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4/27/69  
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# Cacti Blue's Role Big In Mountains

By SP4 Michael Tousey

**OASIS** — In a month-long battle, the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry, drove a NVA regiment from the Chu Prong mountains on the east side of Highway 14 about 23 kilometers north of Pleiku.

Intelligence reports indicated that the enemy regiment moved into the area in an effort to interdict vital Highway 14 which links the Famous Fighting Fourth Division headquarters and Pleiku with forward units in the Kontum area. The area was also being used to stage rocket and mortar attacks on the Pleiku area.

The operation began on March 1 with Bravo and Delta Companies moving into the mountains. The Chu

Prong mountains, about 5,000 feet high and many with slopes approaching 45 degrees, were covered with double and triple canopy vegetation and thick stands of bamboo. This was perfect terrain for defensive operations by an entrenched enemy familiar with the area.

Contact was first made on March 2 by Delta Company. In the following weeks two or three firefights in one day by different elements of the battalion was not an unusual occurrence.

On the 7th, Alpha and Bravo Companies combined to defeat an unknown size enemy force which left 11 enemy bodies. In two separate fights, Delta and a Recon Platoon each accounted for one NVA kill. The Recon Platoon then ended the first week of the battle by finding an ammunition cache containing

300,000 AK47 rounds, almost enough ammo to supply two battalions with a basic load.

The Recon Platoon was again instrumental in an action which brought the battle to an end on the 29th. Ten NVA bodies were found after the fight.

The impressive statistics for the month are indicative of the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry's aggressiveness in the Chu Prong mountains. The Cacti Blue accounted for 65 enemy bodies.

The battalion captured 25 AK47 rifles. Also recovered were 111 60mm and 19 82mm mortar rounds with 126 ignition cartridges for 60mm mortars and 164 fuses for mortars.

In addition to the destruction of a battalion command post and battalion-size aid station, the month saw the Cacti Blue destroy eight tunnel and cave complexes and numerous bunkers, foxholes and fighting positions.

But most important, the NVA regiment's sanctuary and base of operations were damaged and complete use of the area was denied to the enemy. The attempt to cut Highway 14 never materialized and pressure was lessened in the Pleiku area.



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## Bullets In Trap, Not For Long

**POLEI KLENG** — Returning from a platoon-sized operation, the 4th Platoon from the 1st Brigade's Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry, spotted three enemy attempting to spring a trap from a bomb crater.

Specialist 4 David Hutchins of San Rafael, Calif., the pointman, alerted the platoon with

<b>A LIVING MEMORIAL</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>4<sup>TH</sup> DIVISION</b>	<b>AS OF</b>
<b>SCHOLARSHIP FUND DRIVE</b>	

# 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.

# 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."

# Keron Pays Off

by Sgt Michael Tousey  
**HIGHLANDER HEIGHTS** — "Detaining an enemy is a real wacky 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. Sergeant James Hyatt of Leesville, a squad leader with Bravo Company, spotted a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) soldier who was suspected as part of a guerilla party sent back into the area by the enemy.

Specialist Hyatt first noticed the enemy in the area on the job of apprehending him again.

"You have to find him, get control of the situation and detain him," said Sergeant Tibbit. The recon team had care. You want to get the information he has all the way to headquarters.

The recon team had care. You want to get the information he has all the way to headquarters.

"Yesterday, after Bravo Company set the OP, we started searching the area. We knew he was in there. We moved up close to the enemy and beyond the recon company. I thought I heard the body yelling. We thought he might be trying to get us into an ambush.

"Specialist 4 John

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