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6/73

MILITARY AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC SECURITY

INFANTRY UNIT PRAISED FOR HIGH DISCIPLINE

[Story of Discipline column: "Good Democracy and Strict Discipline"; Hanoi, Quan Doi Nhan Dan, Vietnamese, 27 June 1973, p 3]

Everyone who talks about the 3rd Company of Infantry Group Y. has praise for it: it is a unit which is renown for its strict discipline. After campaign X., the company received the front's "model discipline" banner. When it attacked and occupied the D.M. Base and captured much equipment, the company made a list of everything captured from the enemy and reported it to its superiors. Back in the rear, only 1 hour after a "burning of reactionary U.S. literature," the soldiers went in search of other U.S.-puppet leaflets and books and burned all of them. On this occasion, the political officer delivered a speech about the poison of neo-colonialism. For 2 years in a row, not one soldier has used grenades to catch fish. A new soldier in the 5th Company, Le Manh Thoan, lost his finger as a result of playing with explosives, but he immediately took the fuses he had and gave them to his squad leader. The people of N. region called the 3rd Company "their own troops." As soon as they returned from fighting the enemy, they harvested the people's crops, formed brotherhoods with youths, and taught children to sing. The company's "barber shop" is always a crowded and happy place and the soldiers cut the children's hair, tell them about fighting the Americans, and so forth.

What has the 3rd Company done to develop such strict discipline?

Nguyen Nang, the group's deputy political officer who has often visited the 3rd Company, informed us: in addition to having a political officer who is over 30 years of age,

the company commander and the assistant company commander as well as all of the company's platoon leaders are very young, about the age of the soldiers. None of the platoon leaders are more than 20 years old. Yet, there is very close unity between the top and the bottom and all soldiers respect their cadres. Practically every week there are activities to "evaluate cadres." The evaluation begins with an evaluation of the leaders of the three-man teams. Once, when the 3rd Platoon was carrying rice across a deep, fast moving river, two soldiers slipped, the rice became wet, and both the men and the rice were almost swept away. There was talking in the platoon that "the platoon leader does not know who is strong and who is not so that he can assign transportation quotas properly..." At a meeting held to evaluate him, platoon leader Nguyen Xuan An admitted to the shortcoming of not drawing up a detailed plan and, in order to save face, he allowed two soldiers who had just recovered from malaria to carry rice when they asked him if they could. The company commander accepted responsibility for not issuing careful instructions as a result of which this shortcoming occurred. At the end of the meeting to criticize the cadre, the entire platoon raised their hands to pass a proposal to praise the platoon leader because he had the highest productivity during the rice transportation drive. The story about "General Rice," the platoon leader, has had a significant effect in encouraging troops. Whenever the platoon fails to complete its task, the platoon leader tries to determine what he has done wrong. The platoon leader frequently meets with his troops and says: I am not used to being a commander, so, if I do something wrong, tell me; I can fight, but I am still very confused when it comes to commanding troops. All of the cadres of the 3rd Company are like Nguyen Xuan An. These exemplary cadres are an important reason why the 3rd Company has become a unit which, "fights well, has strict discipline, and is united."

The discipline of our army is self-conscious discipline. This discipline is based on the political awareness of cadres and soldiers and on the spirit of internal democracy and equality. Democracy and discipline are the cement joining our army in a unified body which is as strong as steel.

All manifestations of bureaucratic behavior, arbitrariness, militarism, behavior not becoming a soldier, and democracy in form only on the part of cadres as well as expressions of liberalism and excessive democracy on the part of soldiers weaken discipline and fighting strength. Without good democracy, there cannot be strict self-conscious discipline.