

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
61st INFANTRY PLATOON COMBAT TRACKER
APO San Francisco 96345

Apr 1967-
1968

W-03B-AA

10 Jan 69

SUBJECT: UNIT HISTORY-INITIAL AND 1968 ANNUAL SUPPLEMENT

1. The mission of the combat tracker team (CTT or tracker team) is to track the enemy in order to re-establish contact. Typical missions include tracking:

- A. Enemy personnel who survive friendly ambushes.
- B. Enemy ambush parties after ambush of friendly units.
- C. Enemy mortar or rocket crews after attack on friendly units or installations.
- D. Enemy terrorists or mine-laying parties.
- E. Small enemy elements which have been observed by ground forces or air observers.
- F. Lost or missing friendly patrols or personnel.
- G. To gain intelligence information such as age of track, direction of travel, and composition of party. This information can be used to attempt to block or intercept the enemy using ground forces or air power.

2. The CTT is composed of a team leader, a visual tracker, a tracker dog and handler, and two coverman. All team members except the dog handler receive visual tracker training. Each division is authorized a combat tracker platoon with four CTT and each separate brigade is authorized a detachment of two CTT.

3. Tracker Team #5 was assigned to the division on 8 Apr 67, and on 3 Oct 67 Tracker Team #13 was assigned to division. The two tracker teams operated separately but were both attached to the 2d Brigade, on 15 February 68 activation orders were cut by USARPAC for the activation of the 61st IPCT. 1LT Donald R Hendricks was platoon commander from 15 Feb 68 to 1 Jul 68, and 1LT Salvador F Canchola commanded the platoon from 2 Jul 68 to 31 Dec 68. The CTT are on a constant state of readiness and alert.

4. During 1967 the CTT completed 55 missions for a monthly average of six, and in 1968 219 missions were completed for a monthly average of eighteen. The monthly average since April 67 is thirteen. Members of the CTT have earned eighty-five awards since April 67:

1 Silver Star	8 Army Commendation Medal/Valor
5 Bronze Star/Valor	32 Army Commendation Medal/Merit
10 Bronze Star/Merit	10 Purple Heart
19 Air Medal/Merit	50 CIB/1st Award

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5. The 61st IPCT has supported the major division operations such as Junction City, Manhattan, Billings, ShenandoahII, and Qiyet Thang; and participated in the following 1968 battles An May, Toan ThangI, Toan ThangII, Loc NinhIII, and Julie. During 1968 the 61st was credited with the destruction of over 300 bunkers, capturing 35 enemy; killing 120 of the enemy, and salvaging over one ton of rice. The months of May and August were of notable achievement in that the CTT ran a record number of missions, 31 in May and 36 in August are both record highs for all Tracker Teams in USARV. The outstanding mission for the unit was on 5 May 68 when the CTT tracked to the edge of a base camp complex, the dog alerted, and the CTT called in artillery and air. CTT was credited with 70 enemy kills and 6 enemy POW's, there were no friendly casualties in the battle. The missions of the CTT have varied from Sapper Incidents to leading sweeps across enemy base camps. The CTT has supported all the units assigned to division, and attached units such as the 11th ACR and 3/17 Cav. The CTT has also supported 3d Bde/82d ABN Div and various ARVN units in III Corp.



SALVADOR F CANCHOLA
1LT INF
COMMANDING

5 Incl

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