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IVY LEAF

FAMOUS FOURTH

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Walking Point Important Job, Calls For Complete Alertness

OASIS — Some soldiers refer to him as the eyes and ears of a patrol. Others think of him as the infantryman's best friend.

Regardless of what descriptive phrases are used, it has been proven, the pointman is an intricate part of any infantry mission. His performance, more than anyone else's in certain cases, can dictate the degree of any success.

"The pointman is one of the main men of the element and he shouldn't forget it," said Sergeant Larry W. Nobles, of Phoenix City, Ala., who has seen seven months of combat experience with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry.

Sergeant Nobles and Specialist 4 Lynn Bard of Greenville, Mich., of the Cacti Blue's Company B, are two Famous Fighting Fourth Division soldiers who have been pointmen on numerous occasions and as such have some definite opinions about walking point.

"A pointman must have combat experience, this isn't a job for someone new in country," commented Specialist Bard.

Always Alert

Asked what the qualities of a good pointman should be, Sergeant Nobles replied: "He must always be alert and ready for anything."

"A pointman must always look for obstacles," adds Specialist Bard, "especially booby traps and enemy bunkers."

The 3rd Brigade soldier also believes a soldier should be in good physical condition, levelheaded, and a man who cannot be easily excited.

The pointman is confronted with numerous obstacles, both physical and mental. The physical obstacles are dependent upon, and vary with, changes in the terrain.

Look For Unusual

The mental obstacles, however, are always present.

What should a pointman look for? Sergeant Nobles and Specialist Bard both agree he has "to watch out for anything out of the ordinary. It could signify trouble."

"It is a dangerous job and one in which you have to overcome nervousness. In essence the men are depending on you," theorized Sergeant Nobles.

Specialist Bard admits he has "never really thought" about the responsibilities he had when walking point. "I was just glad it was over when the time came."

Perhaps Sergeant Nobles best summarized the duties of a pointman when he said: "It is something you have to have experienced in order to be able to fully understand it."