



OLD GUARD



4th BATTALION 3rd INFANTRY

Vol II - 2

4-3 INVITED TO ATTEND CELEBRATION

This week, the staff of the 4-3 Battalion was invited to attend an important ceremony on July 20, at Ba To, the center of the Montagnard district (pop. 6,000) which is located approximately west of the San Juan Hill fire-base. The invitation is significant in that few GIs can boast of ever witnessing this traditional cultural event.

Initially, this day commemorates the separation of the Vietnamese (North from South) at the 17th parallel. But just as important is the Montagnard Buddhist ceremony of the appeasement of the spirits which is accomplished by the sacrifice of a water buffalo to Buddha. Coupled with this annual event was the aim to strengthen the bonds between the Montagnards, ARVN and the U.S. forces. It was largely an effort to promote friendly relations and insure the mutual coordination of all paramilitary, military and civic indigenous forces to provide a maximum buttress against aggression. This was the main reason behind the assemblage of ARVN, CIDG (composed of PFCs and RFs), Brigade Commander Col. J. Treadwell, Bn Commander Lt. Col. R. Fernandez and the staff at the Montagnard festivities. (Representing the Battalion besides Lt. Col. Fernandez were Major Phelps, Major Inglowright, Lt. Houghton, Lt. Kenney, Lt. Richards and Sgt. Cuiellette.) Also present at the ceremony were MACV personnel.

One could not but notice the Montagnards. There were three to four hundred scattered about awaiting the start of the festivities. Many of them were dressed for the occasion, i in a brilliant display of kaleidoscopic ceremonial garb.
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The ceremony commenced with the sacrificial offering of the water buffalo to Buddha. The animal, which was restrained by a thick rope, was bled to death by quick and accurate thrusts to vulnerable spots. Some of the blood was collected and mixed in huge gourds with rice wine and passed around to all the guests present. The stick dance soon followed the religious aspect. Ten dancers participated in the stick dance moving their feet through bamboo poles which were clapped together in time with the beat of the drums. The dance demanded quite a bit of expertise and agility to accomplish.

Lunch followed the dance. The district chief gave a little speech extolling the memorable event on hand. (The assistant district chief was also present, a man who, purportedly, is a legendary figure among the Montagnards. He appeared decked with rows upon rows of medals bearing witness to his fame.)

At about 12:30, the ceremony was topped off with a volleyball game between the Montagnards and the Battalion staff members. The opposition paraded out dressed in jerseys, altogether indicating that perhaps some competition was to follow. The Battalion team consisted of Lt. Col. Fernandez, Major Phelps, Captain Gadsen, Lt. Houghton, Lt. Kenney and Lt. Richards. We lost! Went down in defeat after two out of three games were lost. But everyone seemed to thoroughly enjoy the match, especially so in the light of our defeat at the hands of our hosts, the Montagnards. Thus ended this annual event, and hopefully, with fruition.

AWARDS CEREMONY AT CHU LAI

Recently, on July 19, a ceremony at Chu Lai was held to honor those of the 4-3 Battalion who have Distinguished themselves on the field of battle. The ceremony, which was ostensibly held to honor the men of Bravo Company, was not fraught with formality or pomp but was a modest and fitting tribute to those men. Colonel J. Treadwell, the Brigade Commander, presented the decorations. LTC Robert N. Fernandez, the Battalion Commander, was also there.

Captain Veeder was the first one to receive his awards: a Silver Star, Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. Captain Veeder (now with S-4) received the Silver Star as a result of his actions while serving as Co of Charlie Company on Feb. 28. On that day, the company was moving across open rice paddies when they were hit hard by an estimated battalion-size enemy force guarding a Regimental Headquarters. As the company advanced the enemy fire grew in intensity. The company was forced to withdraw several times and call in airstrikes after they received merciless fire from the enemy. Captain Veeder exposed himself to enemy fire while going from fire team to fire team to insure that all his men were aware of the move. During one of the withdrawals, the Captain noticed that two of his men were pinned by heavy fire and unable to join the company. With his weapon blazing, he ran to aid the stricken men who were about 75 meters away. His effective fire enabled the two to withdraw. The Captain later joined the company under cover of the airstrikes which quickly followed.

There was no lack of courageous action that day. Several other men received Silver Stars for gallantry in action on the 28th of February. When the company was within 50 meters of its objective, intense automatic and small arms fire opened up. PFC Michael Mills braved the bullets and grenades and helped to extract several wounded men.

He also volunteered to stay behind to cover others until the dust-off arrived. PFC Willie Collins Jr. assisted his gunner in laying down a base of fire to allow some wounded men to be evacuated. When the gunner was killed, PFC Collins, without hesitation, continued to put out a hail of bullets on the NVA position. SP4 Johnson, who was in a sister element not too far away, volunteered to carry ammo to the besieged company across 500 meters of open terrain. After arriving with the ammunition, both SP4 Johnson and PFC Collins Jr. helped to evacuate the seriously wounded men to secure areas and to the dust-off choppers. SP4 Johnson was awarded the Bronze Star with the "v" device.

Another recipient of the Silver Star for gallantry in action was SP4 Joseph Day. On April 11, his lead platoon was hit while walking down a trail. The Platoon Leader yelled for help needed to bring the wounded pointman back to cover. SP4 Day moved forward and supplied a good base of fire while the wounded man was brought to safety. Striving to maintain this suppressive fire, J. Day repeatedly moved his position exposing himself to incoming fire but in spite of all this, managed to keep the enemy pinned down.

SP4 Richard DeChristofaro (Bronze Star for "valor") and PFC Ronald Peetzke (Army Commendation Medal) also received awards at the ceremony for conspicuous action on January 31. Their platoon was moving through a hamlet while an element acted as a blocking force. This element came under heavy fire. The seriousness of the situation was compounded when their only M-60 machine gun became inoperable. Realizing this, both DeChristofaro (the gunner) and Peetzke (the assistant gunner) raced across 200 meters of rice paddy while bullets impacted around them. The two succeeded in gaining a position from which they could place effective fire on the attackers.

In addition to the Silver Stars and Bronze Stars awarded, there were a few Purple Hearts presented to the men of Bravo during the ceremony. They are: Sgt. Ralph Couch, SP4 Charles D. Kent, SP4 Wayne A. Yesko, PFC Apolonio Ureste and PFC Bobby R. Yates.

PROMOTION BOARD RESULTS

The recommendations of the Board held last week to determine promotions to E-6 and E-5 have filtered down and are listed below in the order of most points scored. In addition to the amount of points awarded for knowledge in one's MOS, points are also given for time in service, time in grade and personal appearance.

E-6

Cerami, S.
Durbin, D.
May, D.
Maruska, R.
Collicy, G.
Lutz, D.
Couch, P.

AROUND THE BATTALION

In the past weeks, the Old Guard has seen numerous changes in its staff of officers and NCOs.

Most recent is SFC James Faircloth's transferal to Delta Company. SFC Faircloth has conspicuously filled the position as Platoon Leader of 4.2 Mortar Platoon for six months (Dec 1968 to June 1969) prior to this transition. SFC Faircloth is now Delta Company's acting LSG and is soon to be promoted to E-8.

As for the additions to 4-3, there is Lt. Warren Haugh (now attached to Delta Company) and Lt. David L. Berry, Platoon Leader in Alpha Company. Lt. Berry is a graduate of OCS and also attended other schools for preparatory training for Vietnam. Among them are CBR and Jungle School.

Captain Farinelli has replaced Lt. Cogswell in Headquarters Company while Lt. Moyers is to be transferred to Echo Company as Platoon Leader of 4.2 Mortar.

HELPFUL HINTS

Of late, electrical storms have been playing havoc with equipment such as claymores, CS containers not to mention people. There are a few things to keep in mind to insure that you don't become a casualty during these sudden electrical storms.

- 1) Stay away from isolated trees in an open area. In a jungle, avoid the tallest trees.
- 2) If in a group, disperse immediately. A mass of bodies will attract lightning.
- 3) If possible, disconnect the lead-in-wires to claymores, CS containers, telephones, etc.
- 4) Avoid open fields or bare hilltops if possible. Otherwise, lie flat on the ground to reduce target height.
- 5) Avoid protrusions of pipes, communications cables, etc.

Remember! Thunderstorms usually occur during the late afternoon and evening and usually last only a few hours.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

SURGEON'S CORNER

QUESTION: Will any troops being redeployed have served less than one year in Vietnam? If so, how much less?

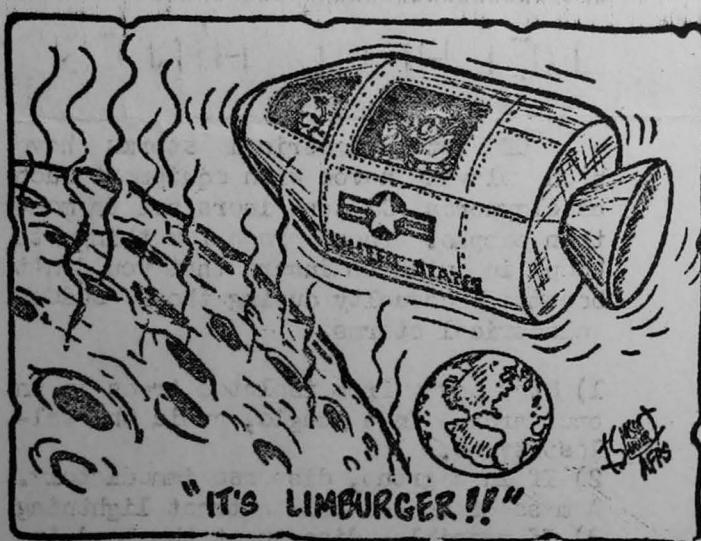
ANSWER: Yes. Although the majority of personnel redeploying to the Continental United States will be within 60 days of their date of eligibility to return from overseas (DEROS), some reserve component personnel assigned to redeploying reserve units may have served less than a full tour.

QUESTION: Are units being redeployed being filled with soldiers who have virtually completed their tour in Vietnam?

ANSWER: Yes. When fillers are required to bring units redeploying to CONUS to authorized strength, personnel will be selected as fillers who have virtually completed a normal tour in RVN.

QUESTION: What will happen to recently arrived soldiers now assigned to units going back to the States?

ANSWER: In general recently arrived individuals will be reassigned to other units in USARV.



Old Guard

LTC Robert N. Fernandez,	CO
1LT Thomas J. Klein,	SI
PFC John Calderonello,	Reporter

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There is a belief making the rounds in the Battalion that the taking of more than one malaria pill at a time will cause malaria. If the common sense is elusive it's because it is non-existent. The Battalion Surgeon reports that this is an erroneous belief.

In the same vein, he advises that other protective measures should accompany the daily pill. Pills alone will not insure full protection. As a matter of fact, even if the malaria pill is taken several mosquito bites can overcome the effectiveness of it. If you don't want to risk shackling your good health for the rest of your days on terra firma, use repellent as well as the Pill. While we are on the subject of malaria, be careful when using the bug juice. It causes blisters when put on nooks and crannies of the body such as the inside of the elbow, the neck.

NEW REG ON TAGS

Effective 1 Aug 69, all personnel in the Americal Division are required to wear at least three Identification Tags at all times. Two will be worn in the normal manner around the neck on a chain. The third ID Tag will be affixed to one jungle boot at the base of the boot tongue and secured by the boot lace.