



The Army Reporter

The largest Army newspaper in the world

LIBRARY
US ARMY WAR COLLEGE
PERIODICALS
APR 22 1969
COPY

Vol. 5, No. 15

U.S. Army, Vietnam

April 14, 1969

Mekong attack turns to rout, Reliables seize offensive

FIRE BASE DANGER—Two recent operations by Old Reliable infantrymen of the 9th Infantry Division resulted in 177 Viet Cong dead in the Mekong Delta area.

What started as an attack on the division's 4th Bn., 39th Inf. ambush patrol turned into a rout of the VC when the unit teamed up with artillery, airstrikes, gunships from the 7th Squadron, 1st Cav. and one company from the 6th Bn., 31st Inf. to kill 143 enemy soldiers 15 miles west of Cai Be March 22-24.

The three-day action began shortly after dark when an unknown-sized enemy force attempted to overrun the site of Co. D, the battalion's main ambush unit.

"They ran into one of our listening posts and got chewed up," said Staff Sgt. Michael Kidd. "Then they backed off and ran into my listening post. We waited until they were nearly on us. Then we really shot them up."

According to Capt. Edward Clark, company commander, the enemy had a planned, coordinated attack but when they were hit with mines, they lost all initiative. "They started yelling and screaming, and it gave away their position."

During a pre-dawn sweep, 35 enemy bodies and a number of weapons were found. Tracker dogs followed blood trails of the enemy force.

Two miles west of the original contact, the elements encountered a well-bunkered VC force.

Airstrikes and gunships worked together to

kill 87 VC. As Air Force jets brought the VC into the open, gunships would follow with minigun fire.

Co. A, 6th Bn., 31st Inf., inserted as a supporting force, immediately came under fire while setting up night positions to block enemy escape.

Artillery fire from Battery A, 1st Bn., 11th Artillery pounded the area throughout the night while infantrymen encountered only sporadic contact as several enemy soldiers attempted to break through the cordon.

Sweeping the area, the recondos of Co. B found more enemy bodies and encountered scattered contact.

The three day operation resulted in 143 enemy killed and the capture of three machineguns, one anti-aircraft gun, 34 AK-47s, four RPG launchers with 30 rounds, one 60mm mortar and thousands of rounds of small arms ammunition.

In another Delta action, this time near Rach Kien, Reliables of Co. C, 2nd Bn., 47th Inf., set up a night ambush which accounted for 34 enemy deaths.

Armored Personnel Carriers of the mechanized unit were moved into night positions three miles west of Rach Kien when Spec. 4 Vale Hoffman spotted three enemy soldiers sitting on a dike a little past 10 p.m.

"I was scanning the area with a starlight scope. They were just sitting there and appeared to be reconning," Hoffman said. "I pointed them out to the .50 caliber machinegunner and he got them."

Please turn to 'Reliables,' page 16

Kills 143 NVA

Firepower crushes Reds

TRANG BANG — One hundred forty-three North Vietnamese soldiers died at the hands of 2nd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division soldiers and supporting fires five miles north east of here in two days of close, fierce fighting.

On the first morning of the two-day battle, Tropic Lightning troops made a helicopter assault into the enemy-infested area.

"We are just getting spread out when Charlie opened up," said Pfc. Vernon Turner.

With gunships providing cover, the infantrymen regrouped to mass firepower on the enemy.

Each time the infantrymen advanced they were greeted by intense small arms and .50 caliber fire.

As fire ceased and the sweep was concluded, 76 NVA bodies were discovered along with three RPD machine guns, six AK-47s, five RPG launchers and a .50 caliber machine gun.

The following day a combined armor-infantry task force moved out to combat-assault the area.

As soon as they got started they received mortar, small arms, automatic and RPG fire from the north.

Armored personnel carriers and tanks were called in to aid the infantrymen once more.

Brigade soldiers began a sweep of the battlefield and they received fire from a well hidden enemy force. After an hour duel

the last round flew overhead, and the Tropic Lightning infantrymen continued the sweep.

Tallied on the second day of fighting were 87 NVA bodies,

one light machinegun, 31 AK47's 15 RPG launchers, three .50 caliber machineguns, three carbines and assorted munitions and documents.

Eagles scream into A Shau, assaults keep enemy on run

FIRE BASE VEGHAL — Screaming Eagles of the 101st Airborne Division, for the second time in seven months, have invaded the enemy's stronghold in the A Shau Valley.

Operation Massachusetts Striker, a multi-battalion combined forces operation, began in early March, but bad weather impeded the buildup.

Infantrymen of the 1st Bn., 502nd Inf. air assaulted to the edge of the valley closely followed by South Vietnamese troops.

Troopers of the 2nd Bn., 327th Inf. combat assaulted to the floor of the 30-mile-long valley Mar. 22. The 2nd Bn., 501st Inf. later moved into the A Shau.

The operation is designed to cut the enemy's lines of communication and to disrupt the enemy's rear areas. Indirectly the strike is to reduce the enemy threat to Da Nang and the I Corps Tactical Zone, including Hue and Da Nang.

Thus far in the operation soldiers of the 101st have killed 88 enemy, captured one prisoner, seized 26 indirect weapons and six crew-served weapons.

Due to several weeks of bad weather, which limited the power of the 101st's airmobility, the buildup for Massachusetts Striker was slow.

Early in the month, elements of 2nd Bn., 501st Inf. moved by air to secure Fire Base Whip on the edge of the A Shau.

Near the middle of the month, elements of 1st Bn., 502nd Inf. reopened Fire Base Bastogne for batteries of 2nd Bn., 138th Artillery.

Co. C, 1st Bn., 502nd Inf. combat assaulted into this fire base and met enemy resistance. The soldiers employed small arms, artillery and aerial rocket artillery to kill 12 enemy—the first communist soldiers to die in Massachusetts Striker.

Elements of the 2nd Bn., 501st Inf. made a combat assault directly into the A Shau. Co. C assaulted the enemy in a fortified position and killed two. Co. B, 1st Bn., 502nd Inf. was in heavy combat, meanwhile, southwest of Fire Base Veghal, and eight enemy were killed.

Sporadic contact with enemy losses continued as March drew to a close and paratroopers continued a thorough search for the enemy and his weapons and supplies.

WATERBORNE, BUT NOT WATERLOGGED, Pfc. Michael G. Fuss, a rifleman with Co. D, 1st Bn., 506th Inf., 101st Airborne Division, finds himself knee deep as he wades through a mountain stream west of Hue. The division has been conducting a reconnaissance-in-force operation in this section of the republic.

Americal smashes NVA near Duc Pho

DUC PHO — Heavy contact with a reinforced NVA company recently netted Americal soldiers of the 11th Infantry Brigade 32 enemy kills.

Working in an area 3½ miles north of here, infantrymen from Co. C, 3rd Bn., 1st Inf., and cavalrymen from "E" Troop, 1st Cav., combined efforts to crush the well-equipped enemy force.

Contact was made just before

noon when Co. C was lifted into the area to search out a deserted village. The Landing Zone was "cold" and gave no indication of the hard fighting that the Americal elements were to encounter the rest of the day.

"As soon as we entered the village they opened up on us with one of their machine guns," said Spec. 4 Chuck Barnes. "We returned fire immediately, knocking out the enemy machine gun nest and killing six NVA."

The soldiers then moved forward to search out numerous bunkers to their front. Before they had gone 25 yards, however, they began receiving RPG and automatic weapons fire from those same positions.

The enemy threw Chicom grenades at the Americal infantrymen from all directions. No one was hit.

When night fell contact was broken and soldiers from Co. C and E Troop counted 32 NVA bodies.

Reporter

Inside

Communique ..	Page 2
Gen. Eisenhower ..	Page 4
Shorttimer Sam ..	Page 5
Jungle ..	
Penetrators ..	Page 6
Enemy can't hide ..	Page 10
Focal Points ..	Page 11
Green Berets ..	Page 12
Pin-up ..	Page 14



101st Abn Photo

Vietnam communique

March 24 to March 30

Sharp fights crackle across country

Allied and enemy units fought infrequent, small battles as action in the fifth week of the enemy Post-Tet offensive slackened. The enemy continued to hit U.S. Army installations with rockets and mortars, but friendly casualties from these attacks were slight.

The Communists did manage to blow up the ammo dump at Dong Tam, headquarters of the 9th Infantry Division, but the widespread damage included few human casualties.

Enemy mortars and rockets hit mostly Army bases near the Communist infiltration routes north and west of Saigon. In that same area, the enemy suffered heavy losses when, on three separate occasions, 25th Infantry Division soldiers foiled ambushes against their convoys.

Infantrymen of the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division near the DMZ fought the sharpest action of the week. In two days of pitched battle they killed 180 NVA soldiers.

25th Inf Div

"They jumped on the enemy so fast that he never had a chance. The provost marshal kept the convoy moving. The armor hit him from the south, the cavalry from the north, and air, artillery and gunship crews worked in unison in a smooth, effective manner to completely rout the enemy force."

That was the way Maj. Gen. Ellis W. Williamson, commanding general of the 25th Infantry Division, described his men's performances during a March 25 ambush by NVA soldiers. It was to be a week of several ambushes, all of which backfired disastrously on the enemy.

During the March 25 ambush, the enemy was beaten back from the convoy about three miles northeast of Go Dau Ha and was then chased by Troop A, 3rd Squadron, 4th Cav. A sweep immediately after the fight revealed 55 NVA soldiers killed and additional sweeps the next day pushed the enemy death toll to 87.

On March 28, elements of the 3rd Squadron, 4th Cav. again teamed with artillery, airstrikes and heavy fire from convoy security forces to drive off enemy ambushers four miles east of Tay Ninh City. That action cost the enemy 80 dead.

The next day, reconnaissance forces smashed another enemy ambush of a convoy six miles south of Tay Ninh City, killing 66 of the NVA soldiers.

Meanwhile, 2nd Brigade Infantrymen discovered a bunker and tunnel complex on March 26 in the Ho Bo Woods north of Cu Chi. In two days, the Troop Lightning soldiers managed to capture more than 17 tons of rice from the enemy.

9th Inf Div

Old Reliabilities of the 9th Infantry Division encountered scattered but sharp fighting throughout their III and IV Corps areas of operation during the week.

On March 24, Infantrymen of the 4th Bn., 39th Inf. and supporting elements wrapped up a two-day fight with a Viet Cong battalion 15 miles west of Cai Be. The Americans had killed 43 VC and Col. John J. Hayes, 1st Bde. commander, remarked that "from the number of enemy killed and equipment destroyed, I would say that this Viet Cong battalion has been rendered ineffective."

March 24 also saw two other major fights. Elements of the 7th Squadron, 1st Cav. were credited with 35 VC killed as airstrikes killed 32 more, while elements of the 2nd Bn., 47th Inf. killed 34 VC and captured assorted enemy munitions.

The tenor of these actions continued through the week. On March 25, 1st Brigade recondos and supporting elements killed 59 VC in scattered actions as troops of the 7th Squadron, 1st Cav. killed 17 other enemy soldiers.

The next day, a reconnaissance patrol five miles northeast of Cai Lay resulted in 12 VC killed by men of the 75th Inf. and a series of night ambushes four miles southeast of Ben Tre resulted in 18 VC killed by River Raiders of the 3rd Bn., 47th Inf. Other battalion soldiers killed 11

more enemy during a daytime sweep in the same area.

Americal Div

Americal Division soldiers reported relatively light and scattered fighting throughout the week, although the figures showed they had killed nearly 200 enemy soldiers by week's end.

On March 30, a major fight occurred eight miles northeast of Quang Ngai when helicopter gunners of the 123rd Aviation Bn. reported killing 26 VC.

In a day when 11 NVA and 23 VC soldiers were killed by the division, 3rd Bn., 1st Inf. soldiers killed six of an unknown size NVA force in a firefight lasting more than an hour six miles north of Duc Pho March 29.

That same day, in an area 20 miles southwest of Tam Ky, a munitions cache was found by soldiers of the 4th Bn., 31st Inf. It included 22,500 rounds of AK47 ammunition, 100 82mm mortar rounds, nine 60mm mortar rounds and three B40 rockets.

On March 28, gunship crews of the 174th Assault Helicopter Co. killed 13 enemy when elements of the 1st Bn., 20th Inf. spotted an enemy force moving along a trail six miles southeast of Duc Pho.

1st Bde, 5th Inf Div

After a relative lull in action, northern I Corps flared again during the week as Red Devils of the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division (Mechanized) pounced on the enemy in northern Quang Tri Province.

On March 27, during which 120 NVA soldiers were killed, a day-long battle took place six miles northwest of Cam Lo

and three miles south of the DMZ. Despite intense NVA small arms and mortar fire, men of the 1st Bn., 11th Inf. contained the estimated enemy battalion with the aid of artillery and airstrikes.

Action continued the next day as the infantrymen, artillery and airstrikes continued to pound the enemy during another day-long fight in which 60 NVA soldiers were killed.

11th Cav Regt

Three aggressive actions pressed by elements of the 1st Squadron, 4th Cav., an element of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment under the operational control of the 1st Infantry Division, accounted for 53 enemy dead March 30 six miles northeast of Dau Tieng.

The Quarter-Cav. troopers, along with elements of the 1st Infantry Division, also captured six AK47 rifles.

On the same day, a brief battle eight miles east of Lai Khe, two NVA soldiers were killed by elements of the regiment.

1st Cav Div

Soldiers of the 1st Squadron, 9th Cav. of the 1st Cavalry Division (Alrmobile) spotted 30 enemy in green uniforms walking along a path 21 miles southwest of An Loc March 24. The enemy, carrying AK47s, were camouflaged with banana leaves. The cavalrymen, along with Air Force jets, lit into the enemy and 22 bodies were sighted in the area after the engagement.

"One of our pilots told us that the whole bunch of them covered with leaves just stood there watching as our choppers wiped them out," declared Capt. Lance Lane, operations officer of C Troop, 1st

Squadron, 9th Cav.

Action centered northeast of Tay Ninh City March 30 resulted in 58 enemy killed by Skytroopers.

Six miles east-northeast of Phu Cuong, division elements observed 10 enemy soldiers. Engaging the force, the Americans killed five of the enemy and called in airstrikes, which killed the remaining enemy. Other squadron forces accounted for five more enemy killed.

Elements of the 1st Bn., 5th Cav. captured 100 60mm rounds in a small tunnel complex 25 miles north of Tay Ninh City.

4th Inf Div

Ivymen of the 4th Infantry Division made repeated cache discoveries during the week, taking thousands of pounds of rice from the enemy.

In one sharp fight March 29, elements of the 3rd Bn., 12th Inf. killed 26 NVA soldiers while breaking up an enemy attack on a fire support base 26 miles west of Kontum.

That was the day when units of the 7th Squadron, 17th Cav. found 7,200 pounds of rice in a tunnel complex 14 miles east of Camp Enari, while 2nd Bn., 1st Cav. elements were discovering 10,000 pounds of rice 13 miles southeast of the base camp.

The men of the 2nd Bn., 1st Cav. also discovered 30,000 pounds 20 miles east of Pleiku March 30, 22,000 pounds March 28 22 miles southeast of Pleiku, 15,000 pounds 20 miles east of Pleiku March 24 and 3,730 pounds about 25 miles southwest of Pleiku on March 26.

The rice haul for the 7th Squadron, 17th Cav. also included 24,000 pounds of rice March 30 about 20 miles east of Pleiku and 12,075 pounds 25 miles southwest of Pleiku March 26 and about 12,000 pounds 10 miles southeast of Pleiku March 27.

1st Inf Div

Action was generally characterized as light for the Big Red One soldiers of the 1st Infantry Division during the week.

March 25 saw elements of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment under the division's operational control kill 17 NVA soldiers and detain two suspects in scattered actions northwest of Phu Loi.

The same day, a sustained sweep by armored cavalry forces seven miles south of Ben Cat developed into an explosive firefight in which 11 NVA soldiers were killed.

On March 28, elements of the 2nd Bn., 18th Inf. killed 10 VC and detained two suspects in a battle three miles southwest of Thu Duc, while 3rd Bde. elements killed eight NVA in a jungle battle seven miles northwest of Lai Khe.

199th Inf Bde

ARVN soldiers operating with elements of the 4th Bn., 12th Inf., 199th Light Infantry Brigade came into contact with five VC while sweeping a paddy land south of Binh Chanh March 30. Rifleman from the U.S. force reinforced the ARVN soldiers, killing all five enemy.

The day before, battalion soldiers uncovered a 55-gallon drum containing 80 B40 rounds and two AK47 rifles 11 miles southwest of Saigon.

Redcatchers of the 3rd Bn., 7th Inf. discovered more than 500 pounds of enemy rice five miles southwest of Saigon on March 27.

101st Abn Div

Soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division killed 12 enemy soldiers and captured three weapons March 24 in Operation Kentucky Jumper. Patrols of the 2nd Bn., 502nd Inf. killed one VC south of Camp Eagle, while 2nd Bn., 501st Inf. soldiers killed three enemy southwest of Hue and 1st Squadron, 1st Cav. gunships killed eight enemy soldiers.

Troops of the 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division uncovered a variety of VC equipment and abandoned munitions in operations in the Capital Military District March 28, while 1st Bn., 508th Inf. soldiers ambushed a 20-man VC force, killing two and detaining one.



25th Inf Photo

M16 HELD HIGH, Spec. 4 Paul Gaither, a 25th Infantry Division soldier, crosses a small river on a sweep and clear patrol near Fire Support Base Washington.



25th Inf Photo

THE COMMUNIST POST-TET offensive had put an added burden on non-combat base camp troops. Here Spec. 4 Jimmy N. Martin Jr., a supply clerk with HQs Co., of a 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division unit mans the bunker line during an early morning red alert at Tay Ninh base camp.

Routine copter flight proves combat ready

PHU CAT — For six men of the 2nd Bn., 17th Artillery, a routine helicopter flight to Camp Fidel near here became a combat assault that resulted in the quelling of a VC ambush.

The men were passengers aboard a UH-1 helicopter piloted by CWO Robert C. Yalden and co-piloted by WO Douglas W. Thomas. Several minutes after liftoff at An Khe they spotted an ambush along Highway 19.

While Sadler and one of the door gunners, Spec. 4 Charles M. Edgar, began firing on the enemy, Jones informed the pilots that Sadler, a qualified forward observer, was aboard and that artillery could be called in on the enemy if the pilots would switch frequencies. The frequency was quickly changed and contact was made with the Fire Direction Center at 2nd Bn. 17th Artillery. Before complete trans-

mission of positions was made the radio contact was lost.

With the possibility of artillery out, the chopper returned and began concentrating its firepower on the two platoons below that had given up on the ambush and were withdrawing.

Four other soldiers also occupied the helicopter. The men quickly set up a system of firing and reloading all the weapons aboard. While two men fired the other four loaded weapons. This allowed full time firepower to be concentrated on the enemy below.

Cobra gunships arrived as all but one magazine of ammunition had been expended. When the Cobras appeared Thomas lowered the aircraft to 1,000 feet and began dropping smoke grenades on enemy positions. During the entire attack the enemy fired back at the helicopter.

Enemy 'saves' life

QUANG TRI—The enemy's accuracy with their mortars recently saved a life, rather than taking it at a forward base camp of the 1st Brigade, 5th Infantry Division south of Quang Tri.

Pfc. Michael L. Evans of 1st Bn., 77th Armor, was on top of a shower trying to light an immersion heater when he heard the sound of incoming mortars.

"The first round hit about 30 yards away from me. I jumped off the shower and the next round hit directly on my right hand," Evans said. "After the round hit me, I was stunned; I couldn't believe that the mortar round hadn't gone off. Finally, I got to my feet and started running for the closest bunker."

Evans tripped and fell and was carried to the bunker by another soldier.

Later, when the mortar round was examined by a demolition team, the team found that by hitting Evans' hand the round had failed to detonate itself. Had the round landed a few inches away he probably would have been killed.

Scout's search for route nets large VC cache

OASIS—A soldier's search to find the easiest way down a ridge netted a large enemy weapons cache in the Chu Prong Mountain area.

Spec. 4 John D. Grindle was scouting a ridge area as a member of a search patrol sent by the reconnaissance platoon of the Fourth Infantry Division's 2nd Bn., 35th Inf., when the patrol was told to come down from the ridge to a stream bed.

On the descent, Grindle spotted an unnatural looking, partially covered hole. An examination of the hole, which was covered by logs, found a cave filled with enemy weapons and munitions and resulted in the uncovering of the first enemy weapons and ammunition found that day in the area. Three more batches of munitions were found later.

Included in the cache were 300,000 7.62 mm rounds, 43 B40 rocket fuses, 78 60 mm mortar rounds, 103 Chicago grenades and four SKS rifles.

Also part of the cache were four RPG7 rockets, 126 ignition cartridges for 60mm mortars, an NVA claymore mine, 164 mortar fuses, and 11 AT grenades.

In discovering another group of weapons one member of the division's recon patrol was able to make a first hand observation of the enemy's camouflage.

Pfc. David Peterson said he "saw two logs that had been cut and attached to a third log so they were shaped like an arrow pointing right toward the weapons."

Discovery of the enemy cache came on the second day of the recon platoon's mission and shortly after a contact which resulted in the death of one NVA.

Sfc. J.F. Tibbitt observed an estimated group of 20 NVA soldiers walking near the Recon Platoon's LZ and opened fire with his M16.

One enemy soldier was killed instantly, and the remainder fled the area.

After guarding the weapons cache overnight in a rice paddy, the platoon needed the assistance of four helicopters to transport the cache to LZ Valentine, the battalion firebase.

Even with the cache out of the way the action wasn't over for men of the Recon platoon. They accounted for three additional enemy deaths in a contact the following day.

"We saw about 10 NVA coming down the hill toward the blue line," said Lt. Charles R. Winn, platoon leader.

"We were hoping they would keep coming into the open but they appeared suspicious and began going back up the hill."

As the NVA started back up the hill the security element of the platoon opened fire.

This was the second time this year that the platoon discovered a large weapons cache.

Hasty ambush yields 7 Cong

MY BINH — A five man night patrol, operating deep in VC territory more than a mile from their parent company, killed seven enemy soldiers in a pair of daring back-to-back "hasty ambushes."

Led by Lt. William Miller of Co. D, 2nd Bn., 503rd Inf., 173rd Airborne Brigade, the night patrol made their successful sojourn into this VC stronghold, five miles north of Bong Son.

Spec. 4 Ronald Yeager, who walked point for the patrol, said, "Leaving an hour after dark we moved about 2,000 meters and had just crossed a bridge when our rear security man spotted a light behind us."

"We set up a hasty ambush and killed two VC," recalled Yeager. "The VC were using a flashlight and ambling down the trail," the para-trooper added.

After searching the bodies, the men used a starlight scope to observe the trail on the moonless night. Through the telltale scope they spotted what proved to be the point team of a platoon size NVA element coming from the opposite direction.

The night patrol set up a second hasty ambush. Spec. 4 Ronald Price said, "The approaching NVA were very cautious. The NVA pointman stopped for a second and then squatted down on the rice dike path. Once again he came toward us. That's when we opened fire. I could see the muzzle flash of the pointman's AK47 as he fell to the ground."

The Americans threw grenades at the panicked NVA who were less than 20 yards away and the squad then moved forward to check the area.

Spec. 4 Richard Pearsall reported, "We got the pointman's AK and were checking the other bodies which were blown off the dike into the rice paddies when we received grenade fire from about 40 yards away."

The infantrymen, directed fire toward the NVA grenadier and began to withdraw as they heard more enemy advancing in their search for the American squad.



11th Cav Photo

TANKERS FROM the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment examine enemy bicycles captured in the Michelin rubber planta-

tion. Thousands of pounds of rice and other supplies were captured and destroyed during the operation.

Unarmed sergeant survives 10 days in hostile jungles

LZ MARY LOU — For ten days and nights, Sgt. John R. Jones, a squad leader with Alpha Co., 3rd Bn., 8th Inf., Famous Fighting 4th Infantry Division, was a man alone.

Separated from his unit, the 20-year-old infantryman mustered all his courage to evade a main body enemy force. Wounded and without a weapon, he successfully outwitted the enemy and overcame the ominous, hostile jungle environment.

The harrowing ordeal began on March 4 when Jones led a patrol toward a hilltop facing opposite the ridgeline where his company had spent the night.

The afternoon before, his unit exchanged heavy fire with an enemy force dug in near the crest of the hill. Contact broke by evening and throughout the night lethal U.S. artillery fire sliced through the thick jungle canopy and onto the enemy positions.

"We thought that after the artillery prep fires, the hilltop might be cleared of NVA," Jones said. "We had moved about 75 meters up the hill when we were taken under heavy fire. Five of us covered the withdrawal of the others."

"As the enemy fire increased, I rolled behind a nearby tree. It was during the exchange that my weapon was destroyed by enemy fire. The NVA blasted it to pieces as they raked the trail with automatic weapons fire."

Jones shouted for the four other members of his patrol to employ fire and maneuver, and the five leaptfrogged their way back to the perimeter.

As the company began to pull back and call in artillery, the enemy who had been in pursuit of Jones and the other four began lobbing grenades inside the perimeter. Dazed temporarily by a head wound, Jones fell behind the company. Then he lost contact altogether and was forced to hide from the enemy.

For the rest of the day, Jones watched the ridge opposite him. He suspected that another

United States unit might be inserted to reinforce the contact so he wanted to be ready to attract their attention.

At dusk, he inventoried his resources — a grenade, a pocket knife, a metal mirror and a plastic battery bag he later used as a canteen.

American forces did not return that day or the next but Jones, hopeful, roved the ridge line for the first five days, never getting more than a half-mile from the point of contact.

"I practically lived on water alone for those first five days," Jones said. "Later I tried eating leaves but my better judgment warned that I might become sick so I decided I had better quit. I saw many squirrel-like animals but couldn't catch them."

Once he heard the drone of American gunships and decided to chance a dash into a nearby clearing to signal the pilot with his mirror. In the clearing, he jumped down beside a log, lay on his back and flashed his distress signal skyward toward the sound of the chopper.

"A sniper must have spotted the signal," he said, "because within a minute I was being fired at. I took off into a heavy woodline."

Each night, Jones carefully prepared his hideaway. He would always select a different location. Since American artillery was pounding the hilltop, he invariably sought a resting place near big rocks and boulders which would give ample protection from shrapnel.

One night, I think it was the fourth, I woke to very loud noises that seemed to be closing in on my position. I prepared to evade. Then I discovered it was a Chieu Hoi broadcast plane flying overhead."

On the fifth day, Jones heard voices from the opposite ridge. Shouts of "fire in the hole" carried over to his hideaway but by the time he crossed to the other ridge the soldiers had gone. Artillery again rained over the area.

On the morning of the sixth day, Jones decided to move toward the sound of the nearest American heavy gun.

By the seventh day, he had diagnosed his wound as light. He was certain it was healing. His confidence grew and he began navigating by terrain. Still, he knew caution would be the key to his successful return, so he moved slowly but deliberately.

All went well until dawn of the eighth day when he awoke to find a huge tiger.

"I was really scared. I reached for my grenade but I figured the explosion might give away my position. I jumped up and, surprisingly, enough, the big cat turned tail and ran."

Near Landing Zone Mary Lou, about 15 miles west of Poley Kleng, Jones came upon a stream and heard American voices. Peering carefully through the overgrowth he noticed several Americans on the opposite bank.

"I had been through too much to be shot now so the first word out of my mouth was 'Friendly.' When I told them how long I had been in the jungle humping without a weapon, they didn't believe me."

"Later I was able to contact my parents by phone. They couldn't believe I had made my way back. In fact, near the end of our conversation my dad decided to put me to a final test. He asked, 'What color is our barn, son?'"

"Charcoal brown, Dad, charcoal brown."

"Thank God, son."

Rx for pacification

Patience, films win villages

BINH MY — Most psyop field teams operating in rural villages and hamlets have run into

situations where sympathies seem to swing easily toward the South Vietnamese government.

Then there is the village where the fight for men's minds is a long, slow battle. Lt. David W. Boots and Spec. 5 Herman D. Yaeger, who comprise a field team from the 8th Psyop Bn., work with this phenomenon every day.

Operating in three villages in southern Binh Duong Province with the 2nd and 3rd Squadrons of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR), the team has had reassuring success in two of the communities, Tam Binh and Binh Co.

These two villages, which gave the Viet Cong considerable support during the 1968 Tet Offensive, have yielded several Hoi Chanhs ("returnees" under the Chieu Hoi Program) in recent months, and now indicate general friendliness toward the GVN.

In the third village, on the other hand, a three-month effort by the psyop team has netted only small returns.

In Binh My, Boots, and Yaeger are applying the only effective cold remedy known — patience. The team has used movies extensively in all three villages. A typical evening begins with the local children helping set up the movie equipment, followed by an entertainment film designed to gather a crowd.

Second and third films are propaganda-oriented and usually include at least one talk by a Hoi Chanh between reels. "My crowd never leaves until the last film," Boots commented. "I always leave a good movie until last."

Just before the reel ends, the team passes out magazines or pamphlets. They have found that if they wait to hand out written materials until the films are over, they are mobbed at the back of their psyop truck.

Binh My's failure to respond to the pacification program as quickly as Binh Co and Tam Binh hasn't discouraged the psyop team, for they know the village was long under Viet Cong influence and that fear dies slowly.

Even if the response at Binh My is not yet warmly pro-GVN, the team knows it is making an impression. Armed propaganda teams, made up of former Viet Cong who have rallied to the government, have been brought into the area to help in psyop appeals. They have astonished villagers who thought a safe and prosperous defection impossible.

Progress, according to Boots, is painfully slow, but he is convinced the team's work is weakening Viet Cong influence. As long as the team remains with the village, he says, the just cause will gradually gain ground.



173rd Abn Photo
MEMBERS OF THE 173rd Engineers, 173rd Airborne Brigade use brute strength to seat a pole for the foundation of a new operations building near Bong Son.

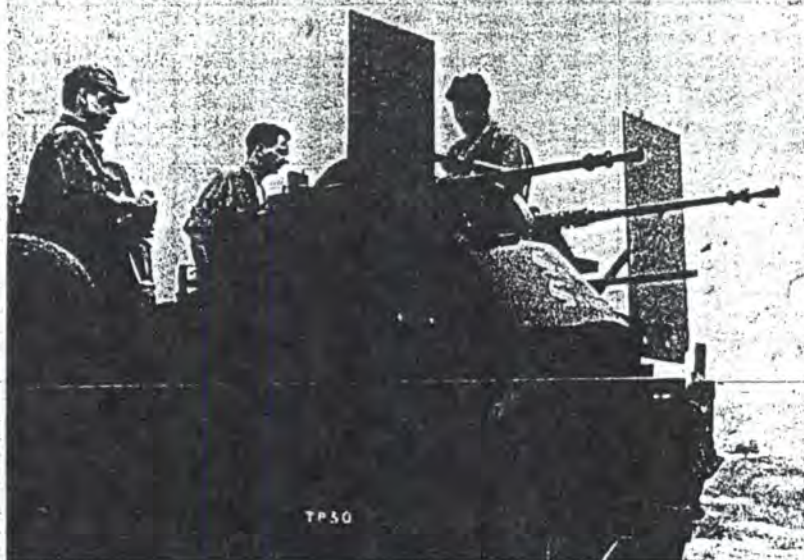
Ex-VC aids allies

LAI KHE — Vo Van Man, a former Viet Cong who realized the futility of the VC cause, has rallied to the government and now writes Chieu Hoi leaflets for the 4th Psychological Operation Bn.

From an ARVN interpreter, Big Red One soldiers heard of Man's being seized from an ARVN unit a year ago. Since then, he served as a supply representative for the enemy.

But Man became discouraged when he wasn't paid or fed. After his unit had several fateful encounters with the 1st Infantry Division's 1st Bn., 28th Inf., Man picked up a Chieu Hoi leaflet and walked toward the allied position.

The leaflets Man now writes in his own handwriting bear his picture and say, in part: "I have been well treated and live in happiness. I sincerely appeal to all you to return to the GVN as I did. I am sure that the National Liberation Front is wrong and certainly will be defeated."



AMERICAN PHOTO
FOUR MEMBERS of Battery G, 55th Artillery prepare a quad-50 for firing as a protective measure for road convoys. The battery, with 24 such truck-mounted weapons, is the only quad-50 unit in the Americal Division.

Enemy can't hide, fireflies find him

CAMP RED BALL — "I was flying in the high ship, about 1200 feet. It's hard to describe how black it is out there. We keep

our lights off until the very last minute to take advantage of the element of surprise." WO Robert L. Harvey of the 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division Imagery Interpretation Section was describing a recent "firefly" mission in which the VC came out on the short end of the stick.

On the dark evening Harvey describes, the firefly crew was on station by 10 p.m. and flew down the Illoc Mon Canal with negative results. The helicopter team then moved to an area slightly west of the canal where Lt. Joseph J. Rider and his crew in the low-flying lightship spotted a sampan with two boxes lying next to it.

The C and C ship gave permission to fire on the sighting and the Cobra went to work with machine gun and M-79 fire. Looking around again the lightship spotted four more sampans and then two bunkers. As these positions and boats were being destroyed the ships were fired upon from one of the bunker positions.

A round scored a direct hit, destroying the bunkers from which the ground fire had come. Another pass over the area illuminated an AK47 rifle sticking up from the caved in bunkers.

When the more than two hour long mission was completed, one enemy had been killed, a bunker complex and six sampans destroyed.

Boats add mobility

DI AN — No champagne, brass band or visiting dignitaries. There was just a quiet launching by some men of the 1st Infantry Division's 1st Bn., 18th Inf. in a small Vietnamese stream.

They were launching a new piece of equipment being issued to the Big Red One's rifle companies. It is a back-packed pneumatic boat, and is being used to aid infantrymen in crossing streams and rivers. The boats are light, only weighing six pounds; compact when deflated, they make an eight-inch roll only 12 inches long. They are capable of carrying up to four infantrymen with full combat gear. Boats are made of nylon and have 12 separate bladders which may be replaced if they become damaged.



25th Inf Photo

VIET CONG LEFT THEM BEHIND and the 25th Infantry Division is making maximum use of these signs. Intended to convince American soldiers that the war is futile and that they should come over to

the side of the VC, these signs are being repainted and placed in their old locations to inform the Cong of the Government of Vietnam's Chieu Hoi program.

Thanks go out to Charlie

VC signs combat propaganda

FSB WASHINGTON — Viet Cong liberation posters have been discovered recently along Highway 22 in front of this base.

Co. C, 3rd Bn., 22nd Inf., 25th Infantry Division exited the perimeter wire to begin a local reconnaissance in force mission

only to discover 20 signs and two banners scattered along the highway pleading with soldiers to turn themselves in to the Liberation Army. Leaflets were attached to the signs spelling out the treatment that would be extended any reverse "hol

chanhs."

Leaflets promised "mosquito nets, blankets, hammocks, plenty to eat, and clothing adequate to the climate." But the propaganda did not prove very effective because the men of Charlie Company did not throw down their weapons to accept the "generous" offer.

"We found the signs very amusing," said 1st. Gerald Henshaw. "The men got a big kick out of gathering up the sheet metal signs and reading the misspelled notes. We were really surprised to find them and appreciated the humor."

Cavmen battle Cong on second front, truth is their weapon, leaflets are ammo



LEAFLETS ARE DROPPED by a 1st Cavalry Division chopper. Tens of thousands of leaflets are dropped on one mission. Result of the cavalry program and others throughout the republic is that Hoi Chanhs have increased during recent months.

TAY NINH — When many people think of the Vietnam conflict, they think of a shooting war, fought on battlefields with conventional weapons.

For a small group of men here, it is much more than a war of steel and bullets. To the men of psyops, it is a battle for the human mind. And it's a battle the 1st Cavalry Division is becoming increasingly adept at fighting.

A 1st Brigade message stated, "During the months of December and January, there were 108 Hoi Chanhs within the 1st Cavalry's area of operations. From the standpoint of the enemy, a Hoi Chanh is a combat loss. He is both a loss to the enemy and a positive asset to the Allied cause. He may be of significant intelligence value; he may induce others to defect. He is living proof of the potency of the Allied effort and the futility of the enemy's. He will likely become a constructive citizen of the Republic of Vietnam and may serve as a scout. In every respect he symbolizes the failure of the Communist effort."

How do we get the enemy to rally to the side of the Government of Vietnam? According to Maj. Richard Browning, who runs the PSYOPS program for the 1st Brigade, "There are two angles we generally try to exploit. First, we play on the enemy's dissatisfaction with his personal situation. Usually his discontent is the result of Allied military pressure. Second, we try to inform him about more attractive alternatives to fighting, particularly the Chieu Hoi Program."

Working closely with the 6th Psyps Bn. at Bien Hoa, the team uses an Air Force C-47 fixed-wing transport when it has a general message to deliver to a large area. The aircraft is specially rigged with 1,000-watt speakers. Each week,

these flights account for the dropping of over three million leaflets dealing with a wide range of topics.

For special missions, each brigade is provided with one utility helicopter. Generally, whenever a battalion has a unit in contact or a special need for a mission, all it has to do is contact Psyps and the mission will be "laid on."

On a typical mission, Staff Sgt. Jim Dickman obtained the helicopter and notified the brigade's Tactical Operations Center of the location and type of mission being flown. Then he selected the appropriate psychological operations tapes for broadcast.

While he was doing this, Spec. 4 Robert Sanchez mounted the powerful 1,000-watt portable speaker system on the chopper and loaded the specially prepared leaflets.

As the helicopter flew over the Saigon River, the many trail systems used by the enemy came into view.

That was the target area, dense tropical jungle riddled with exposed trails.

The pilot flew in a giant circular pattern so that the speaker system was aimed towards the ground. Dickman turned on the tape recorder and, with his hand, signaled Sanchez to drop the leaflets.

Between the blaring falsetto of the speakers and the tens of thousands of leaflets, the message was slammed home to the enemy.

"How many mothers must weep?"

"How many sons must be buried?"

The tape then appealed to the enemy to surrender, and explained the benefits of the Chieu Hoi Program.

After repeating the mission over several target areas, the pilot brought his ship home.

Rangers fly under choppers

CHU LAI — Dangling from a 150-foot rope fastened to a helicopter flying at 80 to 90 miles an hour may seem like a daredevil act to most, but to the Americal Division ranger it's "real security."

The rangers, who work in small teams for reconnaissance purposes, often need a method of fast extraction when "Charlie" closes in. In many instances there is no landing zone big enough for a helicopter to land and pick up the commandos.

The answer — the McGuire rig.

The McGuire rig is made up of two loops at the end of a rope into which a ranger in full field gear can step and be whisked away by a hovering helicopter.

It only takes seconds to effect a successful evasion. When the chopper reaches a secured area, all it has to do is to hover again while the ranger climbs out to safety.

Of course not all Rangers enjoy dangling from a helicopter, but sometimes they feel much more secure dangling than having two feet on the ground.

Quiet town explodes as 4th finds enemy

HIGHLANDER HEIGHTS — The ranks of an NVA unit were decimated when elements of B Troop, 2nd Squadron, 1st Cav., and Vietnamese Regional Forces (RF) coordinated with Air Force F-100 Super Sabres in a combined effort that netted 18 enemy dead.

Returning from a mission north of Kontum City, B Troop's 1st Platoon received notification that they were to assist an RF unit in searching a suspected enemy-infiltrated village.

Capt. Daniel B. Deter, B Troop commander, flew to the suspected point of contact to meet his platoon. Here he coordinated with RF leaders and established a sweep plan — the Vietnamese Forces would provide the ground sweep, while the armored cavalry covered the tree line from tanks and armored personnel carriers (APC).

"We were about two-thirds of the way through the village with negative findings, when all of a sudden the enemy opened up with a barrage of small arms fire from the woodland to our right-front," recalled Deter.

Immediately, the tanks and APCs riddled the woodland with their main-guns, machine guns, small arms and M79 fire. Minutes later both sides ceased fire. Moving up to the enemy position, Staff Sgt. Augustine Peterman, the platoon sergeant, noticed movement in one of the trenches the NVA had been using for cover. Unable to shoot at the enemy movement from his position, Peterman circled around the trench and dropped a hand grenade on an unsuspecting enemy fortification.

Making a sweep of the area, the RF and cavalry forces found two bodies from the estimated squad-sized element.

"The RF made the sweep as we provided security in case of contact," explained Deter.

As the cavalry stood ready and watching, the enemy unloaded with a barrage of mortar, rocket and small arms fire from an opposite woodland.

Again the armored cavalry counter-fired, this time hitting the enemy with 10 minutes of steady fire. A cease-fire was finally ordered, and as the smoke and dust cleared the enemy were again silent.

The Air Force's Forward Air

Controller (FAC) flew overhead with a constant eye on the ground below; suddenly the FAC noticed movement in a clearing near the contact area.

Within minutes, the FACs had F-100 Super Sabres on the scene.

As the Super Sabres swooped in to bombard the enemy, they received intensive ground-to-air

fire. The diving jet pilots unloaded their munitions and were away — unharmed.

No further sound or movement came from the fleeing enemy; they had been defeated again.

A sweep of the area was conducted and a total of 18 enemy bodies and two AK50s were found.

Soldiers seize two VC arsenals

TAY NINH—First Brigade troops of the 25th Infantry Division uncovered two separate weapons caches while operating in the Crescent area 13 miles east of here.

Two companies each uncovered a cache, two miles apart.

One was working its way into a woodland when they were met by small arms fire. As they pushed forward the Viet Cong fell back leaving one dead comrade. The thick jungle thinned out revealing a 30-bunker storage area.

The infantrymen piloted up 1500 rounds of .30 caliber ammo, 3 SKS rifles, 5 bolt action rifles, two CHICOM machineguns, one complete 82mm mortar (base plate and tube), 10 bangalore torpedoes, 27 82mm mortar rounds, and another rifle machinegun.

Co. A was checking out a suspected VC bunker complex when it came upon a small base camp with enemy equipment strewn all over. "After setting up security around the small base camp we started checking out each bunker. Somebody left in a big hurry, it was like an Easter egg hunt," said Spec. 4 Richard Langer.

The other company found 3 SKS rifles, 25 RPG-2 rounds, 25 RPG boosters, 2750 rounds, assorted small arms ammo, 10 pounds of TNT, 30 clips, 49 60mm mortar rounds, and an additional rifle.

Reliables

(Continued from page 1)

Hoffman moved out on foot with a small element to confirm the kills and retrieve equipment and weapons when the VC hit back.

"We got close to the bodies when one of the wounded soldiers opened up on us," he said. "We then received AK47 fire from both of our flanks and a machinegun began shooting at us from behind a mud wall to our right."

Capt. John Grand, company commander immediately scram-

bled the eight APCs from the 1st platoon to back up the sweep elements. With the .30 caliber machineguns on the tracks putting out a heavy base of fire, the enemy was cut off as they tried to escape.

Along with the 34 enemy dead, the infantrymen also captured six AK47s, three RPG launchers, one B40 rocket launcher, a Chi-Com machinegun, numerous documents and an assortment of booty traps, ammunition, grenades and medical supplies.



REFLECTING ON THE PROBLEM of crossing this canal, Spec. 4 Joseph M. Graziano pauses for a moment while on an operation in the Mekong Delta with his unit, 3rd Platoon, Co. A, 5th Bn., 60th Inf., 9th Infantry Division.

Looked like tumbleweeds

Americal chopper rakes camouflaged NVA

TAM KY — A camouflaged mass of NVA soldiers were discovered and eventually routed by the quick actions of an Americal Division helicopter crew in an attack near here.

Twenty-nine enemy were killed, six enemy soldiers including an NVA battalion commander were captured, and numerous weapons and packs plus a .51-caliber anti-aircraft weapon were confiscated in the encounter.

A UH-1D Huey "slick" commanded by WO Walter Seger was flying a visual reconnaissance mission in support of the Americal Division's 1st Squad-

ron, 1st Cav. when he discovered a large mass of enemy soldiers being flushed from a tree line a short distance from the advancing cavalrymen.

"Enemy troops were moving down the opposite side of the hill, just out of range of the Cav," said Seger. "They all appeared to have weapons, back packs, and were well camouflaged. They had tree twigs attached to their helmets and back packs; they ran in a crouching, doubled-over position, so there appeared to be 35 or 40 tumbleweeds blowing in many directions over the top of the hill."

The chopper made its first pass through the center of the disorganized mass killing several enemy troops and continued circling the hill. By that time, having gained some semblance of order, the Communists tried to work their way down the hill to a forested area.

"They didn't have a chance of getting away," said Spec. 4 Terry Bennet, crew chief of the 123rd Aviation Bn. "Pelican" chopper.

"The NVA had to cross an open rice paddy to get to the trees, but our M60 machine gun fire made it impossible."

The helicopter made several

passes around the hill until Bennet had expended all of his ammunition; then the helicopter was turned around so gunner Spec. 5 Randy Parks, on the opposite side of the craft from Bennet, had a clear lane of fire. As Parks began to get low on ammunition, co-pilot WO Garry Raymond took control of the aircraft while Seger called Cobra gunships of F Troop, 8th Cav. to finish the operation.

Firing as they retreated, the enemy tried to hide in some hootches at the top of the hill.

The Co. A "slick" took several hits as the action continued.

"We could feel the ship shud-

der as the rounds hit," said Bennet. "They were firing armor-piercing .30-caliber shells and it appeared as if thousands of rounds were directed at us. I took one through the sleeve of my jacket and Mr. Raymond's neck was grazed as a bullet went through the roof."

"After we expended our machine gun ammo we continued to fire with our M16 rifles until the Cobras arrived."

Crew chief Bennet continued, "They I dropped smoke grenades marking the hootches containing the NVA and the Cobras completely devastated them with rockets."