



LEAPING FROM a chopper during a combat assault are these infantrymen of the 3rd Bn., 187th Abn. Inf., 101st Airborne Division. The troopers conducted the assault west of Fire Base Blaze in the A Shau Valley.

Cordons pressure VC infrastructure

CHU LAI — Cordoning and searching almost a village a day, infantrymen of the Americal Division and elements of the 8th ARVN Regiment are putting pressure on the Viet Cong Infrastructure members operating 15 miles southeast of Chu Lai.

Since late July three companies of the 198th Bde's, 5th Bn., 46th Inf. have worked close with two battalions of the ARVN Regiment in an intensive pacification effort aimed at breaking up the communist political activity in the area.

"Getting to the Infrastructure is the name of the game," said

Maj. Donald R. Kannady, staff officer of the 198th Bde.

In the first three weeks of the joint U.S.-South Vietnamese pacification drive, 721 persons have been detained for questioning. Of those, 31 Infrastructure members, 71 Civil Defendants (individuals of questionable loyalty), and 32 VC or NVA soldiers have been found. Another 59 Communists have been killed.

Almost daily a company of the 5th Bn., 46th Inf. rings one of the many hamlets and villages in the rice paddy flatlands. Along with a Vietnamese interrogation team, they comb the huts in search of the enemy. Just to the south the ARVN soldiers do much the same thing.

"We're disrupting their activities in this area, all right, and we're hitting their food supply, too," said Lt. Col. Julian Wagner, the battalion's commander.

The project is part of a long range 1969 Vietnamese pacification campaign. Although the prime target is VC who have worked themselves into the area's many small hamlet political structures, tacticians also aim to disrupt the movement of logistical support of several local force units in the vicinity.

With the drive only four days old an estimated company of one of these units was thought to have been located. Infantrymen of the 5th Bn., 46th Inf. engaged the element and called in heavy air strikes and artillery. Several enemy were killed, and intelligence officials say, "others were probably buried in the area."

Although U.S. Forces have conducted cordon and search operations in the area before, those since late July have been more intensified.

Difference between victory and defeat

ARVN interpreters rated as elite breed

FR MAHONE — Communication plays an important role in winning battles, and more important, winning wars.

The people most concerned with coordinating communication between ARVN and American soldiers are the interpreters. Because of the importance in translating instructions and directives rapidly and efficiently under dire combat conditions, this small band of ARVN "elite" often make the difference between victory and defeat.

ARVN interpreters are a special breed of men. They are intelligent, dedicated and ready to serve 24 hours a day. One such man is WO Trinh Gia Ngan, a 24-year-old native of Saigon.

Ngan is stationed at this 1st Infantry Division Fire Base, where his work takes him on joint operations between the 1st Bn., 8th ARVN Regiment and the Big Red One's 2nd Bn., 28th Inf.

Ngan attended a Vietnamese school for nine years, after which he took an entrance exam to attend the Vietnamese-American Assistance School in Saigon.

Admitted to the school because of his scholastic standing, he trained two hours a day learning to speak the English language. The course consisted of one hour of grammar, taught by a Vietnamese civilian, and one hour of English speaking and pronunciation, taught by an American.

Though the course lasted only two hours daily, Ngan was expected to study on his own so that his speaking skills would progress. To Ngan, learning English wasn't a bothersome bit of study it was a privilege.

He wanted to speak the language fluently.

Completing the Vietnamese-American Assistance School, Ngan then had an opportunity that few Vietnamese citizens could ever hope to obtain. He was chosen to attend a United States university because of his excellent scholastic ability.

"I spent six months in Pennsylvania studying to become a lawyer. After that time, I was called into military service for my country. I returned to Vietnam and was commissioned a warrant officer because of my education. I have served three years so far, and after an additional two years I will have completed my tour of duty. I can then return to the United States and complete my education," stated Ngan.

Reminiscing about his short stay in the U.S., Ngan gave some

definite opinions on American life.

"Of course the customs and the cost of living between your country and mine are much different. You have a very good country because wherever you want to go, whatever you want to do, whatever you desire... within the limits of the law... you can have."

"The U.S. is free, Vietnam is at war. That makes a great difference. It is wonderful to be free."

Under the command of Lt. Col. William Parks, Ngan and his counterparts work diligently to provide the best communication between American and ARVN troops.

"I now work on field operations, and also in the Tactical Operations Center. There is someone on duty 24 hours a day. I find that these operations are of great value to us. We work with many units, but mostly with the 1st Bde. and units under their operational control," added Ngan.

Lt. Col. Parks has been a tremendous help to us. He is the best battalion commander I have worked with in my three years here."

"With the help we have received, I feel that now the ARVN soldiers are well enough equipped to conduct their own operations with the help of U.S. artillery and aircraft," concluded Ngan.

Engrs quickly solve jigsaw

LAI KHE — Silver hardhats in the bright Mekong Delta sunlight and the sound of sledge hammers against tin rang out over the surrounding rice paddies. Looking more like a construction crew on an urban skyscraper than an Army engineer

platoon at a Vietnamese base camp, members of Co. D, 168th Engr. Bn., 1st Infantry Division sweated through a unique project at Dong Tam recently. Instead of performing the usual engineering feat of erecting buildings in the marshy low-

lands, the platoon was enjoying the pleasure of tearing down an existing building in record time.

The project called for the platoon to travel from here to Dong Tam, dismantle the 40 by 90-foot building, load it on a low-bed truck, and take it back here where the 1st Infantry Division is headquartered. It would then be reconstructed and used as a mess hall for Co. A, 227th Avn. Bn.

The engineer wrecking crew attacked the building with relish. Thousands of bolts and nuts that held the building together were quickly unfastened. The tin walls and roof disappeared in an noisy burst of activity until only the skeleton of steel beams remained. A crane dismantled these last bones of the structure. Only a concrete pad remained of what had been a large storage building only hours before.

The dismantled structure was loaded on the truck and the engineers began the hot, dusty trip back. The 100-mile trip was uneventful if uncomfortable. Only the inevitable beives of curious Vietnamese kids met the truck as it bounced through the green countryside and crowded villages.

Back at Lai Khe, the engineers discovered that it is somewhat easier to take a building apart than it is to put it together. However, with a little time and elbow grease the gigantic, metal jigsaw puzzle was slowly fitted together.

Ambush rips NVA on bridge crossing

FB CURRAHEE — Three North Vietnamese Army regulars found themselves out on a vine with no place to go but down recently when troopers of the 101st Airborne Division's, 3rd Bde, sprang a surprise ambush on them.

While on a mission west of here Co. B, 1st Bn., 506th Abn. Inf., uncovered a suspected enemy supply route. While patrolling a river bed, Sgt. Robin Nichols noticed a large vine hanging from the top of a high cliff to a point directly on the opposite side of the river.

Realizing the vine could be an NVA troop bridge, the young soldier deployed his men in a hasty ambush on a cliff directly above the vine.

Nichols had only been set up a few moments when two combat-loaded NVA soldiers assembled below him. Thinking there may be more troops using the bridge, Nichols decided to continue observation.

A few moments later, another NVA soldier joined the first two and they began crossing the bridge in a hand over hand fashion.

Nichols tossed a fragmentation grenade into their midst, killing two and hurling the other into the rocky river bed below.

Following the incident, Nichols recalled, "The vine looked too large to have grown naturally across the ravine. I guess from now on they'll be a little more selective about their supply routes."



A MODERN DAY Paul Bunyan is this 101st Airborne Division trooper as he wields a heavy axe against the triple canopy jungle in the A Shau Valley. The soldier, a member of Co. A, 506th Abn. Inf., was helping clear a helicopter landing zone north of FB Airborne.

Action in two-day battle

Col's valor earns 2nd DSC

PLEIKU — The former commander of the 9th Infantry Division's 4th Bn., 39th Inf., one the first units to leave Vietnam under President Richard Nixon's troop redeployment program, was recently presented the Distinguished Service Cross for his part in a highly successful two-day battle last March.

Lt. Col. David H. Hackworth, now the senior operations and training advisor to South Vietnamese forces in II Corps, was presented the nation's second highest medal for valor by General Bruce Palmer, Jr., Army Vice Chief of Staff, in ceremonies at II Corps Headquarters.

This was the second D.S.C. for Hackworth. In addition to his two D.S.C.'s he has received nine Silver Stars, seven Bronze Stars for valor, four Army Commendation Medals for valor and three Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Crosses.

He has also been the recipient of eight Purple Hearts.

The 38-year-old officer was 15 when he left a Southern California orphanage to join the Army in 1946. Shipped to Italy at the closing stages of World War II, he spent four years in the same infantry platoon, rising from rifleman to platoon sergeant.

Platoon Sgt. Hackworth was already a veteran at 20 when he received a battlefield commission in Korea in 1951. In succeeding years he moved up the chain-of-command, serving as an infantry platoon leader, company commander, and in a number of battalion and brigade staff assignments.

Coming to Vietnam with the 101st Airborne Division in 1965, he served as a staff officer, and later a battalion commander, with the division's 1st Bde., commanded by Col. James S. Timothy.

Today, Brigadier General Timothy is the Deputy Senior Advisor to the II Corps commander and Hackworth is again a member of his staff.

The action for which Hackworth was most

recently cited began in the early morning hours of March 23 when two companies of Viet Cong attempted to overrun a night position near Dong Tam in the Mekong Delta.

Tipped off by their listening posts, the infantrymen were waiting when the VC launched their surprise attack. The entire perimeter opened up at once on the startled attackers, who immediately headed in the opposite direction.

Supported by air cavalry elements, the soldiers pursued the retreating VC.

Flying overhead in his command and control chopper, Hackworth stayed in constant communication with his men on the ground. As his troops closed in on the VC, he left his ship to lead elements of his battalion in ground assaults against straggling enemy forces.

The chase ended at the base camp of a VC main force battalion.

Back in his chopper, Hackworth made plans for the final defeat of the enemy. Within minutes additional troops were airlifted into the area. Once the ground forces were in place artillery and TAC air began to pound the enemy position.

Their base camp now in rubble, the VC broke and ran — right into the patiently waiting infantrymen.

Several times during the ensuing battle Hackworth landed his chopper amidst heavy fire to bring in supplies and extract wounded soldiers.

Thirty hours after the initial contact the battlefield was quiet. The VC had lost 168 men along with more than 70 individual and crew-served weapons. None of the eight friendly casualties required immediate medical attention.

The battle was typical of the 9th Bn., 39th Inf.'s operations during the four months Hackworth was with them. Operating out of Firebase Danger west of Dong Tam, the battalion conducted operations which resulted in the death of 2547 enemy troops.



from the desk of

Shortimer Sam

Dear Sam, I am an E-6 with nine months left to serve in Vietnam. I will ETS upon returning to States. I have given it much thought and have decided that I want to work for the U.S. government in West Germany in stock records and accounting. Can you tell me how I go about getting my application and where to submit it? Staff Sgt. D.K., 11th ACR.

Well the word I received is that you may have to wait until you get back to the U.S. to apply. Write to the Office of the Civilian Personnel Director, APO 96375. The people there will be able to head you in the right direction.

Dear Sammy, I am in a very precarious position—I have 305 days left in-country. My question is, what's the chance of getting out of my leg unit and being a door gunner for the next ten months? Pfc. R.T., 25th Infantry Division.

Here we go! Submit a D.F. with the following information on it: UP para 5-9, USARV Reg. 600-200, requesting that you be assigned to a combat aviation unit for duty as a door gunner. Also attach a statement from a doctor stating that you are physically qualified for such a position. Your D.F. may or may not be O.K.'d by your unit commander, the final decision being made by USARV. Good luck!

Dear Sam, I am a draftsman and am getting ready to ETS pretty soon. I'm worried about my reserve obligation. I know that it's unlikely that I'll have to bother with weekly or monthly meetings, but the snag is those summer camps. I've already made plans for next summer. What's the rap if you don't show for any of the meetings, or summer camp, if you are so required to attend? Spec. 4 P.H., 25th Infantry Division.

Of June 27, 1967, the drill attendance rules were relaxed by the Department of Defense. Since that date, individuals in the Ready Reserve who have served on active duty for at least two years will generally not have to attend the weekly drills. In no case, though, will an individual who has served in Vietnam be involuntary assigned to a Ready Reserve unit for the purpose of attending weekly drills. However, individuals who are exempt from attending weekly drills will still be required to participate in the normal two-week active duty period with their Ready Reserve unit. To answer your second question—although absences from training for reasons such as sickness or injury may be excused, more than three unauthorized absences on your part may put you in hot water. First, a letter will be sent to you warning you of your absences, then, if you fail to heed this warning, your unit commander may inform the U.S. Selective System of your conduct. The Selective Service System is then authorized to call you to active duty for a period of 45 days. Also, if you are called to active duty during the final year of your Ready Reserve obligation period, you may be kept on active duty for six months instead of the 45 days, depending on the extent of your unauthorized absences from drills.

Dear Sam, I suppose you have answered this question for other GIs, but please take the time to print the answer for me. I want to be either a highway patrolman or a city policeman when I return home. I have six months left in Vietnam. Is there any way I can get some sort of a drop in case I was accepted by some law enforcement unit? Sgt. J.D., 101st Airborne Division.

One thing you didn't tell me which has a lot of bearing on your question, is whether or not you ETS on your DELOS from RVN. Taking this into consideration, AR 635-20, para 5-26, states that separation to accept employment as a law enforcement officer is applicable only in CONUS and the states of Hawaii and Alaska. If you have time in the service remaining after you get back to the States, then read on. You may be granted a three-month early out with separation being accomplished not earlier than ten days prior to the effective date of employment and within three months or less until ETS. An application for the separation must be submitted six months prior to ETS, and must include the following:

- 1.) a bona fide offer of employment as a public police officer with the date such employment is to commence, and,
- 2.) a signed statement by you stating that false representation or qualification or disqualifications pertaining to this job subjects you to a court-martial by authority of the UCMJ.

Dear Sam, I have applied for a separation within RVN in accordance with USARV Reg. 635-1. I intend to go to college in the Philippines when I am released from the Army in December. My question is, will I be entitled to VA educational benefits while attending the University of the Philippines? Spec. 5 M.K., Americal Division.

A letter to the VA representative at the 90th Replacement Bn., APO 96491, will clear up matters. They have a list of institutions in cities other than the U.S. which qualify for the VA educational assistance. Good luck!

Dear Sam, I have two brothers in the Navy. Can they be sent over here and if so can I be reassigned? Spec. 4 D.J.S., 1st Infantry Division.

They could be sent here and you could apply for reassignment if they were not just on a rotating vessel.

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

Shortimer Sam

Wounded Capt leads assault on enemy-infested hilltop

LZ BALDY — At this base camp of the Americal Division's 196th Inf. Bde., 35 miles north of Chu Lai, Lieutenant General Frank T. Mildren, deputy commander of U.S. Army, Vietnam, presented the nation's second highest award for valor to a company commander.

Capt. Richard J. Rinaldo received the Distinguished Service Cross at ceremonies for his actions during an attack on a hilltop.

Under Rinaldo's command, Co. A, 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., succeeded in capturing the western half of an important hilltop near Tien Phuoc, 30 miles northwest of Chu Lai. Since the attack had been conducted through heavy automatic weapons fire, the company sustained nine casualties.

As Rinaldo began to evacuate the wounded, heavy mortar and machinegun fire erupted from the valley below. One of the first mortar rounds wounded the entire command group of another company bringing up reinforcements. At the same time, elements trying to go down the hill were pinned down by small arms fire from their flank.

Rinaldo moved among the men of his company, now temporarily cut off from ground reinforcement, calmed them and prevented a panic. Although he was wounded by mortar fragments, he refused medical aid and began to call in gunship support.

His company had now suffered 26 casualties, including all of the officers and platoon sergeants. Taking ten men who were still able to fight, he held off an ene-

my attack while, at the same time, directing air strikes against the NVA forces.

Seeing that the position of his company was now untenable, he directed and covered its withdrawal, calling in gunship strikes

to within 20 yards of his own position. At the hastily chosen landing zone, he quickly reorganized his company and reinforcing company into a hasty defensive perimeter and supervised their evacuation by helicopter.

Aviators brave fire to rescue crewmen of downed aircraft

PHU LOI—The dedication of Army aviators was dramatically illustrated recently when the crew of a downed observation helicopter was rescued from an enemy infested area 20 miles north of Saigon.

A hunter-killer team consisting of an AHIG gunship and light observation helicopter (LOH) of D Troop 1st Squadron, 4th Cav., 1st Infantry Division, was conducting a visual reconnaissance along the western edge of the infamous "Iron Triangle" when the LOH took a number of hits from intense ground fire. The pilot of the LOH, Lt. Louis Gibson, although wounded in the leg, attempted to fly the disabled aircraft away from the area, but the LOH burst into flames.

Gibson, was forced to crash land the aircraft in a rice paddy near an enemy infested position. The Cobra gunship, piloted by CWO Phillip Cariss, made suppressive mini-gun runs on the enemy positions and returned to the crash site. WO Jonathan Gregory, co-pilot, gunner on the Cobra and armed with a .38 revolver, leaped out of the hovering Cobra and struggled through the waist-deep mud to the crew of the downed LOH.

As Cariss took off to continue his suppressive gun-runs on the enemy positions, another Darkhorse LOH arrived on the scene. The LOH pilot, WO H.J. Vad, expended his minigun into the treeline to keep the enemy down and to lighten his aircraft.

Landing near his three downed comrades, Vad threw away his personal body armor to further lighten the ship, crammed the three into his tiny craft, and successfully flew the grossly overloaded LOH to the nearest Aid Station. Cariss continued firing on the enemy position, killing four, to cover the LOH's escape.



STAYING ALERT is Sgt. Swanson Hudson of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment's aero-rifle platoon, as he covers the lift-off of a Medevac chopper after contact with an NVA force near Quan Loi.

'Smoking' aids US soldiers; hazard to enemy's health

CHU LAI — Gunships and troop helicopters approach the landing zone for another combat assault. But before they set down one chopper drops to tree-top level. It draws heavy enemy fire but continues to put down a protective smoke screen in front of the tree-line surrounding the LZ. The ship is called Smokey.

Smokey is a regular Huey helicopter, with two M60 machineguns mounted in the doors, but his job is probably the most exacting and dangerous one performed during a combat assault operation. It provides valuable cover for the rest of the choppers and helps locate the enemy positions by drawing their first

fire at a relatively low speed. The pilot's skill and ability to perform and complete his mission can mean the difference between the success and failure of an entire operation.

Most helicopter companies have one smoke ship pilot. He flies with the command and control ship until the LZ is confirmed. Then he moves out to do his job. In order for the mission to be successful he must do it well.

Approaching the area at tree-top level, he begins to lay his smoke screen. His air speed, around 60 knots, along with the winds, are vitally important. If his speed is too fast the smoke will not be thick enough and it will disperse too rapidly. But going too slow can also prove to be disastrous.

Each smoke ship has approximately two to three minutes of smoke. If it approaches too slowly, even though the smoke will be thick enough, he won't cover the entire area thus leaving the approaching aircraft exposed to enemy ground fire.

The smoke apparatus is relatively simple. An oil reservoir is contained in a rubber bladder located under the seats in the passenger compartment.

When the pilot activates the system, the oil is forced under pressure into a hollow ring which encircles the engine's exhaust pipe. Vaporized oil is then sprayed from several jets on the inside of the hollow ring. As the oil is sprayed out, the 1,000-degree exhaust gas turns the oil into thick clouds of white smoke.

Considered by most pilots to be the most hazardous job in an aviation company, the smoke ship pilot's duty doesn't end after making the first pass. After laying his initial screen the aircraft gains altitude. It will remain there until the other ships in the operation are ready to land.

All smoke ship pilots and crew members are volunteers with considerable flying time amassed before flying these missions. Smokey's mission in the combat assault is as vital as it is dangerous. Smokey crews depend on their own skill and experience to make their 'smoking' hazardous to the enemy's health.

Roadrunner runs vital resupply mission

CAMP EAGLE—During World War II in the European theater resupply convoys raced across the countryside to support the rapidly advancing and far-flung front lines. The convoy was dubbed the "Red Ball Express."

Today in Vietnam's northern I Corps the vital, life nourishing convoy continues under the code name "Roadrunner" to supply the isolated forward fire bases in the A Shau Valley.

The convoy originates here with the men

and vehicles of the 39th Trans. Bn. Once the convoy loads its precious stores of fuel, ammunition, building and road construction materials, beer, soda, ice and hot chow it departs for the jump-off point, FB Birmingham.

Awaiting there to provide the convoy road security is C Troop, 3rd Squadron, 5th Cav. From Birmingham to FB Blaze is 18 miles of rough, dusty mountain road. Once affectionately known as "Rocket Ridge" and "Ambush Alley," the tanks

and tracks of C Troop have made the trek substantially safer.

Capt. Howard F. Huff, commanding officer of C Troop, said, "The 101st Airborne Division regards this as one of the most important missions in I Corps."

There are two reasons. First of all, Roadrunner is the lifeline of supplies between the rear areas and the bases in the A Shau Valley. Secondly, the overland convoy releases more helicopters for combat missions instead of endless supply runs.

FAN FARE

By Walt Ditzen



Huge complex surrounded; strikes, gunships kill 34

FR MADELEINE — A total of 34 enemy were killed and 73 bunkers destroyed by tactical air strikes, artillery fire, and gunships after the 3rd Bn., 7th Inf., 199th Light Infantry Brigade surrounded a huge bunker and tunnel complex 17 miles south of Saigon.

Soldiers of the 3rd Bn., 7th Inf. have conducted operations in this area of the Mekong Delta for the past two months under the operation and control of the 9th Infantry Division.

Members of Co. C discovered the complex recently during a routine airmobile operation, but the vast size of the base camp was not realized until massive air and artillery strikes literally leveled the area late the following day.

Huey gunships of the 9th Infantry Division, called in by Co. C, killed five enemy soldiers after the initial discovery of the complex.

Early the next morning, both Co. C and B were airmobiled back into the area effectively surrounding the enemy stronghold.

Original plans called for Co. B to serve as a blocking force while Co. C swept through the camp, but after the units were inserted air strikes were judged necessary.

"We were just unloading the trucks when the first jet strike was put in," commented Lt. Glen D. Dreyer, Co. C second platoon leader.

"A combined barrage of air strikes, artillery and gunship fire followed, lasting about two hours," recalled Dreyer.

Artillery fire was provided by Btry. B of the 199th's 2nd Bn., 40th Arty., and Btry. B of the 5th Bn., 42nd Arty., with two other nearby artillery units helping out.

Gunships were again supplied by the 9th Division.

During the strikes, Co. B, on the opposite side of the base camp, received heavy enemy small arms fire.

"We held our return fire because we were notified that a friendly unit was about to engage the enemy," explained Co. B's 3rd Platoon Sgt. Allen Foote.

Shortly after noon the soldiers called in additional artillery fire and air strikes.

As the second barrage began, Co. C received very heavy and accurate grazing fire from an estimated 15 to 20 enemy soldiers.

Immediately fire was returned, and air and artillery strikes were adjusted on the enemy soldiers initiating the fire.

At this time a company of the 9th Division joined and a 9th Division psychological operations plane began circling the area.

With the additional troops, the perimeter around the base camp was tightened, and two enemy soldiers rallied to 9th Division forces under the Republic of Vietnam's Chieu Hoi Program.

The infantrymen spent most of the rest of the afternoon laying behind what cover they could find while saturation of the area from the air continued.

By 4 p.m., air strikes, artillery, and gunship fire ended, and Co. C moved in to survey the damage brought by the day-long attack.

"I just couldn't believe it," recalled Pfc. Gary Moffitt, a pointman with Co. C's 2nd platoon. "The area didn't even begin to resemble the one I had seen that morning. After they were done pounding it, the whole area had sunk about eight feet."

As they moved through the area, members of Co. C realized that they were walking through the remains of a battalion size base camp made up of large tunnels and numerous bunkers.

"The main body of one tunnel alone was large enough to hold over 100 soldiers," Co. C commander Capt. George Watts said later.

Bunkers ranged in size from three feet by six feet with three feet of overhead cover to 10 feet square with four to six feet of cover.

One of the more elaborate bunkers was constructed of concrete and positioned under a canal.

"A passageway from this bunker led into the tunnel complex," Watts explained.

The infantrymen found 34 enemy bodies as they moved through the area along with 73 destroyed bunkers.

All totaled during the day, four tactical air strikes, numerous passes by 9th Division gunships, and over 1,600 artillery rounds were used to destroy what had once been a large enemy base of operations.



A SQUAD LEADER from the 2nd Bn., 506th Abn. Inf., lifts ships in for a landing in preparation for a combat assault southwest of Camp Evans, headquarters of the 101st Airborne Division 3rd Bde.

Guard traffic from ambushes and mines

Highway's security includes clean sweep

HIGHLANDER HEIGHTS — In the early hours of sunlight, the men of Co. A, 2nd Bn., 8th Inf., 4th Infantry Division have already been at work for some time.

Their job is to make sure cer-

tain sections of Highway 14 are free of mines and safe for 4th Division troops traveling between Camp Enari and the home of the 2nd Bde., Highlander Heights.

The 2nd Bn., 8th Inf., whose primary mission is to provide security along the highway, conducts mine sweeps from the main convoy checkpoint to the gate of Highlander Heights daily. The importance of such a task is proven each day by the heavy traffic which travels Highway 14, the main thoroughway in Kontum Province.

Co. A, under the command of Capt. John J. Kulen, is responsible for a 10-mile stretch of road. Working out of LZ Joyce, each platoon of Co. A is assigned a predetermined section of the company's area of responsibility.

Two Armored Personnel Carriers head for their starting point. At the outset of the mission, teams of two assume positions on both sides of the highway.

On the dirt shoulder of the highway, both mine-sweepers move cautiously, examining the area while employing electrical mine detectors. Simultaneously both men investigate the road-sides visually for any signs which may pinpoint an enemy explosive.

Periodically the men switch roles, each spending an equal amount of time at one position. Minutes after Pfc. Larry Farmer began his shift as mine sweeper, the detector responded positively.

Sgt. Curtis Fox, acting platoon leader, delicately brushed away the mine from an almost unnoti-

ceable mound in the roadside. A live mortar round appeared as Pfc. George Kirkland, watching from atop the track remarked, "Usually when you find one that means there are probably 'heavies' around."

Within minutes the operation is again in progress, the mortar having been disposed of carefully by Curtis. The teams, now aware of the increased possibility of more mines being present in the area, become a little more deliberate in their movements.

As the platoon nears the end of its area of responsibility there have been no further incidents. Their mission completed, the men return to their posts as road security.

In a short time another convoy rolls by, confident of a secure and mine free highway thanks to the men of the 2nd Bn., 8th Inf.

Hunter-killer team mows down NVA

DAU TIENG—Seventeen enemy soldiers were killed and a variety of weapons were captured as the 1st Infantry Division's crack hunter-killer experts continued to amass an impressive record of efficient operations.

Lt. Hugh L. Mills was conducting a typical visual reconnaissance from his OH-6A during hunter-killer operations conducted by D Troop, 1st Squadron, 4th Cav., seven miles southeast of here.

While Mills and his gunner, Spec. 4 James E. Parker were moving over the treetops looking for the next victims to come under the sword of D Troop, a force of about 20 NVA soldiers was spotted and immediately engaged with the scout's minigun and M60 machinegun fire.

The NVA soldiers were panic-stricken, but it was too late. As the red smoke grenade marked their location for the other half of the team, pilot Lt. Paul H. Fishman and gunner WO John R. Varner rolled in with a Cobra gunship. After the gunship had finished, the scout came back under the smoke to assess the damage.

Seeing that the Cobra had done its work properly, the Aero rifle platoon of the troop was inserted to police up the spoils and make a ground assessment of the contact. Scattered resistance by two North Vietnamese soldiers was overcome quickly by the Aero rifle platoon, and the area was secure.

The results: 17 North Vietnamese soldiers were killed, six SKS rifles, seven AK47 rifles, one heavy machinegun, one 60mm mortar with 12 rounds, one RPG launcher also with 12 rounds, and one detainee who provided valuable information.

Thus another routine hunter-killer operation conducted by D Troop turned into a nightmare for the enemy, something that seems to happen often of late.

Campfire burns Charlie

AN KHE — If Charlie had followed the warnings of Smokey the Bear and doused his campfire, he might have lived another day.

But as it turned out, Troop A, 7th Bn., 17th Air Cavalry Squadron of the 17th Aviation Group (Combat) turned the day into disaster for five North Vietnamese Army soldiers in a thick jungle just southwest of here while supporting the 1st Bde., 4th Infantry Division.

Early in the morning, A Troop, led by Capt. Robert H. Botnen, discovered several freshly-cut trails, indicating someone had been in the area, and not long ago.

The light observation helicopters (LOH) kept

looking for more signs, until they spotted a campfire still burning and apparently used by five to 10 people.

A few minutes later, WO James R. Muse, who at the time was flying the lead LOH, spotted five NVA regulars, toting field packs and AK47's.

His observer, Sgt. Melvin J. Jock, immediately opened fire with his automatic weapon and killed one. The others found cover under the heavy foliage.

Muse and Sgt. Jock flew out but returned to the area and found the other four. The pilot fired his miniguns and killed them.

Aero-ridersmen, led by Sfc. Lowell E. Bowman retrieved the field packs and enemy weapons.