



VOLUME IV NUMBER 23

DUC PHO, VIETNAM

22 JUNE 1970

ALERT POINT SAVES SQUAD

FSB DEBBIE--Booby traps are an extreme hazard to the infantrymen of the AMERICAL Division. Three months ago the 11th Brigade's 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry initiated a training program to alert its men to the types of booby traps used in their area and how to detect them. One 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry soldier recently proved that he had learned the lesson well when his alertness saved the lives of several members of his squad.

Specialist Four James Gottlob (Big Timber, Mont.) was walking point on a patrol just south of Duc Pho. "I was leading my squad up a small hill when I felt a trip wire pressing on my ankle, and then I noticed a large artillery round hidden in a bush," stated Gottlob. "My first thought was to warn the guys about what I found and get the hell away from there," he continued.

"I told him to freeze," said Second Lieutenant Herbert Boutwell (Pensacola, Fla.), "and Sergeant Timothy O'Donnel (Reading, Pa.) and I carefully moved around to the side of the bush to examine the device."

When the rest of the squad was safely out of danger, Gottlob carefully retreated and the round was blown in place.

Specialist Four Abid Quinones (Lares, P.R.), who was walking directly behind Gottlob, summed up the incident, "Jim turned a near disaster into a close call."

1-20 FINDS HUGE RICE CACHE

FSB LIZ--Operating under frequent harassment from VC snipers, a company of AMERICAL Division soldiers recently uncovered one of the largest enemy rice caches ever found in the I Corps Tactical Zone. The men of Company C, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, 11th Brigade conducted an intensive, nine-day search operation that produced 97,500 pounds of enemy rice along the "Gaza Strip" coastline, ten miles north of Duc Pho.

Initially, Company C had been "combat assaulted" two miles east of the village of Mo Duc, on information that a large unit of VC was operating in the area. Engineers from the 26th Engineering Battalion had reported several instances of enemy sniper fire and mortar fire as well as a number of booby traps.

SHARKS-ARVN

STOP NVA

FSB BRONCO---A recent enemy drive against Nghia Hanh, Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) Camp, has cost the NVA 135 dead, the emplacement, five miles southwest of Quang Ngai City, was the object of a regimental-size offensive which, if successful, would have left Quang Ngai City open to attack. The enemy move was to coincide with a similar attack upon Hiep Duc to the north.

The AMERICAL Division's 174th and 176th Aviation companies (Assault Helicopter) and the 4th ARVN Regiment combined to stop the NVA and dictate a bloody retreat back into the mountains.

Prior knowledge of the (SHARKS CONTD ON PAGE 4)

Company C swept through the flat, open rice paddies, interspersed with hedgerows, mangrove swamp, and small, oasis-type hamlets. A short range, patrol from the mortar platoon was sent out to check one of these hamlets.

A routine search failed to yield any significant results until Sergeants James E. Balcarczyk (Lackawanna, N.Y.) and Alan P. Denucci (North St. Paul, Minn.) entered an old church, fallen into disuse. Once inside, the two men discovered rice hidden in coffin-like boxes. Intensifying their search, they came up with almost two and a half tons of the enemy food staple and sparked a company-size search operation that was to last for the next nine (SEARCH CONTINUED ON PG 3)

A KEY TO UNDERSTANDING

Packing up after a MEDCAP a Marine mutters to a corpsman, "Look some of those people are selling the soap you gave them to that store over there!"

Down the road a Marine guarding a bridge points to a small boy squatting on his hunches and says to his friend "Look at that stupid kid! Don't any of them care where they go to the bathroom?"

Still further down the road a family of Vietnamese have finished their work of transplanting rice in their paddy. They are climbing up the bank of the road on their way home. Their arms and legs are covered with grey slime that rapidly dries and cakes on their bodies. A Marine sees them, points at them, and laughs to his buddy.

You would think that any mature adult could figure out that to bathe you need lots of fresh water. For grown-ups to wash their clothes, they must have another set of clothes to wear while they wash the first set. Many farmers here can afford only one set of clothes a year.

In many parts of I Corps, especially along the coast, there just isn't much fresh water. Many of the wells have barely enough water for drinking. And over the years people have learned that it is best not to bathe in some rivers because of leaches or parasites that attach themselves to human bodies.

And, whenever you see people selling soap, you can figure one or all of three things: 1. They don't have enough water to use it; 2. They need something else more and are exchanging the soap for it or; 3. They don't yet know the value of using soap over an extended period of time.

What about the business of defecating on the

ground? It has been pointed out that human waste here is used as fertilizer. Fertilizer makes up to 30% difference on the rice crop. It's like money. Commercial fertilizer costs VN\$495 and up to cover a two-acre plot (several day's wages). Because human waste is like money many people like to keep it on top of the ground in a box or a compost heap where they can see it. (We sometimes take our wallets out just to look at our money, too.)

So before we condemn anyone for being dirty, we need to ask why are people dirty. There are usually good reasons just as there are with troops coming out of the field.

When we ask some of our friends who grew up in so-called "economically deprived areas" how things were there, we learn that there are still places in the United States where people bathe once a week in a wash tub, where people spit on the ground and where there are no screens or insecticide to take care of the flies.

Sometimes back home

we run into people who have lost all hope of bettering themselves. They tend to be dirty and careless. That's just the point. They have been kicked around so much they don't care anymore. Sometimes we will run into this kind of people in Vietnam.

But bet on this. Most people like to be clean. Look how white many women keep their ao dai (dresses), how white the men keep their formal dress. Their bodies are just like ours. It is refreshing to feel clean, especially on a hot, muggy day. But as we look around we can spot many good reasons why it is hard, even for soldiers to stay clean. Out in the field few men will want to bathe in the cold, winter months. When there is only enough water for drinking during the dry season everyone would like to bathe but can't.

It takes money to buy soap and toilets. It takes fresh, leach-free water and a halfway pleasant climate to take a bath. (Reprint-PERSONAL RESPONSE Viewpoint, V-8.)

TRIDENT

Brigade Commander
Information Officer
Editor
Senior Correspondent
Illustrator
Staff Reporters

COL M.B. Barlow
CPT Terry N. Thrasher
SP4 Gregory Wright
SP4 Peter R. Sorensen
SP4 John Wrigat
SP4 Toby Prodggers
SP4 Ron Adams

The TRIDENT is published weekly under the supervision of the 11th Infantry Brigade IO, APO SF 95217 as an authorized publication. Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of the Department of the Army.

Chaplain's Corner

By Chaplain (CPT) George K. Norton

When Lincoln reprieved William Scott, condemned to be shot for sleeping at his post, he said to him: "I am going to trust you, and send you back to your regiment. My bill for this is a very large one. I have left my work, and have come up here from Washington on your account. There is only one man in the world who can pay the bill, and his name is William Scott. If from this day William Scott does his duty so that if I were there when he comes to die, he could look me in the face as he does now, and say, 'I have kept my promise, and have done my duty as a soldier,' then the debt will be paid. Will you make that promise, and try to keep it?"

The promise was made and kept. The 'soldier' lived a life of courageous helpfulness, and died while rescuing wounded men. Every one of us who have accepted into our lives God's purpose for Christ upon the cross have experienced a similar situation and are pledged to the Master for life. To call ourselves soldiers in the service of our country is not enough unless we are willing to accept the discipline and rigors imposed in peace and war. The same applies when we enlist in the Christian Army. It is not enough to simply call ourselves Christians, but others must see the presence of the Almighty in the way we carry out the pledges made in our hearts when we first made Him Master and Savior in our lives. "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Matt. 25:40

(SEARCH CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

days. Searching all four small hamlets, the company found hidden caches in virtually every hut.

"At first we found simple caches hidden under woodpiles, haystacks, and in bunkers. As time went on, though, we found them buried in gardens with fertilizer spread over the rice. It'd be in the pig pens, too, under the mud, straw, and dirt. Ninety per cent of it was in plastic bags," explained Staff Sergeant John G. Moore (Oxford, Ala.).

In one instance, a man put a stick through the floor of one of the hooches and exposed a subfloor full of rice. Up to two layers of caches were found in some of the hooches.

The night of the first find, the third platoon was setting up outside one of the hamlets for security, when Specialist Four James M. McCord (Holly Hill, Fla.) hit a 300-pound cache while digging out a foxhole.

Later, First Lieutenant John P. Grice (Jackson, Miss.), the mortar platoon leader struck a 1,300-pound cache when he stepped outside to dig a field latrine.

During the entire operation enemy harassment was frequent and often intense. Sniper fire came principally from the mangrove swamps in the area and suspected enemy basecamps were located by patrolling in three of the outlying swamps.

Much of the rice was reserved for distribution to civilians in the area and the rest was sent to Mo Duc for wider distribution throughout Quang Ngai Province.

SP/4 James W. Yates
HHC 4/3, GIRL, 7 lbs.
5 ozs. June 3, 1970.

SP/4 Larry Woo, 62nd Sig.
Bn., BOY, 8 lbs., June 4,
1970.

SSG Robert E. Hensley
BOY, 7 lbs. 7 ozs.
June 3, 1970

Sgt. Robert Harvey
Co. E, 4/3, GIRL, 7
lbs. 8 ozs., June 6, 1970.

Sgt. James Sproles
Co. E, 4/21, BOY, 8
lbs. 9 ozs., June 6, 1970.

SP/4 Tommie Collins
HHC 4/3, BOY, 9
lbs. 4 ozs., June 8, 1970.

Staff Sgt. Fred Laning, Jr.
Co. A 3/1,
GIRL, 7 lbs. 11 ozs., June
9, 1970.

Sgt. Clifford M. Sprouse
HHC, 11th Bde
GIRL, 6 lbs. 4 ozs., June
11, 1970.



ANF

VIETNAM SERVICE MEDAL

(SHARKS CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

enemy's intentions, through military intelligence, could do little to stem the fury and force of the mortar and ground attacks. "When we got on station it was hard to tell who was in possession of Nghia Hanh. Soldiers of the 4th ARVN Regiment, who were air-lifted in earlier, were in heavy contact," stated Warrant Officer Jarvis D. Gambrell (Port Arthur, Tex.) of the 174th Avn. Co.

Said First Lieutenant Joseph R. Brandt (Newton, Iowa) also of the 174th Avn. Co., "We came under heavy enemy ground fire...three or four .51 caliber machine-guns and some .30 calibers. The NVA were well-equipped. Our ships had to rearm at least four times during the day."

Heavy ground fighting by the 4th ARVN Regiment and inspired flying by the gunships, neutralized the enemy action against Nghia Hanh. The NVA were forced to assume a defensive stance. NVA elements attempted to flee south to their sanctuary in the Song Ve River Valley; they were fixed and destroyed by gunships and reaction forces of ARVN infantrymen delivered by "Dolphin" utility ships of the 174th.

The "coup de grace" was dealt the enemy offensive on the western ridge of the Song Ve River Valley corridor. Second Lieutenant John I. O'Sullivan (Brooklyn, N.Y.), 174th gunship pilot, described the action: "The gunship pilots are familiar with the western and eastern mountain chains which rise up from the Song Ve. A 'Shark' gunship passed over the western ridge and noticed that it wasn't as bald or as open as usual. From the base at the southern side-to the top-to the base at the northern side was a row of bushes that wasn't there normally. A second pass of the area revealed an AK-47 attached to one of the 'limbs'. What the pilot identified was a camouflaged, 800 meter, relief column of enemy soldiers headed for Nghia Hanh."

Major Fredrick G. Blackburn (Kansas City, Mo.), commander of the 174th Avn. Co., flying the Air Mission Control ship cleared the grid and turned the gunships loose on the trail. Lieutenant Colonel Le Ba Khieu, commander of the 4th ARVN Regiment, realizing the enemy situation organized a reaction force which was combat assaulted at last light right on top of the now smoldering trail.

Commented Mr. Gambrell, "The 4th ARVN Regiment is an outstanding unit. We like working for them, because we know they are husting for us. They got in there and were all over the NVA."

On the command level, Major Blackburn had these words of praise, "The cooperation between the 4th ARVN Regiment and the 174th has always been excellent. Colonel Khieu is an outstanding military leader. During this operation he was highly flexible in his decisions which were calculated a step ahead of the enemy situation."

The South Vietnamese element while sweeping the battlefield credited the 174th with the destruction of a command post. The 4th ARVN Regiment has confirmed that 135 NVA died in their attempt to raze Nghia Hanh. Seventeen kills were credited to the 176th Avn. Co. and 38 to the "Shark" gunships of the 174th Avn. Co.

A grim postscript to the action occurred a day and a half later when an American force in the Song Ve River Valley detained an NVA who identified himself as a regimental cook. He reported that he was ordered to wait in the valley for the element's return from the Nghia Hanh mission--thus far, no one had returned.

WRAP-UP

the 174th Avn. Co. killed one VC in the lowlands 26 miles northwest of Duc Pho. 12 June: S-2 4/21 killed one VC adjacent to the S. China Sea, eight miles south of Duc Pho. A 4/3 engaged and killed one VC in the mountains 10 miles SW of Duc Pho, and D 1/20 accounted for one VC killed in the lowlands 15 miles north.

16 June: B 3/1 engaged five VC killing three and confiscating one carbine in action on the banks of the Song Tra Khuc River 25 miles NW of Duc Pho. The "Warlords" of the 123d Avn. Bn. accounted for four NVA killed and two SAS's confiscated on the Song Tra Khuc River 25 mi. NW of Duc Pho. Recon 4/21 accounted for 2 NVA killed in the mountains 6 miles southwest of Duc Pho. Working in the mountains 10 miles northwest of Duc Pho. Co. C, 1/20 killed one NVA and discovered two VC bodies which were credited to Co. A, 1/20 who had engaged 4 VC in the area a month earlier.

17 June: Company B 4/21 engaged two NVA, killing one and confiscating one pistol in the lowlands 12 miles north of Duc Pho.

18 June: Company B, 1/20 killed one VC in the lowlands four miles north of Duc Pho. In the action 22,500 piasters were confiscated.

19 June: Company A, 4/3 accounted for six enemy killed while working in the mountains eight miles southwest of Duc Pho. Two AK-47's, one SAS, one 9mm pistol, and two grenades were confiscated in the action. Helix 35 killed two VC in the mountains west of Duc Pho. Co. C 4/3 killed one VC and confiscated two grenades in the lowlands 24 miles northwest.