

SEMPER PRIMUS

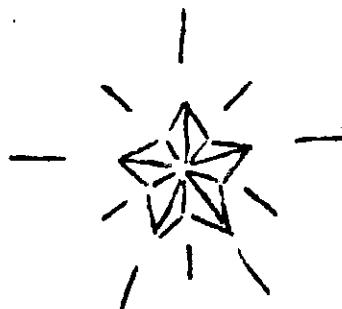
NEWSLETTER OF THE 2ND BATTALION, 1ST INFANTRY, 196TH INFANTRY BRIGADE "LEGIONNAIRES"

NUMBER 13

SEMPER PRIMUS

DEC. 25, 1968

FATHERHOOD of GOD, BROTHERHOOD of MAN



As our nation pauses to remember two holidays of two great faiths, the seasons of Hanukkah and Christmas, I know that your thoughts are with your families and loved ones back home and of the holidays of the past and of the holidays of the future.

Although this holiday will not be like those in your thoughts, you can be proud of the contribution you are making to the security of your country and to the furthering of the ideals of both Hanukkah and Christmas — a better understanding of the brotherhood of man.

To the men of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, I want to wish each of you a very Happy Hanukkah and a Merry Christmas.

SINCLAIR L. MELNER
LTC Infantry
Commanding

Around the world, men, women and children are in the holiday spirit. For a time — a brief time — the differences of race, of creed and of ideology are put aside and the feeling of good will abounds. For this short time, men bow their heads and renew their allegiance to the creator God.

"Joy" is the theme of the holiday season and it is a joy of peace with God and a renewed understanding of the brotherhood of man. In a world torn with strife and hate, comes the message of a loving, caring God, and men pause to hear again the call to faith and trust.

A young boy in his room at night with all the lights turned off, hears strange noises in the dark. As he becomes more and more afraid, he calls out. Then he hears his father's voice speak to him through the darkness and he knows he is safe and that no harm will befall him.

This holiday season answers the cry of mankind, who finds himself afraid of the unknown. The voice of God comes with comfort — "I am here; do not be afraid." The joy in men's hearts is the joy of knowing that they are not left alone in the dark; to grope, to stumble blindly, but rather to know that God Himself is near.

The blessing of this holiday season is the realization that God is in His world and with His people. The peace which prevails is the knowledge of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. The prayer of this season is that all mankind receive the love of God and give the love of man.

RONALD R. SIEBERT
CPT En Chaplain

LEGIONNAIRES CLAIM 51

LZ ROSS — "Legionnaires" of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Division during the past forty days saw action which yielded 50 enemy KIA's, five NVA/VC captured, 139 detained and the capture of 63 mortar rounds, three rockets and two crew-served weapons.

Operation Golden Fleece, concluded 17 November, took more than two million pounds of rice from starving enemy forces and was termed the most ambitious and successful rice denial program in the history of I Corps.

ALPHA COMPANY

Alpha company accounted for 16 KIA's, 120 detainees and three rockets captured.

The company spent the first weeks of November on road security in joint operations with the Moc Bai group, a PF platoon securing the new Phu Tho village relocation. Rifle squads daily accompanied the PF's to insure communications and artillery support.

Medic Sp4 Donald Williams was recommended for the Silver Star for his efforts in caring for the wounded under fire when the company's night lodger was hit on 18 November by heavy small arms fire and grenades.

On 30 November, the Moc Bai PF's and Sgt. James Carter's squad were patrolling along the old national railroad when they were engaged by some 20 VC. The US/PF force killed nine and captured three. Kit Carson scout Kong Bai was fatally wounded in the action and was recommended by Carter for the Silver Star. Men of Alpha company later contributed toward the purchase of his grave monument.

On a patrol on 3 December, a squad under Sp4 Dale Breach killed five VC and took one Chu Hoi from a cave complex. Documents showed the dead to be a VC village chief and two hamlet chiefs and a VC cadre.

Second platoon, led by SFC Charles Broadhead, on 9 December was CAd into the valley between Dragon base and the river, killing one VC and taking 116 detainees.

BRAVO COMPANY

Bravo killed four NVA/VC, took five detainees and captured 63 mortar rounds.

Two men were recommended for the Bronze Star with V device. Sp4 Marvin Owens and Orgilio Rondon, on a search and destroy mission on 6 December, with their element pinned down by enemy fire, charged the position killing two VC.

The day before, a patrol discovered an enemy mortar position with 63 stockpiled rounds. They also destroyed ten bunkers northeast of LZ Ross.

Sgt. Robert McCoy's squad bagged another VC on 19 November during a sweep through sugar cane fields north of Ross. Earlier, a squad led by Sgt. Garland Noodham killed one VC in an ambush in Happy Valley.

A tripped flare outside the Ross perimeter on the night of 11 December generated a "bad minute" which lasted a full half-hour. When the flare ignited in front of bunker 25, two VC with weapons were soon within 50 meters of the wire. Bravo opened up. One VC went down in the fusilade, but a patrol at dawn revealed nothing.

CHARLIE COMPANY

In action since 7 November, Charlie company produced five enemy KIA's, three prisoners and one weapon captured. Six men were recommended for Bronze Stars.

OPCONed to the 1st Bn., 1st Cavalry from 7 to 17 November, Charlie "Legionnaires" participated in a mechanized sweep of Cigar Island to the South China Sea.

On 13 November, under heavy enemy fire, Sgt. George Torresi was wounded in an attempt to take an enemy position. Sp4 Donald Alexander grabbed his wounded buddy and began dragging him back across the open rice paddy when he too was wounded. Alexander had to be given an order and pulled loose from his burden before he himself could be carried from the field, according to third platoon sergeant SSgt. Roger Littoral. Both were recommended for the Bronze Star with V device.

Also named for Bronze Stars with V were Sgt. Ernest Eastorday, Sp4 Clydo "Doc" Sovy and PFC Olin Neal.

On a patrol north of Ross the day before Thanksgiving, one VC was killed and three captured. Questioning revealed the action had aborted a planned VC probe of Fire Support B also Dragon.

On 29 November, Charlie company was CAd atop LZ Rydor to secure and rebuild the old fire support base for pending operations.

Delta company accounted for four enemy kills and six captured, including an NVA doctor and squad leader, and two crew-served and four individual weapons.

On 18 November, during an operation in the Gia Cat 3 area, LT David "Lofty" Parker's third platoon killed two VC and captured three and discovered a VC district cadre depot and weapons including one light and one heavy machinegun and an AK47.

In concurrent action, Sp4 Walter Cline's ambushing machinegun team killed 3 VC when they crossed an open rice paddy. Documents on the bodies indicated they were important members of the local VC infrastructure.

Conducting a sweep in force at the base of fire support base Dragon on 23 November, an element killed one VC and captured another. While Delta was OPCON to the 4th Bn., 31st Infantry from 28 November to 12 December for the Nui Chan mountain operation, LT David Parker and PSgt Julius Williams captured an NVA squad leader. Sgt. Bruce Nolton's squad discovered an abandoned observation post with a 50 caliber machinegun.

On the same operation, while conducting reconnaissance in force in the vicinity of old fire support base Sooner, LT Aubrey Sholton's platoon captured a military age Vietnamese male who questioning revealed to be an NVA doctor with seven years education in Hanoi.

* * *

R.S.V.P., GI

The invitation was "come as you are" and the men of Bravo company accepted, but they were unable to thank their hostess. She was remaining incognito.

The "invitation" actually came a little late. During a patrol on 12 December, F Troop discovered a document notifying district VC cadre of a meeting to be held the following night "at Mrs. Trinh's house." The message considerably listed date, time and location of the lady's residence, some ten kilometers northwest of LZ Ross. The Second of the First decided to add its own surprise to the proceedings.

At dusk the following evening and one-half hour before the appointed hour to avoid the complications of total darkness, Bravo "Legionnaires," ready for a party, cordoned the hill below Mrs. Trinh's and swept up to the dooryard.

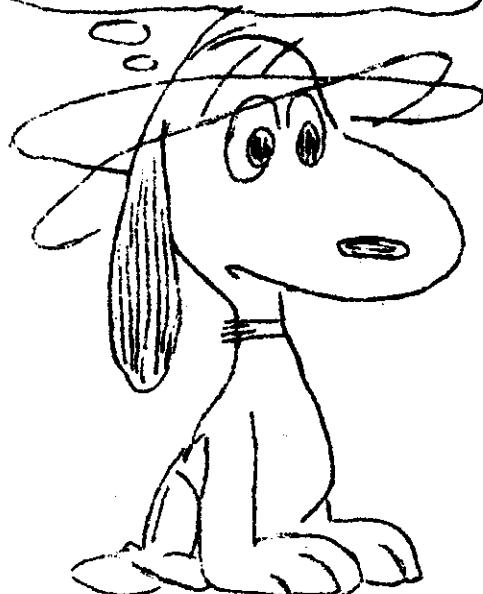
Alas, they were too early. The other guests had not yet arrived, and only five Vietnamese ladies met them.

With the aid of daylight the next morning, searchers found in a nearby cave such "party favors" as new black PJ's, deeds to land, pictures of Ho Chi Minh and a red and blue flag with yellow star.

None of the five women would admit to being the most hospitable Mrs. Trinh.

* * *

In November, Voluntary Informant's Program (VIP) purchases from Vietnamese civilians outside LZ Ross included 347 M79 He rounds, 120 M26 frag grenades and 19 Claymore mines! Could YOU have been a supplier?
Good grief, Charlie Brown!



GIVING THANKS

"Legionnaires" of the Second of the First extend congratulations, a hearty thanks and a snappy salute to the 2/1 mess for the delicious Thanksgiving dinner they served.

Can you do it again for Christmas, fellas?

Semper Primus is an authorized publication of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry, 196th Infantry Brigade Information Office for all units of the battalion. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army. Contributions are encouraged and may be sent to the Battalion Information Office, HHC, 2/1, 196th Infantry Brigade, APO SF 96256. The Information Office reserves the right to edit all material.
LTC S.L. Melner.....Battalion Commander
MAJ T.E. Rowe.....Advisor
PFC J.M. Bruce.....Reporter, editor, secretary, typist and mimeograph monkey

SECURE YOUR AMMO!

6/1 GETS NEW C.O.

In ceremonies on 20 November, LTC Sinclair L. Melner accepted command of the 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry from outgoing commander LTC Robert "Buck" Nelson.

A nineteen-year veteran of the Army, Col. Melner was brigade executive officer for three months before assuming command of 1/1, 196th Infantry Brigade. He is serving his first tour in Viet Nam.

Col. Melner's latest assignment before coming to Viet Nam was as a student at the National War College at Fort McNair, Washington, D.C. He also took advantage of his tour in the nation's capital to earn his degree in International Affairs at George Washington University.

Prior to his War College studies, Col. Melner spent three years with US NATO forces in Germany. He served fifteen months with Army G-3 as Chief of Maneuvers in Heidelberg. He then became battalion commander of the 1st Battalion, 30th Mechanized Infantry Brigade in Scheinfurst. He was there 21 months.

Born and raised in Reno, Nevada, the colonel and his wife, Roma, still maintain their home there. They have three children,athy, 16, a freshman education major at the University of Nevada, Mike, 14, a junior in high school, and Joan, 6.

Colonel Melner is an enthusiastic golfer and handball player.

Welcome to the Second of the First, Sir.

Several special Christmas events are planned for men of the Second of the First, both in the field and on LZ Ross.

Catholic and Protestant chaplains will be making special efforts to visit every fire support base and company in the field during the week before Christmas. An always-welcome treat, three-day stand downs at the Charger Hilton in Chu Lai, will begin shortly before Christmas and extend into the New Year.

On Ross, Protestant worshippers will observe midnight services Christmas Eve in the new battalion chapel. Catholics will celebrate Christmas Day Mass Christmas morning.

The special relationship between Quoc Son refugee village and the men of the 196th will be highlighted when a 15-man "Legionnaire" choir visits the Vietnamese church outside Ross for Christmas services. The choir, battalion commander LTC Sinclair Melner, S-5 officer LT Edward Suits and battalion Chaplain (Opt.) Ronald Siebert will be feted afterward to a Christmas tea by Minister Nguyen Van Ty. The church is a protestant congregation associated with the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

Christmas afternoon, the Vietnamese will return the visit bringing a choir of 50 to 75 children to carol GI's outside the base chapel. "Santa Claus" is expected to make an appearance for the youngsters' benefit.

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Selections by TERRY E. ROWE
MJR Inf
Battalion S-2

I WISH I'D SAID THAT

"WHAT IT TAKES TO BE NUMBER ONE"

"Winning is not a sometime thing; it's an all-the-time thing. You don't win once in a while, you don't do things right once in a while, you do them right all the time. Winning is a habit. Unfortunately, so is losing."

"Every time a football player goes out to play his trade he's got to play from the ground up — from the soles of his feet right up to his head. Some guys play with their heads. It's OK. You've got to be smart to be No. 1 in any business. But more important, you've got to play with your heart. If you're lucky enough to find a guy with a lot of head and heart, he's never going to come off the field second."

"It's a reality of life that men are competitive and the most competitive games draw the most competitive men. They know the rules and the objectives when they get in the game. The objective is to win — fairly, squarely, by the rules — but to win."

"And in truth, I've never known a man worth his salt who in the long run, deep down in his heart, didn't appreciate the grind, the discipline. There is something in good men that really yearns for, needs, discipline and the harsh reality of a challenge."

"I don't say these things because I believe in the 'brute' nature of man or that man just be brutalized to be competitive. I believe in God, and I believe in human decency. But I firmly believe that any man's finest hour — his greatest fulfillment to all that he holds dear — is that moment when he has worked his heart out in a good cause and lies exhausted on the field of battle — victorious."

VINCE LOMBARDI



MERRY
CHRISTMAS

