

Alpha 621 Gimlet

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Vol 2, No 1

Alpha Kills Three

Ineffective noise and light discipline on the part of an unknown-size enemy force recently cost three Viet Cong their lives during a pre-dawn, Gimlet cordon and search operation four miles south-west of Duc Pho.

Explained Captain Michael L. Kotula, San Diego, California, the Commanding Officer of Company A, "The mission was to be a rather routine one. We were to cordon a small hamlet and sweep through before dawn, wake the civilians and request identification from each person. All of those individuals without proper IDs were to be considered as possible members of a reported 30-man, VC rice-carrying party."

An indication that the planned cordon and search was to be something more than routine was provided when an advance reconnaissance team, planning the following morning's route of travel, were engaged by a squad of ruck-sack-bearing VC.

"Our Scout, 'Ben', spotted several VC advancing under cover of a herd of water buffalo" recalled Sergeant Paul E. Covington, Jr., SRRP Team Leader from Bennington, Indiana. "After a short fire fight they rushed into the village nearby."

The small element gave chase but, because of gathering darkness, halted at the village entrance and returned to their NDP, SGT Covington added.

"At 3:00 am we marched from our night defensive position to surround the hamlet" continued CPT Kotula. "Just as we reached the first group of hootahos we made contact."

"Ben heard a cough," explained Covington, "and immediately leaped across a rice paddy dike and opened fire on about six of them. His weapon jammed so he started pitching grenades at the shadowed figures in the hedgerow. Then we, too, sprayed the area."

Covington's SRRP Team remained at the point of contact until dawn, during which time they fired upon a light moving in the darkness.

"We had one KIA that we knew of, laying about 20 meters from us," continued Covington, "and we heard someone moaning on the trail for about an hour before it got light."

A first-light sweep of the contact area initially revealed two Viet Cong KIA, one of whom had a flashlight hanging around his neck. Another had a can of still-warm rice and fish and a bag of medical supplies, noted CPT Kotula.

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Scout is Top Soldier

Poor leadership, lack of support from the populace and a succession of aborted offensive operations led to his disillusionment as a VC, explained Pham Van Binh, 19, whose enthusiastic approach to his present duties as a Kit Carson Scout for the Gimlets has won him the Bronze Stars for Achievement and Valor.

As a fledgling member of a VC sapper company, Binh says he could find little to motivate him so he rejected the life of his comrades and chose the course of action which led to a change of uniform.

"He has been with us for ten months now, and has shown himself to be a no-nonsense guy," offered Sergeant Paul E. Covington, Bennington, Indiana, SRRP team leader for A Company. "Half of the enemy contact our team has made in the past few months was initiated by Binh."

"No one has to tell him what to do," added Sergeant John F. Reilly, Coatesville, Pennsylvania. "He's been around a lot longer than most of us and, more often than not, we simply follow his lead when he thinks he's on to something—which he is most of the time."

Outlining Binh's achievements during the past year, SGT Keith Harwell, Memphis Tennessee, pointed to his discovery of several rice and ammunition caches and his unique ability to find the enemy. "He's ruined a lot of enemy ambushes—he has a 'nose' for them."

Binh's insistence on always walking point has endeared him to all the men in the company, noted Covington.

"One day he was leading us through a village when he heard voices," Covington recalled.

"'Beaucoup VC' were making plans, he said. He took off by himself through the hedgerows, leaving the rest of us just standing there. Very shortly, we heard shouting followed by two explosions. We got there in time to see Binh pulling rucksacks and the second of two dead VC from a bunker."

Enemy Loss Status

8 July-1 December

VC/NVA Killed in Action.....60

VC/NVA Killed in Ambush.....3

Weapons Confiscated.....19

Rice (pounds) Confiscated..108,709

Salt (pounds) Confiscated....542

GRANT OF THE WEEK

Make Monday pill day



Headquatters and Headquarters Company

SFC Dargelo Caballero.....12Jan
 Sp4 Danny D. Tongate.....7Jan
 Sp4 Dale L. Wenz.....10Jan

Alpha Company

SGT Ronald Chant.....10Jan
 Sp4 Dermis DeGroot.....8Jan
 PFC Emanuel Kinsey.....11Jan
 Sp4 Monroe Lawrence.....11Jan
 Sp4 Daniel Neimond.....11Jan
 Sp4 Wayne Ridge.....10Jan
 Sp4 Haze Watters.....7Jan

Bravo Company

Sp4 Sam Erickson.....7Jan
 Sp4 Samuel Moss.....14Jan
 Sp4 Thomas Nail.....7Jan
 Sp4 Victor Peluso.....8Jan
 Sp4 Kinsey Toliver.....9Jan

Charlie Company

Sp4 James F. Kendrick.....10Jan
 PFC Arnulfo R. Romero.....8Jan
 Sp4 Milton G. Schwarzentraub.....7Jan
 PFC Danny L. Tabor.....11Jan
 Sp4 Arthur Stephens Jr.....7Jan
 PFC Edward G. Vander Ham.....12Jan
 Sp4 Larry R. Ziehl.....11Jan

Delta Company

Sp4 George D. Fairmon.....7Jan
 Sp4 David Strouse.....7Jan

Echo Company

Sp4 David E. Bunch.....7Jan
 SGT Odelle Means.....2Jan

Echo Company--continued

SSG James H. Smith.....7Jan



ITC Robert A. Witter.....Bn Commandr

LIT Billy J. Orr.....S1 Officer

Sp4 Joseph F. Alward.....Editor

PFC Gene Colling.....Co-Editor

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"That same individual had a half-dozen 'Tam Kuts' (ID cards), one of which had been taken from a five-year old girl who later came to us with her mother to claim it," Offered Sergeant John F. Reilly, 2nd Platoon squad leader from Coatesville Pennsylvania.

A third Viet Cong KIA was subsequently discovered laying under his ruck in knee-deep rice paddy water.

LTG Raps Cluster--- Photo

Failures in infantry discipline and standards are causing unnecessary casualties, a top combat zone commander says.

Lt. Gen. A.S. Collins Jr., I Field Force commander, says "we got far more (casualties) than we ought because we don't make our men do the basic things they should.

"Discipline and standards have been eroded. We better start raising them." Collins' comments come in a letter to Infantry magazine objecting to publication of a picture, which, he said, showed an infantry squad doing all the things it should not do."

Collins criticized the bunched up squad. "One grenade, one mortar round might kill all of them or certainly kill a couple and wound all the others," he said. "Why are four men without shirts when they are fighting?..."

"Why are two men without a helmet on? How about those M-79 rounds and the magazines on the ground, the ammunition belts in the dirt?

"Who is looking out for the enemy?"

The former 4th Inf Div commander added: "What sort of leadership accepts this kind of performance and does nothing about it. Is there any in that squad? Or platoon? Or company?

"Now the tragic thing is that this is not an isolated instance. Just take a look at many of the pictures that we put up in the halls of the Pentagon, that you have around the Infantry School, showing men in the grim combat situation and note how often they are huddled together as in this case.

"That's why we get so many casualties." (courtesy of THE ARMY TIMES)



Son Takes Motherly Advice

A mother concerned for her son's safety led an E Company reconnaissance team to a tunnel where he and four VC cohorts were hiding.

Working in coordination with a Provincial Recon Unit south-east of Duc Pho, the "Gimlets" were led by the VC's mother to the tunnel entrance concealed inside a hootch.

"We blew open the tunnel entrance and started digging," said recon platoon leader First Lieutenant Peter L. Barili, Salisbury, New Hampshire. "We dug until we came to a culvert which slightly overlapped with another, leaving a small gap. The mother begged to go down to talk with her son."

The anxious mother hurriedly crawled to the gap in the tunnel, Barili added, and called to her son, urging him to come out. After arguing with him for several minutes, the woman returned, followed by an obedient son and two companions.

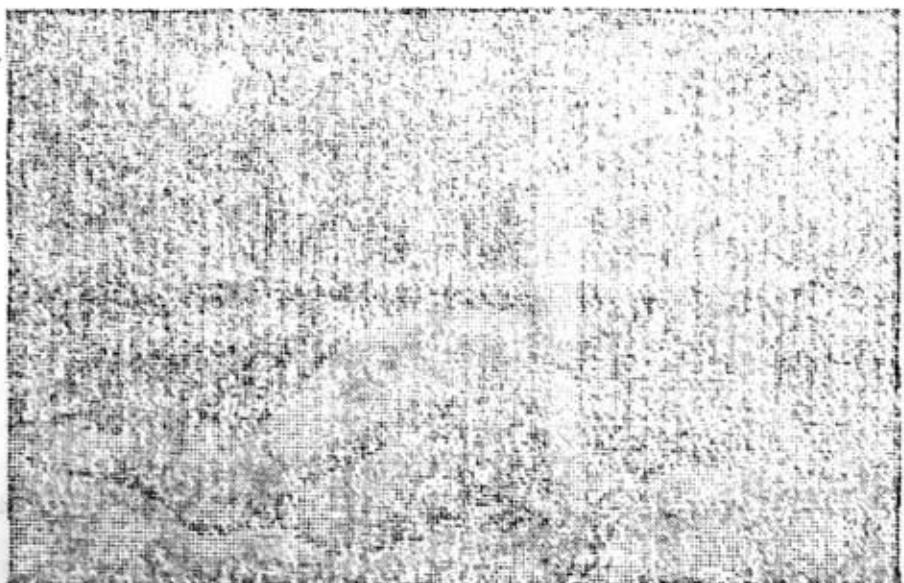
"His friends told us that no one else was in the tunnel," continued Barili, "but when we started to crawl in to check it out anyway, we heard voices."

The remaining VC were again urged to come out, but no reply came from the tunnel. A claymore was then set off and two VC soon scampered through the entrance.

Still uncertain if anyone remained in the tunnel, Barili asked for a volunteer to go in and check it out. Private First Class Bill Mattson, Iron Belt, Wisconsin, stepped forward.

Armed with a flashlight and a .45 pistol, Mattson edged his way into the cavern, and carefully searched the length of the thirty-foot tunnel. He crawled out, carrying an assortment of clothes.

The tunnel was subsequently blown and later investigation revealed that one of the three detainees was a security chief of the local Viet Cong Infrastructure.



THERE'S SOMETHING MOVING IN THE HEDGE

by SGT JAMES WEITHA

Again tonight we wait in horror,
 Wondering if the dark brings sorrow-
 Sitting out the lonely hours,
 Getting wet by sudden showers-
 Minds in turmoil, nerves on edge,
 There's something moving in the hedge....

A flare goes off, it lights the sky,
 Who ever did it's gonna die!
 Rifles fire, grenades are thrown-
 Mortars popped and claymores blown-
 Minds in turmoil, nerves on edge-
 There's something moving in the hedge

Rifles cocked, rounds are chambered,
 Whatever's moving lives in danger.
 It's quiet again, we'll wait somenore,
 The time will come to make our score;
 Minds in turmoil nerves on edge,
 There's something moving in the hedge....

Seventy-nines and one-five-five
 Kills every enemy alive;
 Rifles fire, grenades are thrown,
 Mortars popped, claymores blown-
 Minds in turmoil, nerves on edge,
 There's NOTHING moving in the hedge!

THE GIMLET welcomes literary offerings from the field (from REMFs, too)-poems, short stories, cartoons...whatever you have, for publication. Contributions may be mailed to The Gimlet, 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry, AF0 SF 96217.

Home Leave

The U.S. Military Assistance Command Vietnam has announced that servicemen who have served four months in RVN but not more than eight are eligible for a 14 -- day leave. A soldier requesting the leave must have already bought--at his own expense a return trip ticket before beginning his leave. He must also receive the approval of his unit commander.

The current Department of Defense leave policy which permits servicemen to take leave in RVN, other Asian countries and Hawaii remains intact.

If the request for leave is approved, the following items must be in the soldier's possession for flight check-in:

- a. Valid passport and/or visa, if required for leave site
- b. Up-to-date immunization certificate (DD Form757)
- c. Appropriate leave orders issued by competent authority
- d. Identification Tags (Dog Tags)
- e. Identification Card (DD Form21)
- f. Ration Card (MACV Form333)

(Courtesy of US Army Command Information)

Don't Drink the Water



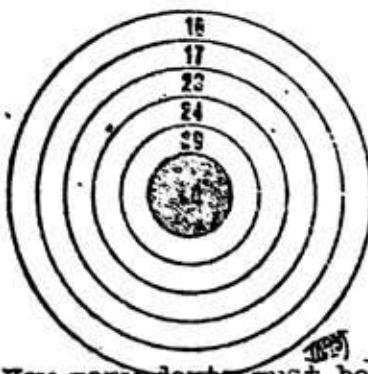
Water in Vietnam can often be more dangerous to you than the enemy. Never drink water unless you know for certain that it is potable. Most of the water in Vietnam comes from surface sources, wells, or municipal systems. These sources offer varying degrees of water quality, but nearly all are contaminated or open to contamination.

Don't assume that water is safe to drink because you see the local people drinking it. They may have built up an immunity to the impurities in the water over a long period of time.

A large number of illnesses can result from drinking impure water. Among these are typhoid fever, paratyphoid fever, cholera, bacillary dysentery, amoebic dysentery, common diarrhea, infectious hepatitis, and all kinds of bad things. Any of these diseases can make you very sick.

Water is either purified by chemical treatment or by boiling it. Freezing water will do nothing to purify the water. If you are in the field and can't get any potable water, use iodine pills to purify the water—one tablet per canteen of clear water, two tablets per canteen of cloudy water.

Water-borne disease rarely produces symptoms in its victim immediately after he has drunk the contaminated water. A certain period of time has to pass before the victim is stricken by the disease. During this period, known as the incubation period, the disease organisms grow and reproduce within your body. Therefore, the absence of any symptoms of illness for the first few days after drinking impure water does not mean the water was safe for you to drink.



How many darts must be thrown to score 100 points?

