

Ranger Applicants Get Intensive Training Here

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From Glen **McCrary**

PHUOC VINH – There are a select group of young men at Phuoc Vinh who volunteer for 12 days of strict discipline, rugged exercise and a rigorous training schedule in order to wear the black beret – a symbol of professionalism. There are 22 men presently undergoing training at the 75th Ranger Academy here.

During this period the men of Company H are judged by their attitude, aptitude and physical endurance. All courses must be passed, or the aspiring trainee is dropped from the program.

According to SSgt. Oscar **Nalls**, an instructor at the Ranger Academy. "The reason why a man is so strictly tested is that a Ranger must always be alert and ready to respond instantly. Sometimes a trainee might be awakened in the middle of the night by a training sergeant and asked a question concerning the day's lessons in order to test his alertness and ability to think."

Day Starts Early

A typical day's training begins at 4:30 a.m. with an hour of physical training. Push-ups and running get a Ranger trainee in the top physical condition he'll need for extensive field operations.

For the remainder of the day various indoor classes are conducted to educate the students in essential Ranger subjects such as map reading, first aid, radio procedures, patrol organization, and many more.

A 10 minute break for the Ranger usually means a few more push-ups and a quick jog around the area.

One of the most grueling tasks the trainee has is the gradual build-up to a five mile run with a sandbag on his back.

If the trainee drops out from any of the runs he is automatically dropped from the program.

Strict Training

The trainee does not have privileges during these 12 days and is not allowed even a simple can of beer.

SSgt. Nalls adds, "This constant harassment is used to test the individual's ability to operate effectively under pressure. It teach him discipline and the ability to follow orders which will be of great importance to him out in the field."

The trainees agree with Nalls' philosophy and actually enjoy the pressures they are faced with. Even such unpleasant tasks as low crawling through monsoon mud are performed without complaint.

After the 12 day training program is completed, the student must go out on five actual missions before he is considered a full-fledged Ranger. It is a moment of well-deserved pride when a man is finally able to wear his black beret – he knows he is a professional.