

65 Reds Bow Out Near Vu Gia River

DA NANG — 7th Marine Leathernecks combined with Marine air and artillery units to deliver a knockout punch to two NVA companies May 1. Sixty-five Reds went down for the tenth count.

The action began at 10 a.m. eight miles southwest of Hill 55

in the Arizona Territory area, where an estimated two North Vietnamese companies were spotted 1,000 yards south of the Vu Gia River.

Using organic weapons, tanks, air and artillery, the Marines killed 25 enemy soldiers in the first two hours of fighting. Attempting to flee, the commu-

nists were hit by jets from the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing and Huey gunships, while a company of Leathernecks crossed the river to the west and set up a blocking force.

Reports indicated the air-ground team accounted for 65 enemy killed, 13 individual and 4 crew-served weapons captured.

Operation Oklahoma Hills was

initiated by 1st Division Marines and Army of the Republic of Vietnam forces with the intention of penetrating the supply and staging areas of the 141st North Vietnamese Army Regt., 10 miles southwest of here.

The operation has been extremely successful in locating enemy camps, supplies and weapons. Riflemen from the 7th

and 26th Marines have located numerous enemy base camps, several of which could house an entire enemy battalion.

The month-old operation had accounted for 475 enemy killed and 152 individual and 40 crew-served weapons captured as of May 1. Four 122mm rocket launchers were also captured in the 1st Division push.



SEA TIGER



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III Marine Amphibious Force, Vietnam

May 9, 1969

Copter Chief Earns Navy Cross on 881

By Sgt. David Butler

PHU BAI — A 21-year-old Marine helicopter crew chief, who shielded a wounded and blinded Marine infantryman from a hail of more enemy bullets, was awarded the nation's second highest decoration for valor.

The Navy Cross was pinned on Cpl. Ernesto Gomez (Los Alamitos, Calif.) by LtGen. Henry W. Buse Jr., commanding general, FMFPac, during ceremonies at the Marble Mountain Air Facility near Da Nang. LtGen. Buse was on a tour of 1st Marine Aircraft Wing units.

Gomez, a two-year Vietnam veteran, earned his award near the slopes of Hill 881 during the struggle for the enemy-held mountain in January 1968.

Visibility was poor as his Sea Knight helicopter from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 262 (HMM-262) dropped into a small valley near Khe Sanh to pull out a wounded Marine.

As the aircraft touched down, the wounded Marine, escorted by two buddies, began to make his way toward the helicopter. Heavy automatic weapons fire poured in from all sides.

The injured Leatherneck had been shot in the arms and legs and had been blinded by shrapnel from a bursting enemy artillery round.

About 30 yards from the helicopter, the trio came under intense communist fire.

Gomez immediately jumped out of the aircraft and ran to the aid of the wounded man. He pushed him down, then covered the Marine with his own body to protect him from further enemy bullets.

After trying to comfort and protect the wounded man, Gomez picked him up and began carrying him toward the waiting helicopter.

He covered half the distance when a .50-cal. machine gun bullet "caught the wounded man's trouser leg and toppled him off me into a rocket crater," said Gomez.

"He kept yelling for me to leave him and save myself," said Gomez, "but I yelled back that I didn't come all the way out there for nothing, so he was stuck with me."

With that, Gomez jumped into (Continued on Back Page)

2/9 Leathernecks Stop NVA Blitz at the Wire

By Cpl. Larry White

VANDEGRIFT COMBAT BASE — An early morning attack on a Marine patrol base south of the DMZ left 43 enemy soldiers dead and an assortment of enemy weapons strewn on the battlefield.

The night defensive position was manned by Leathernecks of "G" Co., 2nd Bn., 9th Marines and had served as the Marines' patrol base for two days before the attack.

"The assault started about 4 a.m.," recalled 1st Lt. James W. Horn (1816 W. Ninth Ave., Stillwater, Okla.), company commander.

"Our listening post heard some movement around their position and called in to report it to the company command post," he continued.

As suddenly as the sound became audible, it stopped and about 100 North Vietnamese soldiers attacked the hilltop posi-

tion of the 1st Platoon and Golf's headquarters element.

The company was spread out over three ridge lines because one hilltop was not big enough to accommodate the whole company.

"They must have known where the company headquarters was because that area of our perimeter took the brunt of the attack," Horn said.

LCpl. Larry D. Johnson (Continued on Back Page)

With Charlie on the Run

III MAF Marks Fourth Anniversary

The III Marine Amphibious Force plunged into its fifth year in Vietnam May 6 with an optimistic outlook shored and buttressed by undeniable success in the field and measured confidence from the South Vietnamese, who see blue sky through the pall of battle.

Since March 8, 1965, when 4,000 Leathernecks from the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade came ashore at Red Beach, the enemy has been identified, sought out even in his most inaccessible hiding places and destroyed. Those who remain, do so at a cost that has rendered them incapable of victory.

Forty-seven major operations were initiated by III MAF commands since May of last year with 45,000 of the enemy killed, 10,000 of these in small unit actions.

Up against 187,000 III MAF plus other free-world troops in I Corps, "Charlie" is reeling with the punch of massive allied firepower and in turn losing the land which sustains him. Following the enemy's Tet offensive early in 1968 and a temporary setback in pacification in the I Corps Tactical Zone the III MAF juggernaut launched a counter-offensive into enemy-gained territory, recovered what had been lost and more — and momentum is continuing.

III MAF, which includes 1st and 3rd Marine Divisions, XXIV Corps which consists of both Army and Marine units, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, Force Logistic Command, the U.S. Army's Americal Division, 101st Air-

borne Division and the 1st Brigade of the 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized), struck hard at the enemy where it hurt him most.

Since last May the largest ammunitions and supply caches of the war have been uncovered, forcing the enemy to fight for his dinner. Lightning operations in the lowlands and jungled mountains of I Corps, including the largest Marine combat helicopter assault in history, Operation Meade River, took Charlie by surprise in his base camps and sanctuaries. Operations Dewey Canyon and Maine Crag in northern I Corps saw the enemy lose hundreds of tons of weapons, ammunition, food and medical supplies and thousands of their own number.

As the III Marine Amphibious Force marks its 4th anniversary as a decisive, efficient and effective force in South Vietnam's search for peace, we pause also to underscore the less tangible,

the soft "escalation" of courage and conviction among the People themselves, the rebuilding of schools, hospitals, homes and the educating and improved treatment and living conditions which necessarily follow.

The success of the civic action program in I Corps is surpassed only by its potential for the future. The Vietnamese are receiving needed medical treatment, military assistance, hope and the security which will allow it to grow. Civic action programs the past year were conducted in construction, health and sanitation, distribution of commodities, education, training and monetary support throughout I Corps. Combined Action Platoons of Marines and Vietnamese Popular Forces provide both moral and military support.

Two children's hospitals are currently serving I Corps, Hoa Khanh Children's Hospital at (Continued on Back Page)



LTGEN. HENRY W. BUSE JR., CG, FMFPac awards the Navy Cross to Cpl. Ernesto Gomez for his actions on Hill 881 in January 1968.

This Is The Way It Was, and Is

To Our Fallen Son

By Al Dewlen

Editor's Note: Second Lt. Michael L. Dewlen, 24, USMCR, was killed in action June 11, 1968, while serving with "C" Btry., 1st Bn., 12th Marines, 3rd Marine Division.

After reflecting on the loss of his only child for six months, Al Dewlen, a noted Amarillo, Texas author, wrote "Report to a Sleeping Son." The dramatic and moving article was originally copyrighted and published in the Amarillo Sunday News-Globe Jan. 12, 1969.

This, my son, is how it was, and is.

It was Friday, 5:15 p.m., cloudy and still hot as I turned into our drive and continued on into the garage. I was standing over the littered workbench, debating which chore deserved first claim on the remaining daylight, when someone called my name. In the doorway I saw a preacher.

As I went to meet him, your mother came hurrying toward me from the house. Nothing about her looked right; there was the impression of calamitous change, entire and final. The minister reached for my arm. Then Jean took my hand, and I felt her trembling. My impulse was to shout at her, to demand that she restore the smile she had been wearing only an hour before. I asked, "What has happened?" She answered, "Mike has been killed."

How can I tell you how much like death life was at that instant? I pictured you as clearly as ever I have seen you, in all the ways I've ever seen you: as a fat baby drooling on my shoulder, as a Little Leaguer straining to throw down to second base, as a rugged sofie sobbing from the sight of a starved dog, as the fiery captain of those good football teams. I saw you grown a man blooming with pride in the Marine Corps uniform, so strong and tough and openly sentimental. And I thought: You, Mike, shot down in battle? Preposterous, a lie. That you could die at all was unthinkable; that you could have lain dead for days without our having known it, or sensed it, was not possible. But there was Jean, wavering before me as the wreckage of a woman is when she has lost her only child, and I could lay hold of nothing to fend off belief.

The agony was utter, crippling. I was unable to speak to your mother or take her in my arms. For a moment I saw you without life, cold and still, and out of my guts sprang an awful rancor against God. I wanted to summon Him down to be battered with this rage and pain, to force Him to account.

"It's Mike," Jean said. "They do mean Mike, and he is dead."

We went into the house. Lynn was waiting. Earlier, she had been talking about your first wedding anniversary, just three days away. A week ago, she had sent you a piece of your wedding cake, saved in the freezer as a surprise, and she had been much concerned that the mails might mash it. Now she stood wide-eyed and lost. Beside her were two Marines. They met me with quiet expressions of regret and the gentle warning that there was no mistake, that we should not cling to hope.

Time passed before I could react enough to gather in our women, yours and mine. I held them like a pair of broken dolls.

Soon people came flooding into the house. Dishes of food and flowers appeared. It had begun, the terrible two weeks of wet pillows, of escapes to the closet for private grief, of alternating collapse and recomposure, while we waited the return of your body from Da Nang.

It is difficult to tell you about

those weeks, even to separate one day from the other. Your mother dwindled by 15 pounds. She hardly slept, but would lie staring at the darkness, remembering the mother things, taking tearful inventory of the treasures she had been storing in her heart since the morning you were born. Through the days, Lynn made herself the angel of our consolation; nights, she lay crying in your bed. Sometimes exhaustion stunned me into periods of stupored rest, and they were hateful. For at each awakening the news struck me afresh, as if with every sunrise you died again, right before my eyes.

Everything prompted us to recollection. Your clothes hanging in the closet, your fishing and hunting gear piled about. On the kitchen doorframe were the pencil marks recording your growth. We heard you in our talk, through the ridiculous nicknames and lighthearted phrases you invented and installed so deeply in the family language that now, try as we might, we could not avoid them. Hundreds of people called to speak well of you. Still, because Lynn and your mother agreed I should, I got myself together amid all this to write your eulogy.

Remember the talk we had, the day before you shipped out? "I expect to be back," you told me. "But if I should buy the farm, I want to be buried as a Marine." Make it short and simple, you said, "and in my dress blues."

This was how we did it. You had Marines like gleaming statues as pallbearers. There was a rifle volley, and taps, at the cemetery. You would have been proud of your women: your mother, controlled, her head high; Lynn, wearing the dress you like best and looking indescribably beautiful, with mute tears streaking her cheeks as she accepted the memorial flag off your coffin.

Much later, the details came to us. Your 70 Marines and six 105s stood vulnerable and isolated in a sea of elephant grass, on a hill near the Laotian border. The attack came after midnight, and it was massive. Besides the mortar fire and hail of grenades, a battalion of enemy infantry penetrated the position, creating havoc and confusion. You were in the command tent, armed only with a .45. You dashed downslope under fire, rallying the men as you went, wringing organization out of chaos. With five others, you jumped directly into the enemy and fought it out in the darkness, hand-to-hand among the guns, through a desperate half hour. It was a burst from a Russian AK-47 automatic rifle that cut you down. Four of your party died with you. The fifth fell, severely wounded.

But you had won. Thereafter, the crews you had rallied brought the 105s into action, getting off point blank more than 200 beehive rounds. A probable massacre was changed into an astounding triumph. You would like knowing that the battery has received special com-

mendation; that its men declare you saved their lives; that they requested and held a memorial service for you; that they nominated you for your decoration. How splendid of you, my son, to have given yourself as you did; to have willed us this boundless piece of gallantry as your estate.

We pore over this final report card with vaulting pride. But it has not surprised us. Bravery was like you, from the time you took on the neighborhood bully, on through the bruises of a hundred football games, into those later hours when you stood firm in allegiance to standards abandoned to ridicule by others of your generation.

Thinking of you and your clear sense of honor and self-respect, I am compelled to the question that has twisted inside me like a dagger since the moment I knew you were gone. Did not we, your parents, point you toward this death? Didn't we, out of our own unqualified love of country and rigid definition of duty, actually rear you to die at war?

Perhaps we did. From the first we taught you reverence for America's flag, her laws, traditions and institutions. We trained you to the habit of every day joy in your citizenship. We encouraged your development into an aggressive competitor for excellence in a free society. We saw to it that you would regard the defense of your homeland and the support of her commitments as a privilege. We deliberately cultured in you the presently unfashionable belief that a man is responsible for himself, the fabricator of his own consequences. You listened well. You accepted yourself as what you had to work with, granted yourself no excuse, adjusted your life to its season. You decided that the student's role was one of learning, not once misconstruing it as a franchise for the destruction of order or the dismantling of authority.

It was natural, then, that you should have considered Vietnam not debatable. That your country had pledged itself was sufficient. There was never a doubt that you would volunteer. Many of your contemporaries must have thought you a hopeless non-swing, a well-groomed heir to their arch-rival establishment, while we applauded you.

But on that terrible Friday, with the cost of our handcrafted patriotism there before us in the cemetery, we had to ask ourselves whether we had meant what we preached, whether we would continue meaning it through the years ahead. If granted a second chance, would we repeat the course? Or would we find ways to permit and justify, to retract and consent, knowing that the resultant irresponsibility might save your life?

To answer, we looked about us at others of your age. We considered the man in our end of town who ducked into teaching, marriage and parenthood as part of an announced strategy for frustrating the draft. We regarded those fleeing to Canada or burning their draft cards under the

(Continued on Page 11)

SEA TIGER

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III MAF Lauded

CGs, MACV, FMFPac, III MAF

On behalf of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, I extend my congratulations to the III Marine Amphibious Force on the 4th anniversary of its activation.

As in years past, III MAF continued to serve with distinction. You demonstrated great fighting skill, determination and esprit de corps in conducting more than 60 successful major operations which cost the enemy 43,000 dead. Operations such as "Meade River", which incorporated the largest Marine helicopter assault in history; "Dewey Canyon" and "Maine Crag" which denied the enemy huge quantities of equipment and rations, contributed significantly to preventing enemy successes in I Corps.

You are also to be commended on your outstanding efforts in pacification. Your assistance to the National Police Field Forces in identifying and eliminating the VC infrastructure, in addition to the construction of schools, churches, hospitals and individual homes, have resulted in increased security and confidence in the government of Vietnam.

I salute you as worthy members of the United States team in the Republic of Vietnam and wish you continued success in your future operations.

GEN. CREIGHTON W. ABRAMS
Commander, USMACV

Congratulations to the officers and men of the III Marine Amphibious Force on III MAF's 4th Anniversary.

Our nation and our Corps can be justly proud of the unprecedented accomplishments of III MAF over the past four years, which have seen it grow and develop into one of history's most efficient, effective and versatile combat forces, a model of wide-scale coordinated military effort. Your combat record is a chronicle of well-planned, skillfully-executed operations, both large and small, interspersed with accounts of individual valor, superb leadership, self-sacrifice and unyielding devotion. Additionally, in the area of civic action you have demonstrated to the world the feasibility and effectiveness of a nation building mission within the role of a combat-employed force. Your outstanding accomplishments in this field have served as a guide for other armed forces units in Vietnam and fostered the acclaim of the free world. Your continued magnificent performance of an enormous, multi-faceted task has brought hope and confidence to freedom loving people throughout the world, and is a monument to the vitality and value of the United States Marine Corps.

All Marines in FMFPac join me extending anniversary salutations and best wishes for future success.

LTGEN. HENRY W. BUSE
CG, FMFPac

Since 6 May 1965, when the III Marine Amphibious Force was officially activated, literally thousands upon thousands of Americans have come to I Corps to join forces with our gallant allies in a determined, unyielding stand against communist aggression and terrorism. During these past four years much has been accomplished to defeat the North Vietnamese invaders and to destroy the Viet Cong infrastructure in South Vietnam. Those others that have fought here in the past would be proud of the job being done here today, not solely in military combat but in the area of civic action as well.

Teamwork has been the mark of our success in I Corps. All members of all services working in conjunction with our Vietnamese and Free World Forces brothers-in-arms toward the common objective have enabled us to seek out and destroy the enemy in all areas of I Corps and have denied him the benefit of even one significant victory.

Although much has been accomplished, there is still much left undone. Much remains that will require the full time, effort and talents of all members of the III Marine Amphibious Force before our nation's objectives in South Vietnam are realized.

To all members of all services, officers and enlisted men, in the III Marine Amphibious Force, I extend my congratulations on your past achievements. I am confident that the future holds continued success in your military operations in the field and even more rewarding results in our nation building programs in the hamlets and villages.

LTGEN. HERMAN NICKERSON JR.
CG, III MAF



Putting Their Backs into Elbow Room

MARINES OF THE 3rd Bn., 26th Marines wasted no time carving out a fire support base from the heavy jungles of "Happy Valley" 20 miles west-southwest of Da Nang. The Leathernecks temporarily traded their rifles for axes and C-4 explosive (center photo) to clear brush and large trees from the hilltop base.

(Photo by Cpl. W.R. Schaaf)

Choppers Snatch Recons From Red Trap

By Cpl. Jim De Witt

QUANG TRI — It was either get them out, or give them up.

"And, that was no choice," said Maj. Harvey E. Britt. "The reconnaissance team had to get out and we were the only ones around to do it."

The 3rd Marine Division recon team was in the middle of a North Vietnamese Army strong-

hold two miles northeast of Dong Ha Mountain.

For the night-time mission, Britt (Shreveport, La.) led two CH-46 transports from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 262. An OV-10A Bronco and a pair of UH-1E Huey gunships from Marine Observation Squadron 6 were also scrambled.

With the weather deteriorating

and too poor for close support by jet aircraft, it was necessary for the helicopter pilots to supply their own firepower and to move quickly before the low ceiling forced them to delay the mission.

"The Bronco was loaded with flares and led the way," said Britt. "My wingman and I followed, flanked by the gun birds."

As the OV-10 circled just below the clouds, the Hueys started their rocket runs, blasting positions reported by the recon team on the ground.

The team had heard movement on one side of the mountain and directed the Huey rock-

ets to that area, but when the small gunships were in the middle of their run, fire erupted all around them.

"It was really the enemy's downfall," recalled Britt, "because then we had his positions spotted from the muzzle flashes. The enemy emplacements were blasted again and again by the Huey's rockets. Gradually the NVA were forced to forget about the outnumbered Leathernecks on the ground and lick their own wounds."

"It wasn't long before the enemy fire had died down quite a bit," recalled the Marine pilot. "So, with a Huey in front and another behind us, I decided to

attempt to get into the zone, hoping the gun birds had knocked out most of the positions."

With a .50-cal. machine gun blazing from each side of the transport, the crew chief firing his M-16, and Hueys darting overhead, the Sea Knight dropped down to the waiting Marines.

As the rescue aircraft touched down, the team began a quick sprint across open ground, firing from the hip as they ran. After scrambling aboard, they continued to fire as the aircraft quickly lifted out of the hostile zone — another patrol and mission successfully completed.

U.S. Miss Lends A Hand, Heart

By Sgt. John Lawrence

DONG HA—In their efforts to raise funds for the 3rd Marine Division Memorial Children's Hospital, now under construction at Quang Tri, Leathernecks of the "Fighting Third" have gained an ally.

Noel Miller (Killingworth, Conn.), a pretty, 13-year-old schoolgirl whose age prohibits her from participating directly in the American effort in Vietnam, has unselfishly volunteered her time, money and energy to raising funds for the new medical facility.

Her campaign included enlisting the help of countless numbers of her young friends who were attracted to the idea by her drive and imagination. Her efforts have gained attention not only in her hometown of Killingworth but throughout Connecticut.

It all started when Noel learned, through corresponding with 3rd Div. Marines in Vietnam, that a children's hospital was being planned for the treatment of youngsters living in Quang Tri Province.

Navy Lt. Fredrick Burkle (Hamden, Conn.), a pediatrician at the temporary children's medical facility at Dong Ha, said, "I had the pleasure of meeting the young lady while I was on the staff of the Yale-New Haven Medical Center. She was wearing a 3rd Marine Div. sweatshirt and since that was the unit I was going to in Vietnam, I went over and spoke to her."

He continued, "I received a letter from her last November. She wrote that she was interested in the children's hospital. I wrote back and sent along a hospital brochure, and I guess that's when she started her fund raising drive."

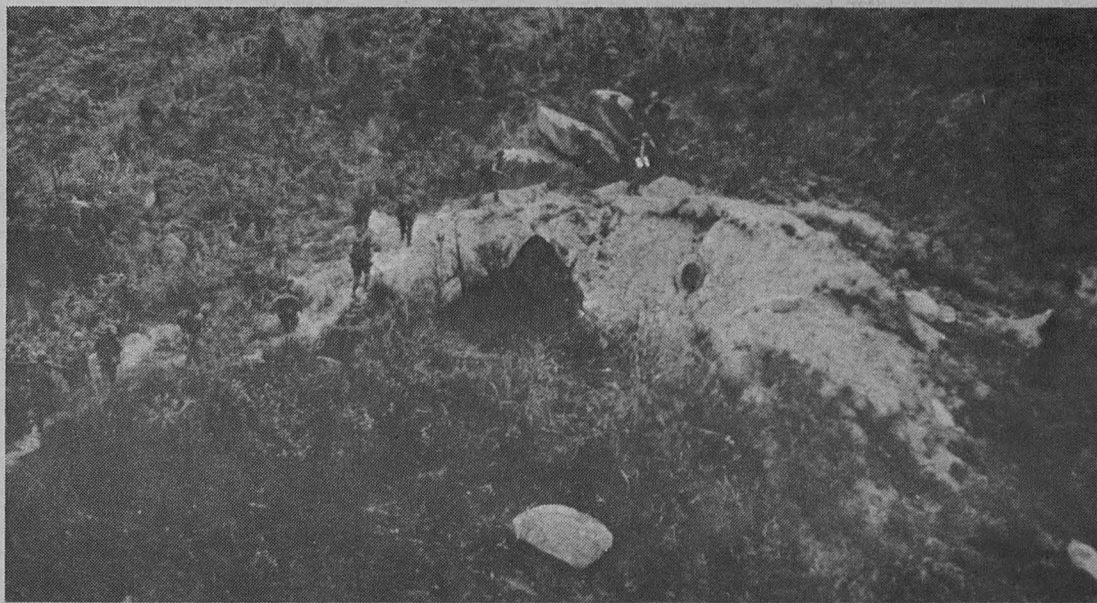
"She has done a fine job," declared Burkle, "we just received the results of her efforts thus far, a check for \$1,000."

Noel and her young friends are working now on their second thousand-dollar goal.

Noel even wrote to a state official asking that a program be instituted in schools for children who wanted to donate to the hospital fund. State law prohibited the program, but the letter gained much attention and various groups and organizations took it upon themselves to help her.

In her letter to the official Noel wrote, "We put up many fine statues as memorials but after a while people don't look at them anymore. On the other hand, a hospital is a living thing. Children will be made whole and well again to enjoy the freedom and rights that our men are giving their lives for."

The cornerstone of the new facility has already been laid, and a young American girl and the people that helped her with donations can be proud that their contributions are helping to raise the walls higher as surely as the workers employed on the project.



LEATHERNECKS of the 7th Marines wind over the top of a hill typical of the terrain being covered in Operation Oklahoma Hills. The multibattalion operation is being conducted west-southwest of Da Nang.

(Photo by SSgt. A.J. Sharp)

One Claymore at Hand May Be Worth 39 in the Bush

By Cpl. Robb Straub

DONG HA — A team of North Vietnamese Army soldiers who recently tried to close a vital supply route in northern I Corps were rewarded for their labor with a hard night's work and four of their team dead.

The enemy soldiers, working along Route 9 west of Cam Lo, planted numerous mines along the road. They then positioned snipers in a futile effort to discourage attempts to clear the road.

"We were sweeping about five miles west of Cam Lo when one of my men detected a hand grenade hidden under several tin cans on the road," reported Sgt. Donnie A. Bobo (Hoxie, Ark.), a

member of "C" Co., 3rd Engineer Bn., who commands one of the minesweep teams that clear the road daily.

As the Marines were setting a small charge to blow the makeshift mine in place, they began to receive light sniper fire.

"We took cover behind a bank beside the road for protection only to find two enemy claymore mines facing us," continued Bobo, a 17-month veteran in Vietnam. "Luckily for us and unlucky for the NVA, they didn't explode. They must have been old, because the face of the mine just fizzled and the steel pellets fell harmlessly to the ground."

The sweep commander located the source of enemy fire and deployed his squad-size security unit behind them. Minutes

later two enemy soldiers were dead.

The security squad from another sweep team working toward Bobo's position also was deployed against snipers and killed two more enemy soldiers.

Continuing their mission, the sweep team found several mines staggered along the road. To make things more difficult for the Marine engineers, the enemy had planted plastic mines in addition to the metal ones.

The sweep team found a total of 40 mines along a 2,100 yard stretch of the supply route.

"They must have been working all night putting in so many mines," concluded Bobo, "but as it came out, all they got for their effort was a sleepless night and the loss of four men."

Marine Convoys Deliver Ammo To ROKs

By Sgt. Steve Addington

HOI AN — Armed convoys manned by U. S. Marines are resupplying more than 6,000 Republic of Korea (ROK) Marines operating from this combat base, 22 miles south of Da Nang.

The convoys originate near a massive ammunition supply point on the outskirts of Da Nang. Moving through bitterly contested territory, the lifeline of supplies is constantly hampered by enemy action.

Korean Army elements assigned to the Korean 11th Logistic Bn., maintain a daily convoy providing ROK Marines with food, fuel and fortification

materials. However, for the resupply of ammunition, the Korean Marines have resorted to calling on their American counterparts to insure delivery of the vitally needed ammunition and ordnance.

The ROK Marines are nearly always engaged with enemy elements near the Hoi An base camp. Artillery pieces maintain a 24-hour vigil hammering at enemy strongholds throughout the surrounding area. Korean Marines move through village after village and into the surrounding mountains to flush out the enemy.

The daily resupply of ammunition and artillery ordnance is a must.

The backbone of the ammunition convoys are "combination rigs," five-ton trucks with a dolly and trailer rig, from the Marine Force Logistic Command's Truck Co. Leading the convoy is a "war wagon," an armored, five-ton truck equipped with a ring mounted .50-cal. machine gun. Bringing up the rear is a heavy-duty wrecker and another "war wagon."

"Once the convoy is on the road," explained convoy commander Marine Gy Sgt. Leo W. Baumgartner (Sarles, N. D.), "we keep moving despite the

enemy or vehicle breakdowns."

If a truck within the convoy breaks down, the wrecker and one "war wagon" stay behind as the remainder of the convoy moves on.

Aboard each "war wagon" are Korean Marines from the 2nd Republic of Korea Marine Brigade, supplemented by U. S. Navy hospital corpsmen.

"Along the route to Hoi An we have intermediate checkpoints," continued Baumgartner. "At each checkpoint we radio back to our control point at Force Logistic Command."

Each morning a combined American and Korean Marine

minesweeping team checks the entire road for enemy mines. Despite the morning sweeps, quickly set-up road mines are frequently found by the allied vehicles.

As the Korean and American Marines make their preparations for the convoy, many sense that perhaps preparations are being made elsewhere: a sniper is setting into position somewhere between Da Nang and Hoi An . . . a mine is being buried under a road . . . or a hidden position is being set up with deadly automatic weapons fire deployed to criss-cross the highway from nearby fortified enemy positions.

As the convoy begins moving, the trucks pass the Cam Vao Bridge and move outside the Da Nang defense perimeter. For the remainder of the trip the convoy is in contested territory.

Villages and towns passed carry the bitter mark of war. Many homes still lie in rubble. The children do not smile as the trucks roar by. The strain of recent fighting is still apparent.

After 15 miles of rambling along Vietnam's National Highway One the convoy arrives at the intersection marking the city square of Dien Ban. Throughout the war the city has passed from enemy to allied hands and back on repeated occasions. Some dwellings still lie deserted and destroyed. Again the people do not smile.

Seven miles later the convoy reaches the sprawling Korean combat base at Hoi An. From there the Korean Marines strike out at nearby enemy positions. The ammunition supplies are off-loaded at an ammunition supply point maintained by the Korean Army logistic unit, similar to the facility in Da Nang, but much smaller.

The convoy begins its return journey to Da Nang. The trucks bounce roughly on the pock-marked roads and cross numerous one-way bridges.

The members of the convoy relax as they span the Cam Vao Bridge and reenter the Da Nang defense perimeter.

Today there were no mines, and only a few sniper rounds. Tomorrow the convoy will make the run again to carry the hardware of war, ammunition, to America's third-nation allies, the Republic of Korea Marines of Hoi An.



A MACHINE GUNNER and his assistant from the 7th Marines, advance toward an enemy position during Operation Oklahoma Hills. The multi-battalion operation is being conducted in the mountainous terrain south-southwest of Da Nang. (Photo by Sgt. A.V. Huffman)

Dying Infant Revived at Hospital

By LCpl. Gary Gunn

DA NANG—Tranquility seemed evident outside the plywood home. Only the sound of children happily playing could be heard in the distance. The air was filled with a pungent smell of fresh baked "banh mi," a flat, bread-like food. No one would have guessed that inside the Vietnamese home, a young child was dying.

Phan Thi Lien, cradled in her mother's arms, was succumbing to pneumonia in the family's candle-lit home in Nghi-An Hamlet near here.

The hamlet's traditional "doctor" had prepared an ointment and spread it over the child's wheezing chest. It was thought, through time-honored customs, that this would cure the child's sickness.

In one corner of the home, a young Vietnamese boy could be heard talking to the child's father, Phan Nhut.

Nguyen "Sam" Van Tho, a 15-year-old interpreter for the Civil Affairs Office, Maintenance Bn., Marine Force Logistic Command (FLC), was trying to convince the father, "Sam's" uncle, to take the child to the nearby Hoa Khanh Children's Hospital at the big Marine base. The father insisted that he couldn't because of what the Viet Cong had told the villagers.

The Viet Cong told them that if they took their chil-

dren to American doctors, the Americans would keep the child, or send her to the United States, and the family would never see their child again. The father refused to seek help from the Americans.

"Sam" was the interpreter on many of Maintenance Bn's., medical civic action patrols. He had seen the U.S. Navy medical corpsmen give medication to the Vietnamese and was convinced they could help his two-month-old cousin win her battle for life.

While Sam talked with the father, other members of the family burned joss sticks (incense), a customary ritual corresponding to last rites.

Shortly, "Sam" emerged from the corner and told the grieving mother he was going to get the Navy corpsman. The father had finally consented to let "BAC-SI" (the doctor) come to the home.

"Sam" ran for the Maintenance Bn. civic action office.

When he got to the barbed-wire perimeter next to the office he called to his Marine friends inside. He relayed the story and they were soon on their way to the home with a Navy corpsman.

"When we arrived the baby was lifeless and only taking about six breaths a minute," said Hospital

Corpsman Third Class J.C. "Stoney" Cox, (Scott AFB, Ill.). "Her eyes were rolling and she didn't respond to any sensitivity test I gave her."

Cox knew that the situation was grave, and that if the child was going to live, he had to get her to the Children's Hospital at FLC. He had to convince the parents this was the only chance they had to save her life.

For more than 45 minutes "Sam" and Cox pleaded with the father in hopes that he would reconsider and allow the child to be taken to the hospital. Their persistence paid off. He agreed only if the mother could go along. Cox agreed and they were immediately on their way.

When they arrived at the hospital, the child was put in a resuscitator. She didn't respond.

A Navy doctor was summoned and gave the child an adrenaline shot and returned her to the resuscitator. In a few minutes, her tiny fingers started moving.

The tear stained cheeks of the mother wrinkled as her frown turned into a smile. She looked thankfully at the corpsman and doctor.

A few minutes later the child started to whimper and everyone broke into smiles.

The child was responding. She would live.



FOR THIS 7TH MARINES Leatherneck, happiness will be the 1st Medical Bn. and quick treatment for his injuries. Marines on Operation Oklahoma Hills wait only minutes before medical evacuation choppers come into their mountain locations to remove the wounded. (Photo by SSgt. A.J. Sharp)

Earth Mover Moves Marines

By Cpl. Robb Straub

DONG HA — Leathernecks of the 3rd Marine Division teamed up with a giant Seabee earth mover to help a Marine reconnaissance team drive off an enemy force in the vicinity of Cam Lo, eight miles west of Dong Ha.

The Marines, members of "B" Co., 1st Bn., 9th Marines were providing security for the Cam Lo River bridge when they received an urgent request for help from the recon team. The team had made contact and was under heavy enemy fire.

"Within minutes of the call, we had grabbed our weapons and were ready to go," com-

mented SSgt. W.W. Miles (Pasadena, Texas), leader of the reaction force. "But then we were faced with the problem of transportation to the scene of the firefight. It was more than two miles away."

Quickly looking around the compound, the Marines spotted the only available vehicle, the giant earth mover complete with two-man crew from Mobile Construction Battalion 62 (MCB-62).

"After explaining our problem to the drivers, Equipment Operator Construction Apprentice (EOCA) Tommy J. Giddnes (Terrell, Texas) and Equipment Operator 1st Class (EOL) C. M.

Vail (Phoenix, Ariz.), they were more than willing to volunteer their vehicle and help out," said Miles.

The Marines quickly scrambled into the scoop of their new assault vehicle and with the Seabees driving, off they went.

"It would have taken us at least 35 to 40 minutes to get there on foot," continued Miles, "but the Seabees got us there in five minutes, and they drove us close in toward the firefight."

The enemy quickly realized that they didn't have a chance when the reaction force arrived. They decided to retreat rather than fight.

After accomplishing their "mission," the two Seabees were given a "well done" by Navy Cmdr. John Paul Jones III, commanding officer of MCB-62.

Capt. K. E. Jenkins, commanding officer of "B" Co., commented, "I've heard of fighting the enemy with bulldozers, tractors and even dump trucks, but never an earth mover."

"Also," he concluded, "the can-do attitude of the Seabees and the working rapport of the Marines and Seabees has proven that they are a winning team."



CPL. JOSEPH MILTON (Jackson, Miss.), a member of 2nd Bn., 4th Marines, receives a few tips on how to shoot a crossbow from a Montagnard tribesman. (Photo by LCpl. Frank DeLong)

Bru Tribe Sells Goods

By LCpl. Frank DeLong

DONG HA — Bru tribesmen from the Cua Valley Resettlement Village west of Dong Ha have been introduced to the small-business world by 3rd Marine Division's Civil Affairs Office.

Having been supplied with the necessary building materials by the Division Civil Affairs Office, the Bru erected a small souvenir shop just inside the rear gate at Dong Ha Combat Base to sell handmade items depicting their culture.

Under the direction of 1stLt. Lawrence Eastland (Nampa, Idaho), a 3rd Marine Division civil affairs officer, the Bru have constructed tiny replicas of

their village homes (hootches), crossbows and arrows plus miniature statues in native dress.

"The shop will give at least 150 Bru families a new source of income," explained Eastland, "and it will give them their first experience in handling money."

The resettlement village in Cua Valley was established for the Bru last year after they were evacuated from their homes in the Khe Sanh area to escape increased enemy activity there. Since their resettlement, the dark-skinned mountain people have received assistance in adjustment from 3rd Marine Division personnel and Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) in Quang Tri City.

"The important thing to remember is that these souvenirs

A Good Omen for Marines

By Pvt. Ralph Evankavich

DA NANG — It was the 13th patrol for one of the Marines from the 1st Reconnaissance Bn., and it happened to be the 13th of the month. His recon team was being landed in enemy territory aboard a CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter, number 13.

The eight-man team had been assigned an observation mission 26 miles south of here. They had no sooner landed when Sgt. George Crouch (545 Cornwallis Dr., West Chester, Pa.) spotted three enemy soldiers near the landing zone. He opened up with his M-16 rifle, killing one.

The Marines were moving along jungle trails when a number of enemy soldiers were spotted traveling in the opposite direction. Artillery was called in and three dead enemy were spotted from an observation plane.

Later in the day a few more enemy soldiers were seen at a distance and again artillery was called in leaving two enemy dead.

The Leathernecks had stopped for chow when they heard Chinese communist grenades exploding not far from their position. The enemy was aware of their presence but not sure of their exact location so they were probing the area with grenades.

Someone spotted 25 to 30 Viet Cong and North Vietnamese soldiers moving toward their position and the Marines readied themselves for a fight.

Five enemy soldiers armed with AK-47 assault weapons got on line and swept in on the Marine position firing as they approached. One Marine detonated a Claymore mine, killing all five enemy soldiers.

During the three-hour fire fight that ensued the Marines hit the enemy with M-26 fragmentation grenades and M-79 grenades. When the dust settled five more enemy soldiers lay dead.

"For some, number 13 may be unlucky, but for us it was just the opposite. It turned out to be a very lucky number," concluded Crouch.

are handmade by the Bru to be sold in their own shop by their own people," continued Eastland.

The small models of their homes alone take three days to complete and most of the Bru handicraft is fashioned from bamboo and grass. Also on sale at the shop in Dong Ha will be wooden bells, flutes, bracelets, neck rings and mouse traps.

The shop is located in an already established Vietnamese concession center near the Route 9 gate at Dong Ha. Military personnel utilize the shops for haircuts, laundry service and souvenir shopping.

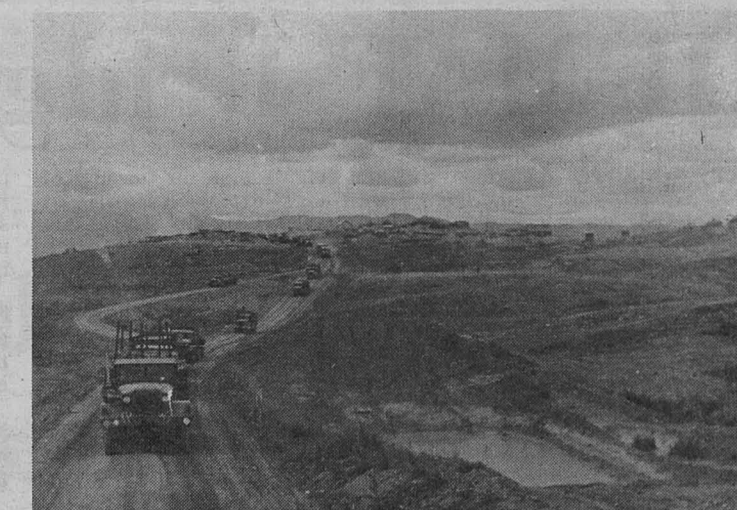
"The enthusiasm the Bru have shown toward this entire project indicates that progress is being made in creating a better life for these people," concluded Eastland.



In Combat, Civic Action: Versatile, Effective



III Marine Amphibious Force: 4th Anniversary



Photos by Marine Combat Photographers

Point Man Takes Enemy Gunner

By LCpl. Tom Kidman

DA NANG — Operation Oklahoma Hills was in its sixth day, Easter Sunday, when Pfc. Robert Maddaloni, a 20-year-old Marine from Kingston, N.Y., was walking point for the first time with his 7th Marines outfit.

On this day Maddaloni perhaps saved the lives of many Marines in his platoon with quick thinking and courageous actions.

Pfc. Bob Rigglesman (English-town, N.J.), Maddaloni's squad leader said, "We were on a patrol near Hill 65 walking in a

platoon column toward a treeline when Maddaloni stopped. He had spotted an enemy machine gunner about 100 yards in front of us."

The column advanced toward the treeline with Maddaloni still in the lead.

"He was only 10 or 15 yards into the enemy position when we

heard him open up fully automatic with his rifle."

"Maddaloni had walked right up to the enemy machine gun position and without thinking of his personal safety, opened up and blew the NVA away."

"If he hadn't gotten that machine gun, the enemy would have really 'done us a job.'"

Private LaPrairie Just Did His Job

By Cpl. Dave Allen

DA NANG — Pvt. Bruce A. LaPrairie left Vietnam after 18 months as a machine gunner with "F" Co., 2nd Bn., 5th Marines. With him he took two Purple Heart Medals, a Presidential Unit Citation, and a record book listing 20 combat operations. Behind him, he left 27 enemy troops that would not fight again.

The disposal of a high number of North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong soldiers might seem an enviable record to some, but to LaPrairie in his words, "I was just doing my job the best I could."

Modest words, but typical of a Marine, and true.

LaPrairie's career in the Marine Corps began in April 1967, and following boot camp, initial infantry training, basic infantry

training and machine gun schooling, he reported to Vietnam in August of that year to begin an overseas tour of 13 months plus a voluntary six-month extension.

His first combat operation was Operation Orange, a short excursion by the 5th Marines, held in his first month in country. Nineteen more followed in the next 17 months.

LaPrairie's best day came on Operation Meade River in the Dodge City area, when he caught eight NVA and cut them down with his M-60.

"Eighteen months is really a long time for someone to be here, but of course, mine was voluntary," LaPrairie commented.

"I don't regret having served here, though, because I really feel like I've contributed to the cause and to my country," he concluded.

Marine Repels Attacking VC

By LCpl. Hank Berkowitz

AN HOA — "That was one night I'll never forget as long as I live," exclaimed Millerbis.

LCpl. Robert J. Millerbis (702 Fickle Hill Rd., Arcata, Calif.), is a gunner on an M-48 tank with the 3rd Bn., 26th Marines and was speaking of a night engagement with the Viet Cong.

"We had set in for the night on a small ridge and since we hadn't seen anything of the enemy in the past week, we didn't expect it to be different that night. But about midnight about 40 VC opened up on us with mortars, grenades and small arms fire. That changed my mind in a hurry."

"When they got within 30 feet of my tank, I was the only one left on it after the tank commander was hit. My loader went

to get a corpsman and the driver was wounded and knocked unconscious. I climbed up from the inside and manned the .30-cal. machine gun."

"I fired more than 2,000 rounds before the VC finally fell back, dragging their dead and wounded with them," explained Millerbis.

"I was never so scared in my life," he said, "and I'll never forget that night."

Millerbis has been in Vietnam since April 2 of last year and in that time he has participated in several operations including Bold Mariner, Russell Beach, Meade River and Taylor Common.

Millerbis has extended for three months and plans on extending for six more when the three are up. He concluded, "There's job to be done over here and I want to stick around and see that it's done."



FROM THE HALLS . . .

Two Force Logistic Command Marines are serving together in Vietnam after living up to these familiar words from the Marines Hymn. First Sgt. A.T. Oates (left) and MSgt. R.H. Miller attended Marine Security Guard School together in Washington, D.C., in 1966. Miller went to serve with the Marine Security Guard, American Embassy, Mexico City where the Halls of Montezuma are located. Oates was assigned to the American Embassy at Tripoli, Libya. The two are now assigned to FLC's Supply Bn.

III MAF Bridge Vital To Da Nang

By Sgt. Steve Addington

DA NANG — An entire company of U.S. Marines is deployed here to protect the III Marine Amphibious Force Bridge. The 1,680 foot structure spanning the Song Han River, provides the only land link between the III Marine Amphibious Force compound (headquarters for all U.S. Marines in Vietnam) and units north and west of the city.

"Charlie" Co. of the 3rd Military Police Bn., a unit of Force Logistic Command, stands a 24-hour vigil on the two-year-old structure.

"The defense of this bridge is a vital portion of the overall al-

lied defense plan for the city of Da Nang," explained Marine 1st Lt. Steve T. Mikula (Rt. 1, Antioch, Ill.).

An elaborate defensive network has been designated to protect the bridge from would-be saboteurs. Bunker complexes, bridge guards, TNT charges and SCUBA divers are all incorporated into the network which has successfully defended the bridge since its construction in June 1967.

The bridge was constructed from 2,500 tons of steel pipe and floated from the construction site at Poro Point, Philippines, to its present site. It consists of 13

piers supporting fourteen 120 foot spans. Each pier is subsequently supported by eight pilings, driven from 50 to 80 feet into the river bottom.

The 30 foot wide bridge accommodates one lane of westbound traffic but was designed to handle two-way traffic if necessary.

A 16-year-old sister structure, built by the French, accommodates eastbound traffic at present.

Marine SCUBA divers, trained at Subic Bay, Philippines, check the numerous pilings supporting the bridge daily.

"We examine each piling to

ensure that there are no explosive devices attached to the supporting tiers," explained LCpl. Greg J. Morrow (6711 W. 76th St., Overland Park, Kan.).

TNT charges are dropped next to the pilings at irregular intervals to discourage enemy divers.

"The charges are not powerful enough to hurt the pilings," said Mikula, "but they would discourage any enemy divers."

At night, the bridge lights up from an intricate illumination system designed to insure that the Marine guards can spot prospective saboteurs before

they come close enough to damage the bridge.

Rifle squads from "Charlie" Co. run daily patrols and night ambushes along probable approach routes to the bridge. Incorporated into the patrols with the Marines are members of a South Vietnamese Regional Force Army unit.

In addition to accompanying the Marine patrols, the Vietnamese Regional Force personnel operate checkpoints on both sides of the bridge. At the checkpoints, all civilians attempting to cross the bridge are required to produce identification papers.



MARINES OF "M" CO., 3RD BN., 26TH MARINES, participating in Operation Oklahoma Hills, find the going rough in deeply wooded "Happy Valley." Terrain like this provided a challenge to the Marines who carved a fire support base and landing zone out of the dense jungle area 20 miles west-southwest of Da Nang.

(Photo by Cpl. J.D. Gallo)

Officer Aids Viet Relations

By LCpl. Franklin DeLong

DONG HA — A long time student of Southeast Asia and a man deeply concerned with the future of its people is applying his knowledge and understanding to the job of helping the people.

Maj. George L. Shelley (Bristol, Conn.), civil affairs officer for the 3rd Marines is a former English instructor at Taipei University, Taiwan, and has spent seven years in the Orient. He has found his experience invaluable in his present position.

"I believe my mission is to develop a positive attitude of loyalty between the people of Vietnam and their government," explained Shelley of his duties.

An average day in the major's life begins at dawn with a call to his right hand man and driver, Pfc. Ronald L. Smith (Manhattan, Mont.). Then, as soon as engineer teams have swept Route 9 and cleared any enemy mines planted during the night, the two Marines drive out to Cam Lo village to check on civil affairs projects.

"I guess more than anything else, I am a middleman for the Vietnamese and Montagnard villagers," said Shelley. "If they need something to help themselves, I try to get it for them."

Recently the Huong Van Village located in the Cua Valley west of Dong Ha, badly needed lumber for a school they were trying to build. Maj. Shelley heard about it and drove down to talk to the Huong Van Village chief. Impressed by the chief and the peoples' need to build a school, he immediately began obtaining the necessary building materials.

Today, Huong Van village has a school.

Each Tuesday finds the dedicated Marine teaching at the Nguyen Hoang Public High School in Quang Tri City.

A veteran of the Korean war, Maj. Shelley of the Korean war turned to active duty from the Marine Corps Reserve at the beginning of the Vietnam conflict.

"I fought in Korea and I wanted to be a part of this one to," explained the major.

Besides his civil affairs duties, Shelley is the officer in charge of the 3rd Marines element at Dong Ha. With all the duties he has to handle it is no wonder that he is frequently found burning the midnight oil.

The major accepts the tedious schedule as a challenge. So far his abilities have overcome that challenge.

U.S. School Children Aid Viet Counterpart

By SSgt. John Tolarchyk

DA NANG — Bridging 10,000 miles with friendship is not difficult for today's young Americans.

A small school in the Nui Kim Son hamlet south of here needs school supplies. And it will get them if the students of Willard Junior High School in Santa Ana, Calif., have anything to say about it.

Interest in the school began when Capt. George W. Baker of Marine Aircraft Group 16 wrote about the problem to his wife,



HE DOESN'T HAVE any place special to go, but LCpl. S. Robinson (Rt. 1, Fleming, Ohio) figures it is time to spruce up anyway. Robinson is a member of the engineer platoon assigned to Battalion Landing Team 3/26 on Operation Oklahoma Hills, south-southwest of Da Nang. (Photo by Cpl. W.R. Schaaf)

Marine Finds Challenging Career

By Cpl. Bob Kerr

DONG HA — A former standout in high school and college athletics, looking for a career in which he could pursue a vigorous and responsible way of life, found what he wanted as a Marine Corps officer.

Capt. James P. Allen (1433 S. Chadwick St., Philadelphia, Pa.) was a track, soccer and baseball

letterman in both high school and college. In 1953, when considering his service obligation, Allen enlisted in the Marine Corps "because it was most in keeping with the young and physically oriented environment" he enjoyed.

Allen's rise from private to his present rank is a story of sacrifice and personal discipline.

While fulfilling the responsibilities of an enlisted Marine he also attended two universities near his duty station. He received a bachelor's degree in accounting in 1962.

Allen received his degree and applied for Officer Candidate School at Quantico, Va. His application was approved, and upon successful completion of

the course he was commissioned a second lieutenant with orders for Headquarters Marine Corps, Washington, D.C.

"Every man, if he is to enjoy any sort of self-satisfaction, should conform to certain self-disciplines," says the 36-year-old Leatherneck. "The Marine Corps concept of youth and vigor relates directly to the dynamics inherent in our fast moving society."

The captain is serving as assistant division comptroller of the 3rd Marine Division in South Vietnam, a job requiring him to be almost constantly on the move throughout northern I Corps. It is his task to monitor the expenditure of more than \$35,000,000 in the division budget. His job takes him regularly to Quang Tri, Dong Ha, Cam Lo, and Vandegrift Combat Base.

"The preparation of the budget is handled largely through data processing," explained Allen. "Management of a financial plan this size requires many reports and general briefings."

Like every Marine officer, Allen has additional duties apart from the comptroller's office. He is a junior member of the 3rd Marine Division general court martial board, a member of the division's administrative discharge board and a member of the disbursing cash verification board.

The captain is married and has three children. His wife, the former Mary Solis and their three children, Bonita, 16, James III, 11, and Cecilia, 10, are currently residing in Roswell, New Mexico.

"The Marine Corps demands the utmost in individual performance both mentally and physically," concludes Allen. "For me it has provided a very challenging and personally satisfying way of life."

'Sweet Swede' Makes Easy Work of Tank Fetching

By Cpl. Bob Kerr

DONG HA — The "Sweet Swede" is an ugly, ponderous vehicle weighing nearly 63 tons, but for the crew of a disabled tank it can be the most beautiful sight ever to come rumbling through the boondocks.

"Sweet Swede" is a heavy

tank recovery vehicle and its four-man crew are the tank retrievers for the 3rd Tank Bn.

Whenever and wherever a tank is disabled, its crew can rely on the retriever team to be there as quickly as possible to pull them and their vehicle to safety. On 24-hour call, the team specializes in operating in difficult terrain under the most hazardous conditions.

They have yet to return without the vehicle they were sent to recover.

"The crew we have now has been working together for nearly eight months and, although each of us has a specific job, any one of us can fill in for any other member of the team if the need arises," says Sgt. Donald R. Shake (Route 2, Odon, Ind.), team leader.

In eight months of molding themselves into an effective recovery team, the retrievers have seen almost every area in which the 3rd Marine Div. has operated.

During recent operations the team was forced to work under some very challenging conditions.

"A tank had been knocked out by an enemy mine, and, of course, we were called to get it out," says Cpl. William E. Couch (Route 5, Magnolia, Ark.). "As soon as we reached the tank the enemy opened up on us with 57mm recoilless rifle fire. While the two tanks escorting us fired back we quickly hooked up our winch to the disabled tank and pulled it out of range."

Sometimes a tank becomes bogged down by the extremely difficult terrain while supporting infantry units. The retrievers have had to combat mud in which a tank had sunk up to its gun turret, a fast moving river which had trapped the treads of a tank in the soft mud of its bottom, and all sorts of natural obstacle including rocks and trees.

In their eight months of working together "Sweet Swede" and the four retrievers have recovered nearly 200 disabled vehicles, including not only tanks but Ontos and even fork lifts. On a few occasions they have been called to pull out enemy artillery pieces captured by 3rd Division Marines.

18-Month Vietnam Veteran Takes Reins of Responsibility

By Cpl. Larry White

VANDEGRIFT COMBAT BASE — Two enemy snipers opened fire on the lead element of the patrol and the platoon commander sent Pfc. Dudley J. Ogden and his machine gun team forward to silence the enemy fire.

Ogden (Mexico, Mo.) prepared for his first firefight.

"We were in a treeline and had to move across an open field to a fallen tree where the platoon commander wanted the gun positioned," recalled Ogden.

After sprinting to the tree, Ogden and his men readied their gun. But the enemy pinpointed Ogden's position with a deadly stream of rifle fire.

"One round hit my helmet and knocked me unconscious for a moment. I regained my senses, but before I could open fire another bullet slammed into the right shoulder of my flak jacket," recalled Ogden.

The assistant machine gunner thought that Ogden was seriously wounded and held the ammunition belt so tightly that it would not feed into the gun properly.

Ogden assured his assistant that he was alright and they opened fire, killing both of the snipers.

That firefight was 18 months ago when Ogden was fresh out of recruit training. Today he is still in Vietnam. He is now a sergeant on his second six-month extension and has already been awarded two Bronze Star Medals for heroism.

Ogden, who is only 5 feet 6 inches tall, hardly appears as the stereotyped picture of the tough Marine sergeant, but his ability and authority are readily apparent in his voice.

The 20-year-old Leatherneck enlisted in the Marine Corps right after graduating from high

school. Boot camp and the infantry training schools were soon behind him and he arrived at Phu Bai, South Vietnam.

He was assigned to "A" Co., 1st Bn., 4th Marines, and has been with the unit ever since.

Like so many Americans, he had heard disheartening stories about Vietnam.

"I can remember it as if it were yesterday," remarked Ogden, "I was scared, and I mean really scared. But after that first firefight things began to fall into place and all my training added up."

Ogden was soon promoted to corporal and assigned the duties of platoon right guide.

"Being made right guide was a big step up" he said. "It became my job to make sure all the men in the platoon had the right uniforms, sufficient ammunition, clean weapons and so forth — and the many other tasks required to keep a platoon in fighting trim."

In December of 1968, Ogden was with a small patrol that ran into an estimated platoon of North Vietnamese Army soldiers. As the enemy poured small arms fire into the position that the small Marine force had set up, Ogden ran from man to man shouting words of encouragement and helping the wounded.

For this action he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with combat "V."

Then in January 1969, Ogden led a patrol in search of enemy mortar positions that were firing on Fire Support Base Argonne located in the northwestern corner of Vietnam.

During this patrol Ogden killed three enemy soldiers after they opened fire and wounded his point man. He continued to expose his position to provide covering fire for a medical

corpsman, who rushed to the front of the column to aid the wounded Marine.

He was awarded another Bronze Star, his second in two months.

Presently he is the platoon sergeant and second in command of a platoon of Marine infantrymen.

"There are a lot more responsibilities carried by the platoon sergeant than by a right guide or squad leader," he said.

"I have to make sure that each squad leader is informed of what is happening and what the future plans are. And see that each squad leader is taking care of his men, especially during a firefight," he explained.

Ogden has learned that the more attention he gives to his men, the better off they will be. He expects them to know who their leaders are and to respect their commands, working as a trained team.

Ogden is proud of his men and his generation that makes up such a large part of the combat forces in Vietnam. He says, "These infantry Marines, the vast majority of them 18 to 25 years old, are doing an outstanding job in Vietnam — assuming tremendous responsibilities — and I think they will have a great influence after the war is over, too."



LCPL E. AGUIRRE, a member of "C" Battery, 1st Bn., 11th Marines, loads another round into his 105mm howitzer. The men of "C" Battery were firing in support of Battalion Landing Team 3/26 on Operation Oklahoma Hills in progress 20 miles south-southwest of Da Nang.

Phantoms Break Record

By Cpl. John Ehlert

CHU LAI — Phantoms of the world take note: Whiskey Uniform Three and Whiskey Uniform Five are not about to be stopped.

Whiskey Uniform Three (WU-

3) and WU-5 are two F-4J Phantom aircraft of Marine Fighter-Attack Squadron 334 (VMFA-334), Marine Aircraft Group 13. They have demonstrated that not only are they swift and powerful Mach II jet aircraft, but

are also combat workhorses.

During the month of March, the peerless pair of F-4s amassed a total of 165 missions and 203 flight hours.

WU-3 flew 82 missions in 107 hours, and WU-5 completed 83 missions in 96 hours. The tally for each aircraft is believed to be a record for F-4J Phantom jets. The fact that two aircraft, from one squadron, were able to turn in such a job in one month is even more remarkable. The totals for each aircraft is almost double that of the average hard-working Phantom in 334's arsenal.

While the durability of the Phantom is certainly noteworthy, the credit for keeping them flying goes to the maintenance crews of VMFA-334 — the radar technicians, mechanics, electricians, metal-smiths, ordnancemen, supplymen and the administrative Marines — all on the ground — working tirelessly to keep their planes in the air.

The responsibility of the ground crews includes repair as well as maintenance, as evidenced by the tail section of WU-3. While flying a close-air-support mission for Marine ground forces south of Da Nang, it took a hit in the tail section. The F-4 was able to make it back to Chu Lai, where the damaged section was quickly repaired. The aircraft was back in action without having missed its turn in rotation.

Gy Sgt. Larry F. King (Oak Hill, W. Va.), maintenance control chief, was justifiably proud of the work record of the two jets. It was a direct tribute to his men.

"These guys are amazing. They all know their jobs and do them quickly and skillfully, but what really distinguishes them is their teamwork."



THERE IS ALWAYS time to write a letter home, even on Operation Oklahoma Hills. Taking a break from clearing Fire Support Base Rattlesnake is LCpl. J. Laugheed, a member of the engineer platoon assigned to Battalion Landing Team 3/26.

(Photo by Cpl. W.R. Schaaf)

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Fallen Son...

(Cont. From Page 2)

rationale of a "love" cultism. We took into account the pot and LSD sets, the peaceniks and raceniks and mobniks. We regarded the infragrant yippie packs caterwauling that America is 200 years mistaken. We considered carefully the whole miscellany of non-people, whose sole product is division, whose single achievement is the treasonable encouragement of the enemy that killed you—and we became too sick to go on.

Yet, even in your transcendence, you are owed a score of apologies. We hate it that your sacrifice goes little noticed, and unpraised, by a press which chooses instead to euphemize treason as "the peace movement," mass criminality as "demonstration," and exhibitionistic anarchy as "protest" and "dissent." We apologize for abiding the kick-seeking "new left" with its spewing seditions; for tolerating government that woos the insurrectionist; for the souring churches; for the disemboweling of the national heritage. Yes, I beg your forgiveness for everything that enfeebled America during your brief days of manhood and your instant of dying.

Along with these apologies, I confess, there is anger. You have purchased me the right to it. It sends me bellowing out of my place in the obedient, silent citizenry where the blames are conveniently dumped, and into a new radicalism of my own. I think I have become dangerous. They shall not mutilate the flag in my sight; they'll not sing their Ho Chi Minh chants in my hearing; they shall not mock your widow; I'll allow no one to belittle or slander or even forget you. I give you these promises, that you must already have known. I would make, and I swear to them.

There remains, then, just this:

How, my son, do I say farewell? The willow, the one you joked of as our "family tree" that gay day we made such ceremony of

planting it, withered and dropped its leaves the week after you died, as if June were autumn. But the chrysanthemums which were sent us in memorial are doing well, out under the north eave where we put them, and it appears that they are near to blooming again. We wear our gold stars for you, and we have hung your sword on the wall. We are keeping fresh the good memories, and more often now, as we speak of you, it is with joy.

The three of us who loved you and buried you thank you eternally. America has had no better than you. And you were ours. Good-by, Mike. Good-bye.

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IN VIETNAM, almost anything can be found in a Marine's pocket. But seldom is a member of the canine corps bouncing along, especially one with such a look of sheer contempt on his face. This pup's mother died shortly after her litter was born and a Marine from FLSG-B at the Dong Ha Combat Base raised him with an eye-dropper, an alarm clock and a heat lamp. (Photo by LCpl. Roger Nystrom)

Don't Think This One 'Ain't Got Nobody'

By LCpl. Hank Berkowitz

AN HOA — A North Vietnamese Army soldier, playing possum, gave a Leatherneck of the 1st Bn., 5th Marines, the surprise of his life.

Sgt. Wilbert L. Christman (1651 Eastford Ave., Duarte, Calif.), was following Marines who were checking the 72 enemy bodies on the battalion's perimeter six miles northeast of here, after an estimated battalion of NVA tried to overrun the command post.

"Everybody was ahead of me checking bodies," explained Christman, "when I noticed a pair of legs sticking out of some thick underbrush. I was going to ask the men ahead of me,

whether any of the bodies were missing any legs.

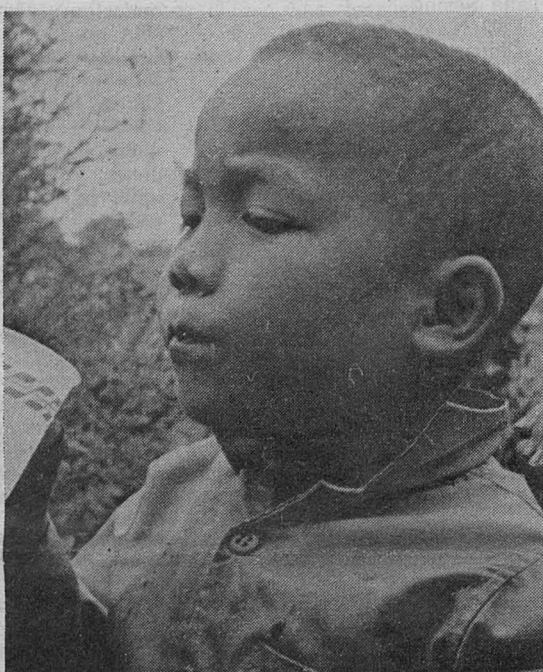
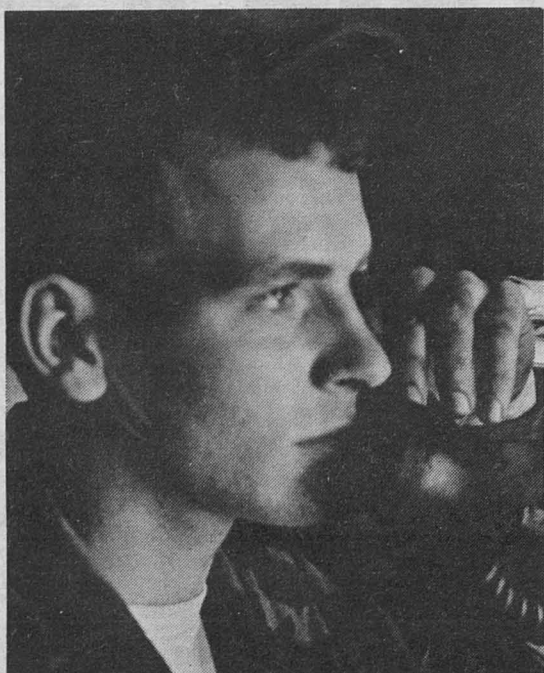
"When I started picking up the legs, I got the surprise of my life! The NVA jumped out of my hands and stood up!" exclaimed Christman.

"I drew my .45-cal. pistol and he started yelling, 'Chieu HOI, Chieu Hoi.'"

"I grabbed him before he could touch whatever was there and got another man to cover him.

"We searched out the area and found an AK-47 and two grenades he had hidden in the grass."

"I was shaking like a leaf after that. I hate to think of what he could have done to us if I hadn't seen him," concluded Christman.



THREE MARINES, a Vietnamese youngster, all familiar faces in ICTZ. They all have a stake in Vietnam's future; all do and will influence the direction it will take as the III Marine Amphibious Force plunges into its 5th year in I Corps.

III MAF Anniversary...

(Continued From Page 1)

Camp Books, Force Logistic Command, and at Dong Ha under the sponsorship of the 3rd Marine Division.

Although much has been accomplished, there is still much to be done. The mood is optimistic, but cautious.

tic, but cautious.

"Much remains that will require the full time, effort and talents of all members of the III Marine Amphibious Force before our nation's objectives in South Vietnam are realized," said LtGen. Herman Nickerson Jr., commanding general of III MAF.

The year 1969-70 may or may not provide the answers to the war's perplexing questions. But the III Marine Amphibious Force is geared toward success, both in combat and on the "battlefields" of the "soft" war. We mark an anniversary less with jubilation than with conviction and determination.

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Navy Cross...

(Continued From Page 1)

a rocket crater and again shielded the man with his body.

"I don't know how long we were there," he said, "but it seemed like forever. I couldn't get him out of the crater by myself, so I was prepared to just lay there and wait for the enemy to run out of bullets.

"Then my aerial gunner (who earned the Silver Star Medal for his heroism) jumped from the chopper and ran over to us and began pulling the man from the rim of the crater, while I pushed him from the bottom," he added.

All three made it to the helicopter, only to find it had taken several enemy hits during the rescue. Gomez again left the aircraft and ran around the chop-

per, giving the pilot a description of the damage.

Although it had taken some bad hits, the chopper was able to lift off and fly to a field hospital at Khe Sanh.

On the way, Gomez and his gunner dueled with two enemy .50-cal. machine gun positions, destroying one and disabling the other.

Gomez, who has been shot down four times in combat and has been awarded 40 Air Medals and the Purple Heart Medal, continued to fly with HMM-262 until he was transferred to the United States in mid-1968. Late that year he volunteered to return to Vietnam and is now with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 364 (HMM-364) at the Marine Marble Mountain Air Facility just south of Da Nang.

2/9 Marines...

(Continued From Page 1)

(Franklin, Ore.) was a platoon guide on one of the other hills surrounding the CP. "Our platoon was taking a light enemy probe when several enemy rocket-propelled grenades landed inside our perimeter and wounded three of our men," he said.

"I gave fire directions over the radio. Our platoon wasn't getting much fire, but the 1st Platoon and the headquarters group were getting plenty," continued Johnson.

The attack was triggered by two North Vietnamese soldiers who threw grenades and satchel charges.

"That was the signal for the attack, because soon after the explosions we started receiving a heavy volume of automatic weapons fire, RPGs and mortar fire," said Horn.

Enemy sappers assaulted the positions in waves. The Marines fought hand to hand with them and when one enemy was killed another took his place.

"The volume of grenades and satchel charges was unbelievable and you couldn't hear people talking over the radios," he continued.

The situation was turning serious for the Marines because they could hardly distinguish the enemy from other Marines on the perimeter. The called for artillery support, but because of the close proximity of the enemy they could receive only illumination rounds.

"In a way that was good," said Horn, "because the enemy was right in amongst some of our men on the perimeter defense and we had a hard time telling who was who. The artillery illumination saved us. We were able to see the enemy."

"When the attack started, an enemy soldier threw a grenade into my fox hole and it exploded just after I got out," said Cpl. Lewis J. Weber, (Eugene, Ore.) a squad leader. "As I looked down the shallow draw between our hill and the next one I could see the NVA running up and down the hill carrying off their wounded and dead. My rifle was hit when the grenade went off, so I grabbed another rifle and killed two of them."

One of the Marine's 60mm mortar tubes had been knocked out and the resourceful Leathernecks found an enemy 60mm assault mortar, which had the bipods and sights removed, and used it effectively against the enemy.

"It wasn't long before Marine artillerymen radioed that they were low on illumination rounds," Horn recalled, "and we started praying for the 'Spooky

gunship' to show up and give us a hand."

The Marines were in luck and Spooky delivered a devastating volume of fire upon the enemy, sometimes only 75 yards from the Leatherneck positions.

As the sun came up the enemy began to break contact and retreat and the Marines knew that they had won the battle.

Marine jets pounded the fleeing enemy and the Marines on the ground began a sweep of their old position. The sweep produced three enemy prisoners; one NVA captured by the company executive officer, and the other two were persuaded to surrender by a Vietnamese scout traveling with the company.

Besides the 43 dead enemy soldiers, the sweeping Marines found 18 enemy assault rifles, 3 semi-automatic rifles, two light machine guns, 2 rocket propelled grenade launchers and 4 RPG rounds, 40 grenades and 3 communist tear gas grenades.

"Even though nearly half of my company were new to combat, they did an outstanding job of repulsing the enemy attack," concluded Horn.

Fast Move Kills NVA

By Pfc. Ralph Evankavitch

DA NANG — The Marines had to make their move immediately. Pinned down by NVA forces and nearly out of ammunition, they did the only thing left to do. They attacked the enemy in his own lines using their rifles as clubs.

A platoon from "M" Co., 3rd Bn., 7th Marines had received word that a Marine patrol was pinned down by the NVA near Hill 10, seven miles southwest of here and quickly moved out.

As the platoon crossed a rice paddy, they received small arms fire from a nearby treeline. Engaged in a fierce fire fight when they ran low on ammunition, the Leathernecks turned to hand-to-hand combat.

Second Lt. Louis R. Piatt (177 Hibiscus Pl., New Orleans, La.), said, "One of the Marines ran up to the enemy's position with his empty weapon and killed three of them using his rifle as a club. We kept up our clubbing tactics until the NVA decided the fighting was too much for them and they ran back into the tree line."