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AMERICAL



JANUARY, 1969



Americal Division Crest

The Americal Division crest or badge, which is worn on the epaulets of the Class A uniform, is symbolic of the division's past service. Approximately one inch in length, the metal crest has a gold background with blue lettering and cross, white stars, and red arrow and marking.

The saltire or cross of St. Andrew alludes to New Caledonia in the Southwest Pacific where the division was created and first activated on May 27, 1942. The blue (for infantry) cross and four white stars form a "Southern Cross," referring to the division's shoulder sleeve insignia (approved Dec. 20, 1943) and the area in which the men of the Americal initially served.

The four stars of the constellation also stand for the four campaigns in World War II in which the division participated: Guadalcanal, Northern Solomons, Leyte, and Southern Philippines.

The anchor refers to the Presidential Unit Citation (Navy) awarded to the division for Guadalcanal. The red arrowhead and Philippine sun at the top symbolizes the assault landing in the Southern Philippines and the award of the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation (Oct. 17, 1944 to July 4, 1945).

The unsheathed sword with point to the top refers to the Americal's service in Vietnam.



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AMERICAL

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The Cover

FRONT: Here come de Cav.! An M-113 Armored Personnel Carrier of A Trp., 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav. crosses a ridge northwest of Hill 29. (See story starting on p. 7)
BACK: A guard tower facing the South China Sea, near division headquarters in Chu Lai, adds its lonely silhouette to the beauty of dawn in Vietnam.

AMERICAL LOG

A QUARTERLY RECAP OF MAJOR ACTION

Following a relatively inactive summer, the enemy became bolder in late August. Deciding to come out of hiding, he challenged Americal forces on several southern I Corps battlegrounds. The summary that follows covers the action of the men of the Americal during September, October, and November. (See pp. 7-11 for description of cavalry action in late August.)

SEPTEMBER

Action flared in the second week of September when a joint effort of the 2nd ARVN Div. and troops from the 11th Inf. Bde. spoiled enemy plans to attack and capture Quang Ngai City. The combined operation accounted for 422 enemy killed. More than 93 small arms and other supplies were uncovered.

During that week, civic action soldiers of the 198th Inf. Bde. treated 2,020 Vietnamese in MEDCAPS. The scholarship fund for Vietnamese students reached \$2,300.

On Sept. 12, two 18-year-old Montagnards, who recently escaped from a Viet Cong impressed labor camp, led troops of a 4th Bn., 3rd Inf. company to a complete 105 mm howitzer buried near the base of a hill eight miles west of Quang Ngai City. As part of the Voluntary Informant Program (VIP), they each received a 25,000 piasters reward.

Action increased sharply in Operation Champaign Grove on Sept. 13 as units of the 1st Sqdn., 1st Armored Cav.'s "Dragoons" and supporting elements accounted for 45 VC and seven NVA killed. In a battle five miles southwest of Quang Ngai City, C Trp. felled 42 of the enemy and captured a large weapons cache.

Contacts continued on Sept. 14 as infantrymen and cavalrymen of Task Force Galloway reported 40 NVA and

Highlights during those months included the marking of the division's first year in Vietnam...the 100,000th Vietnamese civilian treated under MEDCAP...Operation Golden Fleece snatching more than one million pounds of rice from "Charlie's" mouth...and the conclusion of Operations Champaign Grove, Wheeler/Wallowa, and Burlington Trail.

three VC killed and six crew-served and eight individual weapons captured in Operation Champaign Grove.

In the 11th Bde.'s Duc Pho AO on Sept. 15 an intelligence source led Vietnamese National Police and their adviser to a large tunnel complex two miles west of the brigade's base camp where an estimated 15 tons of rice were stored.

Soldiers of a 1st Bn., 20th Inf. Company, 11th Bde. killed 31 NVA on Sept. 22. The "Sykes Regulars" netted 25 enemy when they attacked an NVA force about a mile south of the Ha Thanh Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) camp.

On Sept. 24, the heaviest contact

was in Operation Burlington Trail, as units of the 1st Cav., F Trp., 8th Air Cav., and a company of the 11th Bde.'s 4th Bn., 21st Inf. killed 92 NVA.

Also on Sept. 24, the division's Operation Champaign Grove terminated in Quang Ngai Province. The task force, which killed 323 of the enemy, included elements of the 11th Bde. and the 2nd ARVN Div. It was formed on Sept. 4 to relieve pressure on the Ha Thanh CIDG Camp and to prevent a possible attack against Quang Ngai City.

In the biggest battle of the three-month period, 217 NVA and five VC were killed by division forces on



Sept. 25. The "Dragoons" and supporting elements dealt a hard blow to the enemy in continuous fighting in the rocky hills southwest of Tam Ky. On a rainsoaked battlefield the Americal soldiers killed 300 of the enemy in two days of fighting.

"Brave and Bold" soldiers of the 198th Inf. Bde., along with "Aero Scouts" of the 123rd Avn. Bn., killed 98 NVA on Sept. 26. In addition, in a contact near their fire support base west of Tam Ky, "Ready Rifles" of the 1st Bn., 52nd Inf. killed 82 of the enemy.

OCTOBER

Significant action occurred on Oct. 18 in the 11th Bde.'s AO as the "Jungle Warriors" killed 26 VC at Song Ve, 12 miles south of Quang Ngai City.

Answering an urgent distress call from a squad of division soldiers outnumbered by the enemy, troopers of the 1st Bn., 52nd Inf. rushed to the scene and killed 96 NVA 10 miles west of Tam Ky. Two platoons from D Co. blazed through an enemy position near an NVA outpost to rescue the encircled friendly forces.

In the 196th Inf. Bde. AO, "Charger" units killed 22 VC and captured 12,425 pounds of rice on



Hawkins

Oct. 26. "Guardians" of the 2nd Bn., 1st Inf. gathered 6,800 pounds of rice in three separate caches 24 miles west of Tam Ky.

NOVEMBER

Infantrymen of the 198th Bde. called for accurate firing by the 1st Bn., 82nd Arty. on Nov. 2 as 22 VC were killed south of Chu Lai. The same day, a LRP team and a 5th Bn., 46th Inf. platoon adjusted other fire

missions from the artillery unit, killing 18 VC.

"Chargers" of the 196th Bde. killed 26 VC and captured 8,600 pounds of rice in their AO on Nov. 3. During Operation Golden Fleece, which ended that week, more than one million pounds of rice were grabbed from the enemy in the rice-rich Que Son Valley. The operation began Sept. 15.

Hawkins



On Nov. 11, the division's two longest continuing operations, Wheeler/Wallowa and Burlington Trail, came to an end. The latter ended after seven months, the former one year to the day after it began.

Operation Wheeler/Wallowa, which started as two separate operations and combined on Nov. 11, 1967, was designed to seek out and destroy

elements of the 2nd NVA Div. working in the area northwest of Chu Lai. It was primarily conducted by the 196th Bde.

During the operation, 10,020 of the enemy were killed, 2,053 weapons captured, while only 683 U.S. soldiers were killed by hostile action.

Operation Burlington Trail, controlled by the 198th Bde., was

launched April 8, 1968, north of Chu Lai. Its mission was to open the road from Tam Ky to Tien Phuoc, under enemy control for four years. The "Brave and Bold" were supported by the 1st Cav. and the 26th and 39th Engr. Bns.

Operation Burlington Trail resulted in 1,948 enemy dead, while 545 weapons were captured. Americal losses totaled 129.

On Nov. 16, units of the 198th Bde. accounted for 41 VC killed in the Chu Lai area. A LRP observed VC moving down a trail 10 miles north of Quang Ngai City. The 1/82 Arty. placed eight-inch shells right on target.

On Nov. 17, a 1/14 Arty. battery along with the 198th Bde. killed 32 VC when the enemy launched a mortar, recoilless rifle, and ground attack against the Binh Son District headquarters.

In action west of Tam Ky and north of the Tien Phuoc CIDG camp, 196th Bde. soldiers netted 44 of the enemy on Nov. 21. In one of the actions, a company of the 4/31 Inf. killed 20 NVA in contacts with an estimated enemy regiment headquarters.

During November, "Jungle Warriors" of the 11th Bde. discovered 29 enemy base camps southwest of Quang Ngai City. The large quantity of supplies captured dealt a crushing blow to enemy operations in the area.

Thirty-six VC were killed in the 198th Bde. area on Nov. 26. "Red-legs" of the 1/14 Arty. killed 19 of the enemy in two fire missions eight miles west of Tam Ky when an ARVN force adjusted fire on 30 VC.

The battleship New Jersey was in the division AO from Nov. 24 to Nov. 27. During this time, the Navy's only active battleship destroyed 122 enemy structures, 55 bunkers, and 32 fighting positions.



Pohland

MEDCAP

A Day In The Life...

By SP4 DEAN T. POHLAND
11th Inf. Bde.



While there is no "typical day" in the life of a MEDCAP, the article which follows describes a few hours of "one day" in a MEDCAP conducted by the 11th Infantry Brigade.

When you visit the Duc Pho hospital, the base of the Medical-Civil Affairs Program (MEDCAP) of the 11th Infantry Brigade, several things become immediately and painfully apparent.

The first is the great need of the average Vietnamese citizen for the barest physical essentials: food, clothing, and the basics of medical care. Another is the feeling that you are on the stage. Each pair of eyes watches your every move, carefully, hopefully, and sometimes with a hint of fear.

The hospital's attempts at cleanliness as we know it are difficult to maintain. Chickens and dogs wander in and out of the wards and sterilization and antiseptic techniques are crude or nonexistent.

As soon as the MEDCAP team is set up, CPT Walter Erxleben, 11th Bde. surgeon, and a group of Headquarters and Headquarters Co. medics tend to the in-patients and seriously ill.

The first patient has a window cast on his lower leg and foot protecting a compound fracture and an external wound. The doctor examines the leg and then instructs the interpreter to tell the man, "Three more weeks and then all well again." The man smiles and nods his head.

The next patient is a teenager. He has a frightened look in his eyes, as if he knows what the doctor is going to say. His whole body is swollen almost beyond recognition and he can scarcely move his limbs. The doctor immediately diagnoses the case as a severe liver infection, producing the acute swelling.

"How long have you been like this?" the doctor asks. "Three months," the lad rasps. The doctor shakes his head as he prescribes treatment, through the interpreter, to the Vietnamese hospital orderlies. "It's always like this," he says. "Half of these cases wouldn't be this bad if the people would come to us right away. I just don't know what holds them back."



The prime mission of the MEDCAP is to help the Vietnamese medical personnel raise the level of their preventive medicine and treatment, and then to create an awareness among the people of the availability of the program.

Because of the inroads of the infection and poor diet, penicillin, streptomycin, and other antibiotics, as well as vitamin deficiency tablets, are prescribed in almost every case. The MEDCAP teams also dispense large quantities of anti-bacterial soap, as worm diseases and skin disorders are prevalent. Due to constant irritation and lack of medication, even simple rashes develop into serious illnesses.

The doctor then sees a woman whose shrapnel wound in the leg had healed but later became infected. As Dr. Exrleben lances the huge abscess, the woman, in obvious pain, does not utter a sound but merely hides her face.

When out-patients come for sick-call, a surging crowd soon develops and the problem becomes one of organization. The carnival atmosphere of the crush and the cries of "bac-si" (doctor) soon dissolve as the physician notices a young woman and her small child huddled together on his examining table. They are victims of a VC mortar attack the previous night. As he removes the hastily applied bandages from the wounds, the doctor emits an audible groan.

Without a word, one of the attending medics moves rapidly to prepare the ambulance jeep for a quick trip to the aid station at nearby Landing Zone Bronco, the 11th Bde. base camp.

The situation was critical but several days later both mother and child were out of danger. The quick action by a team of 11th Bde. surgeons and medics and the around-the-clock intensive care by U.S. and Vietnamese nurses saved their lives.

The next patient, a woman, has walked 20 miles from an outlying village with her seven-year-old child who has measles. During the examination, Dr. Exrleben dis-

covers a rare condition in which the child's heart is on the right side of the chest.

Further examination discloses a severe heart defect. The irregular beating of the child's heart is easily seen through his emaciated body, and his whole frame labors each time he takes a breath.

The doctor asks the mother if she can stay at the hospital for a few days, and she nods her head, but hope for the child's recovery is slim. Even though the corrective surgery would be comparatively simple, it would require a heart-lung machine and that kind of sophisticated equipment is just not available.

A man who had a bullet removed from his hand the day before returns for a check-up. The team is happy to see him back, for these people who return for further treatment, and can have their recovery charted, provide the only means for the team to check its progress.

MEDCAPS are carried out in all 11th Bde. battalions, under the direction of the Brigade Surgeon and the S-5 office. In addition, C Co., (Medical) 6th Spt. Bn. supplies a dentist for weekly DENTCAP visits.

It is hard to estimate the good that these teams do, but the comprehensive program undertaken by the "Jungle Warriors" is currently treating more than 200 patients every day.

Besides the DENTCAP speciality, the Brigade Surgeon also maintains a tuberculosis clinic, with records kept on each of the patients who comes in for daily treatment. In addition, the team conducts an amputee assistance program in conjunction with the artificial limb and rehabilitation clinic run by a Quaker volunteer group in Quang Ngai City.

One of the most vital non-combat programs engaged in by the 11th Inf. Bde., MEDCAP is winning an important battle in the struggle for the respect and support of the Vietnamese people. To save a life...to heal the afflicted...to comfort the ill...all are part of a day in the life of a MEDCAP team.

The 1st CAV Brings Smoke

By CPT CARY S. SKLAREN

Thick red mud engraved with track marks lies naked to the Vietnam sky, as awesome machines with chunks of steel torn from their outer skin stand idle, waiting to take the offensive.

It seems as if they are almost pawing at the ground in anticipation like coal-black stallions or burly Brahma bulls. They appear to call out to their Dragoons to mount up and drive away from the stark desolation of Hawk Hill and meet the enemy. The proud, tough men and the mighty machines of the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry are ready to do battle.

But the color, the drama, the tradition of the 1st/1st began on a different battlefield on the dusty plains west of the Mississippi River. There, in 1833, Congress authorized the formation of the First Regiment of Dragoons and for the next 65 years, except for one interlude of fighting with the Army of the Potomac during the Civil War, the unit never left the west.

In 1898, they were called to serve upon foreign soil in the Spanish American War and later to help put down the Philippine Insurrection. During World War I, they served on the Mexican border.

In 1940, they were the first cavalry regiment to become completely mechanized and fought in the North African and Italian campaigns of the Second World War.

The most battle-honored unit in the U.S. Army with 68 battle streamers hanging from the squadron colors, the 1st/1st was ordered to Vietnam in the summer of 1967. After leaving Ft. Hood, Tex., they landed at Chu Lai in early August, and two days later were committed to battle. They have been fighting the enemy ever since.

The most impressive feature of the cavalry's particular method of combat is its overwhelming firepower. In a single platoon there are 10 .50 caliber machineguns, 13 M-60 machineguns, three coaxial machineguns (7.62), three 90mm guns, one 81mm mortar, and seven grenade launchers, in addition to personal weapons.

There are three of these platoons in every troop, and three troops in the squadron. They are supported by the unit's tactical air arm, F Troop, 8th Air Cavalry, which includes a Huey-Cobra weapons platoon and the Headquarters section.

When all of this firepower is put together there is little chance that an enemy can escape the sting of the



Shingledecker

Joining the battle after the first day, the infantry played a vital role in assaulting enemy positions, ferreting the NVA out of spider holes, and pursuing the fleeing foe. A grenadier of B Co., 4/21 fires at a trench line while a rifleman of B Co., 2/1 moves out with the Cav. on line.



Shingledecker

Cav. unscathed. The enemy may bite and scratch and throw a regiment at the Dragoons, but to no avail. The 1st/1st will stand there, accept whatever the enemy has to offer and then return the compliment tenfold, with few, if any, friendly casualties.

A fine example of the whole squadron working together in a battle and completely putting the North Vietnamese Army to rout occurred during late August of last year in the old Operation Burlington Trail area.

It began in the heat of the morning of Aug. 24. The 2nd Plt. of A Trp. was on a sweep with the ARVN 3/4 Cav. seven kilometers west of Tam Ky when the NVA struck.

The ARVN had been reconnoitering a woodline in the midst of rolling rice paddies when they received heavy fire from recoilless rifles, RPGs, and automatic weapons. One ACAV was hit and started to burn. They called for the "Dragoons."

The platoon answered and drove into a valley below the ARVN when they also began to receive fire. 1LT Thomas M. Ginz (Cheshire, Conn.), the platoon leader, called for the gunships of F Trp., 8th Air Cav.

As the "Blue Ghosts" hit the enemy with suppressive fire, 1LT Ginz maneuvered his tracks around the rice paddy and hill to get on line with the 3/4 Cav. The enemy was situated on an "island" in the midst of the paddies

and the ARVN decided to attempt a frontal assault.

"They tried to move in on the 'wool' (a forest bordering on paddies)," said 1LT Ginz, "but the recoilless rifle and RPG fire was so intense they had to withdraw."

The second platoon continued to fire at the positions until ordered to withdraw and await help. Their fire had destroyed one 75mm recoilless rifle, and they had captured another.

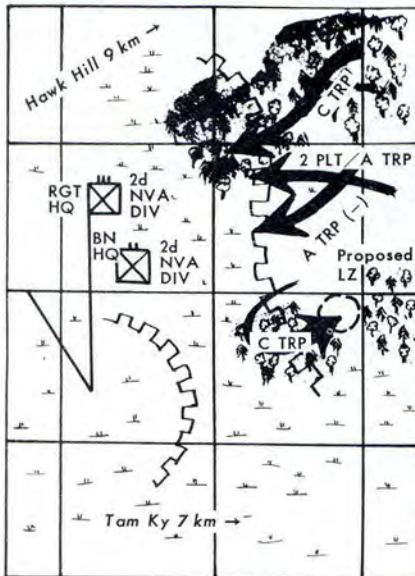
C Trp. arrived about 12:30," said MAJ James A. Logan (Park Forest, Ill.), Sqdn. S-3. "They took operational control of the second platoon and tried to extend the flanks to cover more of the 'island'.

"The remainder of A Trp. then pulled in," he continued, "took over its platoon and began to maneuver south of the fortified position. C Trp. maneuvered to the north." (See Map A)

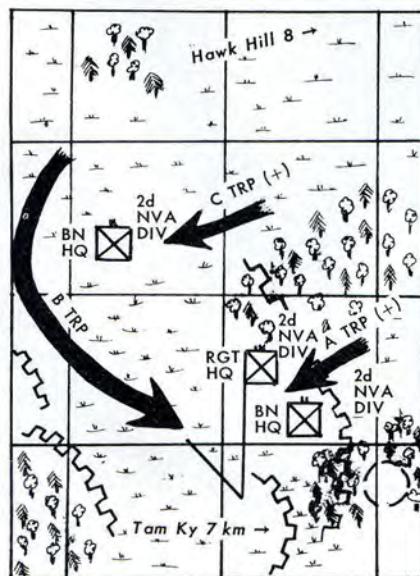
Both troops parried and thrusted with the enemy for a few hours trying to maneuver into position to wipe them out. The enemy was paying a heavy price for keeping the Dragoons outside their perimeter.

At one point during the afternoon, while A Trp. was in particularly heavy contact, the cavalrymen were forced to "circle the wagons" and fire from 360 degrees. CPT Christopher Noble (New Canaan, Conn.), medical platoon leader who filled in for a crewman on A Trp.'s "bandaid" (medical) track that afternoon, explained what happened.

"We were on the circle with the



Map A—First Day



Map B—Second Day

troop when we saw a tank get hit with an RPG round. Four medics were immediately on the spot and found one man with part of his back blown off. The CO tried calling in a dust-off, but before they had a chance to arrive, another chopper descended into the middle of the troop."

"It was LTC Lawrence in the Sqdn. C & C ship, and we immediately took the seriously wounded man over there, and the chopper took off. We later learned that the man survived," said the Medical Service Corps officer.

Realizing that the enemy was in a major position of great depth (later established to be large elements of two regiments of the 2nd NVA Div.), a decision was made to send in an infantry company to flush the NVA out of their spider holes. A landing zone southwest of the "island" battle area was chosen, and C Trp. was dispatched to secure it.

As the unit neared the proposed location, it became evident that no combat assault would be made there that afternoon. "We had to cross a small forest to get to the LZ," stated PFC Mark Bellis (Dundee, N.Y.), a gunner with the 2nd Plt., C Trp.

"As soon as we were in the middle, we were right up ambush alley. 'Charlie' hit us." Once again, a "Dragoon" unit had to "circle the wagons" and fire from 360 degrees.

"**The men never stopped fighting,**" remarked SP4 Wallace Colligan (Terryville, Conn.), a track commander with the 2nd Plt. "In one tank, everybody was wounded except one man, Huom, a Kit Carson scout. He just jumped up to the top of the tank and began firing that .50 cal. until he too got wounded."

The NVA threw everything they had at the Cav., but the Americal unit wouldn't budge. They returned whatever they received with dividends. As darkness approached, the troop was forced to break contact and take up night-laager (360 degree security) positions.

The infantry unit that was to land there, B Co., 4th Bn., 21st Inf. of the 11th Inf. Bde., and another unit, the 196th Inf. Bde.'s B Co., 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., were sent to Hawk Hill to get ready for action the next day.

A Trp., which was still fighting in the vicinity of the "island," also broke contact at the approach of darkness.

At the end of the first day, 227 NVA soldiers were killed, while the "Dragoons" lost only two men.

The plan for the second day called for all three cavalry troops to join the battle with support from the two infantry companies. (See Map B)

C Trp., working with B Co., 4/21, was to move north of the island and attack a suspected enemy battalion

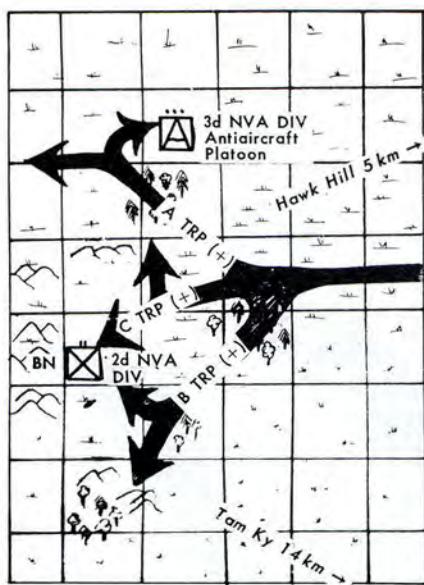
headquarters area. A Trp. and B Co., 2/1 were to move westward from a southerly position and attack the "island" from a different direction than the first day. B Trp., which had not taken part in the action of the 24th, was to move south along the west side of the suspected positions and act as a blocking force. "Blue Ghost" scouts had reported that NVA were fleeing from the area the previous night.

A Trp. drew enemy fire as soon as it neared the woodline. "My platoon never did manage to get into it all day," said 1LT Ginz. "Everytime we got too near to it the fire became so intense we had to go back."

Other platoons had better luck. After air strikes by the "Blue Ghosts" pounded one area, A Trp.'s third platoon thrust into the woodline. "We pulled up on a hilltop waiting for the choppers to finish," remarked 1LT Thomas Jackson (Houston, Tex.), then third platoon leader. "Then we went forward, but we advanced so far that we swept past the enemy's frontline."

"**We were getting hit** from both sides and the rear. We had to fight our way out. But we really gave it to them."

To the north, B Trp. was working its way down to act as a blocking force, and received fire from many



Map C—Fourth Day



With .50 cal. blazing, an assaulting ACAV of C Trp. heads through a woodline.

A "Guardian" rifleman fires across a rice paddy as "his" ACAV gets orders to maneuver. Below, the three elements that together brought victory work very closely in one phase of the operations.

enemy positions. "They very nearly had to run through a gauntlet of NVA guns to get to their position," noted MAJ Logan.

It shortly became apparent, however, that there wasn't any need for a blocking force as the NVA were well dug in and weren't going anywhere. B Trp. kept driving to its objective when it suddenly discovered it was in the middle of a regimental headquarters. The cavalrymen started firing in every direction and formed a perimeter. "Blue Ghosts" continually came in with fire support and B Trp. stayed there till fading light forced them to break contact.

The assault on the regimental headquarters was a decisive blow to the enemy. So much commo wire was torn up and so much disorganization was caused by B Trp.'s attack, that the NVA communications and operations were completely disrupted. They were forced to withdraw during the night.

C Trp., meanwhile, had run into tough and well-planned defenses over the crests of the gentle hills of the area. They slowed the troop up but were unable to completely stop its advance.

About midafternoon of the 25th, a group of infantrymen had become detached from the ACAVs and were in a precarious position. They had moved to within 20 meters of a woodline when the NVA opened up. The patrol was pinned down and several men wounded.

A track from the 2nd Plt. answered the call but was forced to stop 30 meters from the wounded "Gimlets." There was heavy fire coming from the woodline.

SGT William A. Swoveland, scout section leader of the platoon, and SP4 Steven Nussbaumer, the platoon



Shingledecker

medic, dismounted. While the rest of the men in the area laid down a base of fire, the two "Dragoons" dashed to the wounded men and brought two of them back to safety.

Without regard for their own lives, Swoveland and Nussbaumer went back again to help the infantrymen. Both were mortally wounded.

During the second day, 259 NVA soldiers were dead, while seven Americans and one Kit Carson scout had been killed by hostile fire.

On the morning of the third day, the battle began with all three troops moving along the southern flank and hooking north. Artillery from A Btry., 3rd Bn., 16th Arty., prepared the area with 20 minutes of fire prior to the cavalry-infantry assault.

After the former frontline of the previous two days had been penetrated, it was determined that the NVA had moved out during the night. The only action the "Dragoons" were to see that day was from rearguard elements.

In one minor encounter, B Trp. got hit with automatic weapons fire and the ACAVs, tanks, and "Blue Ghost" gunships hit back hard. While this was going on, SP4 Ronald Keener (Tulare, Calif.), a gunner and tank driver from the 1st Plt., noticed an unusual occurrence.

"**The infantry was out in front** of us when the enemy hit. Then I saw an infantryman in front of my tank get shot...at least I thought he got hit," Keener explained.





Noble

"Have you ever used a P-38 to open up some C-rations? Well this guy got hit in the head with an AK-47 round and it sort of ricocheted around his steel pot, opening it up like a can of ham and lima beans. The pot was edged with jagged steel, but the 'grunt' didn't even have a scratch," the "Dragoon" noted.

No American died on the third day, while 35 NVA soldiers were killed.

On the fourth day, Aug. 27, all three troops went out in pursuit of the NVA. They moved on an axis north of the battle area and then fanned out in three different directions (See Map C): Trp. A with the 1st Plt. of B Co., 4/21 to the northwest; Trp. C with B Co., 2/1 due west; and B Trp. with the rest of B

Co., 4/21 to the southwest.

A Trp. was proceeding up an incline when they made contact. "The captain got a call from 'Blue Ghost' about antiaircraft guns being in a fortified position on the hill ahead of us," remarked 1LT Ginz. "We came up the hill on line but there was not much resistance."

"We just drove right in," he continued. "We captured two .51 cal. antiaircraft guns and found a lot of enemy packs. The troop killed or captured all but three men in the unit."

B Trp., meanwhile, had been receiving recoilless rifle, RPG, and automatic weapons fire from a ridge-line north of their position. C Trp. came to help and as they provided fire support, B Trp. assaulted. They remained in contact until dark.

The "Blue Ghosts," were, as usual, there throughout the battle. SP4 Keener recalled one particular instance when the helicopters were right on target.

"We had been moving up a hill and couldn't really see down the other side, when 'Blue Ghost' said that there were NVA in the brushline just over the crest. Before we had a chance to react, the Cobra dived and hit the enemy with rockets and his minigun. There were explosions as

A barreling tank from A Trp. emerges from a woodline in search of main force NVA. Meanwhile, a platoon of C Trp. moves on line to assault NVA rearguard elements.



Noble

close as 25 meters from my tank," stated Keener.

The results of the day's action were 27 NVA killed and three captured, while only one American was killed.

During the four-day engagement, 548 NVA soldiers were killed while 29 individual and 18 crew-served weapons were captured. Three NVA soldiers were captured.

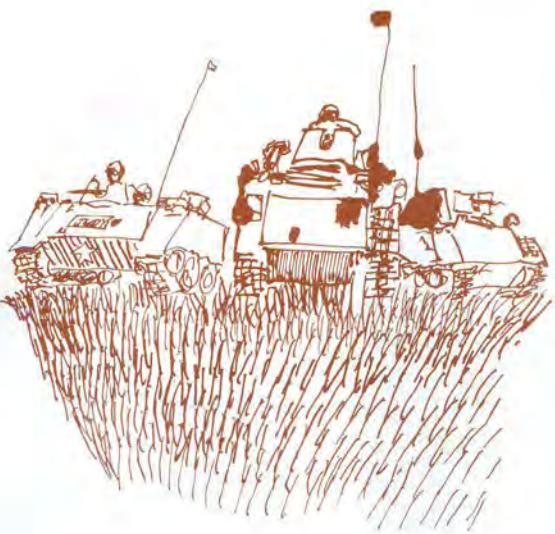
There were 10 U.S. soldiers and one Kit Carson Scout killed, while 81 men were wounded and evacuated. The kill ratio was more than 50-1.

The enemy was stopped cold. "It would appear from captured enemy documents and prisoners," said LTC Richard D. Lawrence, Sqdn. commander, "that the enemy's original objective was an attack on Tam Ky."

Some time later, the Chief of Quang Tin province presented the 1st/1st with plaques and the grateful thanks of the populace.

In the words of LTC Lawrence, "There is nothing mysterious about our success in operating in Vietnam. The principles in the armored cavalry field manual still are valid in every respect. If the troop commanders use them properly and judiciously, and the men are properly motivated and filled with esprit, they can't go wrong. I'd go anywhere with the Cav."





WHAT IS A CAVALRYMAN?

By MAJ FREDERICK J. FILBERT

Exec. Officer, 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav.

Some where between the apple-cheeked innocence of the Combat Center and the urbane worldliness of the Sydney R&R veteran, we find a delightful creature known as a Cavalryman. Cavalrymen come in assorted shapes and conditions, mostly "out of." You find them everywhere, but mostly riding through "Indian Country" on Tanks, ACAVs, LOHs, and Cobras. Local merchants love them; "Charlie" hates them; the Americal Division staff tolerates them; new platoon leaders frustrate them; infantrymen ignore them; and the combat medics protect them.

A Cavalryman is confusion with profanity on his tongue...experience with three Purple Hearts on his chest...imagination with a slice of C4 in his mouth...and faith with a flak jacket on his back.

A Cavalryman has the appetite of an IBM computer, the energy of a nuclear reactor, the curiosity of an old maid, the enthusiasm of a kid in an ice cream plant, the lungs of an umpire, and the shyness of a bull elephant in the mating season.

He likes women, beer, ice cream, Playboy magazine, letters from "The World," Australia, steaks, "DEROS," hot showers, Hong Kong, and hot chow. He isn't much for the Monsoons, RPGs, AK-47s, spit and polish, broken torsion bars, C-rations, roast beef, Kool Aid, powdered eggs, "Charlie," walking, or waiting in line.

No one else is so early in the chow line, or so often at the beer cooler. When you want him he's somewhere in the AO. When you don't want him he's hovering over your desk with 117 reasons why he should be promoted or go on a third R&R. No one else can cram into one fighting vehicle a double basic load of ammunition, 10 cases of C-rations, two rolls of barbed wire, 14 shaped charges, a portable TV, one chaise lounge, three beer coolers, five cartons of cigarettes, an empty tool bag, two transistor radios, three machineguns, a rice-polishing machine, and a pet monkey.

A Cavalryman is a fabulous creature. You can keep him out in the field, but you can't keep him out of the "vill." You can frustrate his desires, but you can't frustrate his drive. You can top his jokes, but you can't top his combat record. He's your conscience, your shadow, your second set of eyes, your psychiatrist, and your despair. But when the chips are down and the bullets ricochet off your track, he's your pride and joy, your fair-haired boy; a slashing, hard-charging bundle of nerve and sheer guts.

When you return from three days of hard fighting, trudge wearily through the mud to your bunker, and settle down with a cup of hot coffee, he can bring tears to your eyes with those tender, sympathetic, and understanding words, "I sure am sorry about your jeep, sir, but we were just trying to beat the other tanks to the fuel pump...."

A Quick Guide To R & R

Whether you call it Rest and Recuperation or Rest and Recreation or just plain R&R, it all means the same thing to a soldier in Vietnam: a chance to "get away from it all" at one of the 10 exciting R&R sites for five fun-filled days.

It could be meeting your family in Hawaii, a shopping spree in Hong Kong, sightseeing in Tokyo, or a romantic interlude in Kuala Lumpur, but whatever your taste, one of the R&R sites will have what you're looking for...and more.

To make the difficult task of narrowing your choice to just the right spot a little easier, the **Americical** has compiled the R&R Guide on the next two pages to give you a quick reference to all the sites. Keep it handy for when you begin to plan your five days in the pursuit of pleasure.

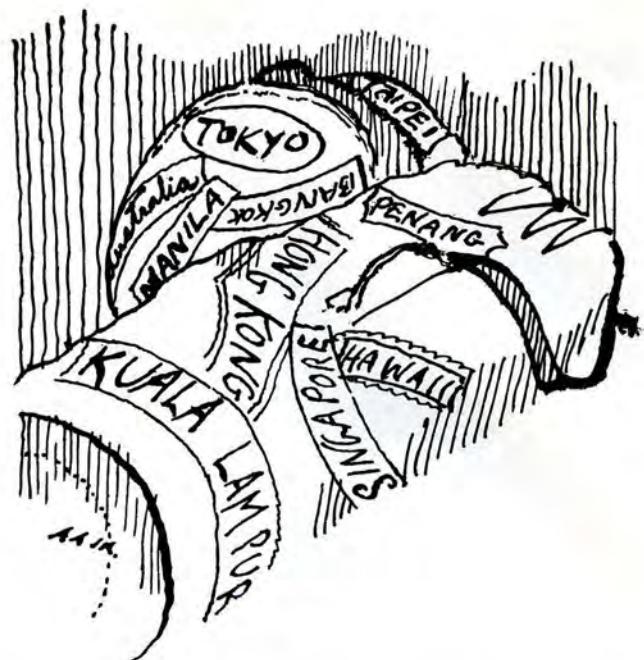
The material for the guide has been culled from the various R&R pamphlets and guidebooks on the 10 locations, plus many men of the Americical who already have taken an R&R have given us inside tips from their experiences.

The "Where The Action Is" column includes some of the forms of entertainment available and the areas they can be found. Under "Special Buys," we have listed the kind of items which are bargains or specialties of the particular locality.

The "Sightseeing" listing represents the places most often mentioned as "don't miss" spots, or they are famous tourist attractions of the area. In the "General Tips" space, we have tried to mention some of the important things to watch out for and remember.

The following general information supplied by the division R&R office should be kept in mind:

- You can request R&R 90 days after you arrive here, and it is best to put your request in two months before you want to depart. About 1,500 men take R&R each month.
- Hawaii and Australia are currently the most popular sites; thus they are the hardest to get.
- The average cost of R&R is around \$300; Hong Kong, Hawaii, Tokyo, and Australia are the most expensive.
- Mail your purchases from the local APO rather than through the civilian post office.
- R&R will be terminated in Kuala Lumpur effective July 1, 1969 and suspended in Penang from March 1 to June 1, 1969.



AUSTRALIA	Hyde Park and the beaches are good places to meet girls and enjoy the scenery. Many night spots and cabarets, just like Stateside. The Bankstown Hospital Quarters is good for blind dates. Try skindiving, spearfishing, deep-sea fishing, skiing, water skiing, surfing, golfing, moonlight horseback riding, and bush barbecues.	Woolen goods, opals, pottery, and aboriginal handicrafts
BANGKOK	Most recommended hotels have entertainment facilities and tour service provided. There are reasonable nightclubs and bars, fine restaurants, and English dialogue films. Take a look at Thi boxing, go to a horse race, or play a round of golf.	Black Star sapphires, bronzeware, silk, laquerware, stoneware, princess rings, unmounted precious stones, wood carvings, and jewelry.
HAWAII	Stateside action with a Polynesian accent. The main drag is Kalakaua Ave.; it has everything. Take in a luau or try a catamaran ride. Good surfing, sailing, golfing, skindiving, and tennis. If you're single try prowling the Waikiki Hotel area or all along the famous beaches.	Muumuus, Polynesian handicrafts, flowers and fruits, perfumes, woodenware, shell or coral jewelry. Many merchants offer special discounts to R&R servicemen.
HONG KONG	Most of the top night and supper clubs are in the hotels or restaurants. There are many dance halls, but check the R&R Center for recommendations. Try dining aboard one of the floating restaurants in Aberdeen Bay or a ride in a sampan or rickshaw.	Just about anything. Custom-made clothes, wood carvings, brassware, silk, ivoryware, cameras, watches, perfumes, bronze, jade, furs, copper, silver, and leather.
KUALA LUMPUR	Most entertainment is available through the hotels. Try horseback riding, swimming, bowling, or the theaters. Port Dickson is good for boat rentals, fishing trips, water skiing, and paddle boats.	Tailor-made suits, jewelry, sarongs, silverware, pewter, and kelatan brocade.
MANILA	The large splashy clubs are located on Roxas Blvd. in Pasay City. M.H. Del Pilar St. in the Ermita District has many small bars with hostesses for dancing. Rizal Ave. is the "movie street."	Monkeywood carvings, shell lanterns, watches, jewelry, handwoven fabrics, straw and abaca articles, cigars, paintings, silverware, and guitars.
PENANG	Penang Rd., Campbell St., and Bishop St. are the main shopping areas. There are numerous bars with hostesses. Most entertainment can be arranged through your hotel. Golfing, swimming, and movies are available.	Tailor-made suits, silk, cameras, ivory, watches, jewelry, and electronic equipment.
SINGAPORE	The most popular places for dancing and dining are in the hotels. There are many tours, plus horse racing, golf, water skiing, swimming, skindiving, fishing, spectator and participant sports, and movies. The international blend of people gives you girls of every description to choose from.	Dining delights to tempt the epicurean. Electrical goods, cameras, watches, jewelry, clothes, ivory, silk, wood carvings, curios, and crocodile skin goods.
TAIPEI	All the hotels have entertainment facilities, plus there are many small bars with hostesses and cheap drinks. Try the steam baths in Peitou, the NCO Open Mess for shows, the top floor of the R&R Center for dancing, and the Camp McCauley recreation area.	Tailor-made clothes, ivory, woodcraft, Chinese artifacts, lacquerware, jade, coral, bone and camphor carvings, and well-stocked Navy PX.
TOKYO	The big entertainment districts are Ginza, Shinjuku, Akasaka, and Shibuya. The world's largest city has huge nightclubs, cabarets, and small intimate bars, all with many hostesses. There are restaurants of every description for every taste. A steam bath is a must. Akihabara for electronic equipment; Yokohama has huge PX.	Photographic and electronic equipment, silk, pearls, children's toys and dolls, fine art and woodblock prints, kimonos and smoking jackets, and porcelain.

SIGHTSEEING

GENERAL TIPS

TAKE A CAMERA

<p>Try the ferryboat tour around Sydney Harbor or the hydrofoil boat tour. There are special tours throughout Australia, like to the Northern Territory. Visit an aborigine tribe or see wildlife such as the kangaroo. South of Brisbane is the Gold Coast.</p>	<p>Take film with you, since film is expensive there. Do not take more than one open pack of cigarettes, more than one pouch of pipe tobacco, or four cigars on your person. Very thorough customs check; know rules. Average cost: \$350.</p>	 <p>USARV-IO</p>
<p>See the Grand Palace, the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, the bridge on the River Kwai, the floating market, and Tim Land. Take the Ancient Palace Tour. Visit the snake farm or the royal barge. Watch native dancing or elephants working.</p>	<p>Always agree on price before taking a cab. Tips are included in your bills. Expect to bargain for purchases (buying several things as a package deal is better than one at a time). Film is expensive. Tap water is not potable. Average cost: \$250-400.</p>	 <p>Ainslie</p>
<p>Visit the Polynesian Culture Center, Sea Life Park, Tropical Bird Park, Kilauea Volcano, Pearl Harbor, Ulu Mau Hawaiian Village, or the Iolani Palace. Take the circle-the-island or night tour. See Ala Moana, world's largest shopping center.</p>	<p>Stay off Hotel St. and all dark streets. Mt. Tantalus is pretty by day, but dangerous at night. Cabs are expensive; cheaper to ride bus or rent a car. Drinking age is 20. Dress is informal. Cheaper souvenirs are in department stores. Average cost: \$500 plus.</p>	 <p>Babitts</p>
<p>Visit Tiger Balm Garden, Repulse Bay, the Peak Tramway, Victoria Peak, Botanical Gardens, a Taoist Temple, the Ocean Terminal, the Temple of 10,000 Buddhas, and the Nine Dragons of Kowloon. Take the around-the-island tour.</p>	<p>Tipping usually is included in bill. Ride in taxis with meters only; taxis with white license plates are illegal. Tap water is not potable. Bargaining is the rule. Ask for Comprehensive Certificate of Origin when you buy "Chinese type" items. Ave. cost: \$300-400.</p>	 <p>Noble</p>
<p>See the Batu Caves, the National Museum of Malaysian History, the changing of the guards at the Istana Negara Palace, the Lake Gardens, the National Art Gallery, the National Zoo, Sunday Market, and Templer Park.</p>	<p>Tipping is not expected. Taxis are cheap. Bargaining is the rule. It is a small area, so check all the stores for bargains before purchasing. Average cost: \$300-350.</p>	 <p>USARV-IO</p>
<p>Visit Intramuros—the Spanish walled city, the American Memorial Cemetery, Taal Lake and volcano, and the Corregidor battle site. See the bamboo organ in Las Pinas and the rapids of Pagsanjan Gorge.</p>	<p>Tipping is not a standard practice. Better to take cigarettes and toilet articles than to pay higher local prices. Many clubs have special Sunday afternoon discotheque sessions. Average cost: \$300-350.</p>	 <p>USARV-IO</p>
<p>Visit Khoo Kongsi, a Siamese temple, the Penang Buddhist Temple, Botanical Gardens, Penang Hill, Sungai Pinang Waterfall, and the Snake Temple. See the Batu Maung fishing village and rubber trees.</p>	<p>Shop in R&R recommended stores. You are expected to bargain. Beware of the services of "commission men" such as taxi or trishaw boys. Cheaper to carry items back to Vietnam and mail home from here. Use only metered cabs. Average cost: \$300-350.</p>	 <p>Ainslie</p>
<p>Visit the Singapore Museum, the waterfront, the Botanic Gardens, Chinatown, Arab Street, Haw Par Villa, and the monkey and crocodile farms. See the snake charmers.</p>	<p>Tips are not expected. You are expected to bargain. Some hotel annexes have cheaper prices than in downtown shops. There is no current U.S. status of forces agreement, meaning you are subject to local laws and police jurisdiction. Average cost: \$250-400.</p>	 <p>USARV-IO</p>
<p>Tour Grass Mountain, Wulai (home of Chinese aborigines), Taroko Gorge, the Taiwan Handicraft Promotional Center, Botanical Gardens, Lungshan Temple, Sun Moon Lake, Mt. Ali, and the National Museum. There are many side tours.</p>	<p>Chinese law prohibits buying hostesses more than four drinks per hour, so don't allow them to push drinks. Public display of affection is offensive to the Chinese. Eating too much of the local fruit may disrupt your digestion. Average cost: \$300</p>	 <p>Cobb</p>
<p>Visit the Meiji Shrine and the many temples, the Imperial Palace, Olympic Park, Sony Bldg., Ueno Park and Zoo, the department store exhibition halls, Noh and Kabuki theater, and Tokyo Tower. There are many festivals.</p>	<p>PX prices are lower than the local economy. Subways are easiest and least expensive transportation. Tipping is not expected. Buy at large department stores for bargains. Taxis are inexpensive, but thrilling. Expensive entertainment, but cheap food. Average cost: \$300.</p>	 <p>Guerrant</p>

Putting The Enemy In The Doghouse...

COMBAT TRACKERS

Four men and a dog walk quickly but quietly in front of an infantry platoon. A lanky Labrador retriever sniffs the ground under the constant observation of his handler. Suddenly the dog stops for no apparent reason. The enemy is out there and one of the Americal Division's tracker dog teams isn't far behind.

The 63rd Infantry Platoon-Combat Tracker (IPCT), operating under the division's Support Command, is assigned the task of finding "Charlie" when he least desires company. Typical missions for the platoon include finding enemy personnel who survive friendly ambushes and tracking down terrorist or mine laying parties.

The use of dog teams in combat is not unique to the Vietnam war. The Romans used canines as attack animals. War dogs saw duty as sentries, messengers, and carriers during World War I. The Dogs For Defense Program brought 1,000 canines a month to the service of the U.S. Army in World War II.

Tracker dog teams were first used in warfare by the British in Malaya. Special teams made up of soldiers skilled in the science of visual tracking and dogs trained to follow a ground scent were introduced to the conflict to find the elusive enemy in the jungle terrain. The U.S. Army, experiencing similar problems in Vietnam, followed the British lead and started a tracker dog program.

The mission of the Labrador retriever tracker teams is different from that of the German sheppard

scout dog teams. The trackers are trained to follow a ground scent, while the scouts are taught to alert for the presence of any foreign personnel or objects in the area by detecting an air scent.

"Our main function is to regain contact with the enemy once it has been broken," explained 1LT James Obermayer, commander of the 63rd IPCT. "Our second mission is the reconnaissance of a given area for



such things as suspected mortar or rocket sites. Also we train personnel from other Americal units to be visual trackers."

Time is as much of an adversary to the success of a tracking mission as the enemy himself. The quicker the tracker team is notified the better the chances are the trail will be picked up. Once contact is broken with the enemy a company commander should immediately request a team through his battalion S-3.

The message is relayed to the tracker headquarters at Chu Lai.

"We continually have one team on alert," the lieutenant commented. "It can be on the chopper pad and ready to travel in 10 minutes."

Four men and a dog usually make up a combat tracker team. They are the dog and handler, the visual tracker, the coverman, and the team leader. The quintet must work closely together or the results could be fatal.

The visual tracker must first determine where the trail is. Then the Labrador is brought to the front of the formation because it can track faster than its human counterpart. The dogs have greater success in heavily vegetated areas rather than open areas because the human scent lingers longer in thick undergrowth.

If the scent is lost by the dog, one of two things happens. Either the animal is given its leash and allowed to "cast," sniffing the general area where the trail was lost, or the visual tracker is called forward to detect any footprints, broken branches, or other indicators left by the fleeing enemy.

The coverman's job is just what the name implies: to immediately provide cover fire in the event of an attack. The team leader makes the decision whether to proceed on the trail or call in the infantry unit.

Depending on the terrain, different types of tracking formations are used. According to dog handler SGT David Coonrod, "In dense foliage we travel in a single file with the dog and handler on the point followed by the coverman, then the

Story and Photos

By SP4 DEAN NORLAND

visual tracker, and finally the team leader. In an open area we usually move in a diamond formation with the dog and handler in front, the visual tracker and the covermen on the sides, and the team leader in the rear."

The original members of the all-volunteer tracker platoon were trained by the British in Malaya. SGT Bruce Klinefelter, now a team leader, was one of the closely screened applicants to be given the seven-week course. "We learned how to recon by taking signs off the trail. We also were taught how to determine the height, sex, number, and load of the persons we were following without seeing them."

A tracker team does have its limitations. The dogs are unable to track at night or after a heavy storm. However, the tracker platoon will field a visual tracking team after a rain, which is often able to pickup the trail. A dog's tracking ability usually deteriorates beyond 5,000 meters. Because of the tremendous investment in the retrievers, about \$3,000 apiece, the animals are removed to a rear area at the end of a day.

In the majority of times a tracker team is called out on a mission, suspects or confirmed enemy troops are found. Weapons, tunnel complexes, and supply caches are often uncovered by the trained searchers. "If we don't make actual contact, we still are almost always able to supply the infantry unit with some type of intelligence information," 1LT Obermayer said.



4 Stars On LZ Mellon



A Color Pictorial

By SGT George Hawkins

196th Inf. Bde.



Four stars loomed high above the triple canopy jungles of Quang Tin Province recently, when the Commanding General of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, GEN Creighton W. Abrams, visited Landing Zone Mellon.

Hosted by the 196th Inf. Bde. unit defending and securing the fire support base at that time, C Co., 4th Bn., 31st Inf., he was briefed during the visit by Bn. CO LTC Robert Wetzel.

LZ Mellon, dubbed "the Outpost" by its defenders, is of command interest because it overlooks heavily used enemy infiltration routes, one of which is visible to the naked eye.



At the tactical maps, LTC Wetzel briefs GEN Abrams on the situation involving enemy infiltration routes and resupply points in the Que Son Valley area. Later, the general, the "Polar Bear" CO, and 1LT John Hagan, another Co. C platoon leader, enjoy a good joke. The Commanding General departed Landing Zone Mellon shortly thereafter.



A network cameraman focuses on GEN Creighton W. Abrams while he is discussing the tactical situation with 1LT Dickie Dixon, a platoon leader with Co. C (standing next to the CG), Battalion Commander LTC Robert Wetzel, and CO of the host company on the remote LZ, 1LT Edward Henry.



They Chose Freedom

By SFC LARRY BABITTS



To the disappointed Vietnamese peasants who have been subjected to the hunger and deprivation of life among the Viet Cong, the brightly colored Safe Conduct Pass of the "Chieu Hoi" program is a permit to renew their old way of life...an opportunity to return to live freely under the government of South Vietnam.

More often than not, the VC guerrillas are "Nho Nha" (homesick) and only want to return to the peaceful life they had before joining the hard life of the rebels. But a few want to do more. For them the only way to rid themselves of the guilt they feel from their past actions is to work as a Kit Carson Scout for the Americans. The following story concerns such a returnee...one of those who chose freedom.

The trip from Tam Ky to the Chu Lai enclave takes only a little more than 40 minutes over a weather-beaten road. Sitting in the cab of a three-quarter-ton truck is Hoi Chanh Nguyen X, a recent returnee under the government of Vietnam's "Chieu Hoi" program.

"Hoi Chanh" (rallier) is the name given to an individual who voluntarily returns under the "Chieu Hoi" program. This program offers the hand of friendship and a new beginning in life to any Viet Cong or North Vietnamese Army member. The program has a strong appeal for both civilians and soldiers to rally to our side.

Hoi Chanh Nguyen X is on his way to the Americal Division's Kit Carson Scout Center to begin 10 weeks of intensive training. His story started slightly more than two months ago in a rice paddy in Quang Tin Province when he was an active communist and cadreman in a local VC unit.

Nguyen was recruited into the VC at a very young age, and despite his slightly stooped shoulders and his work-

worn hands, his alert brown eyes show he is still a teenager.

The son of a sharecropper and sometime small merchant, Nguyen said, "I joined with the VC because they promised me many things. They also told me that the U.S. forces were here to kill the Vietnamese and to help keep a bad government in power."

"As it turned out," he told the officials at the Tam Ky Center, "they lied to me. Life with the National Liberation Front was full of hardships; we never did get enough to eat and were forced to steal from other farmers to stay alive.

"Our medical care was very poor, our wounded could not be treated as they should have been, and we lived in constant fear of the American bomber and rocket attacks. We also heard from the other farmers that the Americans weren't murdering people as we had been told."

Nguyen's decision to return to the government of Vietnam's (GVN) control was not reached lightly. "I did much thinking before coming over," he said quietly, "and even then I was afraid of what the Americans might do to me. It was a tough life, and staying with the VC meant too much chance of being killed."

Like the majority of persons accepting amnesty under the Chieu Hoi program, Nguyen gave himself up to the nearest South Vietnamese military organization. He felt that they could better understand him, and hoped they would honor the promises made by the GVN under this program.

His hopes were well founded. As a Hoi Chanh he was brought with minimal delay to the Chieu Hoi Center just south of the province capital, Tam Ky. Destined to spend the next two months in this center, he was given new, non-military clothing and a place to sleep.

The more than 30 Hoi Chanh already there helped him to overcome his initial fears and he began to feel comfortable in his new surroundings. After a day or two of acclimation and enjoyment of the abundant Vietnamese foods, his indoctrination began.

"**During the first 48 hours** they are given a complete physical examination and must fill out the many necessary forms," said Ong Le Kim Thanh, the GVN center chief.

"While he trains during the next two months," the official continued, "our skilled cadre-observers determine his sincerity and how well he progresses toward political reliability."

Each day the newly arrived Hoi Chanh attends an hour-long indoctrination class concerning the efforts of the Free World Forces. He also is introduced to the fundamentals of personal hygiene.

A broad scope of occupational training may be available, and the acceptance of this training is only by the Hoi Chanh's choice. If he prefers, he may retain his old civilian trade.

Guerrant



An instructor (left) at the division's Kit Carson Scout Center teaches English to a new trainee.

Nguyen Van Xuan (right) receives detailed instruction in the care and maintenance of the M-16 rifle from master scout Ngo Van Douc, as part of the scout training.



Guerrant

After completion of the mandatory training period, the Hoi Chanh is given a six-month draft deferment from military service and an attempt is made to relocate him. If he wishes, he may return home if the area is under GVN control.

Hoi Chanh Nguyen X chose another alternative offered to him. He elected to enter the Kit Carson Scout training program. The program permits a Hoi Chanh to serve as a civilian scout attached to the U.S. forces in a specific area.

"Besides farming, the only thing I knew was to be a soldier," the small, rugged-looking ex-guerrilla said, "and in order to pay back for my earlier behavior, I thought this was the best way."

After a brief training period at the Americal Kit Carson training center, the new scout will be assigned to one of the maneuver elements within the division's area of operations.

"It's a long haul from the less sophisticated Vietnamese peasant society to living with the Americans," one of the Kit Carson school officers remarked. "The largest single item we have to contend with is helping the Hoi Chanh become accustomed to our American diet and mannerisms."

While at this unfenced, special training area, Nguyen is encouraged to adapt the skills and techniques he learned as a VC for tactical use with American or South Vietnamese troops.

From the Chieu Hoi volunteers, our units have often been able to get the "inside story" on the VC situation,

according to a training center spokesman. They bring with them some of the best information, both military and political, that our forces have been able to obtain.

Each day the Kit Carson trainee works along with a cadreman, who himself may be a former communist, as well as with specially-trained American or South Vietnamese NCOs.

Since the Kit Carson Scout is always assigned to the general area in which he operated as an enemy, his knowledge of the geography and the local population is invaluable. In many cases the newly loyal scouts have been able to point out other Viet Cong suspects and sympathizers as well as lead our troops to enemy weapons and supply caches.

During a three-month period last summer, the handful of scouts assigned to the Americal killed 30 VC, detained or brought into the division more than 120 verified VC, and a dozen individual and three crew-served weapons.

In the same period, they participated in nearly 2,500 separate patrols and located and explored 57 cave and tunnel complexes. Some, desiring to assist the Psychological Operations program, have lent their native language skills to more than 300 broadcasts to the enemy.

According to SGT Richard C. Adams, a squad leader with Co. C, 3rd Bn., 21st Inf., 196th Inf. Bde., "These scouts are among the best assets we have on a partol. They are more than just all right."

While operating in a village about five miles north of Dong Ha, near the DMZ, Adams' squad was fired upon by a platoon of NVA soldiers. "The NVA soldiers

placed themselves behind some grave-mounds about 10 or 12 meters in front of us" the young NCO explained, "and we exchanged small arms fire for a couple of hours."

Finally, when it began to get light, the sergeant decided to try and maneuver his men into a better position outside his perimeter.

"From their well-protected positions, they could fire on us almost at will," the veteran of more than 10 months' combat added, "and we wanted to see if we could get into position to clean them up."

But despite the Americans' heavy base of fire, they could not maneuver into a more favorable posture "because the enemy was well set up behind the safety of the high grave-mounds."

"All of a sudden," Adams continued, "our Kit Carson Scout, Nam, who was armed with only a machete, grabbed a rifle from one of our wounded men and ran outside the perimeter. He charged onto the grave-mound, and although he had never handled an M-16 before, began firing point-blank at the enemy lodged there."

While the Americans were laying down support fire for

Nam, he ran out of ammunition. "Under a heavy barrage of small arms fire, Nam returned to our perimeter, corrected his problem, and continued shooting until some of my men could get into position to kill the NVA soldiers," the Michigan-born GI concluded.

"There's no telling what the outcome of this particular fight would have been," added CPT Jay E. Pry, the sergeant's commanding officer, "or how many Americans this particular scout saved by his spontaneous valor that day."

As a result of that action, Hoi Chanh Nam, a Kit Carson Scout and former VC, was nominated for the Bronze Star medal for valor.

If awarded, Nam will join three other Americal Kit Carson Scouts who already have been awarded medals for valor. Seven others have been killed by hostile fire while performing in their official capacity in this program named for the famous American frontiersman and Indian Scout.

They chose freedom, and they were willing to die for it.



Balwin

Putting their training to the test, two Kit Carson scouts lead a 198th Inf. Bde. patrol along a trail northwest of Chu Lai.

POWER THRU KNOWLEDGE

IT
ALL BEGINS
HERE

THE COMBAT CENTER

By 1LT MIKE WOLFGANG
Americal-IO

The fireteam makes its way slowly down the trail, almost hidden by thick undergrowth. The sting of a lone drop of perspiration, seeking out the morning's razor nick, begins to irritate the man assigned to walk point for the element. All thoughts begin to focus upon that single, bothersome twinge of pain, eclipsing the heat of the Vietnamese day and obliterating the almost invisible strand of wire stretching across the trail.

The wire is attached to a boobytrap and the soldier meets it with a bang. This time, however, the explosion is harmless. It is greeted by a few muffled chuckles as a somewhat embarrassed PFC learns a graphic lesson in the employment of enemy mines and booby traps.

A similar scene is reenacted every day at the Americal Division's Combat Center. It is there that all new men in the division are given an extensive in-country orienta-

tion, marked throughout with realistic practical exercises, such as the VC/NVA mines and booby trap confidence course.

The training is designed to give the replacement a cross-section of what he might find when he gets to the field, remarked LTC Robert B. Longino, Combat Center Commandant.

The Combat Center of today is a far cry from the original training site set up in mid-December 1967. Then, trainees crowded into makeshift classrooms converted from hootches on the barren Americal beach. One medium-size tent served as the mess hall during those early days.

In marked contrast to the cramped, poorly-lit classrooms of the original training area, the newly arrived soldiers now receive much of their instruction in 160-man

UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS

AMERICAL COMBAT CENTER





Training To Meet The Challenge Ahead

Schwarz

classrooms equipped with lecterns, fluorescent lighting, fans, and a number of training aids. Feeding of the newcomers is now handled by a huge, 512-man messhall, considered the second largest of its kind in Vietnam.

The new GI with a combat MOS is welcomed to his tour of duty with the Americal by an exhaustive seven-day orientation marked by several 15-hour days with as many as 14 different subjects covered in a single day.

The instruction is divided between academic and field exercises which give the student an opportunity to apply many of the principles taught in the classroom.

Familiarization with weapons such as the claymore mine and the M-79 grenade launcher, as well as the "zeroing" of the individual's rifle is included during the seven days at the Combat Center. Sandwiched between the subjects dealing with infantry are need-to-know classes presented by representatives from various division sections, such as the Staff Judge Advocate, G5, and the Division Surgeon.

"**Instructors are hand-picked field veterans,**" commented FSG John J. Donnelly, acting sergeant major of the school. "Experience, however, is not enough. Each prospective instructor must give a 20-minute class on his particular subject before we accept him on one of the committees. The only exceptions to the field veteran rule are made in the case of some classes dealing with non-tactical subjects."

SFC Angel De La Cruz, NCOIC of the general subjects committee typifies the caliber of NCO chosen to give the "grunt" his last formalized training before meeting the enemy on his own ground. The small, but tough veteran of three Vietnam tours has served as an "11 Bravo" throughout his 15-year Army career.

"I think people coming in-country today are real lucky. They've got experienced people to teach them," said the former platoon sergeant with Co. A, 1st Bn., 20th Inf., 11th Inf. Bde. The big test of a man's ability to survive in a combat situation comes with the first firefight, De La Cruz emphasized.

"It's the first firefight that separates the men from the boys. All it takes is a bullet or a piece of shrapnel to hit close by his ear...then he wises up that this is for real.

"I'm sorry to say most of the people getting killed and wounded over here do so because of their own mistakes—simple mistakes, like not hitting the ground when they are supposed to or failing to look for trip wires in an area known to be booby-trapped." This message is pounded into the trainees repeatedly throughout their course.

SSG Walter Joiner, a former platoon sergeant with Co A, 1st Bn., 52nd Inf, 198th Inf. Bde. is another of those dedicated NCOs who knows exactly what the "green" trooper will face.

"You get out in the field and stay there for several months and your men start to get relaxed. They get tired and disgusted, not paying attention where they're walking or what they're doing. That's when 'Charlie' hits you... when he sees you goofing off on the job."

Although this training could save an infantryman's life, some who are returning for a second or even a third tour, feel that as combat veterans they know it all already. SGT De La Cruz answers them, "This is my third tour and I can honestly say that the tactics have changed each time. Every time I came back I learned something new."

A condensed version of the seven-day course is given to all non-field troops assigned to the division. The course, lasting three days, covers a number of subjects ranging from military justice to weapons training.

The Combat Center has processed and trained more than 20,000 individual replacements in one year's time. In addition, two infantry battalions, one artillery battalion, two artillery batteries, three infantry companies, and most of the 3rd Bde., 82nd Airborne Div. were given a short familiarization course during the first year.

At tour's end, the replacement-turned-veteran returns to his "alma mater" for outprocessing and debriefing prior to his return to CONUS. Perhaps at that time he is more appreciative of the fact that he started his tour at the Combat Center.

*Eager To Aid Their People,
Vietnamese Nurses Provide...*

SERVICE

With A Pretty Smile

“I wanted to become a nurse since I was a small girl. My people do not have a doctor. I want to be able to help when the Americans are not here.”

The speaker is Tuong Nguyen Thi, a petite and pretty girl who displays maturity beyond her years and a dedication to the cause of caring for the health needs of her people.

Tuong Nguyen Thi's dream of becoming a nurse became a reality recently with the help and training of the 198th Infantry Brigade. She was one of several girls to be selected by the chiefs of the seven villages of Ly Tin District to complete the new short course in nursing recently started by “Brave and Bold” medical personnel.

Instituted and headed by CPT Robert Brown (River-

Nurse photos: Kinder



Soon-to-be nurse Tuong Nguyen Thi (left) shows Dr. Robert Brown, program supervisor, the antiseptic she has chosen to treat an elderly patient. Later, working by herself, she explains to a local villager in language he will understand, the use of the medicine she has prescribed for his treatment.



The first group of girls who have graduated from the nurse training program assemble for their commencement photo with Dr. Brown and CPT Thu, former Ly Tin District Chief. A few days later, one of the newly-capped nurses, Hong Vo Thi Thu, is assisted by SP6 Verlin Bryant, 1/6, in treating a child during a daily MEDCAP in her village.



dale, Ill.), battalion surgeon of the 1st Bn., 6th Inf., the program is designed to give the young girls a basic knowledge of first aid and simple medicines so they may serve as nurses for their villages when other medical care is not available.

Most of the girls are high school graduates, and all are eager, intelligent, and proud to serve in this job they have been chosen to perform.

Each day of the intensive two-week course begins when the girls are brought to the battalion aid station of the 1st of the 6th. There they observe sick call and watch as the aidmen log in patients, check symptoms, and, when possible, administer treatment.

Next, they are given two-hour lectures on medicine and medical assistance. The girls are trained to use 15 basic medicines, eight ointments, and several injections. They learn what ointment goes on what rash.

"Each girl knows the effect of the medicine she administers," said Dr. Brown. "She is taught the effects of the injections, what they will do, and what they will cure."

In the afternoon, classes are held at one of the daily MEDCAPs the "Regulars" conduct in the Chu Lai area. At first the girls simply observe the treatments for the various assortment of afflictions, but later they assume a more active role.

As they gain more experience and are given more responsibility, they are soon able to hold their own MEDCAPs with little or no supervision from Dr. Brown.

If a person is seriously ill, they know he must be taken to a Tam Ky or Chu Lai hospital.

The nurses who have graduated from the course (10 as of Nov. 30) are working in the Ly Tin Villages. They have taken over the responsibility for administering medical assistance to the people on a steady basis.

The Vietnamese nurses have several basic advantages going for them. The first is language. They need no interpreter to understand the patient as he explains his symptoms, and it also gives them an intrinsic rapport. Treatments and "how to use this white stuff in the jar" are a lot easier when both parties speak the same language.

Another advantage is that the girls are working in their own villages and are acutely aware of the special health problems that may exist.

"We hope the nurses will soon be running the dispensaries and maternity wards throughout the district, and we can eventually turn the whole MEDCAP program over to the Vietnamese," stated Dr. Brown.

The training of the Vietnamese nurses is an important step toward that goal, and the medical personnel of the 198th are continually improving and refining the nursing course with every new class.

The services performed by the girls of Ly Tin are helping their people in a vitally important way. Both they and their patients are grateful.

As Nurse Hong Vo Thi Thu put it, "It is our country. I only want to help any way I can. It is our job." 

AMERICAL MIRTH

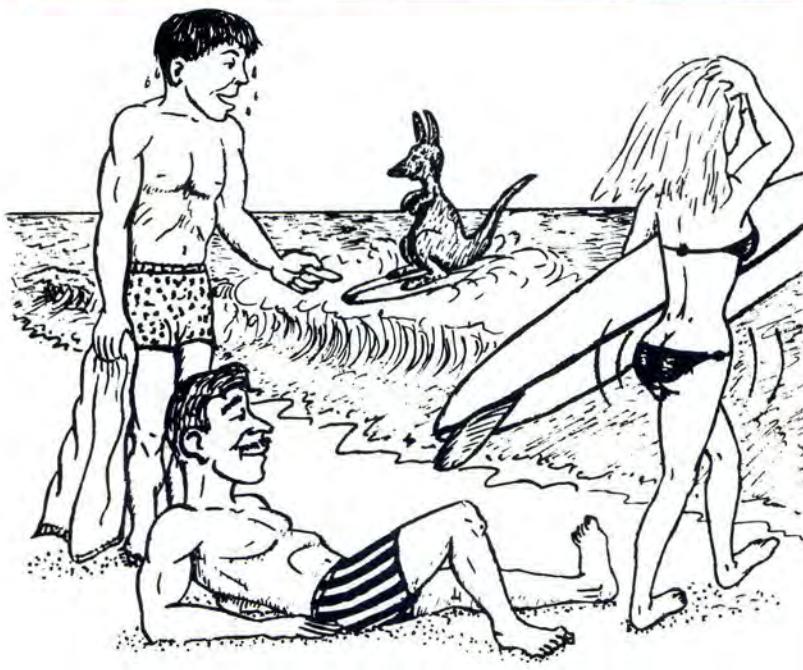
By SP4 Dave McGowen



*"I'm warning you, buddy.
I've been through Ranger School!"*



*"I don't care how you're supposed to pronounce
it, I'm still gonna call it 'Thighland'."*



"Hey, man! Dig that groovy Aussie."



*"Yeah, I had lots of offers to defect in
Hawaii, but I finally sobered-up the ole lady."*

TET

TET is Vietnam's most important celebration of the year: It is a national holiday, a spring festival, a family reunion, and everyone's birthday.

It is a time to pay homage to ancestors, visit family and friends, observe traditional customs, and to celebrate. It is the time when the Vietnamese reflect back on the past, enjoy the present, and look ahead to the future with hope and faith.

Contrary to our new year which begins in the middle of winter, the Viet new year commences with the spring equinox which marks the new lunar year and the beginning of spring. This year the holiday is Feb. 17-19.

For people who have been exclusively agricultural until the last few years, the succession of the seasons is a principle phenomenon by which the life of the individual as well as the nation is regulated. Since ancient times it has been believed that the renewal of people ought to correspond to that of nature. Therefore, with the arrival of spring, man should rid himself of his worries, his griefs, and his hatreds.

TET thus takes on a religious character which implies the correcting of faults and the forgetting of past mistakes, but also the pardon of insults and offenses. At the beginning of the new year one should no longer have enemies or debts.

Preparations for TET begin many days in advance. The house is decorated, new clothes are made, enough food is prepared to last the entire holiday, and a supply of firecrackers is accumulated. Also, the "cay neu" is erected in front of every house to frighten off evil spirits.

The "cay neu" is a 30-foot bamboo pole decorated with bright-colored ribbons, feathers, pieces of colored glass, or a talisman of straw. Attached to the top is a small basket containing betel and areca nuts for the good spirits. A woven bamboo square is placed over the basket as a barrier to evil spirits.

Many superstitions accompany TET. For instance, it is believed that the first visitor on the first day of TET will influence the fate of the entire family for the whole year. If the first visitor is a happy man, happiness is assured until next year. If a rich man visits first, the family's fortune will increase.

To avoid any misfortune, nothing is left to chance—the first visitor is carefully selected and invited in advance to come as early as possible on this day.

Another superstition of TET is that it is bad luck to clean your house during the holidays. Like many other beliefs it has a legendary meaning.

Once upon a time, a merchant met an enchanting beauty and

made her his concubine. From that day his fortune grew. On the first day of TET the girl accidentally broke the most cherished object in the merchant's prized collection of curios. The merchant flew into a violent rage and beat her. Terrified, the girl hid in a heap of refuse. When the merchant had the pile of refuse thrown outside, the girl disappeared. From that time on, he began to lose business, and eventually he became pennyless.

Because of another legend it has become the custom to carefully cultivate the narcissus to bloom on the first day of the new year.

A very wealthy man had his four sons promise to divide his fortune equally when he died. But after his death, the three elder sons forgot their oath and divided their father's fortune amongst themselves and gave only a poor plot of land to the youngest.

As the cheated son looked sadly at his inheritance, a good spirit revealed that hidden on his land was a valuable flower which would make him a fortune. When spring came, the field was covered with beautiful white narcissi. People paid large sums for the flowers, and soon he became even richer than his brothers. Thus, their snow white petals and subtle fragrance became a symbol of prosperity.

Like the narcissus, the peach branch plays an important role at TET. Branches from the tree are displayed in front of the home for protection from evil spirits. Long ago people used to hang a good luck charm on the branch to increase its protective power. Those unable to obtain a peach branch pasted sketches of the good spirits on their door.

Although the custom of using peach branches as a TET ornament has been maintained, the good luck piece has disappeared and pictures of the good spirits have been replaced by drawings to amuse the children.

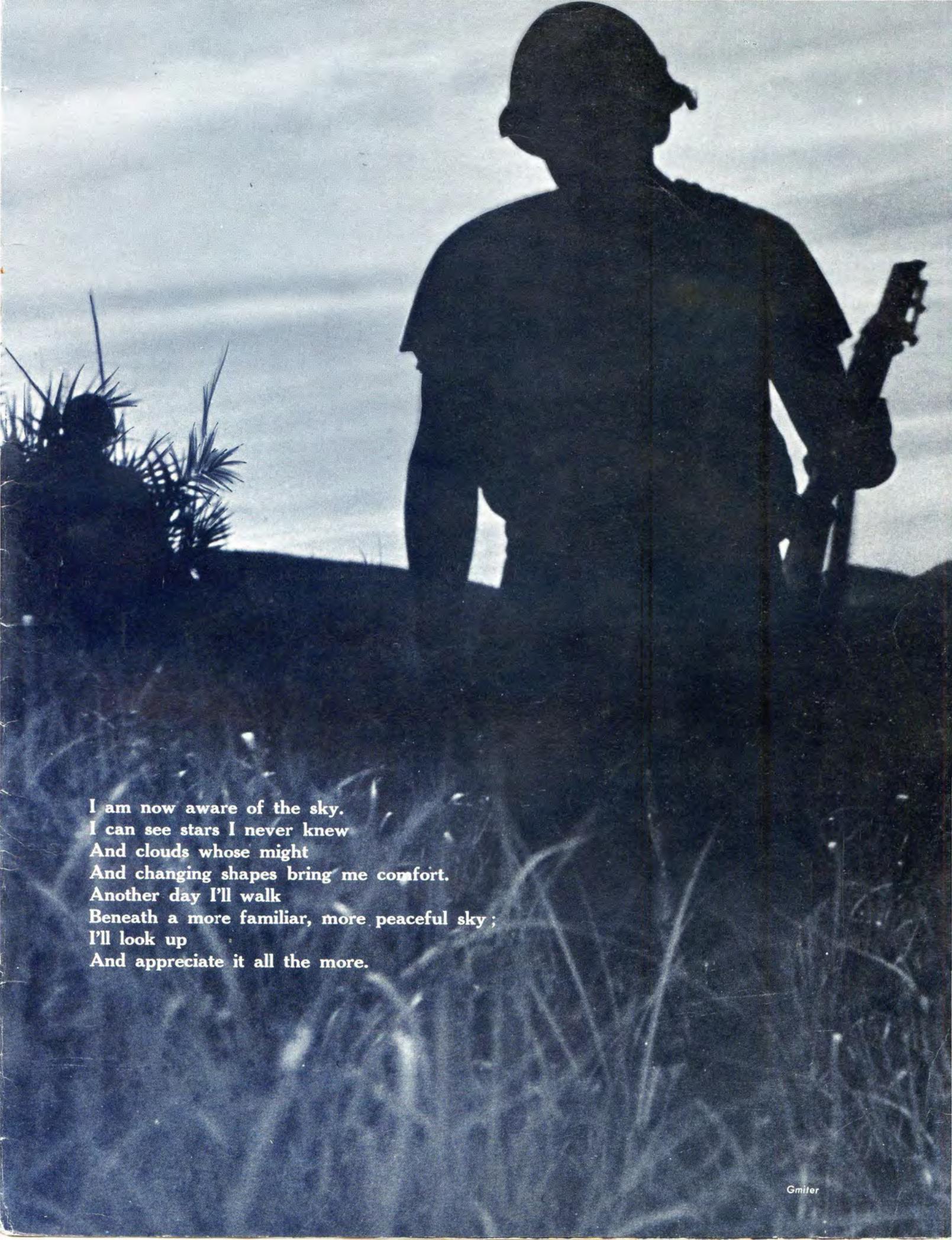
TET is an opportune time to make Vietnamese friends, but you must know how to act on this occasion.

A proper greeting to a man, for instance, would be to wish him a happy and prosperous new year. To a married woman it would be proper to express a hope that she will have another son this year.

Greeting cards should arrive before the first day of TET, otherwise they might be viewed as insincere.

An appropriate gift would be a bouquet of red flowers for the wife of the family. For children under 15 years old, a small sum of money presented in a red envelope has a very special significance.

If you are invited to someone's home, you should go in the afternoon—remembering the significance of the first visitor. Also, observing proper Vietnamese etiquette, you should greet the honored ancestors before greeting his living hosts. If you are offered food, such as rice cake and tea, it would be unpardonably rude to refuse.



I am now aware of the sky.
I can see stars I never knew
And clouds whose might
And changing shapes bring me comfort.
Another day I'll walk
Beneath a more familiar, more peaceful sky;
I'll look up
And appreciate it all the more.

