



OLD GUARD

4th BATTALION 3rd INFANTRY



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November 27, 1969

ALPHA COMPANY SNARES FOUR NVA

BATTALION SUMMARY

The 1st Platoon was on point the day Alpha Company collared four NVA. The action unfolded on the morning of November 11 to the southeast of San Juan Hill.

The Company was marching through the valley below the Hill when SP4 Mike Shields, the pointman, spotted a lone NVA trudging toward him on the same trail. The NVA was unarmed and loaded to the gills with rice for his comrades. SP4 Shields stepped in to effect an embargo on the delivery of the rice and the comrade. He yelled "Dung Lai" (Stop) to the NVA. The alarmed soldier obeyed and halted in his tracks. SP4 Shields barked the second command: "La Dei". The NVA began to inch forward like a reluctant and bewildered inductee. Soon he was close enough for the snatch.

The pointman and three others grabbed the enemy soldier and pulled him aside. Pfc Ed Haynes (Atlanta Ga.), Pfc Maurice Harvill (Boise, Idaho), and Pfc Henry Jeffcoats (Forest, Miss.) questioned the captive about the presence of any others in the area. The NVA put up ten fingers and the four men again hid themselves along the trail.

Five minutes passed and another NVA burdened with rice came bopping down the trail. They grabbed him too. This time the men were galvanized into action and decided to set up an ambush. Twenty minutes slid by and five NVA came strutting down the very same trail as if on a Sunday stroll. The first and last were armed with AK-47s; the remainder carried rice. Three of the unsuspecting NVA were inside the ambush when the leader of the pack spotted SP4 Shields. The leader pushed the others back and they all started to scam- (cont. on page 4, col. 1)

November 14

Bravo Company was involved in the only action to develop on this day. The Company, while on an operation ten clicks north of San Juan Hill, observed five NVA/VC enter a hut, one of 17-18 in the area. Artillery was brought to bear on the huts followed by a 1st Platoon reconnaissance patrol. Several hours later Bravo Company captured seven VC suspects. Five NVA canteens, penicillin tablets and three pounds of powdered CS were found in the huts.

November 15

The following day, Bravo Company received sniper fire while crossing a river. Artillery was requested. At 1700 hours, a utility chopper supplying the Company took enemy fire. Later on that night, one of the Company's trip flares went off and movement was detected. M60s and hand frags answered the call. Results were unknown.

November 17

Bravo Company, located in a valley seven clicks north of San Juan Hill, uncovered two lethal booby traps in an old NDP site. One of the booby traps was set up in the mortar pit, the other in a foxhole.

November 18

Alpha Company tallied four NVA kills on this day in separate incidents. The first three NVA were netted at 1045 hours in a stay-behind ambush at the Company's NDP site used the night before. A few hours later, the Company netted the fourth one and also captured an AK-47. (continued on page 4, column 2)

RECON GOES TO SCHOOL

The 4-3 AO is a nasty one, encompassing fertile valleys, rolling foothills and towering mountains in its wide girth. In such a battleground, reconnaissance skill plays an indispensable role in seeking out an enemy despised for his elusiveness and feared for his unpredictability, an enemy who persists in tucking himself away in the catacombed recesses of hidden valleys and canopied hills.

In order to better cope with such a situation, the 4-3 Old Guard recently made a bid to strengthen and broaden the reconnaissance techniques of some of its men. The men were all from Recon Platoon; the school, the Division Recon School at Chu Lai, was attended by the 22 men to gain mastery in reconnaissance.

The recon training that the men of the 4-3 completed may be referred to as an intensification of AIT in some respects but it goes far beyond that. The principal drive of the course is to feed its recipients with stores of current and up-to-date information about the enemy. This proves to be such an invaluable asset in meeting the shifting tactics and logistics of the enemy. The Recon School performs such a service by virtue of the information gleaned from Kit Carson scouts--people who should be more in the know about our adversary than anyone else. The information is then fed back to incoming personnel and used to sharpen the skills of reconnaissance teams such as ours. One graduate of the school, Sergeant Kurt Johnson from the 4-3, mentioned some of the things the 22 men received training in. Among them, he stated were ambush detection, river crossing, repelling from a helicopter into thick canopy for insertion, sapper techniques and FO procedures. Artillery adjustment was an important part of the training program. In order to familiarize the men with the workings of an artillery base, the Recon trainees visited LZ Stinson. There they observed the artillery in action. Besides learning what is involved in requesting artillery support, they learned to adjust fire on target. Another part of the course concentrated on the full utilization of scout dogs. Sergeant Johnson stated that the scout dogs are not used to the extent that they should be. The men were trained to

(continued on adjacent column)

4-3 MAN TOP GRAD

On November 15, the graduation of a class of 45 from the Recon School was held at Chu Lai Combat Center. Present at the graduation were BG E.L. Powell Jr., Assistant Division Commander, LTC Grover Dubose, Commandant of the Center, LTC Robert N. Fernandez, 4-3 Battalion Commander, and Lieutenant Jerry Josey, OIC of Leadership and Recon Schools. BG Powell, in referring to the 22 men of the 4-3 as the "nucleus of the recon element of the Battalion", stated that "if learned well" their "services will be most vital to the success and to the mission of operations of the Battalion. He congratulated the entire class of 45 and especially SP4 Frank Easler of the 4-3 Old Guard. SP4 Easler graduated at the top of the class and as a result, was promoted to SP4. The other members of the solid course at the School are: SP4 Ural Slater, Pfc Larry Barnes, Pfc Larry Taylor, Pfc Timothy Bradley, Pfc Dennis Anderson, Sergeant Don Moody, Pfc Frank Stitt, Pfc Walker, Pfc Raymond Riggs, Pfc Edward Baraze, Sgt. Wilfred Diaz, Pfc Roy Schoa, Pfc Kenneth Woodward, SP4 Michael York and Pfc Purcell Ford.

It's a war in which small squad-size clashes are the rule and gauge of victory, a war in which the enemy is becoming increasingly harder to find. The Recon Platoon occupies an exclusive position in the detection of the enemy and his positions along with the profusion of devices used today. Logistics and tactics invariably change--the Recon Platoon will meet that challenge.



STAY-BEHIND AMBUSH NETS THREE NVA

AWARDS & DECORATIONS

Nine members of the 2nd Platoon of Alpha Company caught three NVA unawares in a stay-behind ambush while located seven clicks northwest of San Juan Hill.

The action unfolded at about 0900 hours on the 18th of November when five NVA came into view in Alpha Company's former NDP site. The 2nd Platoon ambush was composed of Sergeant Arthur Ariaga (Montibello, Calif.), Pfc Alton Carr (Jackson, Miss.), Pfc Ron Owan (Wailuku, Ha.), Pfc Ray Cole (Mansfield, Ohio), Sgt. Ron Dennis (Annapolis, Ind.), Pfc James Smith (Long Beach, Calif.), Pfc John Bradley (Covington, Va.) and D. Burrell (Evadale, Texas).

Increasingly, NVA or VC have been found to move in a Company's old NDP site to scavenge amidst the debris left behind by the Company in the foxholes. Only, on this occasion, instead of C-rations, the poised and loaded muzzles of the 2nd Platoon awaited the arrival of the enemy. The men had deployed themselves in the thickets surrounding the NDP and bided their time. The stage was set.

They were supremely cautious and wise in the ways of guerilla war having fought since they were old enough to don the ammo and brandish a weapon. But they were satisfied and finally emerged. Once inside the NDP they wisely spread out and began the vigilant search, eyes roving over dike and hedgerows for the slightest pretext for flight. But they were satisfied.

Pfc Carr was patiently hiding in his lair when he was startled by the voice of one of the NVA not ten meters away. He looked across at his buddy and both, in agreement, went into action. They instantly opened up. The exploding shell gave the signal for an immediate and major reshuffling on the stage of the NDP site. The five NVA separated into two groups and made a dash for life down the hill. Pfc Ron Owan and James Smith took off in pursuit after one group. On the run, they fired and succeeded in dropping one NVA on the spot. Three other NVA left their sandals in the wake of their headlong flight in panic down the hill in another direction. The chatter of guns halted two more bringing the total to three NVA killed.

As suddenly as it began it was over. The NDP returned to the tropical hum of unseen creatures; winds erased the lingering drift of cordite while the men headed back to their company.

Action for Alpha Company continued on through the next day when two more NVA were killed in separate action. SP4 Mark Wolfe (Royal Oaks, Mich.), a member of the 1st Platoon was credited with downing one NVA who was hiding out near a likely ambush spot the Platoon was checking out. That same day, the 3rd Platoon killed another NVA while on a patrol along a river in the same vicinity. Sergeant Doug Petrillo initially spotted a group of NVA when he climbed a tree to gain a better view of the area. Having sighted the four NVA, he alerted the 3rd Platoon which then managed to get one of the NVA. Gunships arrived on location and reportedly, accurately fired rockets at three evading NVA.

An awards ceremony was held on November 23 at Chu Lai Stand-down area for Bravo Company. The Battalion Commander, Lt.-Col. Robert Fernandez arrived to decorate those men of Bravo who merited awards.

Among those receiving awards was SP4 Kenneth Walker. SP4 Walker was awarded a Bronze Star for Valor for action which occurred on June 28. On this day, the machinegunner and his assistant were wounded when the Company came under fire from a well-entrenched enemy force. SP4 Walker crossed open terrain under fire, seized the M60 and began to place suppressive fire on the enemy positions, thus allowing the men to be evacuated.

Other members of Bravo who received awards are:

PURPLE HEART

Captain James Hurley; Sgt John Cornell; SP4 David Gordon; SP4 Charles Page; SP4 Bobby Yates; Pfc Apolonio Uresti and SP4 Robert Dancel.



ALPHA-cont. from pg. 1)
wounding one, killing another and capturing a third. SP4 Shields describes the action. When the leader spotted me, we opened up. I turned toward the leader after wounding one who then drew back as if frightened." He tripped and fell on his back and was quite helpless with a heavy load of rice on his back. Such a predicament called for one thing, surrender or take the consequences. He surrendered. The men then collected the two captured along with an AK-47 and hoards of rice.

Three of four captives were flown to San Juan where one willingly responded to questioning. He reported that he intended to Chieu Hoi at the time of his capture. Information about his unit indicated that it was the 305th 2nd NVA Sapper Battalion which the Brigade has been chasing for quite some time. The Hoi Chanh stated that 40-50% of the men in his Battalion were sick with malaria and in a constant state of hunger. The Battalion numbered about 550, according to the Hoi Chanh and was in the San Juan AO for five days prior to his capture. The aim of the Sapper Battalion was to infiltrate and harass American firebases in the mountains. As Captain Geoffrey West, S-2 Military Intelligence, remarked, "that sort of limits it to San Juan." However, the 305th Sappers have been inactive for about the last three months roaming and foraging for food. The Hoi Chanh also stated that the sappers would rather attack the firebase than one of the companies in the field and that due to frequent haranguing from political cadre, there would be more Hoi Chanh's. They are told that they will be killed if captured.

(continued from page 1, column 2)
November 19

Bravo Company killed one of two NVA sighted at 1300 hours while on operations two clicks west of San Juan Hill.

Alpha Company's 3rd Platoon observed five NVA/VC in full combat gear. The Company consequently engaged them with 81mm mortars and suspect some damage was done. A sweep of the area uncovered considerable blood stains. A few hours later, four additional NVA were spotted. The Company opened up killing the fifth NVA this week. That night, Alpha Company was hit with ten 82mm mortar rounds.

November 20

As characteristic of late, Alpha Company managed to add on more NVA to its list. The Company observed NVA/VC in separate locations with ensuing action resulting in one enemy killed.

November 21

Warlords engaged two NVA manning a .51 caliber machinegun position nearly eight clicks northeast of San Juan Hill. Results were unknown.

SRRPs HOST VISITORS

November 22 - A 4-3 (Old Guard) SRAP team recently found itself spending the night in a highly uncomfortable and nerve-wracking position while on a short range patrol in the environs of San Juan Hill.

The night was a dreary and beclouded one with howling winds stifling and making it difficult to see or hear any movement. The SRAP team had long since settled down by 1700 hours for a vigilant watch. At about then, 15 to 20 NVA stealthily crept into position not 15 meters away and also nestled down oblivious to a dangerously tense SRAP team. Through the thrash and howl of the wind, the SRRPs reported that distinct sounds of bolts slamming forward and the crunch and rustle of brush could be heard from time to time. Sergeant Wilfredo Diaz (Geneva, N.Y.) summed up the dread of the situation when he said: "It was hairy."

Throughout the long night the men remained in place fearful to move or to engage due their vulnerable position. The unexpected prowlers finally pulled stakes early in the morning leaving the SRRPs once more to peace but ever-watchful serenity.

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EDITORIAL:

AN ALL VOLUNTEER FORCE?

The Department of Defense is studying the possibilities and feasibilities of instituting an ALL VOLUNTEER FORCE for the military services. This study is being made at the behest of President Nixon in an attempt to better military life and eliminate the need for the induction of manpower into the armed forces.

The main questions are: What will it mean to you? When will it go into effect? What are some of the President's guidelines?

To answer the first question, it will undoubtedly mean, in the long run, a more professional military service, higher wages, more housing, more pride, more esprit de corps. It could mean more of all of the things a professional serviceman deserves.

When will go into effect? The answer to this is not yet known. Several factors are involved. Roger T. Kelley, assistant secretary of defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, is responsible for Project Volunteer.



As an initial step in developing an action program, Mr. Kelley has asked each military Department to review its entire range of options outlined in the study plan and to submit recommendations to him on desirable and feasible actions to move DoD toward the All Volunteer Force goal.

Recruitment and retention of manpower are the main requirements. The study will be used on the principle that any change in manpower procurement will be acceptable only if it assumes that the Services will be provided with sufficient manpower needed to meet our national security objectives. The President has made this emphatically clear.

And what about the draft? The Defense Department, to date, believes the draft authority will be retained and the Selective Service system will remain in a standby status with all of its machinery ready for immediate use - if and when needed. Male citizens within certain age group will continue to be classified for military duty even though they will not be called - unless necessity requires it. Several proposals to amend the current draft practices will undoubtedly be accepted and put into law.

However, President Nixon has also made it clear that the All Volunteer concept, if put into force, will apply only to the period after the involvement in the Republic of Vietnam has ended and when military manpower requirements can be safely reduced.

But, all in all, the study indicated that it may result in many and attractive reasons for enhancing recruiting and retaining a professional All Volunteer Force in sufficient numbers to meet America's security needs. (AFPS)

NEW SERGEANT MAJ.

November 26 - A Sergeant Major who recently entered the 4-3 Battalion found himself for the second time in his military career serving alongside an Old Guard officer. The senior NCO is Command Sergeant Major John Landers (Killeen, Texas); the officer is the Battalion Commander, Lt.Col. Robert N. Fernandez.

The first time this occurred was fifteen years ago. Lt.Col. Fernandez had graduated from West Point as a 2Lt. in June 1953 and was later assigned as Company Commander to the 169th Regiment (National Guard Unit - Oklahoma) in Cirndorf, Germany. He arrived to assume command of Fox Company while CSM Landers (then 1SG) served as field first in the same rifle company.

Today, some fifteen years later, CSM Landers arrived in the Battalion on his first tour in Vietnam. CSM Landers first discovered that he was to serve under his old Company Commander at a Brigade function. He recognized Lt.Col. Fernandez but never even anticipated that he was the Battalion Commander of his new unit, the 4-3 Old Guard.

But past associations don't cease here. CSM Landers has had ties with the Americal Division before. This association stretches back in time to when the Division was first conceived soon after the U.S. entered World War II. CSM Landers was then a member of the Americal Division's original task force deployed to the Pacific in 1942. At this time, he was assigned to the 182nd Infantry Regiment which left the United States in March 1942 for New Caledonia. (cont. on page 6, col. 2)



The trajectory rose and the air was split. An echo of a crash in the far distance. Moving air followed by a whistle of a moving freight train. Screaming, plunging, plummeting towards self-destruction. A rice paddy is calm with the bright sun. A breeze that stirs rice shoots, elephant grass, coconut palms - and then a man becomes aware, lifts his head and recognizes through the clear cloudless calm this sound of approaching impact, explosion, a bursting spread of life-shattering power. He has the chance to recognize this time, to look up and wonder, "Where is it coming from? Where is it going?" Any other reaction is all too late.

"SHOT!" The observer watches the black dressed figure in the field. He hears also the moan of incoming artillery. Senses the impact. Dust, smoke, shrouds and even before it clears, another and yet another lands. The rice paddy is all dust and is all noise - almost as suddenly the field becomes calm again with waving grass, bobbing rice and drifting smoke that the winds erase.

"END OF MISSION, RECORD AS TARGET. ESTIMATE ONE KIA. GOOD SHOOTING."

This is what, from the point of view of the grunt in the field, artillery is all about. He is really only slightly aware of the intricate detail, incredible care, precise calculation that places those rounds where he needed them - when he needed them - in order to wreak such immeasurable damage. Listen in closely a moment to all this complexity. Learn for yourself.

An observer sees the target - "I have five Victor Charlie in the open. Are you prepared to copy grid. "Send it."

"Grid 752396 - Oscar Tango 3100. Proximity - 800. Five VC in the open. Request Battery two."

FDC confirms data and then to Battalion - "Observer has five VC in the open. Grid follows..."

Battalion: "Send me check data..."

Liaison in the TOC confirms friendly location.

"The grid is clear. My initials Lima Oscar - send me air data." (continued on next column)

Numbers, clearances, information for aircraft floods the fire direction net. Finally, "Air data posted - clear to fire."

FDC back to observer -

"We are cranking up on your mission. Wait for shot."

"Waiting, out."

"SHOT, out."

"Rounds complete, out."

And in this short time, the observer has called in the target, the FDC computed it, the Battalion checked data, the Liaison cleared it and the rounds were on the way.

Listen, wait for the impact, the smoke. The artillery does its damage again.

LLt. M. Drew Mendelson
B 6/11 Arty (FO Bravo)



(CSM LANDERS - cont. pg. 5)
onia. CSM Landers was later one of those sent to Guadalcanal and to the defense of Henderson Air Field in November of the same year.

Other tours during his long career in the Army (since 1941) include Japan after W.W.II, frequent stints in Europe and one with the 2nd Logistical Command in Korea in 1950.

ARMY MULE "RAISES" NAVY GOAT

WASHINGTON (ANF) -

When the Black Knights of Army meet the Midshipmen of Navy in their 70th annual grid classic at JFK Stadium in Philadelphia on Nov. 29, Trotter, the Army mule mascot, will also be on hand. Trotter is one of a long line of mule mascots at the U.S. Military Academy.

The mule, known for its strength, endurance and perseverance, has always been considered by the Cadets as an appropriate symbol for the Army football team.

Mules also display other qualities. Some of these were aptly demonstrated when the first Cadet mule mascot was "introduced" to the Navy goat

prior to the kickoff in 1899. The goat, being the cantankerous animal it is, eyed his adversary, snorted once, then charged at the mule's forelegs. At this indignity, legend has it that the mule whirled and "hoisted that astonished goat toward the Navy stands to the delight of the yelling, laughing crowd." Apparently spurred on by their four-legged mascot, the Black Knights soared to a 17-5 victory over the favored Navy team.

From its debut as a Cadet mascot, the legend of the Army mule has grown in length and humor. One mule mascot, known as Mr. Jackson, was used as a favorite prank played on newly-arrived persons at West Point. A message would be left for them indicating that they had received a phone call from a "Mr. Jackson" and asking them to return the call on a local number. The number called turned out to be that of the post veterinarian.

Hannibal, another hybrid mascot, was the subject of the ever-uncreasing legend of the Army mule. His claim to fame was his reported dislike of West Point's summer weather. According to the legend, Hannibal mastered the trick of escaping from his stall and then releasing the other mules from theirs. Not only would he free his fellow heat sufferers, but would lead them through a sliding door to a nearby airconditioned veterinary operating room.



AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

HHC

BRONZE STAR-S

Schlegal, W. (2d olc); Cerami, S.; Detweiler, G.; Laxer, M.

ARMY COMMENDATION-S

Glavor, M. Jr.; Hunsinger, H.; Kelley, K; Mullins, G.; Wells, J.; Brown, B. (1st olc)

ALPHA

BRONZE STAR-S

Durbin, D.; Johnson, W.

ARMY COMMENDATION-S

Clancey, M.; Kayona, D.; Konanin, W; Martin, E.

BRAVO

BRONZE STAR-S

Collins, W.; Gradillas, G.; Unruh, D.

CHARLIE

BRONZE STAR-S

Clark, P.; Gianella, R.; Meyers, G.

DELTA

BRONZE STAR-S

Hunt, S.; Miller, R.; Ralston, W.; Dean L.; Dailey, W.; Davidson, J.; Elfrink S.; Ericson, T.; Faircloth, J.; Massi J.; Mincey, J.; Pelli, J.; Sklover, S. Vecchi, R.; Walker, L.

ECHO

BRONZE STAR-S

Davenport, J.; Eckel, T.; Bream, B. Currington, D.

ARMY COMMENDATION

Tefft, J.; Cultice, N.

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