

Americal Infantrymen Make Historic Strides

CHU LAI — Vietnam's newest and only named division—the Americal Division—made historic strides towards the goal of peace in Vietnam during its first 13 months of operations.

The original Americal Division was organized for operations in the steaming jungles of New Caledonia in May, 1942.

The birth of Americal in Vietnam marked the beginning of many changes in the complexion of the war.

When the soldiers of the 196th Lt. Inf. Bde. landed at the Chu Lai airstrip April 20, 1967, they became the first Army combat troops in the I Corps Tactical Zone. Since these original "pioneers" arrived, the Army has gradually

expanded its large-scale combat operations farther and farther north, and now has troops fighting right up to the demilitarized zone.

The original Americal soldiers were members of the 196th Lt. Inf. Bde.; the 1st Bde., 101st Abn. Div.; and the 3rd Bde., 25th Inf. Div. (later redesignated as the 3rd Bde., 4th Inf. Div.), and were a part of Task Force Oregon, a force conceived by Gen. William C. Westmoreland, commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam.

The division is currently made up of the 196th, 198th and 11th infantry brigades, and is conducting three major, named combat operations—Wheeler/Wallowa, Muscatine and Burlington Trail.

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STILL READY—This Americal Division combat engineer might be taking a short break, but he keeps his grenade launcher constantly ready. (Photo by Sp4 Kevin Howe, 11th Inf. Bde.)

AMERICAL DIVISION SOUTHERN CROSS

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Division Operations Locating Weapons

By PFC MIKE KELSEY
Staff Writer

CHU LAI — Americal Division soldiers, working in dogged pursuit and tedious clearing operations, have been routing the enemy from long-established "homes" and denying vital weapons and ammunition resupply in steady action throughout the division's area of operations.

As soldiers of the 11th Inf. Bde. were closing out Operation "Norfolk Victory" in the southern part of the division area with the largest weapons cache they have ever discovered, infantrymen of the 198th Inf. Bde. kicked off Operation "Burlington Trail," still in progress, by moving into areas that the enemy has held undisputed control of for years.

"Norfolk Victory" closed April 19 with a final tally of 45 Viet Cong killed and 120 individual and 12 crew-served weapons captured for the "Jungle Warriors."

The fighting soldiers of the division's newest brigade were also credited with the destruction of a large enemy base camp during the two-week operation.

"Burlington Trail," which has as its objective the opening of a road between Tam Ky west to Thien Phuoc, a

continue for several days.

"We started Burlington Trail with combat assaults into the area and then conducted reconnaissance in force missions," said Lt. Col. William D. Kelley, commander of the 198th forces in the operation.

In addition to Kelley's 1st Bn., 6th Inf., soldiers from Co.'s B and D of the 1st Bn., 46th Inf. are participating in the action.

In the first few days of the operation two large enemy ammunition and weapons caches were captured in the Viet Cong-infested valley northwest of Chu Lai.

"What we uncovered in those first few days would be enough to equip an enemy regiment for at least a month," said battalion intelligence officer Capt. Francis X. Brennan.

The caches included 21,000 AK-47 rifle rounds, 10,000 rounds for 50 cal. machineguns, 6,000 rounds of 7.62 mm ammunition and 224 rounds for 60 mm mortars.

Totals for the operation as of May 8 were 303 Viet Cong and eight North Vietnamese soldiers killed and 70 individual and 26 crew-served weapons captured.

Combat Ready

Two Battalions Arrive

CHU LAI—The arrival of two infantry battalions from installations in the U.S. has bolstered the Americal Division's strength by more than 1,400 men.

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The 5th Bn., 46th Inf., assigned to the 198th Inf. Bde., and the 4th Bn., 21st Inf., with the 11th Inf. Bde., joined the division last month.

The soldiers of both battalions were immediately moved to the Americal Combat Center, where they were given a week-long course on booby traps, map reading and characteristics of the Viet Cong to supplement the training they had received in the states.

The 4/21 Inf. "Gimlets" arrived in Chu Lai from Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, and the 5/46 "Professionals" had been in training at Ft. Hood, Texas, prior to their movement.

The new 198th Brigade soldiers are currently engaged in the defense of the Chu Lai complex, while the "Gimlets" are engaged in combat operations in the Duc Pho area.

Lt. Col. James E. Armstrong heads the "Gimlets," and Lt.

unit in my command."

Gen. William C. Westmoreland, who is scheduled to depart shortly to become Army Chief of Staff, praised the fighting soldiers of the Army's only named division during Organization Day ceremonies last month.

He also presented awards to six of the division's soldiers.

Included among the awards was a Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's second highest decoration for valor, presented to Capt. James Taylor. The Riverside, Calif., native was cited for "performing repeated heroic rescues" during a nine-hour period last November.

Taylor is a troop commander with the division's 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry.

Westmoreland also presented the 1st Oak Leaf Cluster to the Bronze Star Medal for service to MSgt. Mike Hofer, of Olympia, Wash., who served with both the original Task Force 6814 in New Caledonia during WWII and Task Force Oregon, the forerunner to the Americal Division in Chu Lai.

Task Force 6814 was redesignated to become the "original" Americal Division.

Hofer's friends had dubbed him "Mr. Americal."



RECEIVE INSTRUCTION—Newly-arrived soldiers of the 5th Bn., 46th Inf. receive instructions on booby traps at the Americal Combat Center. (Photo by SFC Snow L. Wilson, 198th Inf. Bde.)

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For more stories and pictures of recent Americal operations, turn to page 6.

Special Forces base and district headquarters in Quang Tin Province, was started in mid-April.

South Vietnamese convoys had made the ground journey by May 8, though more engineering and mopping up activities were expected to