



71 Q? That may be his MOS but this combat photographer, Staff Sergeant Joann Weesner, Franklin La., from the American Information Office might as well be an 11-Bravo as he slogs his way through a stream near Duc Pho. The cameraman was on assignment with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, 11th Infantry Brigade. (Photo by SSG Tim Palmer)

Part 4 of series

ARC's Joann Weesner

By SP4 William Hayes

CHU LAI (AMERICAL 10) — On her first trip away from home, Joann Weesner came a long way—halfway around the world. After receiving her bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of Southern Florida at her home town, Tampa, Joann began looking around for more than just a job.

She found what she was looking for as a Doughnut Dolly for the American Red Cross.

"You don't just sign up for a job, but for a way of life for one year," she explained, "and I love my job, it's fantastic."

When Joann talks about her job, her enthusiasm is evident. Her dialogue is even more animated than vital. Her eyes grow a little wider than normal and sparkle just a bit more.

"I can't believe all that's happened since I've been in Vietnam," she admits.

The American Division is not her first assignment. Since she arrived in country almost nine months ago, she's worked at several locations, enjoying a variety of experiences and situations. There's one she recalls especially.

"Two of us were in a Montagnard village in another area, visiting the soldiers there as an advisory team. We were getting along fine; but whenever we turned around to look for some of the villagers, all we could find was a disappearing form melting into the brush or a pair of eyes peeking out from a doorway or corner of a hut."

"I guess I was the first blonde, blue-eyed woman they had ever seen."

Always willing to make a new friend, the girls got together a plan to break the ice with the

villagers. Picking an open area in plain view of the hiding villagers, the girls opened up a few packets of pre-sweetened beverage powder.

"We began licking our fingers and dipping them into the powder. After a few tastes of the stuff, our tongues were purple and green from the food coloring," she laughed.

"We kept on eating the powder, giggling and making faces at each other, and before long, one of the old women of the village came out of a hut to join our game."

More villagers timidly approached the group, and within minutes, the whole village was on easy terms with the girls in spite of the language barrier.

When she's out in the area of operations visiting the men wherever they are, she often shows up at the nearest mess hall around meal time to serve the soldiers passing through the line. She's apparently appreciated.

Serving at meal time is sight for Joann—she does it when she can, but her main job is to get together with a group of men to present a program to entertain soldiers where they work and help them relax. The girls bring the recreation to the men because the limited recreational facilities at Chu Lai aren't for soldiers.

If her spirits drop, she knows it's important to get back on the ball quickly.

"I groove on life, and that's all I need to pull me out of the dumps," she explains.

"If you're depressed or down, you've got to take care of it right away."

"Often, men she meets ask her why she's here, doing the work she's involved with."

"Back home, I kept hearing

Dust-off crew has its ups and downs in 'Old 600'

By SPS Richard Merritt

L Z H A W K H I L L (AMERICAL 10) — The beds are unmade and C rations are stacked deep under the bunks. A big green duty map is stapled in one corner under a light.

A helicopter out in front, patch-welded in several spots down the body where it took hits, is manned by a dust-off crew from the 236th Medical Detachment, Da Nang. Warrant Officer James Gregory likes to call it "Lucky Old 600"—the last three tail numbers. "Old 600" has been shot down once since WO Gregory became its commander, but it still flies, saving the lives of wounded 196th Infantry Brigade and South Vietnamese soldiers.

Like many other units, Gregory's crew is on call 24 hours a day.

"We cover areas all the way to Laos." He traced a line on the map that took in their flight area. There are three men in the crew—the pilot, a crew chief and a dust-off medic. "The best medics I've ever seen," insists WO Gregory.

When they leave for an emergency run, the crew carries only their personal weapons. They have to "tacticalize" closely, "directly" from the ground element. WO Gregory trained five extra weeks as a chopper pilot, specializing in medical evacuations at Ft. Sam

Houston, Texas.

"Last month we went right in on top of the bad guys," WO Gregory removed about 100 ARVN in the western Division after operation, near the beleaguered refugee camp of Hiep Duc. "Several runs were made without any smoke (signal smoke) to guide us in," said WO Gregory.

"Smoke would give the NVA an aiming point for their mortars and we couldn't give them that much time. Sometimes I came in a low level, 100 knots per hour, and people on the ground would give me hand signals."

"But then I flew over an enemy machine gun when I was returning with a load of wounded. A round hit the fuselage and we went down." The chopper fell into a small Polder Force camp about 24 miles northwest of Tam Ky.

"It was like a dead stick landing," said WO Gregory. No one was hurt.

The crew unloaded the

wounded and stayed all night with the friendly unit.

The luck held. None of the infantrymen were critically wounded and they were able to leave the next day on another chopper. "Old 600" was retrieved later and repaired.

"You can get a good idea of how a mission is executed by looking over [the] sheet," said Specialist Four Charles Harris, MacClefield, N.C., crew medic. Mission sheets are submitted by the aircraft commander after each flight.

Private First Class Thomas Day of Canby, Ore., is the crew chief. He makes minor repairs and oils up the machinery between flights. Recently a hostile bullet burrowed into the floor of the chopper about a foot from where Private Day crouched to return fire.

"That's the second time the ship has been hit in the same place," noted Private Day. "I'm going to start sitting somewhere else."

C, 4-31 nets 4 NVA

By SP4 Gerald Lamb

LZ WEST (196th INF RDS 10) — An NVA supply element chose wrong route recently when they walked into the night laager of a 16th Infantry Brigade Company.

A group of 15 NVA were headed toward Hiep Duc 22 miles northwest of Tam Ky carrying rice and three of their wounded on stretchers.

C Company, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry was in a night laager on the road east of Hiep Duc.

"Suddenly a trip flare went off on the road and we saw them Olean, N.Y.

The infantrymen blew their claymore mines and opened up with M-60 machinegun fire from the perimeter.

A squad went out to check the area and found the bodies of three NVA and an AK-47 rifle.

"On the way back to the perimeter we heard a low moaning in some bushes," said Specialist Schrader.

A wounded NVA was flushed from his hiding place. Before being evacuated for treatment, he related that he had been in a combat unit and had asked to be transferred to become a rice carrier.

The unit's mission that night had been to resupply enemy forces somewhere on Nui Chom mountain to the north.

Something is fishy

By SP4 Gerald Lamb

NO. 10 — Inhabitants of this pacification outpost have noticed something fishy in their area, but they don't know the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry, 196th Infantry Brigade, are helping their Vietnamese allies build a fish hatchery here.

"We decided on the hatchery because it would add a good, high-protein food to the diet and provide a highly marketable product," said First Lieutenant Michael Donohoe, Alamo, Calif.

Staff Sergeant Malcolm Johnson, Tillar, Ark., is in charge of setting up the project and showing the people how to operate and maintain it.

"My father owns a fish hatchery, so I have been raising fish all my life," said Sergeant Johnson.

The first problem to be faced is building a pond and securing it.

"We plan to dig a dual purpose ditch from a nearby creek to fill the pond and irrigate the rice paddies in the area," said Lieutenant Donohoe.

The people of Son Hoa now buy their fish at the Que Son market about five miles away.

The hatchery will be stocked with Tilapia, a rapid reproducing, high-protein food fish common all over Asia.

"Initially the fish they raise will be used as a food supply, but once a surplus is established, they can be sold at the Que Son market," said Johnson.



This is a reminder to keep your steel pots on out in the bush. It betters your chance of getting home and of getting your picture in the Southern Cross and other publications.

(Photo by SSG Tim Palmer)

Scattered clashes mark weekly action

(continued from page 1)
which contained 1000 AK-44 rounds and 4 CHICOM grenades.

Soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry killed 18 in brief encounters throughout the week.

The Recon platoon tallied three dead VC when they fired on the enemy 11 miles west of Tam Ky.

Later in the week Recon again made contact in two separate engagements with the enemy.

The "Professionals" of the 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry killed five enemy soldiers in the thick triple canopy jungle southwest of Tam Ky.

Guns from F Troop, 8th Cavalry killed 12 enemy while flying visual reconnaissance missions in support of the brigade.

Operation Iron Mountain

Early in the week Company D, 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry accounted for one VC killed in

the early morning hours while working near the Song Tra Khue River northwest of Duc Pho. Later in the day they picked up another three VC killed with claymore mines.

The same day elements of the 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry killed two VC and confiscated an AK-47 rifle.

The next day Company B, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry engaged four VC who were spotted by the element's Kit Carson Scout. In the following hit and run fire fight one of the enemy was killed. The action occurred in the lowlands north of Duc Pho.

In an evening engagement with five VC, Company D, accounted for two of the enemy killed. Three pants and four grenades were confiscated in the action which occurred in the lowlands north of Duc Pho.

Working in the lawlands southeast of Duc Pho, Company D, 4th Battalion, 21st Infantry

uncovered a .51 caliber machinegun.

Company A, 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry and E Troop, 1st Cavalry accounted for two VC killed while working together on the Song Tra Khue River northwest of Duc Pho.

Company A, 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry uncovered a 10-ton rice cache near the Song Tra Khue River northwest of Duc Pho. The rice was found in 55-gallon drums and baskets in a small village.

"Sharks" of the 774th Aviation Company sighted and engaged two NVA on the Song Ve River northwest of Duc Pho. One of the enemy was killed when they attempted to swim the river, the other evaded into heavy vegetation.

Company A, 4th Battalion, 3rd Infantry uncovered a two and one-half rice cache while working near the Song Ve River northwest of Duc Pho. The rice was found in numerous hooches, most of it in 55 gallon drums and some in large baskets.

Company D, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry had a heavy day of action working adjacent to the South China Sea north of Duc Pho. The element initially killed one VC and one NVA, detaining two enemy soldiers and confiscating one AK-47.

by a Vietnamese soldier, the element learned that two VC were scheduled to arrive at his village. The company engaged and killed both VC when their Kit Carson Scout spotted them approaching.

Recon engaged seven to nine man VC squad by the foothills west of Duc Pho. The ensuing fire fight resulted in four enemy killed, two automatic weapons, one AK-47, one carbine, and

four grenades confiscated.

Company B killed one VC in an early morning engagement with an undetermined size enemy force. Four of the enemy were detained in the action which occurred in the lowlands north of Duc Pho.

Company C engaged and killed one VC while working in the mountains northwest of Duc Pho. One pack, assorted medical supplies, 10 pounds of rice, and NVA canteen, and a knife were confiscated following the action.

Operation Geneva Park

In an area northwest of Quang Ngai, several Vietnamese approached to Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry the location in which two enemy weapons were concealed. The infantrymen searched the area to find two carbines.

Elsewhere, Delta Company, 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry while maneuvering in the mountainous terrain west of Quang Ngai, spotted five NVA evading in the thick vegetation. The company swept through the area to find a small basecamp revealing signs of recent activity.

Found within the complex was one pistol belt, one CHICOM grenade two fully loaded AK-47 magazines, two canteens, 100 pounds of salt, 50 pounds of rice and other miscellaneous items.

The next day in an area northeast of Quang Ngai, two Vietnamese led Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry to the location of three booby traps. The infantrymen searched the area to find and destroy the munitions.

Elsewhere, Delta Company, received two booby traps from Vietnamese children. The company, maneuvering in an area northeast of Quang Ngai, destroyed the booby traps.

In an area southwest of Chu Lai, Alpha Company, 5th Battalion, 46th Infantry, killed one NVA as the enemy approached their location. Captured in the action were four CHICOM grenades, one fragmentation grenade and one pair of field glasses.

On the same day Delta Company while maneuvering in an area west of Quang Ngai, discovered two freshly dug graves. The enemy kills were attributed to a previous contact of the company.

In another action northwest of Quang Ngai, several Vietnamese approached to Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 52nd Infantry, while maneuvering in mountainous terrain, found one NVA body. The kill was attributed to enemy contact the company experienced the previous day. Found near the body were one AK-47, three fully loaded AK ammunition clips, two CHICOM grenades, one pair of field glasses and other miscellaneous items.

Late in the week gunships from F Troop, 8th Cavalry received several rounds of small arms fire in an area northwest of Quang Ngai. The pilot spotted two Viet Cong wearing black pajamas in a bombed out shelter on the ground below and fired on the enemy with automatic weapons to kill both.

Later, in the same general area, the pilot observed another Viet Cong in a black uniform running along a trail and opened fire to kill him.

In an area southeast of Chu Lai, Echo Recon, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry, while on a routine patrol, spotted one Viet Cong moving through sparsely vegetated terrain. The infantrymen engaged the enemy with small arms fire to kill him.

1st-46th collects 53

(continued from page 1)

killed them both.

As the 1st platoon continued to fire suppressive, the 3rd platoon continued to receive sniper fire and 105 mortar rounds. The 2nd platoon spotted some command wires on the ground and them. The mortar rounds temporarily stopped. The 2nd platoon then moved up to take it and was ordered to secure defensive

position from which an assault on the dug in NVA could be made.

"We dug in faster than I ever imagined it could be done," said Lieutenant Erby. By this time the 3rd platoon had joined the 2nd and only the 1st platoon remained to cross the open area.

Guns from the 71st Assault Helicopter Company and F Troop, 8th Cavalry, were called in to work out on a ridge line in hopes of destroying the NVA mortar emplacements.

The Cavalry gunships killed three NVA. Artillery was also pounding the enemy position as the 1st platoon began to move from the old night laager.

"We moved out by fire and movement and spotted the bunkers," said Sergeant Hall.

The ensuing battle was a grenade-tossing, bunker to bunker battle as the infantrymen moved into destroy the NVA.

As the bitter struggle progressed, the 1st platoon found they had expended all their hand grenades. One squad each from the 2nd platoon and 7th platoon collected all the available grenades and moved to aid the 1st platoon.

With the arrival of reinforcements and more grenades the "Professionals" continued the assault.

"It was a bunker to bunker, hole to hole fight," said Lieutenant Erby. "We would toss a grenade into a bunker and it would come flying back out. So we resorted to first throwing in a rock to confuse the enemy and then immediately tossing in

a grenade. It worked."

The infantrymen finally knocked out the last bunker. In the search of the area that followed, they found that there had been a total of 14 heavily fortified bunkers connected by a trenchline. Twenty-nine dead NVA were counted by the Americans.

"Evidently the NVA had planned to ambush us as we moved out," said Lieutenant Erby, "but we moved before they were ready and caught them flat-footed."

Company B then moved to the high ground and later spotted a large number of NVA in the open. A Firebird from the 71st Assault Helicopter Company was called in and killed 10 of the enemy.

Charlie Company, clearing the high ground, had received heavy mortar fire the entire morning. However, the men continued to support Company B. As a result four NVA died from Charlie Company's intense barrage of rifle and machinegun fire.

Two days later, soldiers of the 6th Regiment, 2nd ARVN Division swept the site of Company B's contact. The ARVN soldiers found six additional NVA killed by artillery from Battery C, 3rd Battalion, 82nd Artillery.

There were several reasons for the success of the operation, but one in particular stood out.

"It was an all-out effort on everyone's part," said Sergeant Dale Phelps, Van Nuys, Calif., Company B. "It was really fantastic how everyone worked together."

July 31, 1970



a patrol. Their unit, Company B, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry, 196th Infantry Brigade, was searching for enemy hideouts during the recent heavy fighting in Hiep Duc Valley. (Photo by SP4 Gerald Lamb)

Sgt Talamoni luckiest man

(continued from page 1)

were taken to nearby Tien Phouc for medical evacuation.

When he regained consciousness, Sergeant Talamoni said, "I could see nothing but LOH's (Light Observation Helicopters) firing on enemy positions. And I couldn't see anyone from the downed helicopters we were on. I thought I would try to move back to the helicopter to get a smoke grenade to signal for help, but at that time the LOHs were running out of fuel and had to leave to refuel. I knew Charlie was somewhere around so I moved 65 yards to the south so the enemy couldn't get me. Right away, I dug a foxhole."

With a broken left leg and right arm, Sergeant Talamoni, armed with nothing but a bayonet, dragged himself farther from the enemy, where he dug a foxhole to conceal himself.

Sergeant Talamoni continues, "I lay in the foxhole and I couldn't see anything...it was

getting dark. I lay there until about 9:00 p.m. when I heard movement...some one was talking. It was the VC moving west. They were about 25 yards from where I was, but they couldn't see me because I was in the foxhole with some rocks over the top."

After the VC left the vicinity of his foxhole, he slept until about five the next morning. "I crawled back to the helicopter to get some smoke grenades. My legs were no use at all...I couldn't use them. But there was no smoke whatsoever. If I stayed there, Charlie would find me so I moved 55 yards west so if the LOHs came, they could spot me in the area." About 7:30 two LOHs from the 1st Battalion, 1st Cavalry did come. Sergeant Talamoni, who still had his lighter in his pocket built a small fire for the observation choppers to spot. They saw it and radioed an eight man rescue Huey helicopter, which let the rescue team down to set up a defensive

position while MEDEVAC helicopter was led in.

If the rescue choppers, by

some chance, could spot him, he said that he anticipated to move to a land zone eight miles away from where he had recently been. "If I two sticks around my legs," Sergeant Talamoni said, "I would make it about 12 hours."

When asked what he did when he was finally found, Sergeant Talamoni said, "I was praying to God."

In 1964 Sergeant Talamoni went to Ranger School at Ft. Benning, Ga. Therein that he received definitely payed off. "I learned quite a few things," he said. "I can survive, I don't need water or food for a long time, I know I can survive."

Thanks to the fedication of the courageous rescue group, Sergeant Talamon is alive and safe and deeply grateful to his friends of Company D, 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry.

Southern Cross

'Army promotion system outlined

(continued from page 2)

knowledge of what it takes to be a good NCO. Most of all, he must be able to lead other people. The specialists in these grades must be what their title says - experts in a technical field.

Promotions are not intended to be made merely as a reward

for jobs well done, but rather to recognize the outstanding individual who has demonstrated that he can perform effectively at the next higher grade level and better than any other individual available.

Eligibility and Selection Criteria

You say you are in a

promotable status? Good. Now let's examine the regulation and determine how you compare against the eligibility and selection criteria.

There are several requirements you must meet to be eligible for selection for promotion. Some of these requirements can be

waived. The waiver provisions are used to permit personnel who demonstrate exceptionally outstanding performance and high potential for leadership or increased ability in their field the opportunity to be considered for rapid promotion.

There are no provisions for waivers to grade E-8 and E-9. Waiver provisions apply separately for time in pay grade and time in service. Waiver for one half time in pay grade is permissible except for promotion to grade E-8 and E-9; maximum waiver for time in service is shown below:

Grade	Time in Service	Waivable
E-7	3 years	
E-6	2 years	
E-5	6 months	

Commanders of units stationed in the Republic of Vietnam may also promote a small number of personnel to grades E-4 through E-6 without regard to time in grade and time in service. These promotions are to recognize the soldier who has demonstrated unusual potential and outstanding performance. This number cannot exceed 4% of the authorized E-4 or E-5 grades and 2% of the E-6 grades.

E-8 and E-9 must have at least 8 and 10 years of cumulative enlisted service creditable in the computation of pay for promotion to the grades of E-8 and E-9, respectively. Prior service as an officer is not creditable for this purpose.

Time in grade and time in service eligibility requirements for promotion to grade E-7 are expanded for an indefinite period. A soldier is now eligible if he has three years in grade. This time is not waivable.

Promotion status: This cannot be waived. You are not in a promotable status and will not be promoted if you are:

Carried as absent without leave, in confinement, in desertion, absent in the hands of

civil authorities, in arrest, or sick (not in line of duty) on the unit morning report.

Awaiting or undergoing reclassification for inefficiency or disciplinary reasons. Within 60 days of voluntary retirement except that an individual who has occupied a position of vacancy of a higher pay grade for a period of 90 days or more may be promoted one grade, if otherwise eligible, but not higher than E-6.

Recommendation: You must be recommended by the unit commander or your supervisor. This cannot be waived.

Award of MOS Code: You must be fully qualified for the award of the MOS in which the promotion is to be made. This cannot be waived.

Promotion Qualification Score: Not required in the Republic of Vietnam.

Proper pay grade: You must be serving in the pay grade next below that in which promotion is to be made.

Physical Qualification: You must be physically able to perform all the duties of the MOS and grade to which promotion is to be made. This may be waived.

Education: You must have completed the eighth grade, or the GED equivalent, for promotion to pay grade E-5. You must have a high school diploma, or the GED equivalent, for promotion to pay grades above E-5. This may be waived.

Position Vacancy: A position vacancy means there is an opening within the promotion authority's command in the grade and MOS for which you are being considered or there is one projected within 60 days.

Once you have been able to meet all of these requirements, with waivers if required, you are eligible for promotion. It is at this point that your commander can consider making a recommendation.

Somebody cares at Division Finance

By SGT Chuck Merdzinski

FSB BRONCO (11th INF BDE 10) - A Division finance officer with unique idea has initiated an on-the-spot financial service for infantrymen in the field. It is a mobile operation that enables the combat soldier, who normally would have had to wait for a trip to the rear, to begin or cancel allotments, alleviate pay problems and handle other financial matters, all in his day laager position.

"The man out front is our main concern and he's the most important person to us," said Lieutenant Colonel William Cate, the Division finance officer. Last fall Lieutenant Colonel Robert Wilson, former commander of the 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, 11th Infantry Brigade, asked Colonel Cate if he could send someone out to the field to cash checks and give financial advice. Colonel Cate continued, "The only time they could get proper assistance was usually once every two months when they came to the rear for a stand-down; then they'd normally let it slide because they'd be more concerned with relaxing, seeing floor shows and having a few beers, which is natural."

After his first trip, Colonel Cate decided to start a financial assistance program for infantrymen in the field. It began with a two brigade test in January and has since spread to every battalion, fire support base and artillery battery in the entire division.

The "finance in a suitcase program" has been well accepted in the division. "The company commanders like the program because their men are being taken care of plus it keeps up foxhole strength," said Colonel Cate.

"I sure was thankful for the help I got when I was out in the bush near Iron Mountain," said Specialist Four William Brockington, Richmond, Va. "I was shocked when I saw the Division Finance Officer get off the chopper. I didn't think a finance officer of his rank would come out here."

"I feel that by being in the field part of the time and seeing the end product of things that we do at finance, I can detect problem areas and take corrective action. This way I have my finger on the pulse of our operation and it's our overall service more effective," continued Col. Cate.

"The message on our Christmas pay vouchers last year was 'somebody cares,'" concluded Colonel Cate. "It's not just a slogan; we mean it and try to make it so."



Our pin-up Miss Lynda White would like to remind you of the up-coming primary elections in September. You may obtain absentee ballots by completing and mailing the Federal Post Card Application (Standard Form 76, revised 1968). For further information on your state's primary consult your unit voting officer.

(ISMC Photo)

Souther Cross