

Flares Guide Copters in Mercy Pickups

CHU LAI, Vietnam (OI) — "Here's the problem," explained Maj. Patrick H. Brady, "Charlie is pretty active in bad weather and that's when we get casualties. Before, it was hard to make pickups at night in bad weather. Now it doesn't matter so much, provided we have at least a few hundred feet of visibility between the clouds and the ground."

Brady's unit, the Army's 54th Medical Det. (Helicopter Ambulance) operates in a particularly difficult area in support of the Americal Div. and other free world forces in Vietnam's Quang Tin and Quang Ngai provinces. Skillful flying is required in order to avoid moun-

tains that range upwards to 3,000 feet. The flying is especially tricky when the weather closes in and clouds shroud the rugged, rain-slashed peaks. Air evacuations were often impossible in the past because of the danger of flying into a mountainside hidden by the mists.

Brady's new technique now enables instrument-rated helicopter pilots to complete their missions under the worst conditions.

It began on Oct. 2 when the alarm sounded in the ready room at the heliport. Word came crackling over the radio that somewhere in the dark mountains a paratrooper had been wounded in heavy fighting.

He was awaiting evacuation from a twisting, mountain-ringed area dubbed "Death Valley."

"When we got there," recalled Brady, "we tried to get in under the clouds — but we couldn't make it. It was so dark we couldn't see the mountains or the ground. I couldn't risk hitting the side of a mountain, so I radioed the people on the ground that we'd try later."

Back at the base, something kept tugging at Brady's mind. He recalled something that had happened some days earlier — on a cloudless night, but one which was so dark that he couldn't distinguish the hills around him from the black sky.

An Air Force flare ship had been there; Brady called for its crew to drop flares; he had been able to land by their light.

The same night the major and his crew made another try at picking up the wounded paratrooper. When they arrived above the clouds which hid the valley and the pick-up zone, another Air Force flare ship was present. Major Brady asked for flares, a succession of them, each of which lighted a large area around the ambulance helicopter as it descended through the clouds.

The lights were bright enough that although the major couldn't see the mountains, he could at least see far enough into the

mists to know how much maneuvering room he had.

Finally the crew could see the ground; they were in the clear, under the dense cloud bank.

Ground action was heavy that night and the major and his crew returned to the battle area two more times to pick up wounded men. Each time, they landed with the aid of a series of flares, timed so that as one burned out another was lighting the area.

Since that night, Brady has refined the technique and made a number of other evacuations in weather which formerly would have caused the missions to be aborted.

New Steels Offer More Protection

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Production is about to begin of two new types of steel armor for military use that is stronger than present kinds now used in Vietnam, according to a U. S. Steel Corp. official.

A. M. Rathbone, division chief of ordnance products at U. S. Steel's applied research laboratory, said both types are "in great demand" for use in Vietnam.

The new steels shortly will be used to protect military helicopters, aircraft, tanks and personnel carriers and naval assault and patrol boats, he said Wednesday.

He made the remarks at The American Iron and Steel Institute's Philadelphia regional technical meeting.

He said the new construction armor plate is 60 per cent stronger than existing armor on U. S. military vehicles. The other metal, he said, is a composite ballistic armor plate which, in sheets of only four one-hundredths of an inch thick, are 50 per cent more resistant to shrapnel and other metal fragments than present plates.

Rathbone said it would be useful on helicopter seats and floors, on fuel tanks and possibly body armor.

He said the metals resulted from five years of extensive laboratory research. He did not say where production would start.

Viet-Bound Ships Delayed

WILMINGTON, N.C. (UPI) — A shortage of crewmen has caused Vietnam-bound ammunition ships to be delayed in port, the U. S. Coast Guard reported.

Coast Guard representative E. S. Davis said an average of two ships a month has been delayed two or three days while waiting for one or two crew members to meet Coast Guard manning requirements.

Delays have also led to crowded harbor conditions, Davis said, when ships had to postpone departure and prevented others from loading.

According to the Coast Guard, many crew members do not want to serve on ammunition ships which sail Vietnamese waters. Davis said the situation was hampered by the absence of a union hiring hall in Wilmington.

The crew shortage is most acute for executive and engineering officers.



Passing the Ammunition

The ammunition moves up as paratroopers of the 101st Airborne's 2nd Bn. form a chain to pass shells for a 4.2 inch mortar to a gun pit. The

soldiers were taking part in Operation Wheeler near Chu Lai. (UPI)

Buffaloes Hold Up The Mortar Express

CU CHI, Vietnam (IO)—Firing a mortar mission at night is tough enough. But when your aiming stake is surrounded by angry water buffaloes and infantry troops need your help, you've really got a problem.

The weapons platoon of D Co., 2nd Bn., 27th Inf. "Wolfhounds," faced just that situation recently 37 miles northwest of Saigon when four buffaloes wandered away from an old Vietnamese farmer and flocked around the unit's aiming stake.

The stake is used at night by mortar crews for rapid aiming. While the 25th Inf. Div. soldiers attempted to move the animals a combat patrol radioed in a call for supporting mortar fire.

The old farmer and the crew members doubled their efforts, but the harder they tried the madder the beasts became. After some quick calculations the crew fired the mission with a substitute stake and the rounds landed right on target.

Unit Aids 3 Viet Students

CU CHI, Vietnam (IO)—Three Vietnamese school children who were too poor to continue their education beyond high school have been given the opportunity to go to college through contributions by members of Headquarters and Service Battery, 6th Bn., 77th Art.

At a recent ceremony at Than-Khiet High School, a private school in Trang Bang, Rev. Nguyen Thanh Khiet, director of the school, said, "The Army and the people of the United States not only bring peace to our country, they more than support our poor people."

Pentagon Picks N.Y. Surgeon

WASHINGTON (S&S) — Dr. Louis M. Rousselot, noted New York surgeon, has been named deputy assistant defense secretary (manpower) for health and medical care.

Rousselot will replace Dr. Shirley C. Risk, who resigned to become associate dean at the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City.

The new deputy is director of surgery at St. Vincent's Hospital and the New York City Medical Center. He is also professor of clinical surgery at the York University School of Medicine.

During World War II Rousselot was a colonel in the Army Medical Corps and at one time commanded the 108th and 2nd General Hospitals in Europe. He

was awarded the U.S. Legion of Merit and the French Legion of Honor (Chevalier) for his wartime services.

In his new post he will be chief medical officer for the Defense Department, responsible for programs and policies of all the Armed Forces regarding medical facilities, treatment and health standards of servicemen and their dependents.

Guitar Leads Gls To Reds

CHU LAI, Vietnam (IO) — A guitar string contributed to the death of three enemy soldiers during Operation Wheeler, a 101st Airborne action west of here.

A patrol led by S. Sgt. Robert Pourier found the 18-inch wire on a trail.

"At first I thought it was a booby-trap," said the 25-year old squad leader in C Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn) 327th Inf. "I carefully checked the surrounding brush and discovered the wire was not attached to anything."

"What do you think it is," Pourier asked Spec. 4 Gerald Soileau. Pourier shrugged, put the wire in his pocket, and directed the point man to move out.

Three hundred meters down the trail the point man stopped. He motioned the patrol to get down. Pourier crawled forward. "Listen carefully," whispered Pfc. Anthony W. Dean. "Sounds like someone playing a guitar."

Oriental music, played off-key, could be faintly heard through the jungle. Pourier called for his grenadier, Spec. 4 Richard J. Walsh and Soileau, the machine gunner.

The three paratroopers began crawling through the undergrowth toward the sound of the music. Thirty minutes and 100 yards later, they saw a hut at the edge of a rice paddy. An NVA soldier sat plucking away at the instrument while two others listened.

Pourier told Soileau and Dean not to fire until the sound from the grenade launcher exploded. "I was curious about the guitar and didn't want to tear it up," Pourier said.

The grenadier fired, dropping the grenade about six feet from the two-man audience. Simultaneous with the explosion, Soileau opened up with the machinegun. Pourier fired on the musician.

As the three Reds fell, Pourier and Walsh rushed the hut. Soileau covered their advance. Walsh examined the bodies and Pourier picked up the guitar.

"Not a string was missing," said Pourier. "The wire I found matched perfectly the strings on the guitar."

New Tan Son Nhut CO

SAIGON (OI)—Col. Farley E. Peebles has assumed duties as the U.S. Air Force base commander of Tan Son Nhut AB. As base commander, he heads the 37th Combat Support Group.