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BRAVO OP CON TO 1-52

ALPHA COMPANY FINDS FOOD CACHE

Bravo Company was under the operational control of the 1-52, 198th Brigade, from May 1, to May 9. The company was first lifted from the field near LZ San Juan Hill and sent to LZ Tra Bong, a Special Forces Camp, 19 miles northwest of Quang Ngai City.

Upon arrival at Tra Bong, the original plan to search bomb craters was scrapped. Instead the company was conveyed by the Special Forces along a road which runs parallel to the Suoi Tra Co River. The company then moved southward and met Alpha Company, 1-52.

During the week of the operation, Bravo was in thick, mountainous terrain most of the time. They were able to follow several enemy trails and mountain streams. Large drop offs and waterfalls however, necessitated cutting circuitous routes through thick brush.

Contact was light. Occasional sniper fire was directed for the most part to units of the 1-52.

In summation, it was an arduous week for the troops of Bravo Company. One squad leader commented, "Now I have learned to appreciate the 11th Brigade more."

The biggest action of the week centered on Alpha Company's discovery of a large food cache on May 11.

The entire cache was contained within a large wooden cubical structure, similar to a conox. An itemization of the contents revealed: 604 2.2 lbs of salt, 670 5 oz cans of mackerel, 126 15 oz cans of mackerel, 568 1 lb, 13 oz cans of ham, 29 15 oz cans of sardines, and 61 12 oz cans of Oscar Meyer luncheon meat. The platoon also found numerous steel pans and pots a short distance from the cache.

The company, led by Cpt A. Carnes, was working near the Song Vo River northwest of LZ San Juan Hill, and had set up a patrol base for the day's operations. 1Lt Mark Richards, led his first platoon on a short patrol, following a trail which they had discovered shortly after moving out. The trail led them to several bunkers and fighting positions. Members of the platoon were investigating a nearby hootch when they found the food cache in an excavation beneath the floor.

The cache was lifted by a CH-47 helicopter to LZ San Juan Hill after the company spent several hours counting the items and cutting an LZ for the helicopter.

Alpha Company's second platoon sprung their ambush on three VC on the night of May 1. Members of the platoon detected the VC by a flashlight with a red filtered beam (cont pg 2)

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which one of the VC was carrying. A search of the area the following morning revealed three different sets of footprints. It was surmised that the platoon had upset enemy plans for an ambush.

At Alpha's night defensive position on the evening of May 3, an NVA soldier was seen outside the perimeter walking in a westerly direction. Effective machine gun fire was placed upon the NVA. The dead soldier had an AK47 rifle, a pack, 40 lbs of rice, and NVA officer belt, a pistol belt, and a canteen.

During a patrol on May 5, the company found a young VC who had been killed by small arms fire. A US M1 carbine, a pair of binoculars manufactured in Canada, a pistol belt, and a canteen cover were near the body.

On May 1, Alpha's second platoon fired on five VC evading. The platoon killed two of the VC, both wearing packs.

On May 8, the company found a 60mm mortar round, a 60mm mortar shell, two chi com grenades, and medical supplies, including bandages, tape, malaria pills, and antiseptics. Other items found were two 50 foot electrical wires, 75 picks, 15 sand bags of rice, 50 punji stakes, an army blanket and an NVA pack.

Alpha's third platoon on May 9, placed small arms fire on an NVA (con pg 4)

THE TWO POEMS BELOW WERE COMPOSED BY A MEMBER OF THE BATTALION WHO PREFERS TO REMAIN ANONYMOUS.

Morning fog runs to the valley,
Hiding as the sun approaches.

Crimson and gold line the east,
Though the moon, A silver bearing,
Lies still on velvet overhead.

Lightning bands of scarlet dome
The sky.

Another day of Death begins with
Beauty.

Death and I are not exactly friends.

I know too well the people who
Have made him what he is.

As I said, We're not exactly friends.

Yet, Death pursues my acquaintance,
Often forcing his presence on me,
Much against my own strong voiced wishes.

I have received many invitations to
Stay with him a while - Indefinitely,
Perhaps forever -

Hacked into the chest of a comrad,
Or written on the face of one I saw,
I have always declined.

One day I will grant what he desires,
But not now.

SP4 FITZGERALD KILLS NVA OFFICER

Sp4 Dan Fitzgerald of first platoon Alpha Company, killed an NVA soldier recently - in all probability a battalion commanding officer.

While sweeping in squad sized elements around an NVA base camp, Sp4 Fitzgerald suddenly sighted an NVA soldier. He fired several rounds at him. A tracker dog team from division assisted in a search of the area. The only thing found was an NVA officer belt.

The following day, however, the platoon found the dead officer in a fresh grave, 50 meters from where he had been shot. Garments and wrappings around the body indicated that he was a high ranking officer.

Following this, the NVA captured by Alpha Company on April 27, related that his battalion commander and two company commanders had all been killed recently by a US unit at the same locale, indicating the NVA base camp where Alpha Company had been operating.

CHIEU HOI TO ALPHA

An NVA soldier became a Chieu Hoi on May 12, surrendering to Alpha Company at their patrol base on top of a hill. The NVA, a quartermaster platoon sergeant, walked up the hill with his hands in the air. He carried a pack but no weapon.

Upon questioning, the NVA sergeant stated that he was thirty-nine years old, and had been in the army nine months. On that day he had become separated from his unit, numbering approximately 60 men. It was this situation together with lack of food and a low morale, that made him decide to become a Chieu Hoi.

The NVA also stated that his unit had been on a nearby hill and had seen Alpha Company from there.

ENEMY SPRING OFFENSIVE BEGINS

At 2:00 am on May 12, the enemy's spring offensive began with a deluge of rockets, mortars, and recoilless rifle rounds on LZ Bronco. The 4-3 received two direct hits, one on Alpha Company's supply annex, and one through the east wall of bunker 37. No casualties resulted except for one person with a minor frag wound.

A mortar attack on LZ San Juan Hill proved futile. Almost all rounds hit a substantial distance from the perimeter wire.

As a direct result of the attack, the battalion rear area launched a crash program of bunker construction. Several living quarters and orderly rooms now have individual personnel

bunkers, some with the entrance from the inside of the building.

Battalion commo is putting the finishing touches on their bunker, a corner completely below ground. Its construction involved a great deal of digging, and chiseling of stone.

Local Vietnamese, with their continuing desire to fulfill every combat soldier's need, are filling sandbags for a penny a bag.

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wearing green fatigues and a pack. An investigation of the dead NVA's gear showed medical supplies, clothes, a block of explosive, and a wallet containing documents.

The first platoon of Alpha Company explored a small NVA base camp the same day. Within the camp they found two dead NVA soldiers still in uniform. It was estimated that they had been killed three or four weeks earlier.

In all, the company killed four enemy soldiers and captured two weapons during the past week.



Old Guard

LTC Jack G. Davis;	CO
1Lt Thomas J. Klein;	S1
Spl Edward Burcholl;	Reporter

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AROUND THE BATTALION

Delta Company was the first company in the battalion to enjoy a stand-down at the new 11th Brigade Stand-Down Area in Chu Lai. Accommodations were good. It had been a long time since anyone had slept in a bed or had a shower readily available to him.

Stand-down entertainment featured The Ambassadors, a Filipino group. Other shows were seen at the nearby Eli Club and at the USO.

Col Jack L. Treadwell, the 11th Brigade Commander, visited the company during the stand-down. While talking to a large group at the Eli Club, he recognized SSG Anthony (The Professional) Speciale, who served with him in Italy nineteen years ago. At that time Col Treadwell was a Cpt, and SSG Speciale was a PFC.

Spl Wilfredo Andrade, PFC Nicholas Ahyo, PFC Danny Kayano, and PFC William Keanui, recently joined Alpha Company. Prior to their arrival to the Old Guard, the four Hawaiians were with the 29th Infantry Brigade, a National Reserve unit. The unit was fully activated on May 13, 1968, and trained for nearly a year at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii, the former home of the 11th Brigade.

The Greatest Show on Bronco! Suddenly heads rear upward in amazement -- Helix again. It's becoming a daily occurrence to see Forward Air Control, Helix, perform a series of aerial stunts around LZ Bronco. His constantly varying program include backward flips, straight downward dives, upside down flight, and rapid sequences of sharp turns.
