



AMERICAL

OCTOBER, 1969



Two Years In Vietnam

The Americal Div. celebrates a special anniversary Oct. 26. On that date two years ago, the former World War II division was reborn at Chu Lai.

Task Force Oregon deployed to Vietnam in April, 1967, marking the first time Army troops were employed in I Corps. Task Force Oregon was redesignated the Americal Div. in October, 1967.

Originally born in the steamy jungles and mountains of New Caledonia during World War II, the Americal is the largest U.S. Army infantry division.

The 196th Inf. Bde. formed part of Task Force Oregon, followed by the landing of the 198th Inf. Bde. on Oct. 22, 1967, and arrival of the 11th Inf. Bde. at Duc Pho on Dec. 20. The 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav., although a member of Task Force Oregon, did not officially join the division until Jan. 10 last year.

During the last two years, men of the Americal have fought in operations such as Wheeler/Wallowa and Burlington Trail, accounting for more than 12,000 enemy killed and 2,598 weapons captured. The 11th Bde. uncovered 81 NVA basecamps and netted 455 enemy kills in Operation Vernon Lake II.

Recent campaigns such as Hardin Falls and Russell Beach have proven the Americal soldier's effectiveness in pacification efforts.

This issue of the AMERICAL is dedicated to division soldiers who proudly have fought "Under the Southern Cross" in Vietnam.



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AMERICAL

The Quarterly Magazine of the Americal Division, Vietnam

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The Cover

FRONT COVER: Pacification is people helping people, whether treating the needy on a MEDCAP, or simply smiling at a passing Vietnamese. (Art by SGT Alfred Anthony Jr.)

BACK COVER: Artillerymen from the 1st Bn., 14th Arty., keep a dawn vigil on a hill near LZ Stinson in support of 198th Bde. soldiers. (Photo by PFC Marshall Rowland)



AMERICAL LOG

A QUARTERLY RECAP OF MAJOR ACTION

Combat action during the three month period of June, July, and August was characterized by sporadic company and battalion size contacts, with major battles erupting in late August.

Americal troops killed more than 2,700 enemy soldiers, 1,400 of whom were NVA; captured 740 weapons, 140 crew-served; and destroyed or evacuated more than 100 tons of rice.

Operation Russell Beach, a long-range pacification

campaign which began Jan. 13, ended July 21. Nearly 225 VC were killed in the operation, three new villages constructed, and the presence of the Government of Vietnam established.

Americal soldiers, along with the 1st Bde., 101st Abn. Div., successfully completed Operation Lamar Plain, which began May 15 and ended Aug. 15. The campaign tallied 524 enemy soldiers killed and 318 weapons captured.

By SGT HERB HARTLEY

JUNE

June began sedately for Americal soldiers until heavy fighting broke out in the 11th and 196th Inf. Bde. areas.

In the pre-dawn hours of June 8, an NVA sapper team was repulsed at LZ Liz, five miles north of Duc Pho, home of the 11th Bde.'s 1st Bn., 20th Inf. During six hours of fighting that followed, 12 enemy soldiers were killed and numerous blood trails found.

Elements of the 196th Bde., then headquartered at LZ Baldy, put

the damper on a special birthday victory for Ho Chi Minh when they retarded an estimated company-size NVA force attempting to break through the LZ's perimeter.

Dawn patrols discovered 29 enemy bodies draped over the wire and gathered more than 125 Chicom grenades, 25 satchel charges, six AK-47s, three AK-50s, and six RPG launchers.

On the morning of June 11, hard-pressed infantrymen, along with artillery elements, beat off a strong enemy assault on LZ East, 11 miles west

of Tam Ky.

Men of the 3rd Bn., 21st Inf., and the 3rd Bn., 82nd Arty., aided by gunships and Air Force "Spooky" and "Shadow" aircraft, stopped a company-size force that attacked the landing zone behind a heavy RPG barrage, killing 27 of the enemy.

Soldiers of the 11th Bde.'s 1-20 and two platoons from E Trp., 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav., combined to inflict heavy casualties on an entrenched NVA battalion for two days beginning June 10, two miles north of Duc Pho. The units accounted for 29 NVA killed.

During four days of fierce fighting starting June 8, Americal forces killed 249 NVA and 87 VC while capturing 89 assorted enemy weapons.

Operation Lamar Plain began May 15 with the mission of relieving pressure from an enemy buildup in the Tam Ky-Tien Phuoc-LZ Professional triangle. The Americal's 1st Bn., 46th Inf., worked with elements of the 101st Abn. Div. in probing for the enemy.

By the second week in June, U.S. forces had accounted for more than 130 NVA and 40 VC killed in the Lamar Plain area.

JULY

July started out with a bang as elements of the 101st Abn. Div., OPCON to the Americal, found one

Buzogany



of the largest weapons caches ever uncovered in southern I Corps, and the 198th Inf. Bde.'s 5th Bn., 46th Inf., discovered an NVA hospital with the bodies of 65 NVA and 16 VC strewn nearby.

A recon platoon from the 101st Div.'s 1st Bn., 502nd Inf., discovered 122 individual and 40 crew-served weapons in jungle terrain 28 miles southwest of Tam Ky.

After the augment of activity the first two days of the month, the remainder of July became quiet. During a two-day period beginning July 11, only 16 enemy soldiers were killed.

The heaviest contact of the month took place July 23 when division elements killed 38 VC and 12 NVA.

Operation Russell Beach, a long-range pacification campaign which began on Jan. 13 ended July 21. The operation kicked off with a massive 8,500-man cordon around the Batangan Peninsula, a longtime Viet Cong stronghold 10 miles northeast of Quang Ngai City.

Americal units accounted for 158 VC killed during the campaign, and other elements brought the combined total to almost 225 enemy killed. More than 12,000 Vietnamese were evacuated from the peninsula and

moved to a combined holding and interrogation center near Quang Ngai City.

AUGUST

Aug. 1 and 2 saw the 6th Bn., 56th Arty., and the 312th Evac. Hosp. depart Vietnam as part of the redeployment announced by President Nixon.

Ground activity during August began much the same as the majority of July's action—light and scattered.

Heavy fighting finally broke out on the morning of Aug. 12 when several installations in the Americal area, including Chu Lai, became the targets of enemy sapper, mortar, and rocket attacks.

Most of the action centered around LZ West, 19 miles west of Tam Ky, when men of the 4th Bn., 31st Inf., repulsed an enemy attack and killed 59 NVA.

Twenty VC were killed when they attempted to penetrate the perimeter of LZ Dottie, jointly manned by ARVN and Americal units 12 miles southeast of Chu Lai. ARVN elements accounted for 16 of the enemy dead, while units of D Trp., 1st Sqdn., 1st Cav., D Btry., 1-82 Arty., and B Co., 39th Engr. Bn., killed four VC.

Also hit were Hawk Hill, former home of the 1-1 Cav., five miles northwest of Tam Ky; FSB San Juan Hill, 10 miles west of Duc Pho; LZ Gator, 13 miles north of Quang Ngai City; and LZ Bayonet, 198th Bde. headquarters.

In all, division units killed 100 enemy soldiers, including 85 NVA, in the night's heavy action.

Fierce fighting again erupted near LZ West on Aug. 18. Infantrymen of the 4-31 killed 148 NVA during a day-long engagement which lasted into the late evening with an unknown-size enemy force.

The battles on Aug. 18 signaled the start of a week of intense fighting in the Hiep Duc Valley area and in the Song Chang Valley southwest of LZ Center.

All of the 196th. Bde.'s infantry battalions were involved in the bitter clash with dug-in forces of the 2nd NVA Div. Americal forces accounted for more than 500 of the enemy, while U.S. Marines operating against the same enemy force in the Que Son Valley brought the total to more than 1,000 enemy killed.

Pearson

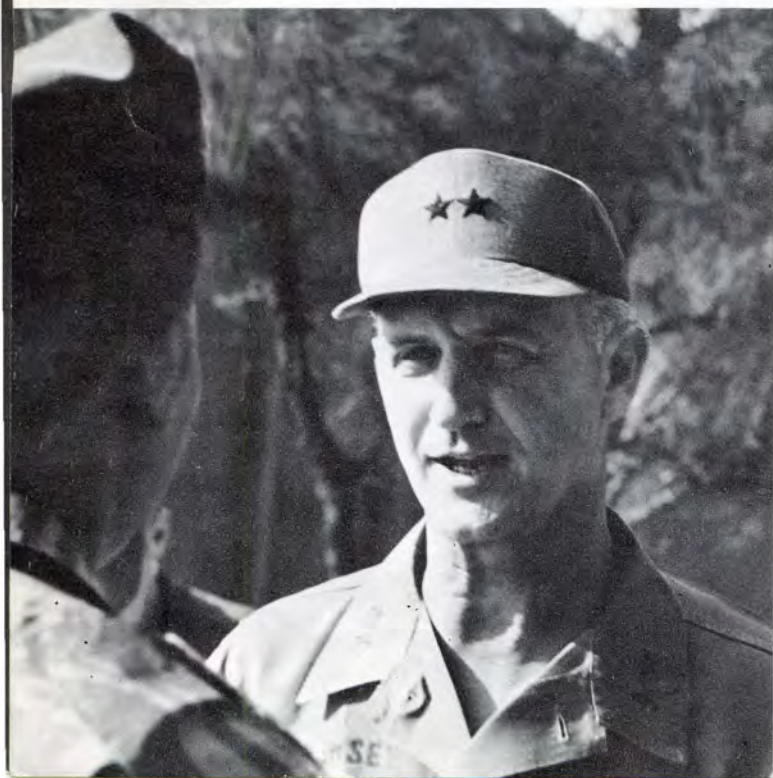


A Day In The Life Of

The CG

Story and Photos by
CPT CECIL GREEN

"There's nothing that goes on in the division that I'm not interested in and checking on every day with everyone I meet."



Most of the time the office door is open, emphasizing the silence and emptiness of the big room.

The impressive, polished desk in one corner has neat piles of paperwork waiting for review, a decision, and a quick signature. The wall maps of the Americal area are always up to date, with red, yellow, green, and blue lines and circles telling a fast story to a trained eye.

The plush leather swivel chair is built for executive comfort, but the man who sits there so infrequently is more interested in action than in being tied to his desk.

This is the official headquarters of the Americal Div., the office of the Commanding General, MG Lloyd B. Ramsey.

Today the general was sitting in his office for a few rare moments, reflecting upon his role as leader of almost 25,000 men spread along 93 miles of jungles, mountains, and coastal lowlands.

"A division commander—or any commander for that matter—has to have solid, reliable information on which to base most of his decisions, and often times it's the little bits of information gathered from different people that go together to make the whole picture meaningful," the general explained.

"For that reason, there's nothing that goes on in the division that I'm not interested in and checking on every day with everyone I meet."

"One day it may be an administrative worry in AG, then a problem with something in the logistics supply line, or a serious talk with the surgeon on malaria control. Everything is important and cannot be slighted, or it may impair our overall ability somewhere along the line."

After travelling with the general for several days, even the casual observer can see that his guideline is more than a mere desire and is rapidly becoming a reality with each new day. Of course it takes time, but the general's schedule allows for that.

His first call every morning is usually from duty personnel at the Division Tactical Operations Center, where all reports of enemy activity are recorded, analyzed, and acted upon. The general's location in the sequence of events is most evident when it's time for the ultimate decision.

"I encourage my people to call me when there's any rise in activity or a problem, no matter how little or insignificant it may seem. I would rather know everything that is going on, than have anyone think that any problem isn't worth my consideration."

After breakfast, the routine of officework and paperwork occupy the general until it is time for the first of his many briefings at 8 a.m.

As the principal staff officers leave the general's office at the end of the morning briefing, the door is seldom shut until late afternoon. The "Old Man's" helicopter

is waiting, itinerary is decided upon, and he heads for the field.

"I try to visit every battalion at least twice a week, but not on any definite schedule," he explained. "I like to talk to the battalion commander and his people at their location because this gives me a better feel of what is going on and I can see for myself what the men are doing throughout our vast area of operations."

The afternoon is spent much as the morning. Often the general eats lunch at one of the firebases, then spends the afternoon hours flying around a different area talking to more people.

"When I talk to the enlisted men on a firebase, I'm primarily interested in finding out how well he is being taken care of, and if his officers and NCOs are looking out for his welfare," the general explained. "This is an important consideration for any commander to be aware of—if his men aren't being properly treated, they cannot operate at their utmost effectiveness."

The local commanders also get their chance for the general's ear during his visits.

"This is where I get down to the essentials—the detailed reports of local situations, intelligence reports and what is being considered operationally with the commander's different resources. These battalion and brigade briefings enable me to see the local commander's problems and weigh them with my decisions," the general said.

Once back in Chu Lai again, the meetings continue with the regular evening briefing attended by all division staff officers. This is where all the day's events are catalogued and summarized to describe the Americal day in full, and decisions are made for tomorrow and the future.

After an hour or more in this briefing, the general's office door closes once again so the stack of paperwork that grew during the day can change from one box to another in silence and privacy.

The late dinner hour is usually spent at the general's mess, where the "Old Man" can talk with his staff officers informally, and, likewise, the staff officers can talk among themselves and communicate better than in the hustle and bustle of the daytime office.

"When I graduated from high school in Somerset, Ky., and indeed, even through college, my one ambition was to be a football coach," the general reminisced.

"While at the University of Kentucky, I was on the football, swimming, track, and boxing teams, and I loved the sports world, especially since I was able to get through college during the Depression Years with a football scholarship and graduate in 1940."

From 1940–1943, the general was with the 39th Inf. Regt., 9th Inf. Div., travelling from Ft. Bragg, N.C., by various routes to North Africa. In 1943, he was

"When I talk to the enlisted man on a firebase, I'm primarily interested in finding out how well he is being taken care of..."



selected to be aide-de-camp to British General (later field marshal) H.R.L.G. Alexander, the ground commander under GEN Eisenhower in the North African Campaign.

"I learned a lot from the field marshal," MG Ramsey said, looking thoughtful. "He was one of the greatest tacticians I have ever seen, and just being near him and watching carefully, I learned a lot about working with troops, how to use a staff and how to maneuver large forces. And although it's a different type war here, the basic principles apply."

The general came to Vietnam as deputy commanding general of the 1st Logistical Command and on to the Americal on June 1.

The years past have been active ones for MG Ramsey, and the days are equally busy now—as his open door and silent office often testify.

But even with crowded schedules and rapid helicopter flights, there's still time to chat with Americal soldiers and perhaps show them a picture of his first grandchild (Keith Ramsey Wallace, born July 31) and share a few words of home. That's the way soldiers are around the world.

Forward Observer Calls...



Maus

Forward Observer: Favorite One Of The Infantry

By LTC PAUL PARHAM

Charlie company closed in on an unfriendly village in a narrow band of rolling hills southwest of Chu Lai. This was "Indian territory," outside the area controlled by the Government of the Republic of Vietnam.

People were in there and a lot of them. There should have been no one. C Co., 5th Bn., 46th Inf., 198th Inf. Bde. was going in to find out who they were and what they were doing there.

CPT Dan Porter had observed the enemy activity from two hills back, and had made his plans accordingly. This would be a cordon and search operation. The infantrymen would deploy as they approached the village, and give it a thorough going-over.

Cautiously the soldiers crested the last hill and began their approach.

Without warning, the sharp pep-pep-pep of an AK-47 sent the infan-

AMERICAL

'Shot Out'



Williams

trymen to the ground. Heavy automatic weapons fire from woods on the right flank and front began to kick up rocks and dirt amid the Americal soldiers hugging the ground. Using their packs as shields, they returned fire.

When mortar rounds began falling in from the left flank, the captain, keeping cool in a hot situation, pulled the equalizer from his bag of tricks.

"Hey Jim, I need some smoke around here and right now!" With no further orders, the young, wiry lieutenant who had been trailing the CO went to work.

"Rusty Nail 25 this is Rusty Nail 27. Fire mission. Over." 2LT James N. Deierlein, Jr. (Columbia, S.C.) spoke crisply but unhurriedly into his microphone.

At the other end of the radio net, the first call began a chain reaction,

as cannoneers and computers started rapid calculations that soon would answer the forward observer's (FO) request for help.

Words and numbers sounding like a mystical incantation to the uninitiated were converted to specific directions and elevation for artillery pieces on a distant fire base. The shells were fired, and gunners reported **"Shot!"**

"Shot Out!" echoed LT Deierlein into his mike. He nodded to CPT Porter that artillery was on the way. Welcome news, because **"Charlie"** had kept the company pinned down.

Krraack! The first round barked out over the din of enemy fire.

"Drop 100, over."

Computers back on the artillery fire base moved the plotting pins in the direction called—100 meters closer to the infantry platoon. Within seconds, a second roar, much closer, landed. But between C Co. and the

enemy.

"Add five-zero, fire for effect."

Friendly artillery now fell in force, and the quiet artillery officer moved it around to the left, right, and front of his infantrymen. Within minutes of the onset of the enemy ambush, C Co. began to move forward again, pursuing the Viet Cong force. Now airstrikes would chase the fleeing guerrillas, as an Air Force spotter above continued the American attack.

Like many other small unit actions in a hide-and-seek war, this one was over shortly after it began. Evading into a friendly village, the VC quickly blended into the populace and were lost.

Once again, though, artillery had brought **"...dignity to what would otherwise be a vulgar brawl."**

The black, slender crossed cannons on the FO's left collar indicate he is an artilleryman, not infantry. Other-

wise the differences are hard to find.

The FO—actually assigned to an artillery battalion—eats, sleeps, and works with the infantry company to which he is attached. In the Americal, he often assumes command of an infantry platoon when needed. He talks infantry and infantry tactics, and knows artillerymen of his parent unit mostly as voices on the other end of a radio.

The forward observer's job is relatively new, developing from the needs of longer range weapons of the 20th century.

Early artillery pieces were wheeled up on the front lines and fired directly into enemy formations, making the guns a prime enemy target.

Longer ranges and better explosives allowed the cannon to be pulled back from the front. This reduced vulnerability of the artillery, and led to use of a forward observer.

Fire direction centers (FDC) were developed to calculate the exact range and direction to a target, and gun positions surveyed to insure accurate plotting from howitzer to target.

Communications were improved as the distance between infantry lines and supporting artillery increased. But until after World War I, there was little contact between infantry and artillery below battalion level.

New, rapid-moving infantry and armor tactics required quick, accurate artillery support for small units. Thus the FO was born.

The forward observer is entrusted with his mission only after long and intensive training.

At Fort Sill, Oklahoma, all field artillery officers learn characteristics and capabilities of their weapons, gunnery, and adjust practice fire missions. They learn how to fire on small, distant targets, pinpoint locations on a map, and plan protective fires.

LT Deierlein arrived in Vietnam shortly after graduation from Artillery Officer's Candidate School. But already he had acquired experience.

"You've got to learn fast. It's not like Ft. Sill. You move quicker, and often adjust several different caliber guns at the same time," LT Deierlein said.

"Instead of breaking up a fire mission into many short phrases, my team and the FDC are trained well enough that we sometimes give the whole mission at once."

When the FO calls for support, he measures directions in angles from a known direction, but uses mils to do it. The mil (1/6400th of a circle) gives him more accuracy than the degree.

He measures distances in meters instead of yards, and calculates changes and shifts in his head by using trigonometric functions.

The FO determines the best type of shell and fuse depending on the enemy target, and then calls in this information using a standard pattern.

LT Deierlein stresses safety. The need to get support for the infantry without injuring them is a forward observer's constant worry. When you live with the infantry, you take care of them.

The FO must know exactly where he is at all times, a difficult task in the varied terrain of southern I Corps. Triple-canopied mountain jungles prevent observation of landmarks, and one jungle trail looks much like any other. The shifting sands of the flat, barren coast, a favorite VC meeting area, obscure any surveyed points.

When maps are in error or prominent terrain features cannot be observed, the FO's job is more difficult, but far from impossible. White phosphorous marking rounds, two rounds fired with a known distance between them, even adjustment by sound, are used to put artillery where it's needed.

Although he can shoot without a map or binoculars when necessary, the forward observer must have communications.

Telephones seldom are used by the Americal FO, so he must be an expert radio operator. He switches rapidly from one channel to another, calling for his artillery from whichever battery or battalion is in range and ready to fire. Getting on a common net, he then proceeds with his mission.

The forward observer also has his own command. To assist and relieve him on occasion, LT Deierlein has

SGT William W. Sandlin, a tall, lanky native of Walters, Oklahoma as his recon sergeant, and SP4 Richard L. Pierce (Dells, Wisc.) as his radio-telephone operator. Both men also travel with the infantry.

"Bill Sandlin is my key man," the lieutenant said. "He's been here over six months and knows this terrain like the back of his hand. He is an excellent map reader, and can take over from me in a hurry."

The close relationship between these three men is the secret of most forward observer teams. They know each other well and learn each other's jobs.

The infantrymen take care of THEIR forward observer. "Too bad you can't get a Combat Infantryman's Badge," is one of the jibes most frequently hurled at the "Redleg" among the riflemen.

But they make sure the FO gets fed, supplied, and protected. All his needs are taken care of by the infantry. "Our resupply is outstanding," LT Deierlein said. "We get a hot meal practically every day, and often even cold soda and milk."

Artillerymen of the Americal have only one mission: to provide timely, close, and accurate fire support to riflemen and troopers in contact with the enemy.

Within the artillery, gunners and their howitzers provide muscle to deliver a powerful punch to the enemy, and the FDC is the brain that tells the fist where to strike.

But the forward observer and his crew are the external senses, locating the enemy, determining his vulnerabilities, and feeding this information back for immediate action.

The FO—usually young, tough, intelligent, and surprisingly cheerful—is unique in this team. He is between fish and fowl, an artilleryman who plods through rice paddy muck, hacks bush on a jungle trail, or crawls up hills under fire.

Outwardly he is more infantry than artillery. But he has become the pivot man in the artillery team, controlling the fires of what is still regarded as the greatest killer on the battlefield—the artillery.

CHU LAI'S LUCKY 13



By SGT HERB HARTLEY

"Do not attempt to adjust your set. We will control the vertical. We will control the horizontal. We can blur your picture or sharpen it to crystal clarity."

Sound familiar? It was the opening monolog for the television series "Outer Limits." Although the phrase may smack too much of science fiction to take seriously, the men at Chu Lai's Channel 13, Vietnam's newest TV station, take it very seriously. It's their job to control what you see.

Established primarily to support Americal soldiers, AFVN (American Forces Vietnam Network), Channel 13 is located at the north end of the Chu Lai complex and is manned by Army, Navy, Marine, and Air Force broadcasters, technicians, and engineers. A 300-foot tower, beaming a 40-kilowatt visual signal mainly south and west, stands at the same site.

The new station is the only one of eight television facilities in country to transmit on Channel 13. All others telecast on Channel 11. "We're on an entirely different wave form pattern than Da Nang," said Marine MSG Frank H. Almeida (Gibsonville, N.C.), Channel 13 NCOIC. "If both stations tried to broadcast on the same pattern, they would drown each other out."

Perhaps the most unique aspect of Chu Lai TV is that personnel stationed at Chu Lai or immediately north hold the distinction of being the only persons in Vietnam who have a choice of two stations to watch—Channel 11, Da Nang, or our own Channel 13.

The man who actually controls what you see on AFVN is the technical director. He sits in a studio-van 7-feet wide, 7-feet high, and 30-feet long.

With him in the van are six television monitors, two 16mm projectors, two cameras, a slide projector, and a control panel with enough buttons, dials, and switches to make a jet pilot weary. For example, in order to get "on-the-air," engineers and technicians must adjust the waveform monitor, sideband response analyzer, peak modulation indicator, and deviation aural carrier.

Now we're ready to go. Not quite. First we have to check the polarity, sensitivity, calibrate, scale illum, response, crystal temperature, and integrator capacitors.

"The job can get pretty tedious after a while," said SP4 James E. Havens (Houston, Tex), one of three technical directors assigned to Channel 13. "When something goes wrong, you don't know where to turn first. It could be one

PFC Dennis Rinzel (Milwaukee), one of three technical directors assigned to Channel 13, switches to live newscast from Chu Lai television studios.



Sklaren

of a hundred things causing the trouble."

For instance, SP5 James Van Riper (Ann Arbor, Mich.), a Channel 13 broadcaster, once gave an entire 10-minute "silent" newscast during the station's first few weeks of telecasting.

"Five minutes after the newscast, the station started receiving calls inquiring if we were having trouble with our sound," Van Riper said.

A crew of engineers went to work in the van to find out what the problem might be, and discovered one of several patch cords wasn't connected properly. "We couldn't tell the difference because the microphone was patched into our monitor, but not the transmitter," Van Riper added.

As complicated as their job may seem, engineers and technicians only make up two-thirds of the team. Broadcasters play the vital role of presenting the viewer with all-important news, weather, and sports.

"Our main source of information is AFRTS (American Forces Radio-Television Service) in Saigon," said SSG Winton L. Rogers (Valdez, Alaska), program director. "We receive our local news from the Americal Information Office and other information branches throughout Chu Lai."

Channel 13 airs one 10-minute and two 5-minute newscasts daily. A 5-minute show is presented at the 2 p.m. "sign on"; a 10-minute news and sports cast at 7:30 p.m.; and a final 5-minute daily wrap-up at 10 p.m.

The film supply for Channel 13 is assembled in Los Angeles and sent to Chu Lai by way of AFVN in Saigon. "We receive 50 hours of film a week," MSG Almeida said. "We're on the air 72 hours a week, so this doesn't give us much slack. If a reel is missing from shipment, we have to re-telecast a previous program."

Film is delivered to Channel 13 weekly by an Air Force C-47. "We receive the programs that were shown on Channel 11, Pleiku, last week," said 1LT Lawrence Brown (Philadelphia), station OIC. "Programs shown on Channel 13 are then sent to Da Nang."

During the Apollo-11 moon flight in July, Channel 13 broadcast a video-tape of the blast-off and actual moon landing only 24 hours after the historic events took place.

"The lunar mission was taped live via satellite in the Philippines and flown to Saigon by jet," Almeida explained. Kinescope images were made in Saigon and again flown by jet to AFVN affiliates.

What's in store for Channel 13 during upcoming months? Plenty, according to LT Brown.

"In the near future, we hope to have a studio large enough to conduct live telecasts," he said. "A larger studio will permit us to do live interviews with various personalities appearing in the Chu Lai area. We could also present live entertainment such as the Americal Band or local Chu Lai talent."

Back to the present, while the viewer is watching the 2 p.m. film of the National Anthem, the men behind the scene are in a state of near panic. Their mission requires complete coordination. If one man slips up, it could ruin the whole show.

Engineers scurry around making that last minute adjustment; the technical director tries to place 10 fingers on 11 buttons that have to be pushed simultaneously; and broadcasters read over their newscast one more time.

A feeling of pride and accomplishment beams on the faces of the men who bring the Americal Div. one of America's favorite pasttimes—television.

HOOKS: BRUTES ON HIGH



Crawford

By SP4 JAMES BROWN

The power and bigness is almost shocking as the huge birds hover over their cargo loads with the grace of gigantic eagles.

They are Chinook helicopters—"big lifts" for field soldiers, supporting forward areas with combat ef-

With the barrel of a 105mm howitzer in the foreground, a Chinook muscles another 105 into place on a new firebase west of Quang Ngai City for D Btry., 6th Bn., 11th Arty.

ficiency.

"We give direct combat support to the 11th, 196th, and 198th Inf. Bdes.," said SP4 James Shembarger (St. Joseph, Mich.), a flight engineer with the 178th Aslt. Spt. Hel. Co. (ASHC). "Cargoes consist mainly of water, ammo, fuel, and C-rations. But sometimes we even carry ice, ice cream, and hot chow."

The normal "hook" crew is made up of an aircraft commander, pilot, flight engineer, crew chief, and gunners.

Assisted by the pilot, the aircraft commander has overall responsibility for operation of the helicopter. The flight engineer, aided by the crew chief, oversees maintenance, servicing, inspection, and security.

"Considerable time is required to maintain the Chinook," said SP5 John G. Lecates (Delmar, Del.) a 178th flight engineer. "An intermediate inspection is performed at 25-hour intervals and a periodic inspection every 100 hours. These inspections pro-rated amount to about 22 hours of maintenance for each hour of flying time."

During flight, the crew chief mans one 7.62mm machinegun, and an assigned gunner mans another. Machineguns are mounted in the forward cabin section, one at the cabin door and another at the cabin escape hatch.

"Whenever a combat assault is called, everyone wants to get into the action," said SP4 Timothy D. Brumley (Dallas), a 178th gunner. "The gunners wait for just such action, and really apply themselves when it comes. 'Charlie' knows and feels it too."

Under emergency conditions the Chinook can transport up to 40 Americal troops, at 240 pounds per man, with a reduced fuel load and radius of action of 25 nautical miles.



Dotson



When the huge "hook" conducts extraction operations, security of the landing area becomes vitally important.

Loads must be planned and coordinated to avoid shutting down aircraft in the pickup zone. Unproductive ground time at the pickup site reduces the number of sorties between refueling and increases exposure to possible enemy fire.

"We can't waste time while putting troops in an area because every minute is essential to a successful operation," said SP4 Stephen Sigano-wick (Denver), a 132nd ASHC crew chief. "Recently we had to discharge some ARVN troops on a tiny mountain peak, and we couldn't even land—just hover over the area while they jumped out."

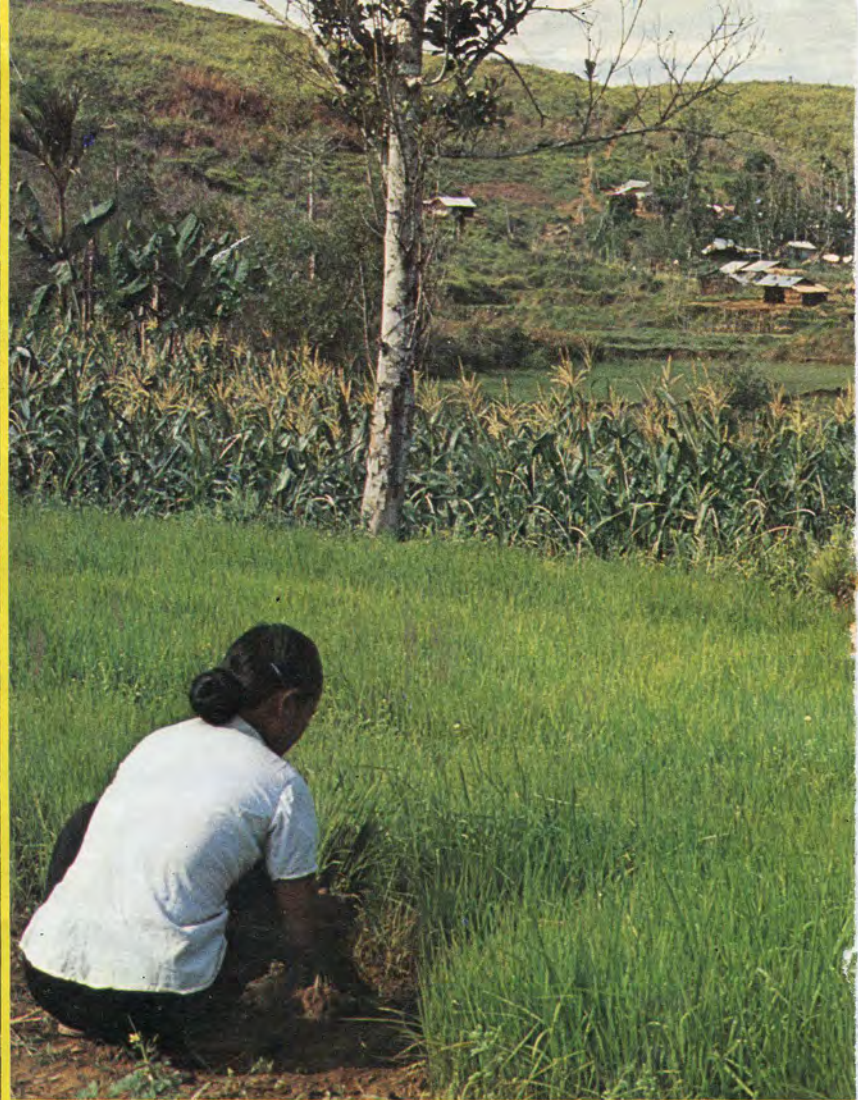
Because of unmarked obstructions and greater possibility of losing visual reference, night operations in unprepared landing areas can be extremely hazardous for Chinooks.

In an emergency, though, a makeshift LZ must be prepared. "Sometimes vehicle lights, five-gallon oil drums filled with gasoline-oil mixture used as flare pots, or flashlights illuminate the landing area," said SP6 Ken Anderson (Boulder, Colo.), a 132nd flight engineer.

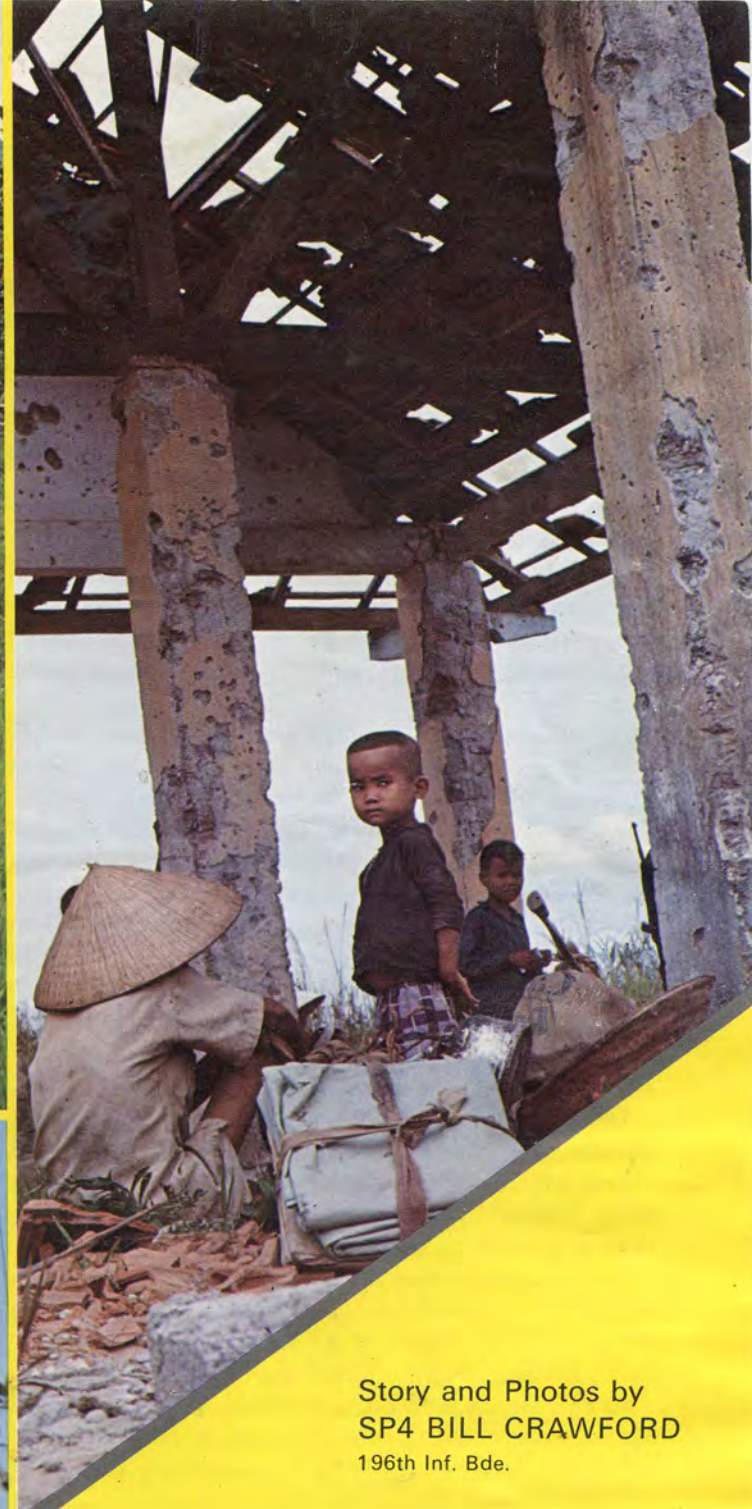
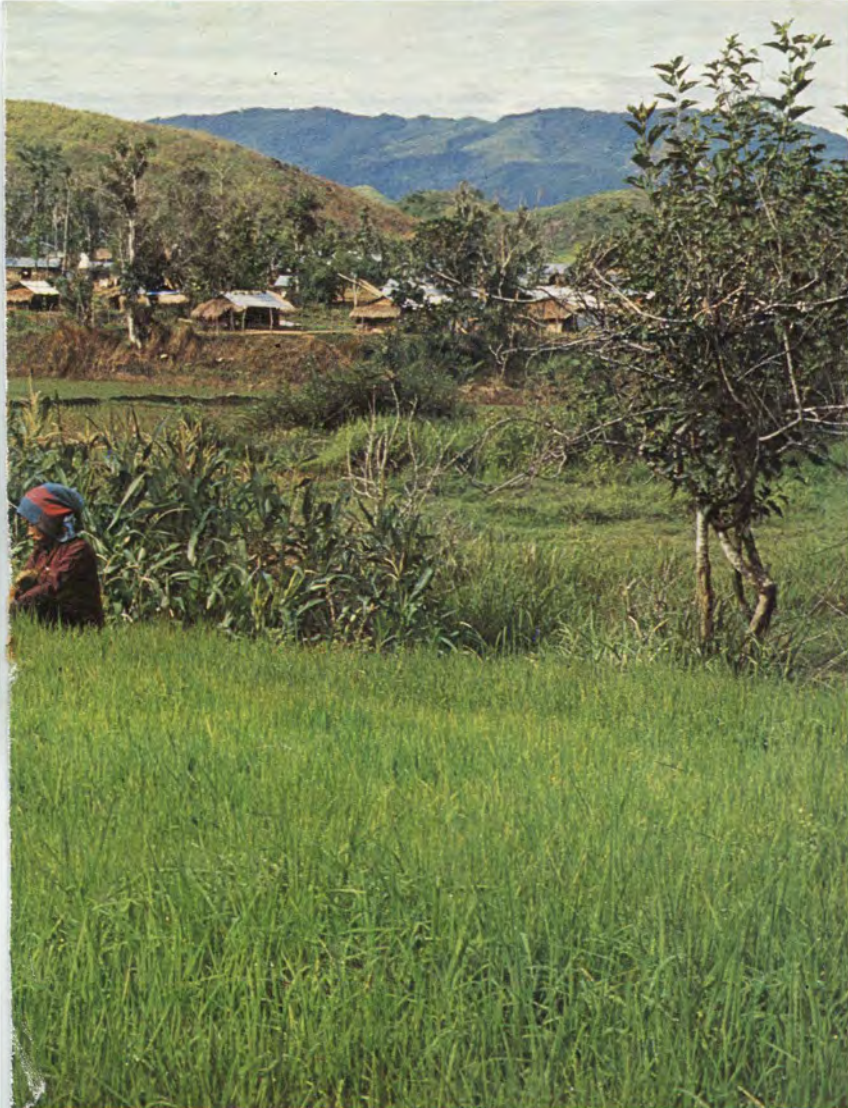
The "hook" is a sensitive, expensive machine. "Flying debris will damage rotary blades and down the aircraft," Anderson added. "And a Chinook costs 1.4 million dollars to build."

But the big bird is worth the care and cost. Capable of transporting 13,000 pounds, the 4,000-pound craft can be loaded internally or sling loaded externally, and holds 620 gallons of fuel.

As any field troop on a desolate LZ will attest, with its giant payload capacity and versatility the "hook" is worth its weight in gold.



The Valley Is Their Home



Story and Photos by
SP4 BILL CRAWFORD
196th Inf. Bde.



A lone cloud drifted across the moon that bathed Hiep Duc Valley in its soft light. Rice paddies gave off silver reflections while rugged mountains loomed like ominous giants on the horizon north and west. South, the Song Thu Bon cut its way into the valley through green hills and flowed between rocky banks, only to disappear through a pass to the northwest.

The tranquil scene on this fall evening in 1965 suddenly was shattered by ear-splitting reports of recoilless rifle fire. The dull "whump, whump" of mortar rounds leaving tubes rang above the crackle of deadly machineguns spewing green and red tracers into the valley below. The siege

of Hiep Duc Valley was underway.

Hiep Duc is nestled among the rugged mountains that make up Vietnam's Central Highlands. Located 25 miles northwest of the province capital of Tam Ky, the valley primarily was an agricultural region prior to 1965.

Summer 1965 saw a marked increase in Viet Cong activity in Hiep Duc. Enemy insurgents initiated an intense campaign of terror and violence against government officials, Regional Forces (RF) and Popular Forces (PF), and the civilian populace. Assassinations and kidnappings became commonplace, and coercion was used to extort illegal taxes from the people.

By October, the VC were ready to seize control of the valley. Fifteen platoons of PFs and three platoons of RFs were charged with defending the district headquarters and surrounding area. For the most part, these troops were deployed on various hilltops overlooking the district headquarters, dispensary, and marketplace located on the valley floor.

The VC launched a carefully planned attack in the fall, shelling government positions with 57mm and 75mm recoilless rifles and with 60mm and 82mm mortars. Simultaneously, the enemy hit with fierce ground assaults.

In a few days, the VC controlled high ground surrounding the district headquarters. Two contingents of government forces remained to contest VC domination of Hiep Duc. One stalwart RF platoon managed to cling to Hill 254 to the southwest, while another RF element positioned themselves around district headquarters. But the remaining defenders of Hiep Duc were helpless before the guns and commanding position of the enemy.

Dawn brought a lull in the shelling as hundreds of civilians, the few remaining government troops, and district officials began a mass exodus to the east along dusty Highway 535. They carried as many of their possessions as possible on their backs.

One refugee summed the feelings of the desolate group as they fled to the relative safety of Tam Ky. "None of us ever expected to return to our homes again." Hiep Duc District belonged to the Viet Cong.

In following months, people from more remote areas of the district followed their neighbors to refugee centers in Tam Ky. Hamlets such as My Luu and Dong An became virtually deserted. Others like Phuoc Son were controlled by the VC. North Vietnamese Army (NVA) regulars appeared in the area, strengthening the enemy grip on Hiep Duc.

In 1967, the 196th Inf. Bde. initiated combat operations in western Quang Tin province, quickly challenging VC/NVA supremacy in Hiep Duc and neighboring Que Son Valley.

The actual task of driving the enemy from Hiep Duc fell to the 4th Bn., 31st Inf. Operating from a gamut of isolated fire-support bases such as Karen, Lurch, Mellon, Richards, Ryder, Sooner, and West, 4-31 infantrymen loosened the enemy's hold on Hiep Duc.

Slowly, the NVA were driven into hiding in the rugged mountains northwest of the Valley. NVA influence in the

district was greatly diminished last November when the 4-31 destroyed a vast NVA basecamp of the 21st Regt., 2nd NVA Div. Sixty-six NVA soldiers were killed during this engagement on Nui Chom Mountain, a rugged ridge-line forming a natural northern boundary for Hiep Duc.

In the summer, the 196th Bde. launched a massive psychological operations (PSYOP) campaign in the Valley, further dissolving the VC infrastructure.

Typical of PSYOP activities was the 14-hour, marathon broadcast conducted by SGT Ken Herrmann (Buffalo, N.Y.), 4-31 civil affairs section. Armed with a portable loudspeaker system with an effective range of over 4,000 meters, Herrmann broadcast at 15-minute intervals from LZ Karen.

Working with an interpreter, Herrmann urged the VC to rally to the side of the Government of Vietnam (GVN). Playing tape recordings of the national anthem of the Republic of Vietnam and calling known VC by name, Herrmann urged them to rally to the side of the GVN under the Chieu Hoi Program.

It worked. Thirty VC came up Highway 534 to surrender in one group as startled 4-31 infantrymen looked on in disbelief. The enemy admitted propaganda broadcasts were having an effect. Local VC were instructed by their cadre to lie on the ground, cover up their ears, and yell and scream in order to drown out the broadcasts.

Return of GVN military forces to Hiep Duc in February had a significant effect in encouraging the people's cooperation. "We reminded the Vietnamese of the peaceful existence they led before the enemy came into the area," said CPT Winston Gouzoules (Ashland, Mass.), 196th Bde. civil affairs section.

Posters depicting a prosperous marketplace were displayed with the question: "Do you remember the old Hiep Duc market? When were you able to get there last?" Farm scenes were shown with the words: "The GVN will bring peace and prosperity to residents of Hiep Duc."

By March, Hiep Duc Valley had been pacified to a large extent, the foundation laid for the return of GVN control after an absence of nearly five years. The valley no longer belonged to the Viet Cong.

March 4 was a milestone in the pacification program. LTC Robert B. Longino, commanding officer of 4-31, arrived at LZ Karen to meet with ARVN 1LT Nguyen Duc Vinh, newly appointed chief of Hiep Duc District. LT Vinh accepted command of LZ Karen, and for the first time since fall 1965, the flag of the Republic of Vietnam flew over the Valley. The re-establishment of GVN control was especially significant because the enemy was busy launching their post-TET offensive.

Assisting LT Vinh with his administrative duties were 27 GVN officials from the district's hamlets and villages. Government troops also were present to provide security for returning refugees, and 4-31 soldiers remained in the area to offer support if needed.

Two small U.S. elements were dispatched to LZ Karen to aid GVN officials. A five-man MACV Mobile Advisory Team, headed by CPT Stanley W. Brown, provided

LT Vinh with assistance during the early days of pacification.

The first refugees arriving at Hiep Duc came from the western edge of the district. They had chosen to remain in the Valley rather than flee to the safety of the refugee center in Tam Ky. For years they had been scattered around remote areas of the Valley fighting for survival in hamlets dominated by VC. GVN forces, often accompanied by Herrmann and a MACV adviser, conducted operations in these remote areas, urging the people to relocate in the refugee center.

Most Vietnamese expressed surprise when informed the GVN had returned to Hiep Duc. Eager to point out local VC guerrillas in their hamlets, the people accounted for many VC and weapons captured.

By late March, several hundred refugees were settled near LZ Karen. For the most part, the people constructed their homes from bamboo, but one departure from the native mode of construction was apparent. Tin roofs sent to Hiep Duc by the GVN replaced typical grass coverings on most hootches. Today, hundreds of shiny roofs shimmering in sunlight greet visitors.

One day in April, Americal Chinook helicopters mass air-lifted 1,000 refugees, along with their belongings, from LZ Ross to Hiep Duc. Subsequent air-lifts and convoys returned hundreds of refugees to the Valley.

A food shortage was the first problem to confront newly-arrived refugees. "Fields around Hiep Duc hadn't been farmed in years," CPT Brown said. "We got rice that 4-31 captured from the VC, and GVN authorities in Tam Ky contributed a lot of food during the early months."

The refugees attacked the food problem during May by harvesting productive rice paddies. Under protection of RFs, PFs, and 4-31, the people gathered over 10 tons of rice.

Fields dormant for years were cleared and planted. A form of hybrid, long-grain rice—IR-8—was introduced for the first time in Hiep Duc. Vegetables were planted also. By late June, lush cornfields stood shoulder-high near LZ Karen.

All has not been peaceful in the Valley since the return of the GVN. Early morning on May 19, Hiep Duc came under attack by an unknown-size VC/NVA force. Fifteen civilians were killed and 25 wounded as the enemy terrorized villages with small arms, mortars, RPGs, and Chicom grenades.

The Vietnamese fought savagely against attacking VC. A Rural Development Camp was hit hard, but with help from a PF platoon, the black-shirted cadre refused to yield.

Instilling self-reliance in the people of Hiep Duc is a major objective of Americal efforts. Self-reliance must begin with economic self-sufficiency, according to CPT Brown, who serves as the senior adviser for Hiep Duc. "We hope to rebuild the marketplace so the farmer can come and trade his rice with the fisherman," the captain said.

Such free trade is designed to encourage other types of economic endeavor throughout the district. An enterprising resident once purchased a surplus of brightly-colored cloth while visiting Tam Ky, and offered it for sale for the first time in Hiep Duc.

As in any society, recreation plays an important role in boosting morale for people of the Valley. Periodically, district dwellers take a break from the arduous task of rebuilding their community and engage in a songfest sponsored by local GVN officials.

Last Easter, 1LT Robert Mocarski, 4-31 civil affairs section, organized an Easter-egg hunt for children of Hiep Duc. After the eggs were decorated in bright colors and hidden around LZ Karen, several hundred Vietnamese children enthusiastically joined in the search. The Americal soldiers gave prizes of toys and candy to finders of the most eggs.

The future of Hiep Duc Valley looks bright for its residents, many of whom had not seen their homes for years prior to their return. Through the energy of the people, 4-31 soldiers, and MACV advisers, Hiep Duc continues to expand and flourish. Thousands of Vietnamese are home to stay.

Dalby



A truck from B Co., 23rd S&T returns refugees to their homes in Hiep Duc Valley, 25 miles northwest of Tam Ky.

ARVN

Our Vital Partner

Photos by Tipton



By SP4 DON YOST
11th Inf. Bde.

Working with 11th Inf. Bde. units, soldiers from the 2nd ARVN Div. load, aim, and fire a 106mm recoilless rifle. Opposite page, trainees run through ARVN confidence course at Quang Ngai City.



Their physical appearances differ—the Americal soldier towering over his ARVN (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) ally. But they fight with equally high skill, and are teaming up to put the crunch on “Charlie.”

Born in wartime and brought up with numerous bloody battles against enemy forces, one group of ARVNs, the 4th Regt., 2nd ARVN Div., has developed into a first-rate combat force.

It has participated in most opera-

tions organized within Quang Ngai Province, and its soldiers have put 12,500 enemy troops out of action and captured over 1,000. More than 450 Communist cadre, including an NVA lieutenant colonel, have defected to the ARVN regiment.

As testimony to its combat efficiency, 4th ARVN Regt. elements captured a 75mm recoilless rifle the VC planned to use in an attack against LZ Bronco, 11th Inf. Bde. headquarters.

ARVN troops had set up night

ambush positions three miles north of the LZ along possible routes of enemy movement. Late that night, the luckless VC stumbled into the trap.

The ARVNs sprang the ambush, killing five and capturing not only the recoilless rifle and its ammunition, but also a log book containing the number of rounds the VC fired at LZ Bronco only a few days earlier.

Because of the regiment's efficiency, LZ Dragon, formerly manned by 11th Bde. soldiers, was turned over to the ARVNs in May. The regiment is stationed on Dragon to work with the 11th Bde. in securing the tactical operations area south of Quang Ngai City.

LTC Richard A. Jacoby, senior American advisor on LZ Dragon, coordinates operations with the 11th Bde. through a combined U.S.-ARVN tactical operations center.

Some 155mm howitzer batteries are perched on Dragon, as well as elements of the 21st ARVN field artillery, 81mm and 60mm mortar platoons, and 57mm recoilless-rifles.

When Americal and ARVN troops conduct a combined operation, two basic planning methods are used. In one approach, U.S. advisors and ARVN and Americal unit commanders hold informal discussions, determining which units will participate in the operation and what their functions will be.

The second method of planning a combined assault is based on intelligence reports which identify areas of large enemy activity.

When an enemy concentration is detected, Americal and ARVN com-

Pearson



manders reach a mutual agreement on what units to deploy. The decision depends on location of friendly units relative to enemy positions, as well as tactical importance of operations engaged in at the time of the discovery.

ARVN and Americal units maintain close coordination throughout a combined operation. The ARVNs move parallel to Americal forces on combined combat sweep operations and often act as blocking elements for U.S. troops, pushing the enemy toward them.

Although they usually are supported by their own artillery, ARVN forces frequently receive artillery support from the 11th Bde. In like manner, the 11th does not hesitate to ask for support from ARVN artillery.

ARVN batteries function basically the same as an Americal battery except they do not employ the sophisticated Field Artillery Digital Computer System. An ARVN battery plots its targets mathematically without computers.

Besides close cooperation between Americal and ARVN artillery, ARVN infantrymen and E Trp., 1st Cav. frequently work together in combined sweeps. Such operations normally are planned at least one week in

advance on the basis of intelligence reports.

If an ARVN commander feels he needs added support to accomplish his mission, he can request Americal armored personnel carriers (APC) to move with his unit. During a sweep in April, elements of the 4th ARVN Regt. and a platoon from E Trp. secured an area 11 miles north of Duc Pho.

"The ARVNs worked exceptionally well with us," said 1LT Tony Varda, executive officer of E Trp. "They were very cooperative, and this made the operation a complete success."

Helicopter support also plays a major role in U.S./ARVN operations.

The 174th Aslt. Hel. Co. (AHC) provides LTC Le Ba Khieu, 4th Regt. commander, with a command and control (C&C) helicopter. From his chopper, LTC Khieu controls his troops on the ground, maneuvering them toward enemy positions. He also directs artillery support from either Americal or ARVN batteries.

When an ARVN unit contacts an enemy force, it is given all the helicopter support provided U.S. troops. This includes "Shark" gunships for added fire power, as well as Medevac helicopters.

Frequently, a "Smokey" chopper

is included in a combat assault for greater security. The "Smokey" spreads a dense smoke around the landing zone to provide concealment for ARVN and Americal elements.

When ARVN units set up night defensive positions, they also can call on helicopter flare ships for needed illumination.

Statistics from the last 12 combined combat assaults involving 11th Bde. and 4th Regt. troops indicates the effectiveness of allied campaigns.

The combined units accounted for 266 NVA and 79 VC killed, and the capture of 18 crew-served and 68 individual weapons.

During Operation "Quyey Thang" (Strive For Victory), ARVN and Americal forces fought side by side, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy. Results of the operation included 1,406 enemy soldiers killed.

Besides combat sweep operations, U.S. and ARVN soldiers often cooperate on engineering projects such as building firebases and constructing roads.

In one seven-day operation, elements of the 11th Bde. and 4th Regt. teamed up on a road clearing mission five miles west of Quang Ngai City.

Division combat engineers from C Co., 26th Engr. Bn. cleared a 200-

ARVN soldier aids Americal troops in providing security for C Co., 26th Engr. Bn., on a road-clearing project. Opposite page, during a break from the operation, ARVNs show new knife to engineer.



Pearson

meter swath on either side of a road connecting the province capital to a firebase four miles west. The ARVN's 3rd Bn. provided security, and additional fire support came from the 11th Bde.'s E Trp., 1st Cav., and the 1st company of the 4th ARVN Tank Bn.

The combined team met with only sporadic sniper fire as they pushed ahead, widening the existing strip of road to prevent ambushes against truck convoys supplying the firebase.

1LT James Kosman, platoon leader with E Trp., praised ARVN efforts: "They did an excellent job of clearing the way up ahead, and they kept us well-informed all the way."

As U.S. and ARVN bulldozers cleared brush and leveled hedgerows, two ARVN infantry companies set up forward, providing flank and rear security.

Americal APCs maintained local security as the ARVN tank company deployed along the flanks with the infantry units.

A member of Advisory Team 2, Quang Nagi City, which has been working with the ARVN battalion for nearly a year, spoke highly of the unit. "They are fine soldiers," said Australian Warrant Officer Bob Cameron. "They show a great willingness to learn and make good fighters."


As the operation drew to a close, PFC Richard Rosa, C Co., 26th Engrs., said, "The ARVN did a fine job of pulling security for us and were very easy to get along with. It was a smooth operation."

ARVN and Americal forces also worked closely in establishing a hilltop firebase seven miles west of Quang Ngai City.

Holding a commanding view of the surrounding area, the hill sits on the edge of the 11th Bde.'s 3rd Bn., 1st Inf. area, and is the staging point for intensive pressure against local-force VC.

Assigned to preliminary work of clearing the new firebase, A Co., 3-1 began digging in and prepared a temporary helicopter pad for the first loads of supplies and equipment brought in. ARVN units secured the surrounding area.

Official name of the firebase is "LZ 4-11" in recognition of combined efforts between men of the 4th Regt. and the 11th Bde.

Fighting together, Americal and ARVN soldiers have grown to respect each other. Through the success of their combined operations and strong spirit of cooperation, they have hurt the enemy and continue to strike as an efficient combat team. 

Pearson



'chairborne rangers'

With the help of a computer, SGT Cary B. Bacall, 23rd Admin. Co., updates personnel data cards for division troops. Bacall works in 462-man AG section.



From getting you paid,

To getting you home,

23rd Admin. Co. does the job

Story and Photos by
SP5 THOMAS MAUS

How much does money mean to the Americal soldier? Or how about DEROS orders?

At Division Headquarters in Chu Lai, nearly 800 men of the 23rd Admin. Co. work at the massive job of caring for these administrative needs of 25,000 fellow Americal soldiers.

The 23rd Admin. has three main missions: (1) Provide necessary personnel and administration to support and sustain the division, including replacement support and centralized personnel service for all units assigned and attached to the division; (2) Serve as a carrier unit that provides support for certain elements of the special staff; (3) Act as the rear echelon for division headquarters.

The Staff Judge Advocate, Inspector General, Division Chaplain, Adjutant General, Special Services, Finance, and Information Sections of 23rd Admin. work toward carrying out these missions.

Special staff sections like the Staff Judge Advocate Office (SJA) provide valuable legal assistance for Americal soldiers.

The claims section of SJA handles property loss or damage cases. "We process claims submitted by soldiers on personal property destroyed or lost which occurred due to no fault on the part of the claimant," said SP4 Kevin G. Roche (Coventry, R.I.). "The claimant must have taken proper measures to insure the safety of his property prior to the violation."

The legal assistance section of SJA offers everything from tax consultations to legal assistance in general court martial cases. SP5 William K. Stratvert (Albuquerque, N.M.), an enlisted attorney with SJA, deals with military justice and legal assistance matters.

Legal assistance provided by SJA is a valuable aid to soldiers with domestic problems. The word of a qualified attorney comes in handy before signing a legal document.

Another 23rd Admin. section, the Inspector General Office (IG), serves as a link between the serviceman and problems he cannot solve at a lower echelon.

"We are here to serve when the chain of command is no longer effective," said MAJ Thorton S. Saperstein (Leavenworth, Kan.), deputy division IG. "The IG is here to answer the soldier's every whim, but we will not interpret an Army regulation, simply relate what it says."

SFC Fred S. McFerren (Grand Rapids, Mich.), complaints NCO, deals with a dozen complaints in an average week. "Most of the gripes I get have not gone through the

company, so 90 percent are turned back for review," McFerren said. "But we still treat each and every problem as a real problem."

The IG also performs the well-known job of seeing that the division is standing tall. The annual IG inspection digs deep into areas such as living conditions, office functional filing systems, and every day upkeep of vehicles.

The Division Chaplain's Office also falls in 23rd Admin. Chaplain (LTC) Jack C. Randles (Rogersville, Tenn.), former acting division chaplain, coordinates division religious activities. "A soldier's personal problems present a real challenge to us," Chaplain Randles said. "During a recent three-month period, we handled 4,874 cases, most of them marriage problems."

During the same three-month period, over 62,000 people worshipped in 24 chapels located throughout the Americal operational zone.

The Chaplain's Office also oversees the Americal Choral Club. Under the direction of SP5 Larry Mason (Joliet, Ill.), the 25-man group visited Saigon in June to appear on AFVN-TV's "Interlude."

Keeping track of men in the Army's largest division is the responsibility of the biggest single section in 23rd Admin.—the Adjutant General's office (AG). LTC James R. Ralph, Jr. (Seattle), Americal AG, heads a 462-man staff.

AG's Personnel Actions Branch (PA) controls all commission and warrant officer applications, hardship discharges, and compassionate reassignments. On the other side of the wall from PA, personnel records are in- and out-processed through AG's Personnel Management (PM).

SP4 William Murray (Chicago) works in PM's redeployment section. "This is one of the most hectic jobs around," Murray said. "With only so many seats available on one airplane, we have trouble accommodating all the guys going home. But we do all we can to make sure a man doesn't have to stay longer than he has to."

AG also sees that the bushbeaters and rear echelon personnel get the greatest morale booster of all—U.S. mail. "The amount of mail that comes and leaves this post office is astronomical," said APO clerk SP4 Art Taylor (Alturas, Calif.). "For example, we processed 433 tons of mail during June."

Thanks to the Special Services Section of 23rd Admin., Americal fighting men receive another morale lift—live entertainment.

Special Services sponsors numerous shows—Korean,

Philippino, and even Americal's own group, the "Joint Chiefs of Staff." Last summer, celebrities such as AFRS's Chris Noel performed in the division area.

Special Services beach facilities in the Chu Lai area include tennis, miniature golf, horse shoes, even a barbecue by the sea. Every month the Sandpiper Club at 723rd Maint. Bn. boasts a full slate of recreational activities.

"In service we excel" is the motto of 180 men of the Americal Finance Office.

A man is in Chu Lai only a few days before Finance has his records and pay voucher for the up-coming month. After this, all pay records are converted to a skeletonized military pay voucher and put in an accessible master file where adjustments can be made more easily.

American Express's Chu Lai branch office offers division soldiers the chance to deposit their monthly pay into a checking account right here in Chu Lai. SP4 Roby Brown (Powhattan Point, Ohio) transfers military pay to this unique combat check facility. "Salting away money in a checking account is a real benefit, especially to the guy in the field," Brown said. "Money is within easy reach when he needs it."

Another 23rd Admin. section, the Division Information Office (IO) keeps the folks back home and Americal troops informed of division activities.

IO processes a hometown news release on every man entering the division and sends it to hometown papers. Working with brigade information offices, IO also prepares general news stories and photos of Americal soldiers for release to military and civilian news media.

The Daily News Sheet published by IO brings the soldier up to date on combat action, and the weekly SOUTHERN CROSS newspaper and AMERICAL magazine present in-depth coverage of division news.

MAJ James W. Dobyns (Kingsport, Tenn.) 23rd Admin. commander (since succeeded by MAJ Robert J. White), summarized the objective of the company: "In essence, we are simply an administrative or controlled headquarters. Each special staff section has their own job to do, and they do it very admirably."

Thanks to efforts of the division's administrative nerve center, the complex paper machine keeps turning, helping men of the Americal get paid, informed, processed, spiritually replenished, entertained, legally assisted... and home.



PFC Art Taylor, APO clerk in 23rd Admin., whittles down seemingly endless pile of mail sent to and from Americal soldiers.

'Doc'— Someone Who Can Help



While visiting one of his companies in the field, CPT Wayne Secrest, battalion surgeon for the 5th Bn., 46th Inf., takes time for an impromptu MEDCAP for nearby villagers.

Story and Photos by
1LT JOSEF HEBERT
198th Inf. Bde.

CPT Roger W. Browne settled into his chair awaiting the beginning of a USO show. Then came a telephone call, and the 27-year-old former part-time truck driver disappeared. Someone needed his help.

A few weeks later CPT Browne was awakened at 4 a.m. because a young soldier required medical attention.

On another day, the flag had just been lowered near brigade headquarters when the captain walked toward the mess hall, only to be halted by a request for help. His detour postponed dinner.

The interruptions were nothing unusual for the young Philadelphian who would rather have people call him "Doc" than captain.

Although he has no receptionist to guard him from his patients, and his place of business could just as well be a cruising helicopter as his aid station, with medics instead of nurses as assistants, Doctor Browne—as well as the other three battalion surgeons of the 198th Inf. Bde.—is a busy, practicing physician.

"Sometimes people think you want to hear about their illnesses all the time...and here there really isn't any way of getting away from being a doctor," Browne lamented in a moment of introspection. But he quickly added, "That's my job though. That's what I'm here for."

The battalion doctors feel their job, both as healer and morale booster on the front lines of combat, is vital and important.

At LZ Stinson, the forward firebase for the 1st Bn., 52nd Inf., and a landing zone in the midst of heavy enemy movement and action, CPT Paul Phelps (Warrenton, Ga.), battalion surgeon, makes his home and office in an aid station constructed of sand-packed ammunition boxes and two-by-four pieces of lumber.

"This is the place for a doctor," he said. "I would rather be back at the hospital, but after three months here I find that this is where you can often get the 'life saving' cases only a doctor can handle."

Many of the day-to-day cases for



"Doc" Roger W. Browne, 198th Bde. surgeon, helps a Vietnamese youngster try to walk in a village near LZ Bayonet.

CPT Phelps involve skin ailments, minor surgery, and programs to prevent malaria and dysentery.

Commanders from brigade on down recognize their doctors' importance, especially when the chances of having someone wounded are increased.

"When it's the dark of the moon I want the battalion doctor as close to the men as possible," said LTC Reed E. Davis Jr. (Omaha, Neb.), commander of the 1st Bn., 52nd Inf. at LZ Stinson.

At the dark of the moon "Charlie" is liable to start something, and if he does the "Doc" is as good to have around as a strategically placed "Quad 50" machinegun.

About 10 miles northeast, only a few thousand meters from the South China Sea at LZ Gator, the doctor of the 5th Bn., 46th Inf. couldn't agree more with LTC Davis' feeling that a battalion physician

should be close to his patients, the infantrymen.

"I've always placed a definite priority on the 'grunt' in the field who has to carry the real burden," said CPT Wayne Secrest, the 5th Bn., 46th Inf., medicine man. "We treat a lot of colds and headaches anywhere, but they don't kill people—mines and bullets do."

To stay "on top of the action," CPT Secrest spends much time in the battalion commander's command and control helicopter. Touring the area of operation with LTC Julian Wagner (Columbus, Ga.), "Doc" Secrest has on several occasions zoomed into an area where he is needed.

CPT Secrest's attitude of staying close to the infantrymen makes good sense to "Doc" Browne who, although serving as brigade surgeon at LZ Bayonet, makes frequent trips to other firebases.

"The presence of a doctor at a forward firebase is a big morale booster," CPT Browne noted. "Often I treat nothing very serious, but when I'm there I'm somebody they (the troops) can tell their troubles to."

Aside from the chaplain, CPT Browne added, the doctor is one of the few persons a soldier talks to freely.

By being on the scene, today's doctors observe the conditions under which their patients live, the load they carry up hills and through rice paddies, and rugged environment with which they must cope.

"But these men are in the prime of their health. It's very rare that I find any critically serious health problems aside from battle wounds," CPT Phelps said.

Men of the 1st Bn., 6th Inf. patrol the "rocket pocket" area west of Chu Lai and prevent the enemy from establishing rocket launching sites.

"In some areas here contact with the enemy isn't that frequent," said the 1st Bn., 6th Inf., doctor, CPT David Phillips (Norristown, Pa.).

"Our main problem is mines and booby traps."

"This type of patrolling wears on the morale of the men," CPT Phillips added. "It gives them a big boost to see a doctor out there in the field. It's really letting them know that you care and that you're nearby in case they need you."

As the man to whom commanders and enlisted men alike turn in case of medical emergency, the doctors are indispensable. But that is only part of their job.

Often Vietnamese from the infant to the aged, from innocent civilians to captured Viet Cong, come under the care of brigade physicians.

On a number of occasions "Doc" Browne has treated Viet Cong prisoners or Hoi Chanh. And MEDCAPs are just part of a day's work.

On one occasion, a five-year-old girl was brought into CPT Browne's aid station unable to walk because of paralysis of both legs. Under steady treatment at a small village near LZ Bayonet, "Doc" Browne made her exercise and gave her vitamins. Today she manages to walk a little with aid of crutches made by her father.

"The girl will never be right, but she's better," CPT Browne said after a recent visit. "I did all I could under the conditions."

Such is the attitude of battalion surgeons, whether they're treating a young Vietnamese girl with paralyzed legs or an Americal soldier with a gunshot or fragmentation wounds—do all that can be done under the conditions.

The result has been the best medically cared for soldiers in the history of warfare.

"Over here you can think of yourself as an Army officer, a battalion or brigade surgeon, or just a doctor," CPT Phillips reflected. "I guess I'm not very formal about it. I prefer to be thought of as 'Doc'—someone who can help."

AMERICAL MIRTH

By SP4 LOU PEARSON
523rd Sig. Bn.



"I'm your new lieutenant.
Do you have any 1049s?"



"Hey, here's a nice peg right here."



"Ain't seen that new lieutenant since the last sniper round came in."



"Gosh, there's no telling
what's in that water, sarge."

Sparkling Legend Of The Theater

By SP4 JAMES BROWN

In the new land of dragons, when it was still young with incredible hope and wisdom, Vietnamese actors brought songs and poems, legends and Chinese plays to the stage.

During this same period, the legend concerning the "Sunlight Maiden" began, a legend shrouded in mystery. The Sunlight Maiden was unveiled before the royal court of the Ly dynasty, a halo of sunlight enveloping her entire body.

Traditional Hat Boi theatrical performances use no scenery and properties are few, which heightens the Sunlight Maiden's impact. Actors' makeup, gestures, and costumes compensate for the barren stage.

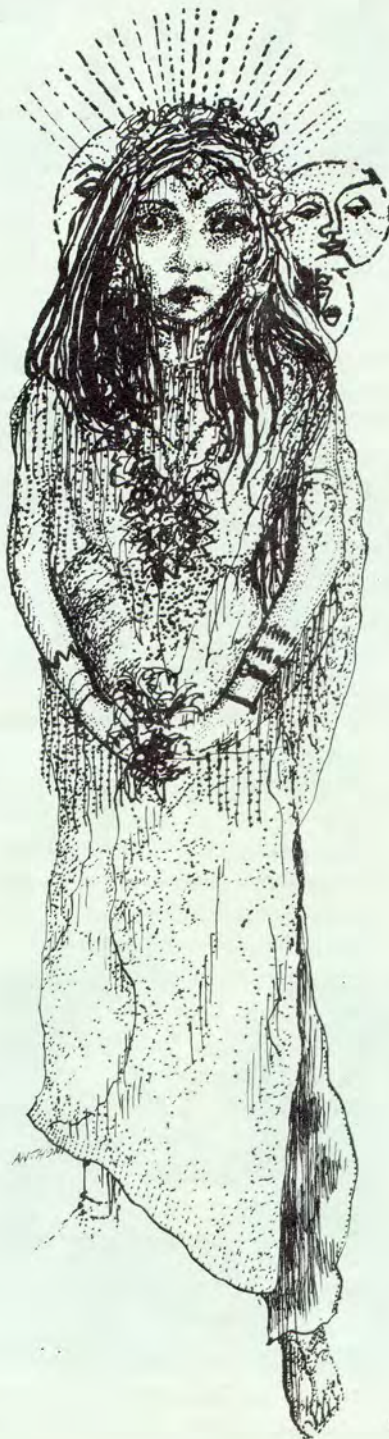
Facial makeup identifies the characters, various skin colors representing different human qualities, and type of eyebrow, eye shape, and mouth indicating special traits of the role.

But the Sunlight Maiden surpassed this embellishment. Although her costume was only a peasant garment saturated with sunlight, it glowed even when the stage was semi-dark. Like the sunlight, her identity became part of the unsolved puzzle of her existence.

Plots for most Vietnamese plays are drawn from Vietnamese and Chinese history and arranged in a series of episodes, each play built on a set of tunes to fit the dramatic situation. Lines are sung or chanted.

When Hat Boi plays were presented to the general public in the 13th century, they became very popular.

Although Hat Boi theater has declined in popularity as fewer Vietnamese study Chinese and as familiarity with conventions of stylized acting wanes, it remains the formal



entertainment for traditional ceremonies.

The Cai Luong (Reformed Theater) emerged as the most popular form of play. Usually a comedy of manners, Cai Luong's dialogue is interspersed with songs accompanied by orchestras, as in European operetta.

Originally, players were instrumentalists who performed a type of chamber music, but singers and actors were added as songs and dialogue were introduced.

The Sunlight Maiden became active again, singing her songs of prophecy from stage to stage. A few Vietnamese claim she was resurrected or another Maiden given to the people as a gift by Buddha.

Cai Luong plays grew mainly because of public support. The belief evolved that if one was lucky enough to see the Maiden, he would enjoy good luck the rest of his life. Parents often take small children to the theater hoping they will see the Maiden, so their lives will never know hardship.

The Kich is another form of Vietnamese play. Modeled after the modern French comedy, it is not enjoyed by the common people, who are unaccustomed to plays without singing or music. The fact the Sunlight Maiden never has appeared there contributes to the Kich's unpopularity.

The psychological warfare division of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam uses the Kich extensively, though, for entertainment in the countryside and on radio broadcasts.

Some Vietnamese believe the Maiden soon will appear even in Kich plays.



