

Vietnam Communique

April 28 - May 4

III Corps action flares during week

This past week's action was marked by numerous cache and bunker discoveries, with the 1st Cavalry Division seeing intense action in their area of operations.

Soldiers from the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment and the 1st Cavalry Division swept an area of an enemy base camp near Tay Ninh and uncovered 11,000 pounds of rice in addition to 76 enemy bodies killed during a two-day operation.

Tropic Lightning soldiers of the 25th Infantry Division discovered two large rice caches containing over 48,000 pounds of rice south of the Hobe Woods nine miles northeast of Tay Ninh City.

9th Inf Div

Ninety-six Viet Cong died in contacts with the Old Reliabilities of the 9th Infantry Division in the Mekong Delta April 30 and May 1. Approximately one-half of those kills came in contacts April 30.

Co. A, 3rd Bn., 39th Inf., accounted for 15 VC killed in night ambush operations April 30 seven miles northeast of Dong Tam in Dinh Tuong Province. The ambush element set up to observe highway 4 had sporadic action in the late evening which netted five VC. Around 2 a.m. May 1 the action increased. "We began sighting groups of VC crossing the highway until 50 or 60 had showed themselves," said Sgt. James H. Damme. "We hit them and received small arms fire. Then we guided the artillery in. They moved out quickly. It seemed they had something planned somewhere else." Ten VC were credited to the patrol and artillery in the action.

Sixty-four enemy died in contacts with soldiers of the 1st Bde, with 39 of the VC dying during the hours of darkness.

The 2nd Bde, Mobile Riverine Force accounted for 30 VC with D Troop, 3rd Squadron, 5th Armored Cav. killing 11 in two operations 10 miles northeast and five miles south of Mo Cay. Night actions accounted for 10 of the enemy dead and the remainder came from multiple engagements with small groups of the enemy.

In Long An Province Infantrymen of the 3rd Bde. were credited with killing two VC during the night.

1st Inf Div

A Viet Cong ambush backfired and a host of minor skirmishes cost the enemy 34 killed and 11 suspects detained by members of the Big Red One on April 30.

A routine road sweep operation turned into a firefight when a platoon-size VC force opened fire on 3rd Bde. forces.

Almost immediately after the enemy's initial barrage of rocket propelled grenades elements of the 1st Squadron, 4th Cav. moved into the scene of the contact about 10 miles south of An Loc. As they were met with fire from a well defended fighting position elements of the 2nd Bn., 16th Inf. were landed from helicopters for additional support.

An element of the 2nd Bn., 28th Inf. was helicoptered in for additional firepower as tactical airstrikes and artillery were called into action.

First Division combat units killed 19 VC and detained nine in the action. Also captured were 15 AK47 rifles, 7 RPG2 rocket launchers, and 1 RPG7 launcher.

Other division actions added 15 more enemy killed to the day's total.

An ambush patrol from Co. D, 2nd Bn., 28th Inf. engaged an unknown-size enemy force May 4 eight miles west of Lai Khe with organic weapons and Claymore mines. The 1st Division infantrymen received no return fire and a sweep of the battle site revealed 13 Viet Cong dead.

In a series of skirmishes with Big Red One soldiers an additional 27 VC were killed and 11 individual weapons captured.

1st Cav Div

Thirty-five bunkers connected by trenches were discovered by an element of the 2nd Bn., 5th Cav. April 28 16 miles northeast of Tay Ninh.

In the complex the Skytroopers found one hospital bunker, three kitchen bunkers, 50 pounds of medical supplies and six graves containing the bodies of North Vietnamese Army soldiers.

The eagle-eye of a 1st Squadron, 9th Air Cav. chopper pilot caused the death of one NVA soldier April 28. "One of our choppers was cruising in the area about 18 miles northeast of Tay Ninh when the pilot caught a movement in the brush out of the corner of his eye," said Lt. Robert Albright, operations officer of B Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Air Cav. "Sweeping over the area again the pilot spotted an NVA wearing fatigues but no shoes attempting to hide in the bushes. The gunner then fired into the brush with his M60 machine gun killing the man."

In other light action the 1st Cavalry Division reported 17 more enemy killed.

25th Inf Div

Early April 30 a lone gunship crew from the 25th Infantry Division's 3rd Squadron, 4th Armored Cav. observed a platoon of enemy in a bunker complex eight miles southeast of Phu Khuong.

Swooping down on the position under battlefield illumination the gunship crew engaged the enemy and then called in artillery. When the smoke cleared the bodies of 16 enemy soldiers were seen lying in the complex.

Meanwhile, a reconnaissance patrol from the 1st Bde., operating on the eastern slope of Nui Ba Den Mountain, encountered a burst of small arms fire from a single enemy soldier. The incident lasted only seconds as the Tropic Lightning soldiers returned the fire, killing the

enemy. Near the lone soldier's tunnel were the graves of four more enemy.

The reconnaissance platoon continued its operations joined by a company of mechanized infantrymen. Airstrikes, artillery and helicopter gunships were called in to blast suspected enemy positions. When the airstrikes were over the infantrymen battled an estimated enemy company west of their position. Seven enemy were killed in the contact.

A 3rd Bde. element engaged a North Vietnamese Army force four miles south-east of Dau Tieng. The unit was reinforced by another brigade element and an Air Force forward air controller. The brief firefight cost the enemy 16 more soldiers.

In other action throughout the division's area of operations Tropic Lightning soldiers killed 15 more enemy.

Americal Div

Americal Division forces killed 55 enemy in several contacts in southern I Corps on April 28.

In Operation Frederick Hill gunship crews of F Troop, 8th Cav. killed 22 enemy with 16 of the kills in an action 13 miles south-southeast of Hue. Another element of the 1st Squadron, 1st Cav. killed two more enemy six miles south-southwest of Tam Ky.

Gunship crews of the 174th Assault Helicopter Co. reported killing nine VC in the rice paddy area two miles southeast of Duc Pho in Operation Iron Mountain.

The remainder of the division's kills came in small engagements dispersed throughout the Tam Ky Duc Pho area.

Americal Division soldiers of Co. A, 1st Bn., 20th Inf. uncovered what appeared to be an enemy classroom 11 miles southwest of Duc Pho April 28.

While searching the area infantrymen found six hooches, six bunkers, 16 targets with stands, two SKS bayonets, and five crossbows.

Division forces killed one NVA soldier and nine Viet Cong during multiple contacts in the division's area of operations the same day.

101st Abn Div

Screaming Eagles from the 3rd Bn., 187th Inf. killed 33 enemy in several heated engagements approximately 25 miles southwest of Hue on April 28. The 101st troopers also uncovered several small munitions caches in the area.



SNIPER FIRE cracks through the tangled jungle branches and two infantrymen from the 9th Division's Co. A, 3rd Bn., 47th Inf., dive for cover in a bomb crater made by airstrike the day before. The action took place in the Mekong Delta.

In other action division elements killed three more enemy soldiers.

The following day Screaming Eagles of the 3rd Bn., 187th Inf. killed nine enemy and uncovered a large enemy munitions cache during sweep operations in the A Shau Valley, 28 miles southwest of Hue.

In other action, division soldiers killed one more enemy and captured four crew-served weapons.

4th Inf Div

A one-and-one-half-ton truck, its exterior pock-marked by shrapnel and bullet holes and its cab burned out, was discovered by 4th Division infantrymen April 28 25 miles northwest of Kontum City.

The initial observation was made by the operations officer of the 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Major Benjamin P. Owen, while flying over the area in a Light Observation Helicopter. "I spotted two well camouflaged trucks just off a small road and radioed the information back to the battalion," he said.

The battalion sent Co. A in to secure the area and by 3 p.m. the infantrymen had discovered one truck. Continuing to search the area they found an underground garage measuring 11 feet long, 11 feet wide, and 7 feet high with 14 feet of overhead cover.

Unlike garages in the United States, this one contained, in addition to a truck radiator, 14 105mm shells and three 105mm casings.

The truck was airlifted to the 2nd Brigade's base camp at Landing Zone Mary Lou five miles south of Kontum.

No enemy resistance was reported at the area of the find.

199th Inf Bde

Soldiers of the 199th Light Infantry Bde. and Republic of Vietnam units began a cordon operation on April 30 in an area 13 to 15 miles southwest of Saigon. A total of 11 VC were killed in the area of operations.

Elements of the 2nd Bn., 3rd Inf. and supporting gunship crews accounted for nine enemy late April 30 and May 1. The unit also captured small stores of munitions supplies, food and clothing.

In its first full day of operation the Combined Holding and Intelligence Center (CHIC) processed 250 villagers from the area, of which 15 were detained as confirmed VC and one as an enemy military suspect.

Units involved include elements of the 199th Light Inf. Bde., the 50th Regiment of the 23rd ARVN Division, Gia Dinh and Binh Chanh Regional Forces, and National Police Field Forces. U.S. and Vietnamese civil affairs and psychological operations units are involved at the CHIC.

11th ACR

Blackhorse troopers of C Troop and Co. M of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment encountered heavy enemy fire early in the day April 29 as they moved into an enemy base camp in the thick bamboo jungle northeast of Tay Ninh City.

Sheridan tanks and M48 tanks rolled into the area 22 miles northeast of Tay Ninh where 1st Cavalry Division soldiers clashed with North Vietnamese Army troops the previous three days.

Braving intense rocket-propelled grenade, automatic weapons and small arms fire, the tankers unleashed their armored weaponry, killing 40 enemy in the three-and-one-half-hour battle.

Capt. Lemos Fulmer, C Troop commander, led his men for more than an hour after receiving a shrapnel wound. He commented, "I just didn't want to leave my men while the fighting was still going on."

Awards and decorations

He kept mowing 'em down

LZ BALDY — Spec. 4 Stanley C. Goff was not conscious of emotion when he charged across 200 yards of exposed rice paddies against a murderous barrage of enemy fire and drove nearly 100 NVA from well entrenched positions with his blazing machine gun.

He was downright nervous, however, when Gen. Creighton W. Abrams, commander of American forces in Vietnam, pinned a Distinguished Service Cross on him here.

"I wasn't nearly as scared in the field as I was when those four stars were standing directly in front of me," said the young infantryman from the Americal Division's 196th Brigade.

His commander, Capt. John R. Malpass, reflected on how his unit, Co. B, 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., got involved in the action.

"I was alerted that my company was to proceed by foot to LZ Ross and prepare to be airlifted to Hawk Hill.

"We had heard the division's 1st Cav. was in heavy contact west of Tam Ky and needed infantry to charge the heavily fortified bunkers."

By 9 a.m. the company was transported to the laager position of A Troop, 1st Squadron, 1st Cav. The combined armor-infantry units rambled through the "Pineapple Forest" (what used to be a large pineapple plantation).

They cautiously approached the flat rolling hills where the Cavalrymen had killed nearly 200 NVA the previous day.

Goff and the rest of the Americal Division infantry unit were riding the tracks. His conversation with the other soldiers on the armored personnel carrier centered around, "how many of them were still out there."

Everybody was expecting contact. The tracked monsters crushed the smaller vegetation of a thick clump of woods into the ground as the heavy vehicles whirled and grinded into an assault position.

Across 200 yards of rice paddy clearing to their front was the densely-foliated woodland of an island. When the track Goff was riding on got into the line assault formation, he "figured everybody knew what to expect."

The enemy didn't disappoint them. "As we pulled into position before the open paddies, we reconned by fire and to everybody's surprise we got twice our employed fire power back," said Malpass.

Goff jerked his head suddenly to the sound of an explosion and saw that one of the tanks had been hit by a rocket propelled grenade. An instant later another tank was damaged by an enemy round.

The tanks and two platoons of infantry pulled back into their woodland.

Malpass figured that they were encountering at least an NVA battalion. "They had in-depth defense," he said, "rows and rows of positions. Their defensive lines and extended far wider than we imagined—at least 300 yards long all the way down the island."

A deadly hail of enemy fire came spitting from the woodland—a complete lethal arsenal of crackling 75mm recoilless rifles, RPGs, .51 caliber machine guns and AK47 rifles.

As the tanks and APCs pulled forward the infantry walked and then ran because of the intense NVA shooting.

All around the quickly shuffling feet of the infantrymen, bullets were shredding the dirt, kicking up small clouds of dust.

They ran 100 yards to the slight protection of a rice paddy dike and hugged the dirt.

Just a little bit to the right of the tanks, Malpass and the men in the command post saw the desperate plight of the 2nd Platoon — Goff's platoon—and put a wall of protective fire into the heavily concentrated enemy area that was pinning down the infantrymen.

Under this cover of fire, a mud and sweat-soaked Goff, jumped up and charged the enemy positions blazing away with his M60 machine gun. He was followed by Pfc. Tommie Emery, the ammo bearer.

"It was just a blur of action," said Goff. "I just started firing all the rounds I had."

Sgt. Garland Needham, the platoon sergeant, yelled, "Goff . . . Goff, bring to pig (M60)—we got some over here."

"He screamed that there were 30 or 40 of them in the woodland to their right flank," said Goff. "I ran up and down the line trying to get more ammo—as people tossed more to me I just kept blowing it towards the NVA. When I got through firing, everything was quiet in that area."

Malpass had seen most of Goff's actions—"He just kept mowing them down in groups of five and 10."

"RPGs were skipping across the rice paddies everywhere. When Goff came closer to the NVA positions at least 75 to 100 NVA made a grand exodus. They just ran away."

Goff was now staggering—the 120 degree heat was taking its toll. The scorching hot machine gun in his hands had blown up completely with bolts coming out everywhere.

Together, weapon and man fell to the ground, both suffering heat exhaustion. Nine other men were lying on the ground—also victims of a less deadly enemy.

Two hours later the infantry unit went into the woodland for a body count. They found 40 dead NVA soldiers, most—if not all, as a result of an estimated 2,000 rounds fired from Goff's weapon.

There were many long scuff marks on the ground that indicated more bodies had been dragged away by the remaining enemy soldiers.



NATION'S SECOND-HIGHEST award for valor, the Distinguished Service Cross, is pinned on Spec. 4 Stanley C. Goff at the Americal Division's Landing Zone Baldy.

Observation chopper flyer makes daring medevac flight

TAY NINH — He may have been "just doing my job," but Brig. Gen. Frank Meszar, assistant commander of the 1st Air Cavalry Division, didn't see it that way. He presented the Distinguished Flying Cross to WO Robert J. Johnson at an impact award ceremony held here recently.

Johnson, a scout pilot with the 1st Brigade's aviation platoon, voluntarily landed his OH-6A helicopter in a narrow jungle clearing amid a hail of hostile fire, picked up a severely wounded Skytrooper and flew him to a hospital.

The 22-year-old aviator had been on a reconnaissance and

security mission for an element of the 2nd Bn., 8th Cav. when that unit was engaged by an estimated 30 NVA soldiers. The unit was stranded in a bomb crater clearing and was receiving heavy small arms, rocket-propelled grenades and 60mm mortar fire from a nearby woodland.

One of the cavalrymen was severely wounded in the neck, and the company commander requested an immediate medevac. Overhearing the request, Johnson radioed the unit and offered to do the job.

"The area was too hot for a medevac ship," he said. "And I didn't think a Huey could fit into

the LZ, it was so small."

As aerial rocket artillery and gunship helicopters blasted away at the enemy emplacements, the tiny observation chopper began its descent.

"Before going in, we had to expend half our load of ammunition," the pilot explained. "We couldn't carry that extra weight otherwise."

As one skid settled on the edge of the crater, the infantrymen laid their wounded comrade in the vacant copilot's seat. The door gunner, seated in back, held the plasma bottle.

After bringing in the wounded infantryman, Johnson headed back to the contact area.



from the desk of

Shortimer Sam

Dear Shortimer Sam, I would appreciate some information concerning the proper procedure I will have to comply with to visit Sydney, Australia on my R&R. Also, if it isn't too annoying, could you tell me just how short you are? Just curious. Spec. 4 J.C.M., 44th Medical Brigade.

Your company clerk has all the info on requesting an R&R. As for the second part of your question, I consider it very bad taste to boast about how few days I have left in country. Nothing offends me more than to see people brandishing their shortimer sticks and shouting out how many days they have left. I don't really care for questions like yours, mostly because they take me away from my packing.

Dear Sam, With all the rumors, press reports, and hints by government officials that there might be a partial troop withdrawal, I've been wondering about its effect on early outs. If a member of the Army serves 10-12 months in Vietnam, but then returns to CONUS with a unit rather than on individual orders, will he still be eligible for a five-month early out? What about members of a unit that have served fewer than 10 months? Spec. 4 F.C.H., 5th Infantry Division.

News commentators back in the States are paid to speculate on possible troop withdrawals, but I'm not. We all want to go home as soon as possible, but the President has announced no troop withdrawals yet. I think you would agree it would be silly for me to try to answer your questions about the mechanics of something that doesn't yet exist.

Shortimer Sam, What are the chances of getting an R&R in my eye, which I've had trouble with for a long time? Where can I go to get more information on it? Also, I just got back from an R&R in Hawaii with my wife. What are the chances of getting a seven-day leave to Hawaii to see her again in the later part of this year about one or one-and-one-half months before my DEROS? Pfc. J.P.M., 1st Infantry Division.

Go on sick call and have a doctor look at your eye. If he thinks you need an operation, you'll get one. I think it's a very bad idea to try to take a leave in Hawaii to meet your wife. You'll have next to no chance getting a seat—the priorities are: R&R space required first, R&R standby second, and leave third. It would be expensive and heartbreaking for your wife if you told her you would meet her in Hawaii on a certain date and then, because you couldn't get a seat, you never showed up.

Dear Shortimer Sam, Would you please print the dates the following divisions arrived in Vietnam? 1st Air Cavalry Division, 1st Infantry Division, and the 25th Infantry Division. It will settle a friendly dispute we are having in this office. Thank you. Staff Sgt. R.I.C., 1st Cavalry Division.

You're welcome. The first elements of these divisions, in the order you list them, arrived Sept. 12, 1965, July 12, 1965 and Dec. 12, 1965. However, the 1st Cav was considered complete in country by Sept. 28, 1965, whereas the Big Red One wasn't considered complete in country until Oct. 20, 1965.

Dear Sam, I am a US serving my last year here in Vietnam. Will I have to pull two years of active reserve duty after my ETS next February? Spec. 4 R.E.S., U.S. Army Depot, Cam Ranh Bay.

As a Vietnam veteran you will not be involuntarily assigned to a Ready Reserve unit for drill purposes which means you won't have to go to weekly or monthly meetings. But you may be told to attend summer camp for active duty training during the two summers you as a US will be considered on Ready Reserve status.

Say Sam! I'm wondering if you could give me information concerning the whereabouts of an Army buddy of mine. Spec. 4 E.L.B., U.S. Army Depot, Long Binh.

If he's in-country, The Area Postal Directory, APO Ia-country 96381 might be able to help you.

Dear Sam, My DEROS is Feb. 23, 1970. My ETS is March 14, 1970. Will I get a drop after I leave Vietnam? Spec. 4 G.T.F., 1st Signal Brigade.

Yup.

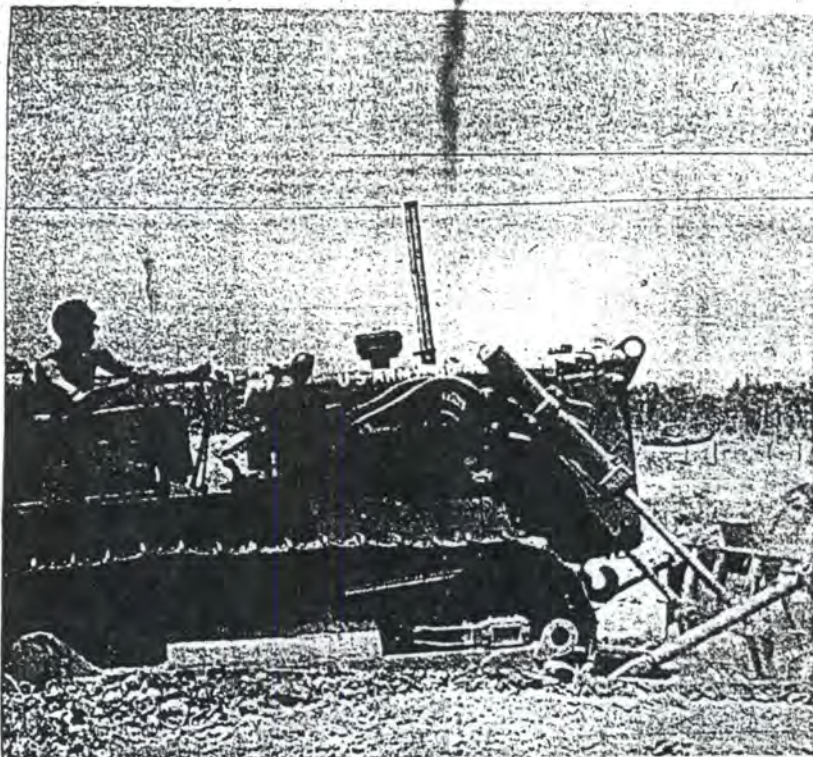
Dear Sir, In your April 14, 1969 issue of The Army Reporter there was a picture of a most beautiful girl, I.J. Jefferson. I am in awe of your taste in pictures, good work gentlemen, good work! Is there any way I could obtain a pin-up picture of this charming female? I would be grateful if you could give an address I could write to. In the meantime keep those pictures coming of more girls like I.J. Jefferson. Spec. 4 J.D., 4th Infantry Division.

We will. Our publications officer thought she had a funny nose, but lieutenants are strange that way. We had many letters about Miss Jefferson, and I am forwarding all of them, including yours, to Columbia Pictures (1438 N. Gower St., Hollywood, Calif. 90028) to see if they might be able to help you out.

Questions on any subject may be sent to Shortimer Sam, in care of The Army Reporter, Hq., USARV-IO, APO Ia-country 96375. All questions will be given prompt attention and deep thought. Unsigned or anonymous letters will not be answered.

Shortimer Sam

Engineers renovate old air strip



A CATERPILLER TRACTOR handled by a soldier from the 8th Eng. Bn., 1st Air Cavalry Division, scrapes an artillery position flat for a 108mm howitzer emplacement at Landing Zone Carolyn, northeast of Tay Ninh.

TAY NINH—The helicopters circled around the area for the last time before landing near the battered air strip. Engineers from Co. A, 8th Engineer Bn., 1st Air Cavalry Division piled off the Chinooks, some running for cover against the dust and dirt the whirling blades were kicking up while others walked easily, taking in the new landscape. They looked at the runway, its strips of perforated steel plating ripped up by a hit from an enemy rocket or mortar.

For the engineers, it was nothing new. They have been called on time and again to go into an area and construct a new landing zone. This is the second landing zone they have completed within a three-week period.

The first impression the old air strip gave the engineers was one of a ghost town. Old bunkers, some of them partially destroyed through nature and man's ways, stand as a remembrance to a once widely used air strip. Plates of perforated steel plating rusted, bent out of shape or just ripped from bunkers and thrown about left the engineers with uneasy thoughts.

Some of the engineers walked around the new area. They cautiously avoided old rocket propelled grenades and mortars strewn around the area. They started to think of how easy it would be for 'Charlie' to walk into this place anytime and booby trap the bunkers and mine different sections of the strip since the 5th Special Forces evacuated the area over a year ago.

For the engineers it was the same old story. Get the equipment and supplies that will need to be airlifted into the area, start building bunkers, fill sandbags until you think you'll go out of your mind, and string concertina wire and everything else needed for protection of the landing zone. All the while this goes on, the engineers can look up and see more supplies and equipment coming in on cargo helicopters.

With this landing zone it was a little different. They would have to work even a little more and a little harder. The strip in front of the landing zone had to be repaired and special care taken to make sure it was not mined. Not one fixed wing aircraft would be allowed to land before the entire air strip was repaired and cleared of any mines.

The old bunkers would have to be inspected, torn down and rebuilt. Or, they may just need a few minor adjustments. Strips of PSP, wooden timbers and other materials would have to be cleaned out from in front of the bunker line.

The old, rusted and tangled concertina wire had to be replaced and, like any other new landing zone, it needed at least one triple strand of new wire before nightfall.

Like magicians, the engineers transform a ghost town into a new landing zone within a few days for the soldiers of the 1st Air Cavalry Division.



WITH A 105MM howitzer and ammunition slung under its belly, a Chinook helicopter from Co. B of the 1st Cav's 228th Assault Helicopter Bn. descends into the broiling dust kicked up by its blades.



TWO SOLDIERS from the 8th Eng. Bn., 1st Air Cav guide the crooked arm of a backhoe digger scooping out new bunkers at Landing Zone Carolyn. The soldiers completed two landing zones in a two-week period.

Ambush lessons costly, VC find

DAU TIENG — From a nearby rubber plantation to the Boi Loi Woods, the 25th Infantry Division's Co. C 1st Bn., 27th Inf., is teaching enemy forces a lesson in the art of the ambush.

During a five-day period, the infantrymen successfully sprang six ambushes, killing 11 enemy soldiers and capturing nine AK47 assault rifles. In sweeps

near the ambush sites, they also uncovered two munitions caches.

Capt. Lloyd Yoshina, the company commander, credits his unit's successes to new ideas in ambushing — "stay-behind" daylight and night-time ambushes using platoon-size or smaller units.

"We move into an area in force and drop off stay-behind ambushes along strategic routes," he said. "The rest of the unit moves away and sets up other ambushes."

In many cases, munitions and foodstuffs are uncovered near ambush sites. Unsuspecting enemy soldiers returning to their caches lead American riflemen to hideouts. Conversely, ambushes are always set up when a cache site is uncovered.

Two such caches were uncovered within 150 yards of three successful ambushes that resulted in six enemy soldiers killed and five weapons captured.

The first cache, found in the bottom of a dry well, contained 113 RPG rounds and 2,500 rounds of AK 47 ammunition. The second was uncovered at a nearby docking site. A bunker was discovered, and Co. C probed it with bayonets locating a false wall that concealed a tunnel.

A search of the tunnel netted 11 RPG-2 rounds, 70,000 rounds of AK 47 ammunition, 14 37mm recoilless rifle rounds, 25 Chicom claymores, 13 82mm mortar rounds, 500 rounds of 251-caliber ammunition, 1,500 rounds of light machine gun ammunition and 37 AK 47 magazines.

Co. C is doing a fine job of disrupting the enemy's movement," said Maj. "Doc" Holliday, battalion operations officer. "The ambushes keep him constantly on the move with little chance to rest. They deny him access to his favorite infiltration routes and resupply areas."

He didn't clean it

PHAN THIET — "The guy we got it from didn't clean it," remarked Sgt. Leo M. Smith as he held up a dirt-crusting carbine.

The weapon belonged to a Viet Cong soldier that members of Co. B, 3rd Bn., 508th Inf., 101st Airborne Division killed in an ambush in the jungles near here. The infantrymen had engaged the enemy force while searching for a suspected tunnel complex northeast of the coastal city.

A count of the rounds in the magazine indicated that the VC was an enemy trailwatcher who had earlier fired seven rounds into the air to warn his comrades of the Screaming Eagles' advance.

"How those seven rounds ever fired, nobody can explain," commented Lt. Nathan L. Jones, Co. B commander. "His carbine was falling apart and his ammo was old and corroded."

The remaining rounds in the magazine proved to be poorly handloaded. Three of the rounds didn't even have powder in them.



SCRAMBLING OUT of a helicopter, riflemen of the 9th Infantry Division's 3rd Bn., 47th Inf. head for cover before going out after the enemy.

Enemy is prey

Nighthawks swoop down

BIEN HOA — The sun has dipped below the western horizon. Two UH-1 Hueys, one loaded with flares, the other with a .50-caliber machine gun, lift off the 1st Cavalry Division's 3rd Bde. VIP pad here.

As the tin roofs, glinting now in the pale moonlight, drop behind, the choppers climb and turn toward their target area. In minutes they are at their destination, and the Huey with the mounted .50-caliber drops to tree-top level while the flare ship continues to maintain its altitude.

Behind them are the winking

lights of this installation and Long Binh.

In a few minutes the commander of the flare ship, WO James Michael Hudson receives word from the gunship to drop the first flare. The word is then relayed to Spec. 4 Stephen Tyler, a doorgunner who drew duty as "flare popper" on this particular night, and he tosses out the 40-pound Navy aircraft parachute flare, which he had already armed and hooked up.

The flare tumbles out of the chopper and reaches the end of its static line. Its activator is yanked, and the cannister tumbles free for 10 more seconds before its parachute pops and the flare ignites.

On the gunship, gunner Spec. 4 Robert L. Thomas catches some movement in his sights. He opens up with a long stream of fire, and the movement stops.

The purpose of these two-helicopter flights, known as Nighthawk operations, is to provide continuous surveillance.

Since infantry units on the ground are limited, in part, by the darkness, the Nighthawk missions fill the surveillance gap-between dusk and dawn.

The patrol's route is selected by the 3rd Brigade commander and the brigade's air operations officer, Capt. Michael McCannel.

"The Nighthawk mission," said McCannel, "is one of many plans we devised to restrict the enemy's movement."

To accomplish this mission, Co. C of the 277th Assault Helicopter Bn. at Quan Loi provides UH-1 Hueys each night. The choppers are mounted with machineguns and over 3,000 rounds of ammunition each or are loaded with 40 Navy aircraft parachute flares each.

Throughout the night chopper teams alternate, so that patrol, refueling and reloading operations are simultaneously conducted.

Normally, this means the choppers will spend two hours in the air and then two on the

ground on an alternating basis until dawn.

Once a set of choppers reaches its destination, the gunship drops down close to the earth, while the flare ship remains in its orbit. Once the two ships are in position, the flare ship begins to drop flares.

"When we sight a target," said WO Larry Linonis, aircraft commander of a gunship on a previous mission, "we fly across it with our left side toward the target and engage it."

"The most common target is one or two enemy troops on a trail, but sometimes there are more."

Airmobile howitzers add punch

LZ BUFF — The first American Division artillery unit to receive the Army's new 105mm howitzer is providing a newer brand of firepower for the infantryman on the ground.

Btry. D, 1st Bn., 14th Artillery, which supports the division's 198th Brigade, added the new M102 howitzer to its inventory recently. The model replaces the earlier M101A1 model.

"The M102 is more adaptable for airmobile operations than the older model," says Capt. George M. Alexander, battery commander.

He explained that the new model is lighter, has a greater range, is capable of traversing in a full circle and has lifting hooks for aerial transport.

"We hope that the added punch given by these new weapons will help us bring more effective fire on the enemy," said Lt. Col. James J. Durbin, battalion commander.

Bounty hunter guns for Charlie, psychotic reaction hits him

QUI NHON—"If it hadn't been for the 'quad,' I wouldn't be here now." That's the sentiment of Lt. Richard Bushong and many of the men of the 8th Transportation Group (Truck) when they talk about "the bounty hunter."

The 2½-ton truck with a four-barrelled, .50-caliber machine gun combination mounted on its bed presents an awesome sight. The .50-caliber system, developed primarily for air defense, is known as the "quad-50."

It's been found that the electrically fired and aimed system mounted on a small turret can be placed on almost any vehicle or on the ground for close-in support against almost any enemy, not only low-flying aircraft.

With this in mind, the men responsible for convoy security in the 8th Group found a good application for the weapon: put it on the back of a 2½-ton truck. Hence: the bounty hunter.

In addition to the high rate of fire offered by the quad-50, the bounty hunter has a standard ring-mounted .50-caliber machine gun over the truck's cab manned by Sgt. Rodell Smith, who also doubles as crew chief for the unusual weapons truck.

Other men in the all-volunteer crew include Pfc. Frankie Jenkins and Pfc. Dallas E. Mullins, who act as cannoners for the vehicle. The man who sits inside the turret of the quad-50 is Pfc. Robert L. Sterling Jr.

The second member of the protection team for the 444th Transportation Co. is a combination of steel and fire-power called "the psychotic reaction"—the security for the bounty hunter.

The psychotic reaction is a 2½-ton truck that has been beefed up by adding heavy plate to its bed and cab so its crew can go almost anywhere within a convoy, providing rear support and protection for its companion in battle, the bounty hunter.

Spec. 5 Andrew T. James is crew chief of the psychotic reaction: "Our job is to back them up, to protect their rear."

James and the machine gun-wielding crew have teamed with the bounty hunter to gain quite a reputation among truckers in the Northern II Corps Area. The diverse talents of these vehicles were demonstrated graphically during a recent enemy ambush.

Contact lasted nearly half an hour. When contact was established, the reaction's machine guns and the turret-mounted quad of the bounty hunter started making things uncomfortable for the enemy.

The combination of systematic electrically-controlled fire from the bounty hunter, plus the reaction's massive machine gun fire caused the badly beaten enemy to retreat into the brush, once again proving the bounty hunter's worth.