

COMMAND INFORMATION

Americal Division History-Part 2

In February, 1967, COMUSMACV, General William C. Westmoreland, formed a planning group to organize an Army task force to send to the troubled I Corps area of South Vietnam.

This planning group, led by Major General William B. Rosson (later Lieutenant General) formed a multi-brigade force comprised of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade; the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division; and the 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division (later designated the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division).

The task force ~~became~~ operational on April 20, 1967, under control of III Marine Amphibious Force (III MAF), with the 196th beginning operations near Chu Lai, in Quang Tin Province, and the 3rd Brigade 4th Infantry conducting search and destroy operations in Quang Ngai Province. In May, 1967, the 1st Brigade 101st Airborne arrived at Duc Pho and began operations in the jungles west of there.

Early offensive operations conducted by Task Force Oregon included: Malheur I and Malheur II, Hood River, Bep-ton and Cook. On Sept. 11, 1967, Operation Wheeler was launched against elements of the 2nd NVA Division in the area west of Chu Lai.

On Sept. 22, 1967, Brigadier General Samuel W. Koster assumed command of the task force, succeeding Major General Richard T. Knowles, who had commanded the task force during the period June 25 to Aug. 20, 1967.

On Sept. 25, 1967, Task Force Oregon was re-constituted and designated as the Americal Division with a proposed organization to consist of the 196th, 198th, and 11th Light Infantry Brigades.

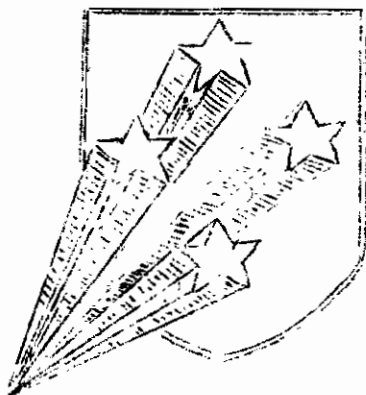
Operation Wheeler continued and on Oct. 4, 1967, the 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) was placed under operational control of the Americal Division to launch Operation Wallowa.

On Oct. 22, 1967, the 198th Light Infantry Brigade arrived in Vietnam to become part of the Americal Division.

On Dec. 21, 1967, the 11th Light Infantry Brigade, commanded by Brigadier General Andy A. Lipscomb arrived in Vietnam.

THE COME-ON

Here's a trick the VC sometimes use. A group of VC will show up in the distance, waiting for you to close in on them. It could be a trap. You may pursue them into hilly country where a large unit may be waiting. One way to beat this is to call in the artillery when you first spot the decoys.



"Barker" cont. from page 1 camp. "There were about 75 newly constructed huts," Capt. Micheles reported. "They were probably rest areas for troops moving through the area. As we moved in, the enemy fled."

Navy gunboats, checking possible enemy retreat along the coast, killed 5 enemy as they tried to escape along the beach shortly after noon.

Four hours later, 1st Platoon, Co. B, received heavy automatic weapons and mortar fire. "We were pinned in a rice field by the heavy fire coming from the tree line, and had no opportunity to pull back," 1Lt. John B. Spraggins, Philadelphia, Pa., said. Spraggins, the platoon leader, added: "I asked for volunteers to charge the entrenched enemy position. After concentrating artillery support, we made the assault against the heavily reinforced position."

As the enemy fled, the "Dirty Dozen" cut down 44 of an estimated 100 defenders.

A "Shark" from the 174th Aviation Co., piloted by WO1 James T. Cooney, Ft. Walton Beach, Fla., flew three missions to medevac injured personnel while under heavy fire. During one of these missions, the "Shark" received automatic weapons and mortar fire from four directions.

cont. on page 4

SOLDIER MEETS CHARLIE UNDERGROUND

Specialist Four Victor M. Jamoom, Brooklyn, N.Y., team leader in the 2d Platoon of "D" Company, 3d Bn., 1st Infantry, 11th Light Infantry Brigade, figures he's lucky to be alive. At least he won't challenge hand grenades with a .45 caliber pistol again.

Specialist Jamoom and the 2d Platoon were on a search and clear operation about 15 miles northeast of here in the southern I Corps area when 2d Squad leader Staff Sergeant Pinky McNeely, Oakland, Cal., spotted a man and a woman running from the advancing troops. As the squad gave chase, the two split up and Jamoom and his fire team continued after the man.

They lost the fleeing VC in a thick swamp, but while searching the area came across a Vietnamese hut and a bunker and began to check it out. The hooch was empty, but the bunker had a false wall in the rear entrance which opened into a forked tunnel.

Jamoom grabbed a flashlight, traded his M16 for a cont. on page 4

"Medics" cont. from page 1
juries due to hostile action and 25 Vietnamese accidental injuries. This does not include routine sick-call.

Operation Dust -Off has flown approximately 425 missions with 140 hours logged while evacuating 80 Americans and 450 Vietnamese and Viet Cong.

Company "C", 26th Engineers, has begun construction of a medical treatment complex to house a dispensary, laboratory, admissions and dispositions ward with nursing stations, X-ray, and a tiled and air-conditioned surgical facility.



"Tunnel" cont. from page 3
.45 pistol and started into the complex. The hole was so small that he had to shed his helmet to squeeze in the entrance. Halfway through the tunnel he found some clothes and searched them for weapons or document but they were clean.

"I continued into the tunnel where the bunker section led off to the right," Specialist Jamoom relates. "As I shined the light into the right section I saw a man just as he threw a hand grenade at me. It took a fraction of a second to realize what was going on.

"I fired a shot at him but missed, and he threw another hand grenade at me. As I fired a second shot I remembered that I only had two seconds before that first grenade went off. When I started backtracking I recall saying to myself, 'Don't stop! Make it to the top.'"

"I think the pile of clothes might have saved me," Spec. 4 Jamoom continued. "There wasn't room to turn around in the passage, and I only got a few feet out when the grenade went off." With debris raining around him, Jamoom emerged from the tunnel without a scratch.

"My first thought was how bad I was hurt, but when the excitement died down I found I only had a ruptured eardrum from the concussion of the grenade. I must be the luckiest man alive."

When other members of the platoon began digging into the chamber they found that Specialist Jamoom had not missed with his second shot. They also found the second grenade hadn't gone off, and another VC who had been killed by a grenade tossed into the hole when the men broke through the roof.

"Engineers" cont. from page 1

11th Brigade, on June 15, 1967, the company was redesignated "Charlie" Company, 26th Engineer Battalion, under the command of the Americal Division Jan. 10. The company arrived in Vietnam with the 11th Brigade and has been providing support ever since.

"We maintain a squad of engineers at each of the landing zones in our area of operations," CPT Allen said, adding that the engineers are presently engaged in several major projects at the Brigade base camp.

In addition to the routine jobs - building bunkers, maintaining roads, and supplying potable water, the company is constructing new heliport facilities for Brigade aviation elements, a new aid station for the base camp and a new detainee camp.

"Barker" cont. from page 3

I don't know how the helicopter got out. It sounded like all hell broke loose when it landed," Capt. Michles said.

After the 1st Platoon's daring assault, the 2d Platoon was also pinned down by intense fire.

"If it hadn't been for accurate artillery fire holding the enemy in their positions, we would not have had a chance," Capt. Michles recalled.

The 1st Platoon linked up with armored personnel carriers commanded by 1Lt. James R. Oley, Lafayette, Ind., of Troop E.

1st Cav., and fought their way to the 2d Platoon.

"Without the APC's, we wouldn't have been able to fight our way back to the rest of the company and get out of there," Capt. Michles said, adding that, because of the weather, "air strikes would have been impossible."

The units pulled back to secure areas for the night as artillery periodically pounded the area to check enemy movements.

Tuesday's major action began late in the day as Co. C of "Sykes' Regulars" again received sniper fire. Return fire from the company shot two enemy snipers down out of the trees.

At the same time, Co. A and Navy "Swift" boats were being shot at by snipers and automatic weapons from a village in the same area.

As units moved toward the village, two platoons from Co. C, led by 2Lt. William L. Calley and 2Lt. Steven K. Brooks, and another platoon from Co. A, were pinned down.

DUG IN

"The enemy was dug into holes and elements who went after them received heavy automatic weapons and small arms fire," LTC Barker reported from a forward position.

Contact was broken at 7:30 p.m. by TF Barker units when the enemy drew into defensive positions. Artillery was once again called in on the enemy to check his movements.

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