



***IVY LEAF***  
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10 Nov 1968 Ivy Leaf

## **Ivymen Rout NVA From Volcano**

By SP4 Hans Lange

BAN ME THUOT—The volcano rises majestically, pointing its crown 880 meters into the Central Highland sky southwest of the hamlet of Due Lap.

It sits strategically overlooking rolling hills and fertile valleys to the north and east, and more rugged terrain to the west and south.

Thousands of years ago it spewed hot, molten rock for miles in each direction. In May of this year it served as a launching site for North Vietnamese Army (NVA) mortars during the second offensive.

In late August, four enemy anti-aircraft guns were throwing hot lead at 4th Division helicopters flying to break the siege of the Due Lap Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG).

The volcano has been a favorite staging area for the NVA. Cambodia is only three kilometers to the west, easily accessible via dried stream beds and high-speed trails.

But change came dramatically when Ivy Division soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel William C. Moore of Alexandria, Va.; the 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel John Daniels of Alexandria, Va.; and from the 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Joseph T. Palastra Jr. of Salinas, Kan., moved into the area.

The NVA were methodically routed out of their lair and driven to seek sanctuary across the border. Attempts to re-infiltrate in large numbers have repeatedly been thwarted.

On the rim of the volcano, where the foe previously ruled, now sits a company of Ivymen—Company A, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry, commanded by Captain Richard B. Walker of Bloomington, Ind.

“Whoever has this high ground dominates the whole valley,” said Colonel Herbert J. McChrystal of Arlington, Va., commander of the 2nd Brigade, while visiting Alpha Company’s location.

"You can see how important this is to us," the colonel continued. "Down below, to the northwest, is Ban Sar Pa, a Popular Forces outpost. The enemy could overrun it if no one were up here.

"On the other side of the crater, to the south and west, is what we call Coffin Corner. Our artillery has nailed a lot of lids on NVA graves down there."

Directly to the north of the volcano is Fire Support Base Pack Rat, home of the 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry. There, Lieutenant Colonel Palastra echoes Colonel McChrystal's words.

"We have what the NVA needs, the volcano. And believe me, we're going to keep it"