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8 Sep 1968 Ivy Leaf

Elephants Make A Small Circus

By SP4 John Trimble

OASIS — It had been a dull day for a small patrol of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry, commanded by Captain Thomas Steuber of Milwaukee, Wis., until they ambled into a small Montagnard village, and became the audience of a circus.

The 3rd-Brigade squad had left the company firebase early in the morning on a cordon and search in an area near Ban Me Thuot.

The 4th soldiers walked and searched all day in the torrid, steaming jungle; they found nothing. The sun began to sink behind the tall trees as they started the long, exhausting trek back to the firebase.

Along the way they had to pass through a Montagnard hamlet. The villagers had always been friendly and given them fruits and other small treats when they journeyed through.

The Ivymen expected a treat, but little did they know that it would be a circus act.

As the soldiers entered the hamlet, they noticed three elephants in the center.

"It was a shock," said Private First Class Jimmy Smith of Fayette, Ark., "I knew there were elephants down here but these were the first I'd seen."

The 3rd-Brigade Ivymen scattered among the awesome beasts, looking over the giants.

Before they knew what was happening the Montagnards were riding them around and putting on a show for the weary men.

"It was almost as good as a circus show," PFC Smith added