

DICK ARNOLD

3rd Bde., 25th Infantry Division

DUC PHO—On May 10 the 3rd Bde., 25th Inf. Div. completed its 365th consecutive day of combat operations.

In 12 months the Bronco Bde., which has the motto "None Better," has never left the field of combat.

They have sloshed through rice paddies, climbed forested, precipitous mountains, waded rivers and endured torrential rain, mosquitoes, rotor-bladed dust, monsoon mud and unbearable heat over the past 52 weeks.

Since May 10, 1966, they have participated in 129 battalion-size and 16 brigade-size assaults. They have fought the North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong in seven different operations ranging from Kontum to Darlac on the Cambodian Border and from Qui Nhon to Duc Pho on the South China Sea.

They have battled in the swampy, densely vegetated Ia Drang Valley, in the triple-canopied, virgin forests north of Plei Djereng, where sunlight never reaches the forest floor and on the sands of the hot South China Sea coast.

They have waded through rice paddies from Qui Nhon to Duc Pho and repeatedly searched caves in the mountains, sniper holes and trenches in the villages along the way.

Before Operation "Baker" began on April 22, the Bronco Bde. had rid Vietnam of 2196 North Vietnamese Army regulars and Viet Cong by confirmed body count and captured 1437 of their weapons for one of the best weapon-to-body count records in Vietnam. Since the beginning of Operation Baker they have added another 234 enemy killed in action to their already impressive record.

From May to October—except for a three week period in August—they were the only U.S. force between five North Vietnamese Army regiments and their objectives around Pleiku. They made numerous contacts with enemy units of battalion size or larger in that four month period of "Paul Revere," each time sending the NVA scurrying west to escape.

In October, while still on Revere, the brigade displaced north to Plei Djereng where the NVA were reported to be massing in the mountains. Five times the brigade made contact with enemy battalions. Twice they overran NVA regimental basecamps, earning the highest weapons captured count to confirmed body count recorded as of that time.

Two hundred and thirty days and 1466 dead NVA later Paul Revere came to a close, concluding the longest single operation in U.S. Army history.

The brigade started the new year in a new area of operation.

Without returning to basecamp for a rest or standdown, the 3rd Bde. of the "Tropic Lightning" Div. moved over 100 miles on Highways 19 and 1 to Phu Cat leaving one battalion still fighting in Pleiku Province. There the brigade joined the 1st Cav. Div. (Airmobile) on Operation "Thayer II" to force the NVA out of the rich coastal ricelands.

By constant patrolling they sufficiently agitated the Viet Cong so that the enemy had to focus his efforts on staying alive. The enemy lost the offensive and his operation deteriorated.

In addition, the Bronco Bde. located the Communist Binh Dinh

provincial headquarters, seizing NVA weapons, ammunition, flags, hospital administrative supplies and large amounts of documents that proved highly useful intelligence sources.

In February, the 3rd Bde. Task Force attacked north and Operation "Pershing" began, a continuance of the same programs in another more vital, more strongly VC-held area. Especially in the Crescent Valley, an area rich in rice and salt, the enemy was reluctant to leave. He attacked in battalion strength at the Village of Hoa Tan, but scurried into the mountains the next morning leaving 81 dead comrades, numerous machine guns, anti-tank rocket launchers and rifles behind.

On April 19 the brigade massed an air and sea lift and jumped deep into Viet Cong territory. They landed at Duc Pho and began operations immediately, this time on Operation "Le Juene."

The commanding general of the 1st Cav. Div. attested to the 3rd Bde.'s effectiveness in a message which read in part:

"Through the inspiring leadership of its officers and non-commissioned officers, and the resolute determination of its courageous soldiers, the 3rd Bde., 25th Div. has received laurels not normally awarded units of this size and has clearly merited the retention of its motto, 'None Better'."

Still on Operation Baker, the brigade is now part of the multi-brigade Task Force Oregon.

This brigade of the 25th Inf. Div. is unique in Vietnam. It fought as a separate brigade under the operational control of I Field Forces, the 4th Inf. Div., 1st Cav. Div. and Task Force Oregon but never under the 25th Div.

Its overall reenlistment rate of 54 per cent for April tops any other in Vietnam. Also from January thru April, 100 per cent of the Bde.'s Regular Army personnel eligible for reenlistment have reenlisted and stayed in Vietnam to fight with the unit.

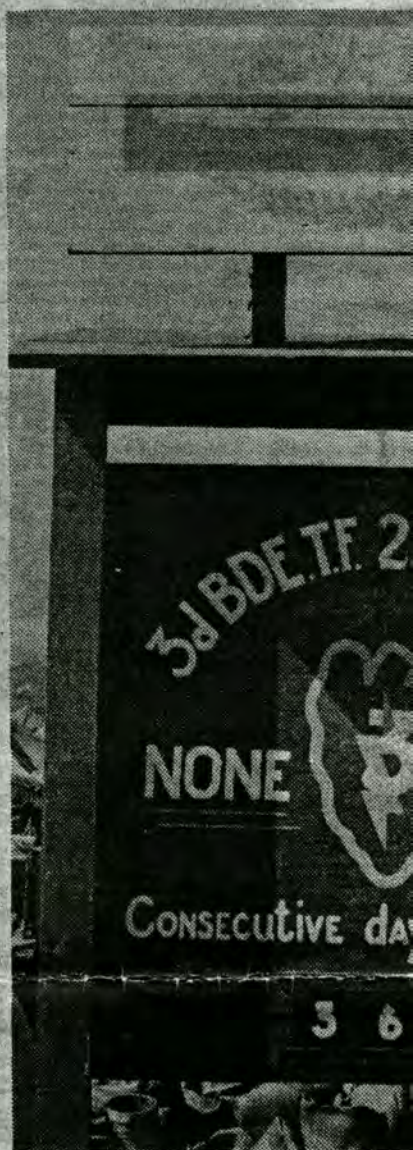
Throughout the previous operations in which the 3rd Bde. Task Force has participated over the past year, they have maintained one of the best enemy-to-friendly loss ratios of any unit in Vietnam.

COL James G. Shanahan, the brigade commander, and a veteran of three wars, who was with the 25th Div. as a platoon leader and a company commander during World War II, and a battalion commander in the Korean War, believes the last year has been a profitable one for his brigade.

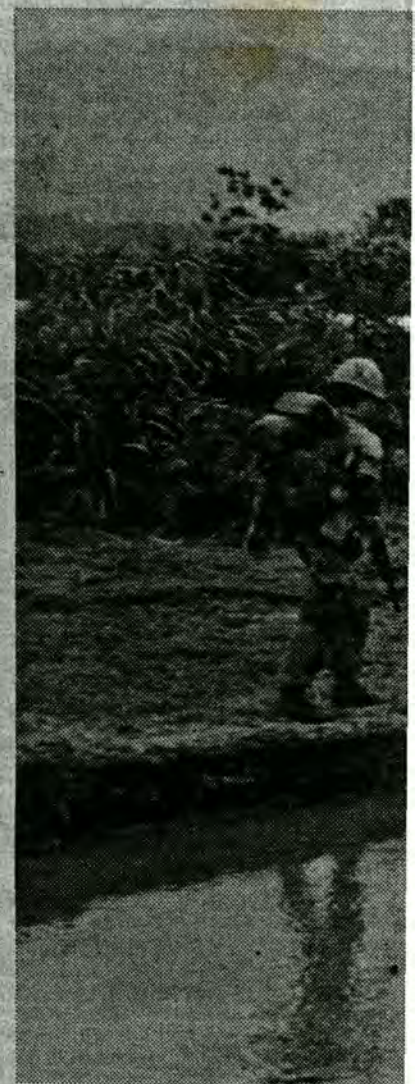
"We've fought and defeated the enemy throughout the highlands and for 150 miles along the South China Sea. I think the situation has vastly improved, partially because of the brigade's gallant efforts. We have proven to ourselves everyday for the last 365 that we can defeat the enemy in battle and it appears we may be convincing him of that fact also.

"Vietnam has been saved from the NVA. The enemy seems to be fighting a retrograde action with an occasional well planned but desperate attempt to regain lost control.

"The job has just begun, but the threat is diminished. The tide has turned and there is no longer the question, 'Will South Vietnam be free?' but rather the question is, 'When?'"



SEARCHING EYES—A patrol from Co. A, 1st Bn., 14th Inf., recons an area near an NVA rest camp in Pleiku province during Operation "Paul Revere III." (Photo by SP4 Dale Sutphin)



OUT ON PATROL—Men of Co. C, soldiers were killed the day before.

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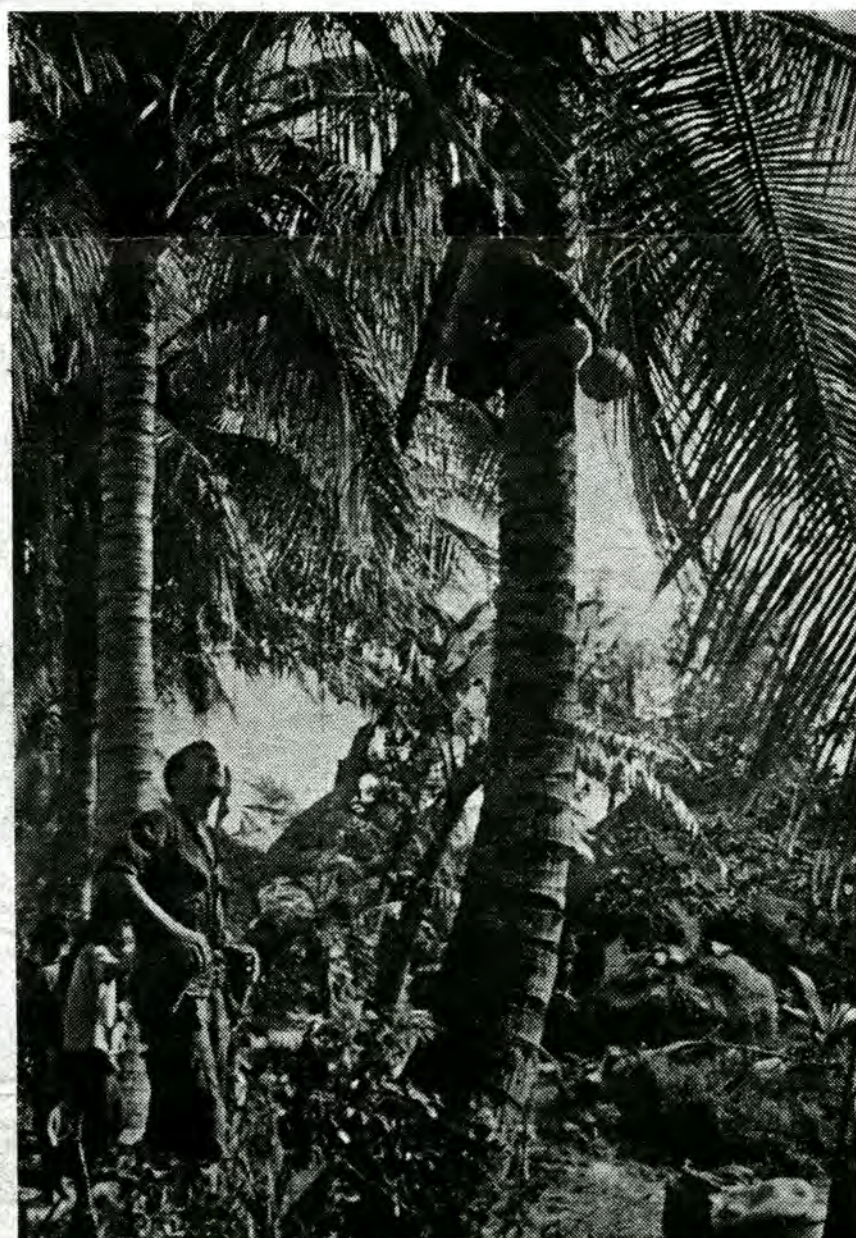
OUT AND AT 'EM—A machine-gunner in Co. C, 1st Bn., 35th Inf., heads for fortifications as his helicopter is setting down during a combat assault. The action took place during a search and destroy operation in Binh Dinh province. (Photo by SP4 John Rolfe)

-1 Year



1 Bn., 35th Inf., keep a watchful eye on Operation "Pershing" in an area where 81 NVA (Photo by PFC Robert Metz)

1st BN



COMIN' DOWN—A Vietnamese youngster picks a coconut for his buddy in the recon platoon, 1st Bn., 35th Inf. The two became friends during Operation "Pershing" when the men were near Van Thiet. (Photo by PFC Eric Schmidt)