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20 Jul 969 Ivy Leaf

Cacti Blue Zap Enemy Platoon

By SGT Michael Tousey

HIGHLANDER HEIGHTS—A Bushmaster patrol from Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry accomplished its purpose before it even moved into position when it engaged an estimated enemy platoon ten miles southwest of Kontum City. Charlie Company was credited with killing four North Vietnamese (NVA) in the contact.

The patrol, led by Sergeant James L. Nightlinger of Bellflower, Calif., was 800 meters from the company patrol base when it received fire from 75 meters away.

“We hit the ground,” said Specialist 4 Coy R. Burns of Marietta, Ga., radio telephone operator in Charlie Company, “and Sergeant Nightlinger instructed us to set up a perimeter.”

“I moved up to him with the radio, and he called for artillery support. The rest of us put out some real firepower.”

The call for support was answered with artillery, gunships, and additional men from Charlie Company. Staff Sergeant Charles Nelson of Alexandria, Va., was joined by Sergeant John F. Nordstrom of Marshalltown, Ia., and his patrol.

“When we met Sergeant Nordstrom’s men, we caught an NVA between us; Nordstrom’s men opened up on him,” said Sergeant Nelson.

“When we got to the contact location,” continued Sergeant Nelson, “a gunship came by low and slow. The NVA must have thought it was a dustoff or something, and they fired on it.”

“They got a real surprise. We saw where they were firing from and directed the gunship in on them. They stopped taking potshots at gunships real fast.”

“We only reported as KIAs the four NVA we hit and saw go down,” said Captain Marbury. “Those the gunships or artillery may have gotten were not included.”