

# Cacti Blue Takes A Break

OASIS — Company barbecues and a visit from movie starlets, highlighted a stand-down for the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry at the Oasis.

A carnival atmosphere prevailed throughout the three-days-of the Cacti Blue stand-down. Each company had a barbecue, the most popular feature of which was charcoal broiled steaks.

"The best part of all, though," according to Specialist 4 James Pickerill, of Lyons, Kan., a member of the Delta Company Mortar Platoon, "was the chance to forget war for a few days. No patrols, no guard duty. We just acted like it was peace time."

Although the primary purpose of the stand-down was to provide the Cacti Blue with a well-earned break after ten months in the field, the days also afforded an opportunity to solve numerous administrative difficulties.

The Division Composite Personnel Team handled finance and personnel records problems. Problems with equipment were taken to Maintenance Contact Teams. To the chagrin of some, all shot records were brought up to date.

A mobile PX visited the battalion area and was immediately busy selling cameras, film, radios, and tape recorders.

The new cameras and film were put to immediate use when the battalion was visited by Sharon Hillyer, Suzann Brent, and Sharon Mullikin, three very beautiful and friendly girls with a touring USO show.

Other activities crowded the calendar for the three days the Cacti Blue spent at the Oasis. Volleyball and football were popular but writing letters home filled most of the time. Many took full advantage of the privilege to sleep at any time of the day or night.

At the conclusion of the stand-down, the Cacti Blue executive officer, Major Dennis M. Duggan of Honolulu, pronounced the operation a success.

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# Sarge Drops Lone Enemy

HIGHLANDER HEIGHTS — Staff Sergeant Eliezer Ayala of New Brunswick, N.J., a platoon sergeant with Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry, was credited with killing one NVA near Landing Zone (LZ) Penny, ten miles south of Kontum City.

Leaving the company perimeter to locate an observation post (OP) for his platoon, Sergeant Ayala spotted the NVA and fired at him. The NVA went down.

The kill was confirmed later in the day by an OP team from Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry which spotted two NVA carrying a body on a stretcher improvised out of a poncho.

"Collins (Specialist 4 Jack F. Collins of South Barre, Vt.) and I had just gotten into position. Approximately ten minutes later we heard movement," said Private First Class Doug Boughton of Stanley, N.Y. "Then we saw two NVA carrying a third on a stretcher.

"Specialist Collins, who saw them first, opened up and they dropped the stretcher and took off. One of them ran so fast he lost his Ho Chi Minh sandals."

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# Recon Pays Off

By SGT Michael Tousey

HIGHLANDER HEIGHTS — "Detaining an enemy is a real tough business," explained Sergeant First Class James Tibbit of Leesville, La., platoon sergeant for the Reconnaissance Platoon of the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry.

The Recon Platoon, working with Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry, was sweeping an area where there had been contact the previous day. Specialist 5 James Hyatt of Baltimore, a squad leader with Bravo Company, spotted a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) soldier who was suspected as part of a burial party sent back into the area by the enemy.

Specialist Hyatt fired, hitting the enemy in the leg, and the job of apprehending him began.

"You have to find him, get control of the situation and disarm him," said Sergeant Tibbit. "This requires real care. You want him for the information he has, but he is always dangerous."

"The problem is complicated by the fact that we can't understand each other's languages."

"Yesterday, after Bravo Company shot the NVA, we started searching the area. We knew he was in there. We moved approximately 300 meters beyond the bunker complex. I thought I heard the guy yelling, we thought he might be trying to get us into an ambush."

"Grinde (Specialist 4 John

Grinde of La Mesa, Calif.) and I crossed a Montagnard fence. The NVA jumped up and Grinde fired just above his head, close enough to make him think about the situation.

"He got down fast and we yelled to him to Chieu Hoi. He yelled back something which may have been Chieu Hoi. We moved up on him slowly, got our rifles on him and we had him."

"He did not have any grenades or weapons on him, but checking him out for them was still a problem. He was on his stomach when we got to him and could have had a CHICOM grenade under him, but he didn't."

The Hoi Chanh was turned over to Army of Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) officials who later reported that he gave them a lot of information concerning an ambush on Highway 14.

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