





AMERICAN SOLDIERS and ARVN's scramble to avoid the thorns of heavy brush as an armored personnel carrier crashes through a hedgerow in a swampy area near Fire Base Jackson. Soldiers of

the 2nd Bn., 27th Inf., 25th Infantry Division, are giving men of the 49th ARVN Regiment valuable experience on mechanized vehicles.

## American division fosters Highland military school

PLEIKU — Just outside this city is the Highland Junior Military Academy, an institution which is unique through the Republic of Vietnam.

The academy — staffed by ARVN cadre and one American soldier and funded by the Vietnamese government — is unusual in that enrollment is limited to Montagnard males between 12 and 18 years old whose fathers have served in sustained military operations against the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army soldiers.

Two and half years ago the

4th Infantry Division formally adopted the academy as a gesture of friendship. Since that time the division artillery's S3 section has shown special interest in the school as part of its Civic Action program.

Each year young Montagnard men travel long distances from their tribal villages scattered throughout the Central Highlands, intent upon completing a modern education and becoming more closely identified with the principles of the Republic of Vietnam and the free world.

Highest priority for admission

to the academy is reserved for the sons of the Montagnards who have died in combat operations in the Central Highlands. Other prospective cadets must fulfill rigid entrance requirements, including a battery of written examinations and a personal interview, before being admitted.

The academy's curriculum is similar to that of a typical United States high school. The Montagnards are taught mathematics (including algebra, trigonometry and geometry), general science, geography, physics, chemistry and languages.

During 1967 and 1968, the 4th Division provided the academy with engineering support for the expansion of the school's facilities.

In turn the cadets, dressed in their distinctive white uniforms and scarlet berets, participated in a division Medical Civic Action Program as interpreters for medical aid teams who diagnosed and treated the Montagnard villagers near Pleiku and Camp Enari.

The endurance of the stern discipline and rigors of the academic grind prove especially valuable upon graduation. Aside from earning a much coveted diploma, graduating cadets become corporals in the Republic of Vietnam armed forces. Six months later, they receive automatic promotions to the grade of sergeant.

Then numerous options become available: Some of the graduates enter Officer Training Schools where they pursue studies leading to a Reserve Officer Commission. Others are schooled in Officer Specialty Branches and remain on active duty for indefinite periods of time.

A third group finds that their academic preparation has grounded them well in the field of education. These young Montagnards become teachers in Dak To, Ban Me Thout, Pleiku or Kontum, but they may be called to active duty as ARVN reserve officers.

## 281st Avn. awarded Cross of Gallantry

The Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm has been awarded to the 281st Avn. Co. (Assault Helicopter) for its tactical air support in connection with Project Delta operations since June 1966.

The company is an element of the 1st Aviation Brigade's 10th Avn. Bn. (Combat), 17th Avn. Gp. (Combat).

General Cao Van Vien of the Joint general staff, Army of the Republic of Vietnam, said in the official citation:

"Despite seemingly insurmountable difficulty and extremely hazardous conditions, this outstanding unit has continually displayed a high esprit de corps and an undaunted spirit throughout 14 Delta operations."

"Particularly deserving of recognition were Delta operations in Phuoc Long Province, in Tay Ninh Province and in the Thua Thien Province."

"In spite of dangerous terrain, marginal weather and extremely accurate enemy ground fire, personnel of the 281st repeatedly endangered their lives to support the Delta forces. While simultaneously conducting infiltration and extraction missions, they placed deadly air strikes on enemy pockets of resistance, accounting for some 437 enemy killed and six detained. In addition, the 281st captured considerable enemy weapons, equipment and supplies and destroyed numerous structures and 23 enemy vehicles."

"These achievements are outstanding examples of this proud unit's determination to stem the flow of aggression by Communist forces within the Republic of Vietnam and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the profession of arms."

Flanked by representative members of the two airlift platoons and the gunship platoon, Maj. Ellie E. Lynn, commanding officer, accepted the award at Project Delta, 5th Special Forces Group (Abn.), on behalf of his company, from Major General Doan-Van Quang.

from the desk of

## Shortimer Sam

Dear Sam: I am a citizen of Colombia, South America, and I have been living in the United States since 1963. I joined the Army in September 1967. I have been told that since I am not a citizen of the United States, I cannot get a five-month early out. I would like to know if this is true. Spec. 4 F.P., USA Support Command, Da Nang.

Whomever told you that you couldn't get an early out because you aren't a citizen was spreading a false rumor. Citizen or not, every U.S. Army soldier in Vietnam who finishes his year tour and has 150 or fewer days of active service time remaining, will get the early out.

Dear Sam: I have served three complete 12-month tours in Vietnam, and am now serving a six-month extension which will be completed in January 1970. Due to my overseas tours, I have not spent a Christmas at home for the past five years. My question is can I request a drop of, say, 21 days from my DEROS, or should I request a curtailment of foreign service? I would appreciate advice as to which regulations I should consult for the information I need. Spec. 5 R.R.G., USA Support Command, Da Nang.

Yes, you can make a written request to your commanding officer for a curtailment of foreign service, based on information in AR 614-30 and USARV Regulation 614-30. The request will end up at USARV AG.

Dear Sam: When I return from my Vietnam tour, I will have eight months left on active duty. Will the Army pay for moving my house trailer to my next assignment, and upon completion of my tour of service will the Army pay for the moving cost back to my original home?

Yes, the Army has a trailer allowance for moving costs between assignments and back to your home of record. When you change assignments, check with your finance office for determination of the exact amount you are entitled to.

Dear Sam: Well it is just about time for me to go on in-country R and R. As a former competitive surfer, I have only one thing on my mind. And that is of course to get back on a board and ride some waves. Could you please help me out? Where do I go and how could I get a board for three days? G.S., 199th Infantry Brigade.

At the Vung Tau Enlisted Men's R and R Center, there are a few surf boards which the officer-in-charge said he would lend to guys for use during their stay.

Dear Sam: I am considering buying a car through the sales representative at the Post Exchange. I would like to know if the PX screens or checks the reputation of these automobile representatives and the integrity of the deals they make? I have heard a lot of talk about other people losing money through overseas military automobile purchases. Spec. 4 A.P., 44th Medical Brigade, Da Nang.

The contracts under which orders are taken for automobiles in Vietnam are negotiated and awarded by the Army and Air Force Exchange Service Headquarters in Dallas, Tex., and are on a worldwide basis. Only reputable contractors are allowed to operate in the system and the Exchange insures prompt delivery of the make and model ordered. Since there are so many different models and choices of optional equipment available, it is hard to make a general statement about savings compared to stateside prices. You should do your own comparison shopping by deciding what make, model and optional equipment you want, and ask your family or a friend back in the states to get an estimate for you. This way you can decide where to buy an automobile based on savings on a specific deal. Also remember that while the PX prices for autos are the same worldwide, prices vary from one dealer to the next within the United States, sometimes within the same city.

Dear Shortimer Sam: In April 1962 I became a member of the United States Army. Twenty-four days later I reenlisted and became an RA. I reenlisted not for a bonus, but for a school. In May 1965 I was released from active duty and became a member of the Reserves. I came back on active duty in January 1969 and was assigned to Vietnam. My ETS in the Reserves is April 1971. Can I reenlist here in Vietnam and collect a Variable Reenlistment Bonus? Spec. 5, E.R.M., USA Support Command, Saigon.

Upon completion of eight months service on your current active duty period, you may be discharged for the purpose of reenlistment. This could be done in Vietnam if you wish. However, regarding the bonus, I can't answer that because you did not tell me your primary MOS. (Anyone writing to me about assignments, promotions or reenlistments, please include your primary MOS). Since you are fully eligible for enlistment, are of a higher grade than E3 and will not ETS from the Reserves until 1971, you may be entitled to the bonus if your primary MOS Multiple is within the system. For more information, see your re-up sergeant.

Dear Sam: Some time ago I heard that all Individual Ready Reservists should contact their local personnel officer about an early release if they were not assigned to an activated Reserve unit. Although my normal ETS was to have been January 1970, I should be released by Dec. 10, 1969, according to the recent DA message on Reservists and National Guardsmen. Next I heard that DA set up a new release date and I could leave here earlier. Any truth to that? Spec. 4 J.L.B., 18th Eng. Bde.

Your release date is still Dec. 10. That is the scheduled date by which all Guardsmen and Reservists called up last year will be out of Vietnam.

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

*Shortimer Sam*

# Joint US-ARVN operation secures enemy stronghold

**DI AN**—An operation reflecting the increasing take-over of ARVN forces in the war effort has secured a traditional VC stronghold 10 miles north of Saigon.

The joint ARVN-1st Infantry Division effort has resulted in 42 VC killed, 14 detainees and 15 Hoi Chans, plus numerous weapons and supplies captured and bunkers destroyed in the An Son area.

The main force was composed of the 265th, 167th, 794th and 263rd Regional Forces, the 28th River Assault Group and the 1st Bn., 7th Regt., 5th ARVN Division. The 1st Division was represented by Co. D, 2nd Bn., 18th Inf.

The terrain of dense foliage, waterways and swamp and numerous bunkers have allowed the enemy to lay low during previous operations and resume their effectiveness when the Allies withdrew. Allied tactics, however, have allowed the stronghold to be broken.

A main point of the operation has been the rotation of troops on a 24-hour basis. Despite many boobytraps in the area, casualties have been kept extremely low by using stalker tactics—waiting for the enemy to move and engaging him. As the enemy was eliminated, detailed searches found the boobytraps plus numerous bunkers, caches of supplies and equipment.

The operation came on the heels of a two-day operation by the 82nd Airborne Division in the same area which eliminated 38

VC. Big Red One artillery immediately followed the withdrawal of the 82nd and troops were inserted following the artillery assault.

Apparently the enemy thought he had only to wait out the Allies. However, the constant and sustained pressure forced many

of the VC out of hiding to seek food and supplies.

The low morale of the enemy and efforts of the psychological operations teams operating in the area resulted in 15 Hoi Chans. The psychological teams broadcast extensively and dropped leaflets in the area.

## Sniffer reports lead to VC casualties

**RACH KIEN** — Reaction to people sniffer reports by 9th Infantry Division's 5th Bn., 60th Inf., has resulted in 10 enemy killed and the capture of weapons, supplies and documents.

Reacting to an early morning report, battalion troops were air-lifted onto the banks of the Vam Co Dong River four miles south of the Ben Luc Bridge and there cornered a VC unit.

Ten of the enemy were then killed by artillery and jet fighter-bombers.

In the late morning hours, Co. A was air-assaulted into an area where sniffer readings had given evidence of more than 100 VC. As the first platoon made the initial contact in a heavily bunkered palm tree line, two soldiers were wounded when they came upon a VC bunker.

Artillery from three fire bases slammed the area with 155mm and 105mm rounds and then air strikes were called in.

As supporting fire was lifted, the first platoon swept the bombarded area and found a maze of destroyed bunkers. Three rocket launchers, two rockets, an AK47, documents and medical supplies were captured.

## Artillerymen give training



**TRAINING WITH** the 1st Bn., 44th Arty., at Dong Ha, Sfc. Ho Dien installs a part on an M42A1 Duster, which is similar to the T41 tank he will work on when he returns to the 1st Troop, 11th ARVN Armored Battalion, south of Quang Tri. He is one of 18 ARVN to train at the battalion.

## ARVN learn US mechanics

**DONG HA** — In an effort to maintain the Army's policy of stepping up the ARVN capability to assume a more active role in the war, the first of 18 Vietnamese soldiers are being trained in the maintenance of the T41 tank at XXIV Corps' 1st Bn., 44th Arty., here.

Three ARVN mechanics are training for 10 days on the M42A1 Duster before they will be replaced by three more Vietnamese mechanics from the 1st Troop, 11th ARVN Armored Battalion, located at Landing Zone Betty, south of Quang Tri.

The ARVN unit uses the T41 tank, assault tracks, armored cars, armored personnel carriers and mortars in search-and-clear and search-and-destroy missions throughout northern I Corps.

"The chassis, engine and carriage of the T41 is identical to that of the Duster," CWO Virgil White, assistant motor officer, said. "The only difference is the

type of weapon mounted on the track."

Before the ARVN soldiers came here, they attended a six-week course at the Thu Duc Training Center in Saigon.

White is scheduled to go to LZ Betty some time in the near future to help the ARVN unit set up their own maintenance program. "I'll try to show them what they're doing wrong and

show them how they can improve what they have," he said.

When all of the mechanics have been trained, the 1st Troop, 11th ARVN Armored Battalion, is scheduled to hold a "passing out" parade in which Colonel Duom, the ARVN unit's commanding officer, will accept the unit as combat ready. Tanks and APCs will parade in the review ceremonies.

## Terrorists trapped in village ambush

**LZ SALLY** — An investigation by a U.S. Marine and South Vietnamese combined-action platoon has resulted in the death of seven VC terrorists in an ambush carried out by soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division's 2nd Bde.

The chain of events began when a Vietnamese woman was murdered when she refused to give a squad of VC terrorists rice and money. The results of an investigation of the incident confirmed the presence of a Communist element in a small fishing village 15 miles southeast of Ilue.

The reconnaissance platoon of the 2nd Bn., 327th Abn. Inf., in conjunction with the investigating combined-action platoon set ambush positions on the approaches to the village and waited for the VC to return to the area.

Early the next morning, an estimated 14 VC soldiers tried to enter the village. Caught off guard by the Allied force, the disorganized enemy element tried to escape but was trapped in the ambush. Lt. William C. Drypolcher reported seven enemy killed and one detained.

"The chassis, engine and carriage of the T41 is identical to that of the Duster," CWO Virgil White, assistant motor officer, said. "The only difference is the

clear operations northwest of Tam Ky, Co. D, 4th Bn., 31st Inf., found the base camp which spread out over the thick jungle terrain. The bunkers were connected by an extensive tunnel network.

At the same time, a platoon-size element led by Lt. Juan F. Gonzalez killed three NVA and captured three individual weapons in a small hamlet.

"We moved up on a hootch area and Spec. 4 James Coyle and Staff Sgt. Robert Spillner came in from both sides," explained Gonzalez.

The infantrymen observed an NVA soldier sleeping in a hammock inside the hootch. Two others slept on a nearby table.

Later the same afternoon, after Co. D set up its night defensive position, five enemy soldiers wandered into the area and came under intense weapons fire.

Two NVA soldiers were killed and blood trails branching off from the area indicated the others had been wounded. Captured packs yielded rice, canned fish and 9mm pistol ammunition.



HUEYS KICK UP dust as men of Co. A, 4th Bn., 23rd Inf., 25th Infantry Division, prepare to catch a flight to

the crest of Nui Cau.