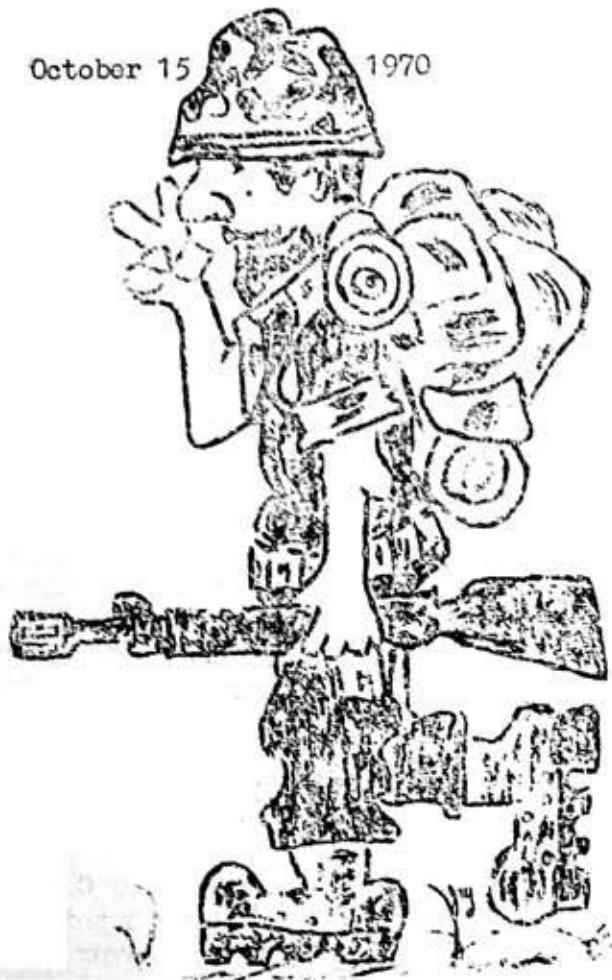
"I gave up the fight for the revolution," continued Minh. "I gave my Chieu Hoi paper (safe conduct pass) to the people at the Chieu Hoi Center in Saigon. They treated me fairly and told me I was not a prisoner; I was a rallier, a Moi Chanh."

Following the customary short period of indoctrination in Saigon, Minh asked to become a Kit Carson Scout. After a four week course at the Kit Carson Scout School in Gru Lai he became a fully accredited Scout and was subsequently assigned to Company A, 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry.

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"Fortunately, they weren't too well organized," continued Sergeant Goblet. "The crouched VC closest to us stood up and began moving our way and we let him come, hoping his friends would follow. When it finally dawned on him what was happening, it was too late. He raised his weapon and pulled the trigger just before we killed him with bursts from our M-16s."

In the ensuing firefight the outnumbered patrol, quickly maneuvering cover of darkness, killed two more VC and scattered the others. A first light sweep of the area uncovered heavy blood trails, several ChiCom hand grenades and one AK-47 rifle with a round jammed in the chamber.



Headquarters and Headquarters Company

Sp4 Ronnie E. Byrant.....6Nov
 Sp4 Stephen W. Darr.....160ct
 SGT Joseph W. Daniels.....1Nov
 Sp4 Kelly C. Drabus.....4Nov
 Sp4 Henry L. Hicks.....15Nov
 CW2 Williard P. Hovis.....12Nov
 Sp5 Robert A. Jenkins.....3Nov
 Sp5 John E. Johnson.....190ct
 Sp4 Jack W. Jowers.....230ct
 Sp4 Louis F. Kidd.....200ct
 Sp4 Ronald C. Miller.....160ct
 Sp4 Albert B. Ramirez.....10Nov
 Sp4 David J. Richter.....12Nov
 1LT John G. Tripp.....150ct
 SGT Michael D. Wagner.....290ct
 SGT Phillip D. Wilson.....210ct

Alpha Company

SGT Thomas Bernhard.....250ct
 FFC Roy Patton.....12Nov
 SGT John R. Reed.....280ct

Bravo Company

Sp4 Mark Burke.....11Nov

Sp4 Geter Perryno.....150ct
 Sp4 John Herek.....11Nov
 Sp4 Kenneth Helms.....190ct
 Sp4 Ellis Joseph.....150ct
 Sp4 Jerome Karpinski.....11Nov
 PFC Marshall Lampley.....11Nov
 SGT Paul Larsen.....5Nov
 Sp4 Julien Mason.....150ct
 SGT Christobal Patron.....10Nov
 Sp4 Lynn Pigg.....10Nov
 Sp4 Anthony Robinson.....10Nov

Charlie Company

Sp4 Gary L. Popp.....10Nov
 Sp4 Thomas B. Pyle.....10Nov

Delta Company

Sp4 Gary D. Clark.....270ct
 SGT John T. Downie.....240ct
 Sp4 Darrel Edwards.....10Nov
 SSG Jimmy A. Holder.....160ct
 Sp4 Lawrence Jozwiak.....10Nov
 SSG James E. Marshall.....300ct
 Sp4 Daniel Rogness.....10Nov
 Sp4 Pasquale Romore.....10Nov
 Sp4 Vincent S. Tapia.....15Nov
 Sp4 Mark A. Vogt.....15Nov

Echo Company

Sp5 Dennis R. Hodges.....8Nov
 SGT Kaminaris Anastasios.....160ct
 SGT John C. Wight.....210ct
 SGT Lonnie J. Liscomb.....1Nov

the GIMLET

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 The GIMLET is published bi-weekly under the supervision of the S1, 4th Battalion 21st Infantry APO San Francisco 96217 as an authorized publication. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of the Department of the Army

Chieu Hoi

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

passive, my heartbeat quickened as it always did when contact with the enemy was close. My finger tightened on the trigger of my weapon as the lead man came into view. As soon as the majority of the patrol was in the killing zone, the sergeant would detonate the claymore mines signalling the rest of us to shoot.

Suddenly, the claymores exploded, men fell, we all began firing. Then, as planned, we pulled back, melting into jungle to plan another raid, attack or ambush on the Americans.

I had been doing this for almost two years when the planes dropped the Chieu Hoi safe conduct passes. I did not believe what I had read. I was tired and scared of the continual fighting and wanted it over. I had feared that the Americans would torture me and make me tell where my comrades were and then kill me.

Then one day as I was helping to collect rice from the villagers, an American patrol surprised us. I dropped my rice and ran to a cave nearby where I hid. Three of my comrades tried to shoot it out with the soldiers and were wounded. From where

I hid trembling, I watched the Americans give first aid to my fallen comrades. They were not beaten up. I was surprised. This is not what the political officer had told us. They were given water and cigarettes by the Americans.

I had kept the Safe Conduct Pass. I realized that this was a chance I might never have again, so I ran out waving the pass in the air, yelling "Chieu Hoi, Chieu Hoi."

The soldiers wheeled around and pointed their weapons directly at me. I feared for my life. I stopped. They then approached slowly and took my weapon and grenades from me.

The soldiers did not tie me or blindfold me. Everybody was so quiet as they led me and my comrades down the trail that I imagined the very worst things I knew now that the only reason they didn't kill me or my wounded comrades in the village or beat them was to impress the villagers and win them over. They would kill us all as soon as we were out of sight of the villagers.

But when we got to their command post, I was turned over

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Chieu Hoi

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to an interrogator who asked me questions about my unit. I answered all the questions as best I could. A few hours later, I was taken to another interrogator where I thought I would be beaten and tortured. But everyone treated me nicely. The questioning was long and thorough.

I was then sent to the Chieu Hoi center. I found several of my old friends there who looked very well-fed and content. I was still apprehensive, afraid I had done the wrong thing. Then, at one of the lectures, I saw one of our officers who had disappeared about a year before. He had been decorated for heroism by the NVA unit with which we served. He was teaching!

I soon settled into the way of life in the center. I listened how the Saigon government wanted to improve my country and wipe out the injustices of the old days. I learned that I was not a prisoner but a rallier, one who had returned to the government.

One day I was asked if I would like to accompany another rallier on a mission into my old area. The old

fears of war returned, but I said yes. I pointed to two caves which had been weapons caches. We found two mortars and several rounds of ammunition. I was then complimented and rewarded and was overjoyed.

I went on several more operations, each time gaining more confidence that the soldiers I accompanied would protect me. Soon, I was given my own weapon. I was a full-fledged Kit Carson Scout. I pointed out Viet Cong in villages and identified Viet Cong bodies after firefights.

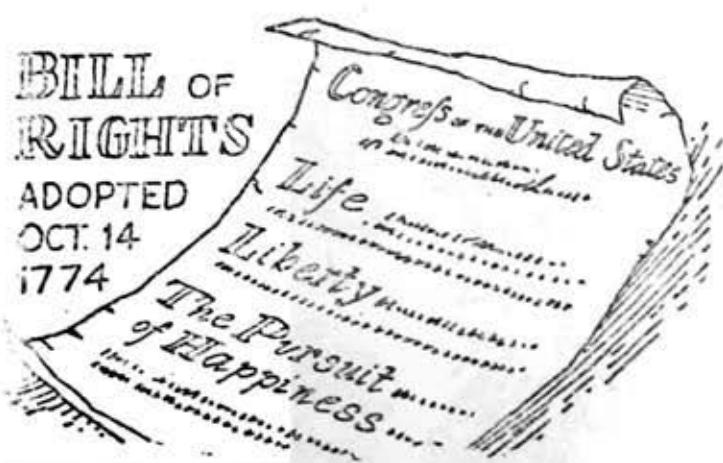
In my first month I was responsible for the detention of 20 Viet Cong. But then I realized that my mission should be to convince my old comrades to give themselves up, that the way preached by the political officers was wrong.

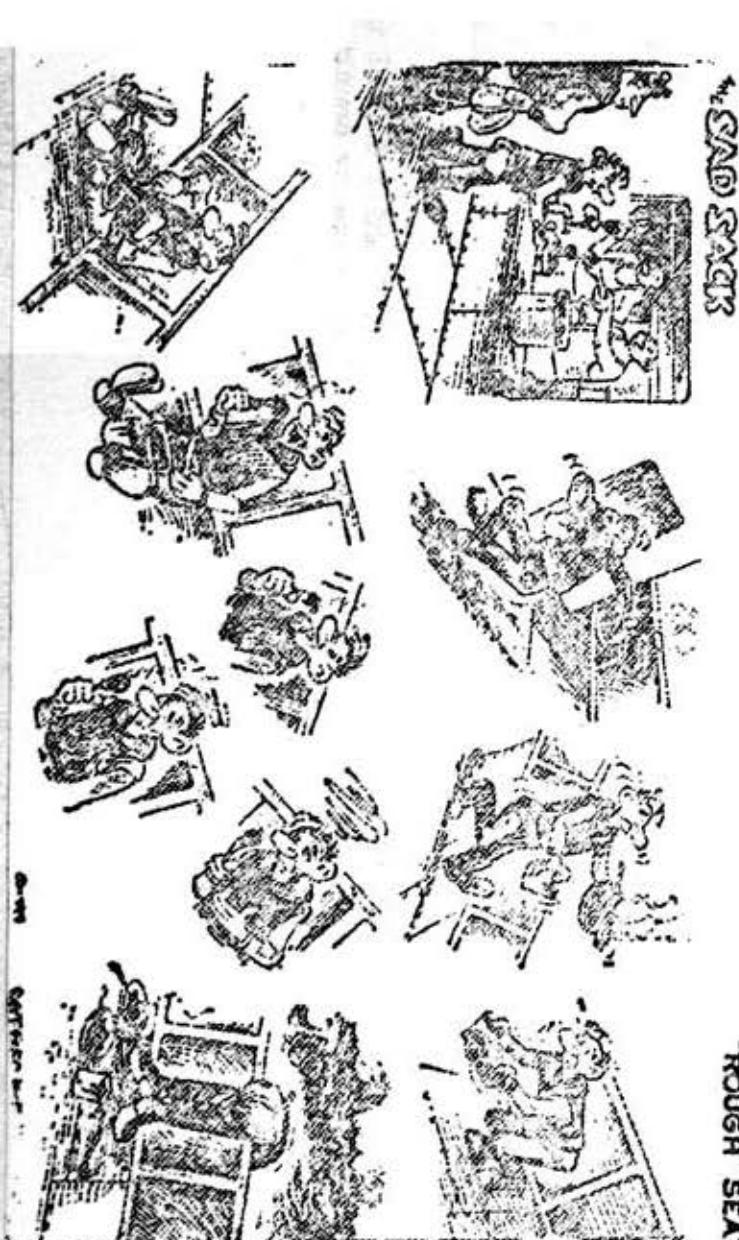
This is what I do now. You can help me. The allies have promised that if a Viet Cong will display a Chieu Hoi safe conduct pass and bring his weapon with him, we will reward him, train him and treat him with respect. Treat him firmly but not brutally.

You must be careful, though. Some friendly forces have been shot when they dropped their caution in going out to meet ralliers. Some ralliers, too, have been shot trying to rally.

I know that it is hard to be restrained in bringing in a rallier right after one of your buddies has been shot. But, more of your friends may be killed or wounded as they try to track down the same Viet Cong had he not rallied to the government.

For myself, I think I will be killed. But maybe I can make my country a place where my family can live without fear.





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