

Charlie Loses Rice To Cacti Blue Hunt

By SP4 Michael Tousey

OASIS—In a two day search of a stream bed near the battalion firebase, Cacti Blue, Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry, uncovered five tons of Viet Cong rice and captured one North Vietnamese submachine gun.

A Viet Cong suspect, detained by the Cacti Blue the previous day, led the Bravo Company troops to the first of four caches found in the area.

"The detainee said there was only one cache along the blue line," said 1st Lieutenant William R. Burdick of East Lyme, Conn., Bravo Company Commander, "but we were skeptical and probed out to the east about 50 meters where Specialist 4 Leonard Peak of Havre, Mont., found another cache of approximately one ton of rice.

"Close to this location Private First Class Robert Hill of Plainfield, Ill., found a North Vietnamese submachine gun with a loaded magazine and a round in the chamber. It was in perfect condition."

The search was discontinued for the day and a small element was left near the two caches. An enemy force, estimated at between a squad and a platoon, attempted to reach the rice, but was driven off by grenades and artillery fire.

The search was continued downstream the following morning, where two more caches were found with a total of about three tons of rice.

"All four caches were constructed the same," said Sergeant Robert A. Toledo of New York City. "They built a hooch just like the Montagnards use to store rice. Then they dug out the stream bank and lowered the hooch into the hole.

"This kept the rice off the ground in the hole. They even placed rat traps around the area to protect the rice.

"They put a log roof over the hole and camouflaged it with straw and leaves, leaving an entrance through the bank facing the stream. You could only see the cache from the stream bed."

During the search, Bravo Company also found caches from which the rice had already been removed. These structures were also destroyed.

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Shop Is Easy To Locate

OASIS — "If an officer tells a man to get a haircut, he can no longer claim that he can't find the barbershop," smiled Private First Class Robert Palmer Jr., barber for the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry.

PFC Palmer is referring to the newly painted red and white building which makes the barbershop so easy to find.

PFC Palmer decided to take part in the area beautification program. So he went to work and painted alternate boards red or white. The colorful facade indicates the building's function as well as any barber pole could.

Cacti Blue's Alpha Company Ransacks VC Supply Depots

By SP4 Michael Tousey

OASIS — Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry played finders-keepers with the enemy for four days, with the Cacti Blue coming out as the easy winners in the Chu Kehn Mountains.

The mountains, forty miles south of Pleiku, yielded three M1 carbines, two submachine guns, two light machine guns and a 30.06 Springfield rifle in the first cache discovery.

Also found in the area were 2,500 .30 caliber rounds, a CHI-COM grenade, an anti-tank mine and medical supplies.

Working with the 7th Squadron, 17th Cavalry, Alpha Company was making a late afternoon sweep of the wild area when the second cache was found.

This cache included six B40 rockets, 26 60mm mortar rounds, a 60mm mortar tube, six B40 booster charges, three cans of 60mm mortar charges and one can of 60mm mortar fuses.

Chief's Quarters

"A Viet Cong (VC) district chief's headquarters had been reported in the area," said Alpha Company Commander Cap-

tain Walter L. Corey of Concord, N.H., "so we were not surprised when we found a base camp area.

"There was a barracks area, dispensary, club, and kitchen with 35 to 40 chickens and eight pigs running around.

"They must have left in a big hurry when the gunships hit as they still had equipment, like pistol belts, hanging there, and we found packs, with clothing and medicine hidden in the rocks.

"The area had been used a long time," continued Captain Corey. "The hooches and kitchen equipment had been there approximately twelve months. It looked like they had been keeping their families there, too."

"I spotted a hooch after we left their base area," said Private First Class George Barnes of Marion, Ill., describing the finding of the first cache.

"I went up to it and the weapons were sticking out from under a poncho. It looked like they just left them there and ran. The 30.06 still had five rounds in it."

PFC Barnes found the second cache when Alpha Company returned to the area the following morning to make a more thorough search. The cache was hidden in a crevice in the rocks 100 meters up the mountainside from the VC base camp.

An old rag placed on one of the rocks caught PFC Barnes'

attention, and a careful investigation discovered the mortar and rocket cache.

Another One

"Another day another cache," seemed to be the slogan of the Cacti Blue, as they discovered still another one the next day.

The cache included 11 grenades, 19 60mm mortar rounds, one claymore mine, one box of carbine ammunition, four boxes of C4 and sixty AK-47 rounds.

And the day after that Alpha Company found what appeared to be a main dispensary for the VC district headquarters complex.

"The supplies were hidden over a wide area with almost the whole company helping in the search," said Sergeant Spencer Kreiser of Lorain, Ohio. "It was hidden in tree trunks, under rocks, up trees; it was just like an Easter egg hunt."

Private First Class Peter Horton of Wilton, Calif., a medic with Alpha Company, described the captured medical supplies.

"They had almost everything an aid station would need. There was even quinine and vitamins, which, according to the label, were made in Hanoi."