

Valorous Unit Award Given to 199th



REDCATCHER!

199th Light Infantry Brigade

Vol. I, No. 1

Dec. 1, 1968



VALOROUS UNIT AWARD was presented to the Brigade Sep. 26. In front of the reviewing stand facing the Brigade color guard are General Creighton Abrams (left) and Brigadier General Frederic E. Davison. Photo by Hansell.

'Numbah One'

Meet Your Brigade Newspaper

Greetings from Redcatcher! Volume 1, Number 1.

Your newspaper will be published twice a month and will try to reach you on or about the 1st and 15th.

Redcatcher! will be edited by members of the Brigade Information Office. News and feature stories and photographs will be mainly supplied by the Brigade and battalion staffs, with the exception of signed columns (Chaplain, SJA, etc.) and information

contributed from the Armed Forces Press Service and other official Government sources.

However, this is meant to be your newspaper. If you have something to contribute, from an idea to a finished story or picture, contact the Brigade Information Office, forward or rear. Your material (or idea) will be considered equally with staff-produced material.

A time-lag of at least two-and-one-half weeks between news event and publication unfortunately is unavoidable, due to the necessity of 1) getting most stories and photographs checked by higher headquarters for accuracy and 2) the two-week delay at the printer's in Tokyo. We regret this delay, but have no means of overcoming it at present.

Redcatcher!—the first true newspaper attempted in the Brigade—will try to catch you up, in coming issues, with the stories and pictures of Brigade interest that have occurred since the Brigade came to Vietnam. Of special interest to most "short-timers" and new arrivals alike are the Tet and May attacks, and we will give their stories and pictures all the space we can.

The 199th has made a name for itself and is well-known, not only over here but also back home. Many of its activities have been publicized by major newspapers, wire services, magazines and television networks, and its members have been publicized extensively through the Army Home

Towns News Program and other means. We wish that we could somehow collect every article so that each Redcatcher might have a scrapbook as a record of the Brigade's activities. Since this is impossible, the Brigade newspaper will try to be a periodic record of what has happened.

We will need your help, criticism and suggestions in order to fulfill this mission. Help us to publish a newspaper that you will be proud of and will find useful in years to come, as a reminder of your days in Vietnam with the 199th Light Infantry Brigade.

Special Orders Held by PX

The main base Post Exchange has increased the sales staff for shopping convenience. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday.

The customer service counter now offers a "customer special request." Any item over \$75 stocked by the store will be held for a customer for three days when received. There is no money involved for the request and the unit is notified upon arrival of the merchandise, giving the customer or a friend time to get in from the field to claim the merchandise.

Cited for Heroism During Tet Attacks

The 199th Light Infantry Brigade has been presented the Valorous Unit Award for extraordinary heroism during the Tet period battles from Jan. 31 to Feb. 19, 1968.

It is the first award given to the Brigade as a unit since it was formed in July, 1966 and began operations here in January 1967.

Fastening the commemorative streamer to Brigade colors at a formal ceremony at the main base camp Sept. 26 was General Creighton Abrams, Commanding General of U.S. Forces, Vietnam.

General Abrams then addressed the assemblage. At his side was Brigadier General Frederic E. Davison, Brigade commanding officer during the attacks.

The citation said, "In the early morning hours on 31 January, insurgent forces launched savage attacks against Long Binh by firing rockets at II Field Force Vietnam and Bien Hoa Air Base. Brigade artillery promptly and effectively reacted to the attack, destroying two rocket bases and silencing the rest with a voluminous barrage.

Thwarted in this aspect of their attempt, the Viet Cong then initiated well-organized and determined attacks upon Long Binh and the base camp of the Brigade. In response clerks, cooks, mechanics and other support troops of the 199th Infantry Brigade manned the unit's perimeter while maneuver elements aggressively engaged and pursued enemy forces.

"During the fighting at Long Binh, the Brigade's firepower and indomitable spirit were instrumental in depriving concentrated enemy forces of progression into the city of Saigon. The resourcefulness and tactical expertise of unit commanders enabled units to retain constant contact with the insurgents and inflict numerous casualties which totally demoralized the enemy and destroyed his initiative.

"The men of the 199th Infantry Brigade displayed extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty which are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect distinct credit upon themselves and the armed forces of the United States."

The award went to all organic units of the Brigade which participated in the Tet attacks. Included was A Trp, 3rd Sqdn, 17th Air Cav, a helicopter gunship unit under operational control of

the Brigade during the period. Also under Brigade operational control then was Foxtro Co, 51st Inf. (Long Range Patrol).

The Valorous Unit Award is made to U.S. Army units for heroic combat action since August, 1963. It consists of a gold-bordered red background centered by a vertical red stripe with several blue and white stripes on each side, and is worn above the right breast pocket of the dress uniform.

Soldiers assigned to the Brigade during Jan. 31 through Feb. 19 may wear the award permanently. Those assigned afterwards wear the award only while they are members of the Brigade.

The Valorous Unit Award streamer will join many other streamers carried with the colors of Brigade units, some of which date back to nearly the beginning of the U.S. Army and commemorate engagements from the Indian Campaigns of 1794 to the present.

See Center Section The Full Account Of the Redcatchers In the Tet Battles

—Story and Photos

December Draft Totals 17,500

The Department of Defense has requested the Selective Service System to provide Armed Forces Examining and Entrance Stations with 17,500 inductees during December.

All inductees will report in the first two calendar weeks of the month to avoid the entrance of new inductees to active duty during the holiday season.

The Army will take 15,000 of the inductees and the Marine Corps 2,500.

The request supports currently approved force levels and will assure a timely flow of replacements for men completing their terms of service. (AFPS)

Slippery PFC, Watery Cache

When the rickety narrow plank bridge across the canal south of Saigon caused Private First Class Allan J. Stankevitch (Nescopek, Pa.) to lose his balance, he dropped his weapon.

As he hopped into the muddy water, he landed on something hard, and it turned out to be hard boxes. He groped for his M-60 and discovered more boxes. Placing the machinegun on the bank, he called to his Delta Co. buddies to come help him.

Ninety minutes later, the Redcatchers from 2d Bn, 3d Inf, had finished hauling some 50 boxes out of the canal. The cache included TNT explosive and more than 36,000 AK-47 automatic rifle rounds.



BRIGADIER GENERAL Frederic E. Davison is congratulated upon his promotion by General Creighton Abrams, commander of US Forces, Vietnam. The ceremony was Sep. 15 at Brigade forward headquarters southwest of Saigon. Photo by Hansell.



REDCATCHER!

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The Chaplain Speaks

Happiness Through Service

By Chaplain (Capt.) William A. Macaulay, Jr.

According to the Word of God, true happiness is not something to seek out as an end in itself. True happiness comes only as a by-product of service.

Jesus, speaking to his followers, said: "Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant" (Matt. 20:26). This same principle is taught in psychology, and we know it to be true through our own personal experiences. By living for ourselves, by selfishly seeking out our own happiness, we tend to draw up into a shell and to become frustrated and anything but happy. It is only by living above and beyond ourselves, even in serving others, that we can experience real happiness.

Take marriage for instance. Marriage is a wonderful institution. It was created by God for—among other things—the happiness of husband and wife. However, unless husband and wife unselfishly love and serve one another, there can be no real happiness in marriage. Consider also the question, Who makes the best soldier on the field of battle? Is it not that soldier who is willing to risk his life for his comrades and for his

country?

Truly the greatest and the happiest people are those who voluntarily serve their fellowman. Jesus, undoubtedly, is our greatest example in this respect. He "came not to be waited on but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28). Christ not only proves his love for us by his death, he saves us by this death—if only we respond in love and faith and service. And truly this is God's formula for happiness and well-being, for time and for eternity: God first, others second, and ourselves last.

More than 55,000 eligible veterans have taken advantage of three new programs opened a year ago by the Veterans Administration in keeping with their policy of providing complete educational opportunities for veterans.

Effective Oct. 1, 1967, flight training, on-the-job training, and training to complete high school without losing entitlement to follow-on college education were made available to veterans under the Post-Korean G. I. Bill.

Wills Not Only for the Rich

By Brigade Staff Judge Advocate Office

"We don't have enough of an estate to worry about, so who needs a will?"

"My wife will get everything anyway, so why get involved with wills and unnecessary legal fees?"

"I just don't have time."

These are typical comments about one of the most essential documents a family can have. But, more often than not, its value is overlooked by individuals and families—even those who are conscientious about other financial planning areas.

A will is a legal document that describes in detail the manner in which a person wants his property distributed after his death. It must comply precisely with state law.

It is recommended that wills be drawn for both the husband and the wife, for several reasons. Whoever dies first, there may be legal questions as to who owned what. If both die in a common disaster, or if the wife dies shortly after her husband and leaves no will, property distribution and care of the children might be at the discretion of the law and the courts.

The major personal advantage of a couple having two wills is

that they may name the guardian and trustee who will care for minor children and their property, if both parents die. This usually avoids unnecessary expenses and possible custody battles among relatives—factors that could hurt the children emotionally and financially.

A properly drafted will often could reduce the cost of administering an estate. The person making the will can name the administrator, or executor, who could be the surviving spouse, another relative, a friend, a lawyer or a trust company. He may be exempted from bonding. If no administrator is named, the court will appoint one, who must be bonded.

The person administering, or managing, the estate files the will in probate court. Before distributing the property among heirs, he must pay all debts and obligations.

Life insurance does not take the place of a will. If the policy is made payable to a certain individual or organization, the insured's will can have no effect on that payment. If it is payable to his estate, then disposal of the money may be stipulated in the will.

A new 80-page indexed handbook entitled "Drug Abuse: Game Without Winners, A Basic Handbook for Commanders," is a comprehensive publication on drug abuse.

Prepared by the Office of Information for the Armed Forces, it is designed to help fill the information vacuum on drug abuse. Its aim is to help commanders understand, prevent and combat drug abuse problems.

It sets out a brief historical view of drug abuse. In addition, it describes various drugs and nondrug products susceptible to abuse. The drug abuser is discussed, as are methods of therapy, educational approaches, problems of abuser identification, identification of drugs, what to do when drug abuse is suspected, procedures for drug abuse prevention, and the over-all com-

mand relationship to drug abuse matters.

Drug distribution methods, penalties for illegal drug traffic, and technical definitions are described. A drug abuse reference chart is also included.

Prevention is stressed. The handbook points out that "The illegal use of drugs by members of the Armed Forces is a matter of concern that requires intensive, coordinated departmental effort for its control and elimination. The heavy responsibilities of members of the Armed Forces make drug abuse by any

member a matter of serious concern which dictates intensive effort to eliminate it. The Department of Defense acknowledges particular responsibility for protecting the young, impressionable members of the Armed Forces overseas against the dangers of using drugs which may have a seriously damaging effect on their health and welfare."

The handbook may be ordered through normal supply channels by requesting: DRUG ABUSE, GAME WITHOUT WINNERS, A Basic Handbook for Commanders (DA Pam 360-530.) (AFPS)

Stork Halts Night Patrol

Lights in the night and people stirring in and around a previously darkened hut tensed the members of a recent routine ambush operation in a region southwest of Saigon frequented by Viet Cong.

Especially when it had been quiet enough to hear a population explosion.

"We were in position in the dark—about 8 p.m.—when we heard people talking and saw lights," recalled Private First Class Michael J. Franze (Columbus, Ohio) of the 2nd Plt, Alpha Co, 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf. "There were three persons visible outside the hut and about six inside."

The 3rd squad leader, Sergeant Guy M. Jackson (Overland, Mo.) radioed his company commander for advice and was told artillery was standing by—cordon the area and search it.

The platoon guarded the hut from three sides while Jackson and his men approached the front door, which was opened by a startled Vietnamese. "We quickly saw the excitement was caused by his wife giving birth to a baby," Jackson said. "So what could we do? We congratulated the man, apologized, then made a hasty and rather embarrassed exit."

"Our report to the C.O. was, 'It's a girl, sir! You'll get your cigar in the morning.'"



The Redcatcher Brigade's all-weather patch is modeled by Bobbie, our fair weather friend.

Action Highlights

Redcatcher Summary

14 Oct 1968

Bravo Co 3rd Bn, 7th Inf, killed one VC in a brief fire-fight with four VC 10 miles southwest of Saigon in the "pineapple" region. Nearby Vietnamese PF's captured a VC squad leader as he fled from the fire-fight.

The VC admitted two more VC had been killed in the fire-fight. In the same area PF troops captured five more confirmed VC and their weapons as they hid in a wooded area.

Elsewhere throughout the area, Brigade elements destroyed 17 bunkers, 3 fighting positions and a 50-man sleeping area complete with 60 pounds of cooked rice.

A combined cordon operation by elements of the Brigade, and ARVN Rangers and NF, 3 miles northeast of Ben Luc, Tuesday resulted in 10 suspects detained, four of whom were later confirmed as VC. In addition, the combined forces destroyed 13 bunkers and five fortifications in the same area.

In other action, helicopter gunship crews destroyed an additional five bunkers and three fortifications while operating around Duc Hoa.

16 Oct 68
Action was extremely light as the Brigade conducted reconnaissance-in-force operations in the Saigon vicinity. "Redcatcher" soldiers destroyed a total five bunkers, four booby traps, one mine and one punji pit during the day.

17 Oct 68
In the southern "pineapple" region 9 miles north of Tan An, two companies from the 9th Infantry Division's 4th Bn, 39th Inf, under the operational control of the Brigade, discovered 7 AK-47 rifles, 20 Chicom rifles, and 38 bandoliers of ammunition. Several fresh trails led south from the cache site to the Vam Co Dong River.

Binh Chanh District PF troops, working with Bravo Co, 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf, found a munitions cache hidden in wooden crates in a canal 10 miles southwest of Saigon near the village of Tan Nhut. Buried in the mud 3 feet under water, the cache contained 107 RPG rounds, 400 rounds of AK-47 ammunition, 70 pounds of plastic explosive, 69 AK-47 magazines and 15 AK-47 ammunition pouches. The com-

bined force also destroyed 200 gallons of gasoline in 55-gallon drums found at the scene. It was estimated that the cache had been in place approximately a month.

In other action, U.S. infantrymen detained seven suspects seven miles south of Saigon and continued to destroy bunkers and booby traps throughout the area of operations.

21 Oct 68
Redcatchers and supporting gunship crews killed one enemy soldier and found the body of another during light action south and west of Saigon.

A light fire team from the 7th Sqdn, 1st Air Cav observed an enemy force 10 miles southwest of Saigon. The chopper crews began receiving automatic weapons fire from the ground and took the enemy soldiers under fire, reportedly killing one.

Elsewhere, elements of the 3rd Bn, 7th Inf found the body of one enemy while conducting a reconnaissance operation 5 1/2 miles south of Saigon. The soldier had apparently been killed by artillery fire.

22 Oct 68
Redcatchers found the bodies of 4 enemy soldiers, seized 5 individual weapons and destroyed 20 bunkers in action in the southern "pineapple" region.

Air Force tactical airstrikes were directed onto a position 15 miles west of Saigon. Following the airstrikes, elements of the 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf were inserted. They found the bodies of four enemy in heavy brush along with five individual weapons. The infantrymen also destroyed 16 bunkers in the same area.

About 100 meters east of this position, elements from the same battalion destroyed another four bunkers, while soldiers from the 4th Bn, 12th Inf destroyed a large punji pit.

Redcatchers killed one VC and wounded another in action 8 miles south of Saigon.

Alpha Co, 3rd Bn, 7th Inf engaged two VC during a reconnaissance-in-force operation south of Saigon. One VC was killed, the other was wounded and detained.

In other action, "Redcatcher" units continued to destroy enemy bunkers, fighting positions, booby traps and punji pits throughout the area.

26 Oct.

An element of the 3rd Bn, 7th Inf sighted and engaged two VC during a cordon-and-search of a village 7 miles southwest of Saigon today. Fire was returned by approximately five VC before contact was lost. A short time later, four suspects were apprehended in the area. One had fragmentation wounds on his head and was evacuated. In other action, Brigade elements found and destroyed 80 rounds of Chicom 7.62mm ammunition and one 81mm mortar round.

27 Oct.

Supported by gunships, Redcatchers continued recon-in-force operations. Elements from the 5th Bn, 12th Inf destroyed spiderholes and two bunkers, and seized a small rice cache during an operation 2 1/2 miles southwest of Duc Hoa. Three more bunkers were destroyed by a light fire team from Trp B, 7th Sqdn, 1st Air Cav.

30 Oct.

During recon-in-force operations south and west of Saigon yesterday, Redcatchers killed two enemy and detained five suspects. An element from 4th Bn, 12th Inf killed two enemy and detained three suspects during a sweep 8 miles south of Saigon. The other two suspects were detained by 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf while securing the Binh Dien Bridge on Rt. 4.

31 Oct.

Brigade soldiers destroyed 22 bunkers and detained one suspect in the "pineapple" today. A bunker complex 8 miles south of Duc Hoa was destroyed by men of the 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf.

Flight Program Soars

Despite a requirement that veterans must have valid private licenses or equivalent in flight training hours and meet medical requirements for a commercial pilot's license, the current Post-Korean G.I. Bill flight training program has attracted more veteran-trainees than did the much less restrictive Korean Conflict program at its peak.

More than 17,000 veterans have entered flight training under the present program. Peak enrollment under the Korean Conflict flight training program was reached in November 1967, when 13,000 veterans were enrolled. (Commanders Digest)



DSC FOR TET HEROISM is pinned on the chest of Captain Robert L. Tonsetic by General Creighton Abrams, USARV commander. At left is Lieutenant Colonel Leon E. Lichtenwaller, commander of 4th Bn, 12th Inf. Photo by Gyallay-Pap.

CPT Tonsetic Awarded DSC

The fifth Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism by a member of the Brigade was presented to Captain Robert L. Tonsetic Sep. 20 by General Creighton Abrams, commander of U.S. Forces in Vietnam.

He was honored with the nation's second highest award at his battalion's forward fire base "Stephanie."

Brigadier General Frederic E. Davison, and key staff officers of both the Brigade and its 4th Battalion, attended the ceremony.

As company commander of Charlie Co of the same battalion during the Tet attacks, Captain Tonsetic led his men on a combat mission through Ho Nai village Jan. 31.

(The 274th Viet Cong Regt had infiltrated the village after 9 p.m. Jan. 30 in preparation for a coordinated rocket-mortar-ground attack on Long Binh Post at 3 a.m. Jan. 31. Terrorizing villagers, the Viet Cong planned to overrun the 199th base camp from Ho Nai village.)

(Acting on intelligence reports of enemy infiltration, Colonel (now Brigadier General) Davison, acting Brigade commander, at that time positioned Captain Tonsetic's company and other units around the enemy's units,

which in turn surrounded the stepped-up defenses of the base camp. In effect, the maneuver trapped the Viet Cong regiment before it could begin its attack.

In addition, helicopter gunships and artillery were zeroed against enemy positions before the attack began.)

At this time, Captain Tonsetic's point squad ran against enemy forces preparing to attack the base camp. He quickly moved forward and directed artillery fire to within 50 meters of his own positions.

Calling in helicopter gunships to bring additional fire on the enemy, he ran through a hail of ricocheting small arms fire and rocket shrapnel to locate and bring all available firepower on hostile positions.

Captain Tonsetic then led an attack on the enemy through a volley of small arms fire, and when the Viet Cong added mortar fire, he directed a massive grenade bombardment that destroyed the enemy positions. Following through, he maneuvered to close with the enemy in a creek bed. The enemy withdrew after an hour-long battle.

Establishing a defense perimeter, Captain Tonsetic's company then fought off strong enemy counterattacks on three sides, using a combination of maneuver elements, tactical air strikes and supporting artillery fire against enemy forces.

Said the citation, "His fearless leadership inspired his men to fight furiously and successfully repel the Viet Cong. Captain Tonsetic's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army."

The Brigade's four other holders of the Distinguished Service Cross will have their stories told at length in future issues of Redcatcher. They include: First Sergeant James A. Diamond of Alpha Co, 4th Bn, 12th Inf, who distinguished himself Feb. 6, 1967, shortly after the Brigade came to Vietnam.

He was followed by First Lieutenant Wayne H. Morris, a platoon leader of Alpha Co, 4th Bn, 12th Inf, and Chaplain (Capt.) Angelo J. Liteky, battalion chaplain who was in Alpha Co's sector when a battalion of entrenched NVA regulars was encountered Dec. 6, 1967.

Specialist Four Robert S. Archibald, a radio-telephone operator with Charlie Co, 4th Bn, 12th Inf, was cited for heroism at the beginning of the Tet attacks Jan. 31, when his company encountered a VC force in a cemetery in the Ho Nai village vicinity.

199th on Saigon Guard Since June

By Specialist Five Craig Hansell

Guarding Saigon's western and southern gates from enemy attacks since late June, Redcatchers of the 199th have continued since to block enemy approaches, destroy fortifications, uncover weapons caches, and fight small engagements.

Working closely with regular Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) troops, Regional Forces (RF), and Popular Forces (PF), 199th units have routed enemy infrastructure from villages in paddy and nipa-palm flatlands near Saigon, and have conducted extensive civic affairs projects.

Restricting enemy movement around Saigon with continuous reconnaissance-in-force operations, the Redcatchers have (as of Nov. 1) accounted for more than 80 enemy killed, over 180 crew-served and individual weapons captured, and 15 suspects detained, later confirmed as enemy by ARVN authorities.

In addition, over 3,400 enemy fortifications, 20 military structures, and 200 grenades have been destroyed. Many other weapons, rockets, munitions and supplies were uncovered by ARVN units working on joint

operations with the 199th.

Most enemy fortifications were destroyed during recon-in-force operations into the "pineapple," an inundated region beginning 12 miles west of Saigon, used as an enemy staging area prior to attacks on Saigon during Tet and the aborted May attacks. Enemy troops dotted the area with covered, camouflaged bunkers and other fortifications.

A number of caches were found in the heavily booby-trapped area.

The 199th capitalized on its "light, swift and accurate" characteristics in the Saigon defense, using helicopters, ragboats, armored personnel carriers and even airboats to make quick thrusts into suspected locations.

But in the end it was the mud-soaked infantryman who slogged through the paddies and waded the streams to search out the enemy, his weapons, and his hiding places. Carrying bare essentials, the infantrymen by day made movements difficult for enemy units. Following the example set by Redcatchers in the May fighting, their ambushes and patrols tightly restricted

enemy night activities.

Artillery from the Brigade's 2nd Bn, 40th Arty, along with gunships and air strikes, pounded enemy supply and infiltration activities at night.

Brigade and battalion civic affairs teams meanwhile carried on an intensive program, helping the civilian population where Redcatcher units operated.

Between June and November, Brigade Civil Affairs Medical Civic Action Programs (MED-CAPS) were responsible for treating over 74,000 Vietnamese patients in the Saigon area. They treated ailments ranging from malaria to tooth cavities, including liaison activities that effected the surgical correction of a little boy's harelip.

During the same period, 4 schools, 78 homes and a large medical dispensary were built with the aid of the 199th's 87th Engr Co. The dispensary, located in the battle-torn Rach Ong section at Saigon's south edge, includes a waiting room, doctor's office, maternity room and a large ward with beds.

Tons of cement, bricks, sand, lumber and roofing tiles were distributed, enabling civilians to

rebuild houses destroyed during earlier Viet Cong and NVA attacks. Over 42,000 pounds of food-stuffs were distributed to the needy, including those in refugee centers and orphanages.

Supported by an element of the 6th Psyops Bn., the Brigade has distributed over 6,667,000 Chieu Hoi campaign leaflets and contributed more than 170 hours of loudspeaker broadcast time describing the South Vietnamese Government's rally program.

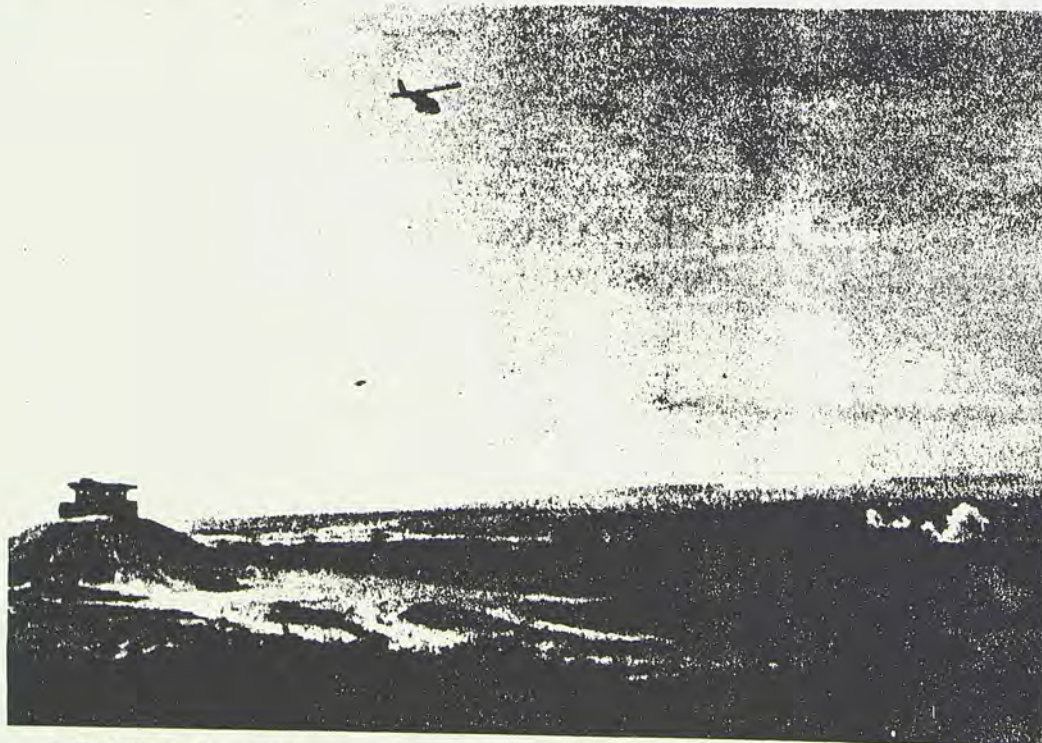
Prior to its latest role in defending Saigon, the Brigade operated against enemy forces entrenched in the heavily-forested areas northeast of the Long Binh military complex. The 199th then shifted its entire forces to the area surrounding Saigon immediately began reconnaissance-force operations June 22. It had performed a similar task in early May, when it moved from an area of operations northeast of Long Binh to defend Saigon during the May attacks.

The Redcatchers halted the enemy march on the capital from the west in May, killing over 600, and trapped enemy troops trying to escape the area.

Redcatchers Smashed Enen



REDCATCHER TROOPS rush to reinforce another section of the Camp Frenzell-Jones perimeter at dawn, the first morning of the Tet attacks, Jan. 31. Photo by SP4 Richard O. Freeman.



A HELICOPTER GUNSHIP rockets elements of an enemy regimental heavy-machine gun company. The company had infiltrated Long Binh Post near the II Field Forces' Plantation helipad during the night of the 3 a.m. Tet attacks. The VC mission was to engage US helicopters of the 12th Aviation Group. Gunships and airstrikes, combined with infantry sweeps, annihilated the enemy force. Photo by MAJ Ralph K. Anderson.

"If we can find them we can kill them—this time they've accommodated us. They're attacking US for a change. We've killed them, we're still killing them and we will continue to kill them."

These words were spoken during the first 24 hours of the savage Tet fighting that raged the length and breadth of South Vietnam in late January and early February, 1968.

Brigadier General (then Colonel) Frederic E. Davison, acting Brigade commander at the time, expressed the exact sentiments of Redcatcher infantrymen who had been attacking well-fortified enemy bunker complexes during the months before in the jungles north of Bien Hoa.

Combat elements of the Brigade accounted for more than 500 NVA/VC dead (BC) in the first 14 hours of the bitter fighting. Over 400 more enemy troops would die in the next few days as 199th infantrymen counter-attacked after shattering the initial mass rocket, mortar and ground attacks on Long Binh Post, Camp Frenzell-Jones and in Saigon.

During the same period, the 199th lost 14 killed and 92 wounded, 45 of whom did not require hospitalization.

The 199th was fully alert prior to the attacks, due to information from the Brigade's 179th M.I. Det. and the Brigade Intelligence Section, which had forecast the attacks more than a week earlier. The original enemy plan called for the main attack to begin at midnight, but due to their forces not being able to reach their objective areas in time, the main strike was delayed until 3 a.m.

General Davison had re-positioned Brigade maneuver elements around the Long Binh-Bien Hoa area just prior to the attacks. This confused the enemy and made their previous reconnaissance information useless. Intelligence gathered following the now infamous Tet "truce" violations by the enemy confirmed these points of information.

About 11 p.m., the first Tet "truce" report of unusual enemy activity was relayed to the Brigade Tactical Operations Center by a team from the 71st (Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol) Infantry Detachment. An enemy company of about 80 heavily-armed VC was seen trotting in the direction of Long Binh Post a few miles north of the perimeter.



199th "TRACKS" force who popped up in wind attacks. The armored personnel carrier bolster defenses. Photo by MAJ Ralph K. Anderson.

y's Tet Attacks

By First Lieutenant Michael D. Swearingen, Jr.

Later, the perimeter of Camp Frenzell-Jones began receiving probing sniper fire from VC who had infiltrated into Ho Nai Village. Guards were ordered to hold their fire unless they could actually see a man firing on them, so as not to kill or injure innocent civilians in the area.

The main attack began about 3 a.m., Jan. 31, with 122mm rockets being fired on II Field Forces, Vietnam headquarters, Long Binh Post and nearby Bien Hoa Air Base.

General Davidson had deployed elements of the 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf. in the area known as the "rocket belt" north of Bien Hoa and Long Binh Post. The area had been under constant surveillance for rocket launchings and the VC artillerymen managed to fire only one salvo before all rocket batteries were wiped out.

Counter-battery artillery concentrations were immediately called onto the enemy artillery positions from the Brigade's 2nd Bn, 40th Arty. "Spooky" multi-missile airplanes and helicopter gunships, on station over the rocket belt because of Brigade intelligence reports, also immediately engaged the enemy sites. Large secondary explosions at each of the enemy rocket-battery positions were reported by Old Guard infantrymen near the sites and by aerial observers flying over the area.

Because of these precautions, the enemy was forced to move into final lines of departure for the main ground attack against Long Binh Post without planned mortar and rocket artillery support.

Two platoons of the Brigade's 4th Bn, 12th Inf and a platoon of armored personnel carriers ("tracks") from D Trp, 17th Cav were sent to check reports of enemy movement in a hilltop graveyard just north of Ho Nai Village, located on the perimeter of Camp Frenzell-Jones.

Spotting a flurry of movement in the dark, the Redcatcher elements slammed into an estimated VC battalion. The heavy contact between these two elements opened the main Battle of Long Binh for the 199th.

The enemy troops had dug short trenches between the graves on the hilltop from which to launch their attack and later bury their dead in. So confident were they that the Tet attacks would be successful, many of the enemy bodies searched after the battle

revealed civilian suits among their field gear.

A wounded enemy detainee, soon confirmed to be a Viet Cong, explained that "...after our victory, we were going to Bien Hoa to celebrate Tet." Later intelligence indicated that the enemy forces attacking Camp Frenzell-Jones had also planned to resupply themselves with food, weapons and ammunition from 199th stores.

But 199th infantrymen and armor stopped the VC drive in its tracks. Fighting from trenches that were to become their graves, the pinned-down enemy elements were held in place by the outnumbered but counter-attacking Redcatchers.

Helicopter gunships from A Trp, 3rd Sqdn, 17th Air Cav, reloading and re-fueling as fast as they could at Fireball (199th) Aviation's helipad, raked enemy positions with miniguns and rockets. Fireball UH-1 "Hueys" also flew many hours of support, acting as flare-ships and as command-and-control helicopters during the long battles around the Brigade main base.

Heavy-caliber anti-aircraft and other automatic-weapons fire from the enemy was almost constantly directed at the buzzing helicopters during the pre-dawn hours of the initial fighting. Many of the ships were hit, but the pilots either exchanged helicopters at the helipad or kept flying until they were forced to land. Tracer rounds and rockets streamed back and forth for hours as the gunships located more enemy troops.

Pin-point bombing, called in from Bien Hoa Air Base, pounded other enemy troop concentrations during the battles.

199th infantrymen not already engaged in the initial counter-attacks were swiftly ordered into blocking positions to entrap the shattered enemy units. Saturation sweeps pushed the enemy into ever-tightening cordons.

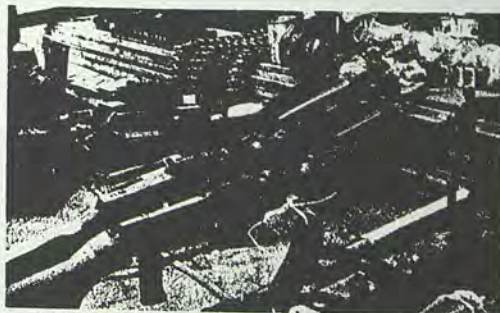
The largest group, an estimated 200-man force of dazed, but still deadly NVA/VC troops, was trapped in a heavily-jungled area northwest of Long Binh Post. Redcatcher infantrymen and artillery kept constant pressure on the encircled enemy. Repeated efforts to get them to surrender by loudspeaker broadcasts were futile.

Airstrikes and artillery thundered down on the hastily dug-in VC until almost all of that

force was annihilated. The remaining few were either killed by infantrymen if they still continued to fight or were taken as detainees during a reconnaissance-in-force through the area.

Many smaller pockets of the battered enemy were isolated and locked in by the 199th in the continuing operations around Long Binh Post area. More than 189 suspects were detained.

(Continued on page 6)



CAPTURED WEAPONS and equipment gathered by 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf in battle north of Ho Nai Village the first morning of Tet. A large amount of automatic weapons, rocket grenades, medical supplies, and communications equipment was captured along with other gear. Photo by SP6 W.J. Dupuis.



A WOUNDED CIVILIAN from Ho Nai Village is brought to the perimeter of Camp Frenzell-Jones for medical attention. Several seriously wounded South Vietnamese civilians were passed over the barbed wire to be taken to the 7th Spt Bn dispensary for emergency treatment, often under fire from snipers in the village. Photo by SP5 Jerry Van Wyngarden.



INFANTRYMEN increased the firepower at perimeter strong points by firing from the top of bunkers. These Redcatchers are exchanging fire with Viet Cong who had infiltrated Ho Nai village on the northern perimeter of Camp Frenzell-Jones. Photo by SP5 Jerrold Fishman.



D" Troop, 17th Cav exchange potshots with snipers of houses in Ho Nai village the first day of the Tet. Personnel carriers were moved around the perimeter to reeman.

Over 500 Enemy Killed by Brigade In First 14 Hours

(Continued from page 5)

ing the Tet battles by Redcatcher elements.

Clerks, cooks, mechanics and truck drivers from the 7th Spt Bn helped man perimeter defensive positions and provided additional firepower to stop attacking enemy elements from firing rocket grenades and automatic weapons into the Brigade main base.

199th MP machine gun jeeps moved constantly around the perimeter of Camp Frenzell-Jones to give additional firepower where it was needed.

At the same time that other 199th elements were engaging in the opening stages of the Battle of Long Binh, the Brigade's 3rd Bn, 7th Inf, then deployed southwest of the Vietnamese capital, was committed into the Battle of Saigon.

A large NVA/VC force was reported in and around the Phu Tho racetrack in the Cholon sec-

tor. Infantrymen of the battalion and tracks from D Trp, 17th Cav rapidly pushed into the city. Six blocks from the racetrack they ran into heavy rocket-propelled grenade and automatic weapons fire from rooftops and houses along the street.

Bitter house-to-house fighting—new to Redcatcher infantrymen more familiar with the jungle and rice paddies—erupted as they fought toward the racetrack.

As the tracks and infantrymen continued to drive to their objective, enemy dead from the battle and previous enemy contact with South Vietnamese troops, were piled high in the street and had to be moved before the lead track could continue, according to infantrymen involved in the point element fighting.

Supported by helicopter gunships, the assaulting Redcatchers fought their way to and overran heavy resistance in the racetrack itself. Late in the afternoon of the first day, they were firmly inside. An immediate search of the race-track's concrete grandstands revealed that they had been used as an enemy central command post, well-stocked with ammunition, medical supplies and food.

Continued heavy fighting in the area around the racetrack accounted for more than 150 enemy dead (BC) during the fierce three-day battle.

Scores of enemy weapons were captured by 199th combat elements during the Tet fighting, along with hundreds of pounds of equipment, ammunition and supplies.

Continued contact with enemy groups was sporadic through mid-February as Redcatchers mopped-up remaining VC elements in the Long Binh and Cholon areas.

The 199th Light Infantry Brigade had met the challenge during its 13th month of combat in Vietnam. The enemy attackers had been thoroughly beaten.

'Kit Carson' Routes Enemy

As a "Kit Carson" scout, Nguyen Van Mat does a job for the Brigade by helping find the Viet Cong and their supplies in the area south of Saigon.

A former VC, who surrendered to the 199th a year ago, Mat has proved his value as a fighter as well as an able scout. And the men of Bravo Co, 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf are glad he did.

While on patrol in the "pine-apple" region 15 miles west of Saigon Sep. 3, the men of Bravo found signs of recent enemy activity in the area and were advancing cautiously. Dense underbrush made passage rough and visibility limited.

Mat, a platoon sergeant and the company commander were only yards away when a heavy machine gun in a well-camouflaged VC bunker opened up directly in front of them.

Everyone was pinned down, but Mat knew he had the best chance of reaching the bunker. Dodging intense machine gun fire, he raced to the bunker, tossed in a grenade and silenced the weapon.

The Redcatcher unit was up immediately, racing forward to overcome other bunkers that had begun firing. Without their heavy machine gun, the VC were quickly routed.

Nguyen Van Mat had been a Viet Cong six years before coming to the Brigade. He was taken from his village in the Mekong Delta under threat of harm to his family.

"First they trapped me into becoming a VC," Mat recalls, "then kept me on with tales of torture if I was captured."

"I guess I believed them, but I just couldn't take it any longer. I figured nothing could be worse than the life I was living."

So, one day Mat walked into a 199th base camp and hoped for the best. He was given new clothes and food, then assigned to Bravo Co, where he works today.

Once a mechanic, Mat hopes to that trade someday. But first he wants to make sure another goal is realized.

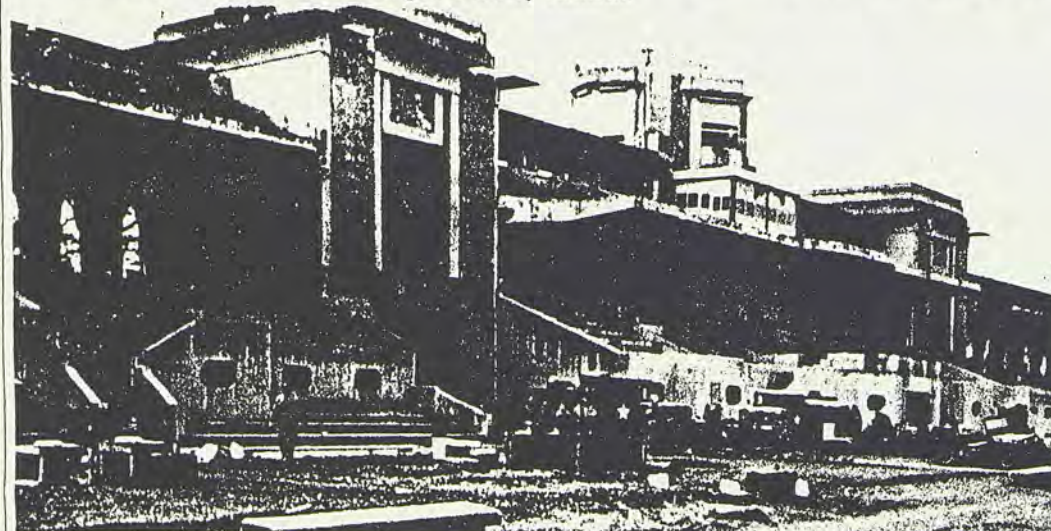
"I want to be a mechanic again," he explains, "but not until the Viet Cong are beaten. I will fight till there is peace."



WOUNDED DETAINEES await medical evacuation on a road in the village across from II Field Forces headquarters the morning of the Tet attacks. Infantrymen and armored personnel carriers continue the counter-attack in the background. Photo by Anderson.



"COTTON BALERS" from 3rd Bn, 7th Inf sweep through the Cholon sector of Saigon during mop-up operations following the initial three-day battle of the Tet attacks in Saigon. Photo by Fishman.



PHU THO RACETRACK concrete grandstands served as battalion base for the 3rd Bn, 7th Inf during mop-up operations in the Cholon sector of Saigon in early February. The Viet Cong had used the same location as a central command post and operational base during the initial Tet action in Saigon until the Redcatcher battalion recaptured it after bitter house-to-house fighting in the area. More than 150 NVA/VC were killed in and around the racetrack during the battle. Photo by Fishman.

'Cottonbalers' Win Five Silver Stars

Silver Stars were presented in October to five members of 3rd Bn, 7th Inf.

First Lieutenant Charles M. Bradbury and Paul E. White were decorated for their actions April 18, First Sergeant Frederick F. Wallack, Platoon Sergeant Joe T. Romero and Specialist Four Kenneth C. Sargeant for their actions April 24.

While serving as a platoon leader on a reconnaissance-in-force mission in northeastern Bien Hoa Province, Lieutenant Bradbury and his unit made heavy contact with a large force of North Vietnamese regulars. His two point men were severely wounded and remained exposed to heavy enemy fire from a nearby enemy position.

Disregarding his own safety, the lieutenant charged the position and continued to advance, intentionally drawing the intense enemy fire to himself, until the wounded had been evacuated.

Assigned to the 2nd Bn, 40th Arty, Lieutenant White was a forward observer attached to a unit which came under heavy fire from a well-entrenched VC force during a reconnaissance-in-force mission. Several men were wounded during the initial fight, and the command group became pinned down.

Lieutenant White placed a heavy volume of small arms fire on the most strategic VC positions, then moved forward through a hail of bullets until he was inside the enemy bunker complex, where he neutralized and destroyed the bunkers. Despite continuous sniper fire, he held his exposed position and provided covering fire until the wounded were evacuated.

While he was serving as acting First Sergeant during a reconnaissance-in-force mission, First Sergeant Wallack's company was maneuvering to help another company engaged with a large VC force when it was hit by rockets and automatic weapons fire, causing heavy casualties. As his company temporarily withdrew so artillery and air strikes could be called in, the sergeant began crawling to the forward area to aid and extract casualties who were unable to withdraw from their exposed positions.

After crawling about 100 meters he received intense fire from an enemy bunker, which he silenced with bullets and a hand grenade. Next he was the target of two snipers, whom he killed with two shots. Reaching the wounded, he gave first aid and carried one to safety. Evacuating a second, Sergeant Wallack was painfully wounded by rocket fragments, but he carried on and evacuated six casualties, all under intense VC fire.

April 24, Specialist Four Sargeant was a machine gunner with the same company. After initial contact and temporary withdrawal, he saw several

wounded men exposed to enemy guns and left his covered positions to advance through heavy fire to help evacuate them. Specialist Sargeant wiped out two entrenched enemy machine gun positions, which enabled the wounded to be safely evacuated. He then drew intense fire from a concealed bunker while going to aid another casualty. Seeing the wounded man needed fast medical aid, he immediately charged the bunker and silenced it with a hand grenade. Finally, he treated the wounded man and carried him through savage enemy fire to safety.

Platoon Sergeant Romero was in charge of his company's two flanking elements, mortar platoon and command group while the company commander moved forward to control the unit's advance on the right flank of a large and well-entrenched enemy force. Noticing a casualty lying in an exposed area, Sergeant Romero unhesitatingly moved forward through heavy enemy fire and treated the man's wounds and, despite withering fire, moved him to a secure position.

As the medical evacuation helicopter approached, the sergeant again exposed himself to fire in order to direct the landing. After the evacuation, he discovered his company commander had been wounded and he immediately organized the entire company, maintaining firm control over all elements until the senior officer present could assume command.

'Hi-Mom' Holiday Telephone Calls Being Arranged

The Department of Defense will cooperate again this year with the Communications Workers of America, AFL-CIO, in administering the twelfth consecutive "Hi-Mom" Christmas Telephone Call Program which provides free telephone calls from overseas families.

As in other years, the calls will be arranged in two ways. The family of a serviceman, or woman, may be contacted by a local union of the CWA. The family then will have the serviceman place a collect call which will be paid for by the local union. Arrangements for other calls will originate overseas, where the USO may select a serviceman who will notify his family that he will call, and the USO overseas will pay for the call with funds provided by the CWA.

Priority this year will be given to telephone calls from patients in military hospitals outside the U.S. and will include calls from servicemen stationed in South Vietnam and other areas of Southeast Asia.



ARVN TROOPS load captured 107mm rockets onto a waiting helicopter. The rockets represent only a part of the large cache uncovered in a joint 25th ARVN Division-Brigade sweep in the southern "pineapple" region Sep. 26-27. Photo by Gonzales.

Uncover VC Arms Cache

By Specialist Four Peter Gyallay-Pap

In combined operations, the Brigade and the 25th ARVN Division uncovered significant caches 18 miles southwest of Saigon.

Located in sections along a wide bend of the Vam Co Dong River in the southern part of a pineapple-producing region, it was considered by senior officers to be the largest supply base camp the Brigade has found in its Capital Military District defense operations.

The bulk of the weapons caches, consisting of mortars, rockets, and small arms ammunition, was found by the 50th Regt of the ARVN Division.

199th units uncovered, in addition to smaller amounts of mortars and rockets, two base camps which included three small hospitals, classrooms, and large caches of enemy gear and equipment.

Arms and ammunition uncovered as of Sep. 30 included four 155mm howitzer rounds, 18 122mm rocket motors, 25 107mm rockets, 338 82mm mortar rounds, 546 60mm mortar rounds, with one complete mortar; 174 57mm recoilless rifle rounds, and 38 anti-tank RPG-2 and RPG-7 rounds with an RPG-2 launcher. Hundreds of fuses and charges for the warheads were found.

Twelve individual weapons, along with more than 21,500 rounds of small arms ammunition, mostly AK-47, were found, as well as 50 grenades and 24 claymore mines. In addition, over 150 bunkers and 800 booby-traps were found and destroyed during the 12 days.

Among the equipment found by the 5th Bn, 12th Inf, were 150 VC plastic gas masks, 358

AK ammunition vests, 184 complete sets of Chicom-205 black pajama uniforms, 40 carbine belts, and 64 rifle slings. On Sep. 21, 225 VC plastic ponchos were found by a unit from 2d Bn, 3d Inf, along with 25 pounds of medical supplies.

During the combined operations, 500 pounds of rice, 90 pounds of medical equipment, two operating, two cameras, a tape recorder, and other miscellaneous equipment were found, including several pounds of records, documents, VC propaganda, flags and armbands.

Commander of the 5th Bn, 12th Inf, Lieutenant Colonel Herbert Ray, whose unit operated in the heavily booby-trapped area during the period said, "We believe the cache to be one of the most significant finds made south of Saigon since the Tet offensive."

"The Brigade," he continued, "has succeeded in throwing the enemy off balance, because we've set in on a major staging and supply area."

Brigade Intelligence Officer, Major Rudolf Levy, said the base "could have been used as the last pick-up and pre-positioning point for an enemy march into Saigon. The bases here and elsewhere in the 'Pineapple' could service a whole division of enemy troops."

Arty Mascot Is Airmobile Mutt

There's a dog in Saigon who is partly Airdale, partly airborne, and who has more flight time than Snoopy and the Red Baron put together.

The chopper-hopping rotary wing-rider is the mascot of the 2nd Bn, 40th Arty and answers to the name "Grizzle" when he feels like it.

Grizzle is the name of the NCO who rescued him as a pup in February 1967 during a rice paddy fire fight. Rotation being what it is, a year later Grizzle's newest master was the artillery battalion commander.

The independent dog was usually in some sort of trouble and was, in fact, "jailed" three times for assault and battery upon various artillerymen. Rabies shots and good behavior led to dropping the charges, and Grizzle was subsequently adopted by the "judge."

Footloose and fancy-free, Grizzle somehow developed a taste for helicopter travel, and the Brigade's "Fireball" aviation unit pilots all know him and are happy to take him wherever they go. His favorite stop-offs are the infantry base camps in the Brigade's area of operations south and west of Saigon, and he returns to his old haunts how and then for sentimental reasons.

Camp Grizzle, west of Saigon in the "pineapple" region, is named for him, but he won't necessarily be found there. "He disappears frequently and is liable to turn up anywhere in the Brigade," says his latest master, Captain Thomas Patrick (Sturgis, S. D.)

Army Recruits Train With Communist Rifle

Battle realism is expected to result from recent instructions issued by General William C. Westmoreland, Army Chief of Staff, to include familiarization with the Communist AK-47 rifle in the training program for Army recruits.

When implemented, the plan calls for all recruits to be given an orientation on the weapon's characteristics, to be followed by a live firing demonstration.

A majority of Viet Cong and North Vietnamese units in South Vietnam are armed with this Russian-designed automatic rifle widely used by Communist military forces.

Captured AK-47 rifles will be used at all Army training centers in the U.S.

DFC's to General, Captain

Brigadier General Frederic E. Davison, Brigade commander, and Captain Kenneth Canup, "Fireball" Aviation Section pilot, have been recently awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism.

The medal, one of the nation's highest awards for valor involving aerial flight, was presented to the general by Lieutenant General Walter T. Kerwin, II Field Forces commander. In a later ceremony, Captain Canup was decorated by General Davison.

Captain Canup, then a lieutenant, was awarded the medal for his actions June 18 while flying to resupply an artillery battery with essential counter-

mortar radar parts, without which the apparatus was useless. Forced to fly through a severe thunder-storm, he requested the unit to fire illumination sounds to assist him in locating its position. Thus aided, Captain Canup safely landed his helicopter and the battery was able to bring effective counter-mortar fire against a determined hostile force.

General Davison's cited actions took place May 6-10 as the Brigade's 3rd Bn, 7th Inf attempted to dislodge a large Viet Cong force from fortifications near the village of Binh Tri Dong. Disregarding the intense fire, he ordered his helicopter into the zone to mark

enemy positions by smoke grenades for incoming air strikes. In later action, the general again directed his pilots to fly at extremely low altitudes in reconnaissance support of the Brigade's 4th Bn, 12th Inf so he could pinpoint targets for supporting helicopter gunships.

In the course of the five days, General Davison repeatedly supplied his infantry units with information concerning enemy troop concentrations, and often landed to advise unit commanders on appropriate tactics to be employed against the enemy forces. He frequently utilized his command-and-control ship to evacuate casualties.

Brigade CG Gives SFC Re-Up Oath

After 20 years' service, most soldiers think strongly of retirement. Sergeant First Class John Ross, however, decided to reenlist recently and asked his commanding general to administer the oath.

The request was granted by Brigadier General Frederic E. Davison, who administered the oath to the veteran NCO at fire support base "Pillage," west of Saigon.

There Sergeant Ross was battery sergeant for Btry B, 2nd Bn, 40th Arty. The 65 men of the battery paused between fire missions to attend the ceremony. Also present were Lieutenant Colonel Frederick D. Bell, battalion commander, and Captain Raymond T. Lingo, battery commander.

General Davison remarked, "It is an honor to reenlist Sergeant Ross. I am delighted that he is continuing his Army career."

Said Sergeant Ross, "I'm grateful to General Davison. This has never happened to me before."

Delta Battery Makes Brigade Independent

An organization day ceremony officially forming Delta Btry, 2nd Bn, 40th Arty, was held Oct. 27 at Camp Frenzell-Jones.

Brigade Cites Two 'Soldiers'

A sergeant who completed basic training a little more than a year ago was chosen the first Brigade "Soldier-of-the-Month" in September.

Sergeant Roger Lee Harris, normally a squad leader for Alpha Co, 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf served for a month as an enlisted aide to Commanding General, Brigadier General Frederic E. Davison.

Soldier-of-the-Month for October was Specialist Four Lyle C. Palmer of Charlie Co, 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf. As enlisted aide for November, he accompanied the general in his helicopter and operated a radio-telephone.

In addition to a month as enlisted aide, each winner receives a three-day R&R leave, a tailored suit, \$25 cash and a \$25 Savings Bond.

Formation of the 105mm howitzer battery, which will support the 5th Bn, 12th Inf, was the final step in making the 199th the only completely separate, self-supporting light infantry brigade in Vietnam.

Delta Btry consists of both soldiers newly arrived in Vietnam and combat experienced men from other units of the 2nd Bn, 40th Arty.

In a final operation test under combat conditions Oct. 25, the artillerymen worked smoothly together and produced, in one officer's words, "outstanding results."

The 5th Bn, 12th Inf, which became the 199th's fourth infantry battalion April 1, 1968, had been previously supported by a 105mm artillery unit from II Field Force, Vietnam.

Brigadier General Frederic E. Davison presented the guidon to Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Bell, Jr, battalion commander, after an 11-gun salute by the howitzers. General Davison personally congratulated each member of the battery following the ceremony.



LIEUTENANT COLONEL Frederick Bell, Jr. presents the guidon to Captain Eduardo A. Salgado during the organization day ceremony of Delta Btry. The captain, who had trained and led the new unit since August, rotated early in November. Photo by Gragg.

Birth Defect Corrected

Specialist Helps Change VN Boy's Life

By Specialist Five Craig Hansell

A soldier's concern for the facial disfigurement of a little boy changed not only the life of that boy, but the attitude of his village toward Americans. The story begins July 5 when

a Medical Civic Action Program team from the 5th Bn, 12th Inf treated the villagers of Phuoc Long Dong while the battalion conducted a reconnaissance-in-force operation in the adjacent

area.

The team was led by Specialist Four Dennis Cox (White Salmon, Wash.), who heads the battalion Civic Action Program. "When we first set up, people were hesitant to come," Cox recalled. "But after a while they realized that we only wanted to help and they came to us with their sick."

As the day passed, medics noticed an 8-year-old boy who stood off by himself and was taunted and teased by other village children. Although his name is Phan Van Tien, he was called "Theo," a Vietnamese term for harelip, the congenital birth defect which disfigured his face.

The plight of the little boy with a tragic face bothered Cox and he wanted to help him. Checking, he found an Australian surgical team working in the Bien Hoa hospital which was willing to perform a corrective operation if he could take care of transportation and other details. With the full support of the battalion commander and his staff, this was done.

When he returned to the vil-

lage to make final arrangements, Cox found that a major hurdle remained: the boy's 75-year-old grandmother. Patiently he explained to the worried woman that her grandson would return safely if she let him go with the American soldiers. Still doubtful, she finally gave permission.

The operation successfully rid the boy of his disfigurement and left only a faint scar. When the helicopter bringing the boy and his mother touched down, the whole village greeted him. One of the most surprised—and delighted—was the grandmother.

The battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Herbert H. Ray, called the project "the epitome of the Civic Action Program." He explained, "Aside from the direct benefit to one little boy, the whole attitude of the people in the village changed. Before this operation, they were suspicious—even afraid—of us. Now they're happy and outgoing when they see us."

"The credit for the success of all our Civic Action projects should be given to an outstanding individual in our battalion.

Specialist Cox has done a good job in a position normally occupied by an officer. He is effective because he is concerned."

'Four-Deuce' Part Of 199th Firepower

Since July, the Brigade has had an addition that has given the Viet Cong many sleepless nights, or terminated their nights and days altogether.

The 4.2 inch mortar is called the "four-deuce," and it too has proven itself a "Redcatcher."

It is the first time a separate brigade has been equipped with a four-deuce unit. Brigade firepower has been increased in both quantity and reaction time.

With the arrival of the first four-deuce, battalion mortar units were formed, and training and drills begun to familiarize Redcatchers with the weapon in the Vietnam environment.

During their initiation into combat, the four-deuce units have supported nightly reconnaissance patrols, laid down harassment and interdiction fire along Viet Cong and NVA infiltration routes, and destroyed enemy basecamps.



SPECIALIST FOUR Dennis Cox, head of the Civic Affairs Program for 5th Bn, 12th Inf, with 8-year-old Phan Van Tien and his mother before surgery was performed to correct the birth defect. Photo by Gragg.



SUCCESS Held by Second Lieutenant Gilbert H. Hatcher, Psychological Operations Officer for Brigade, Phan Van Tien is surrounded by friends and relatives after successful surgery. The boy's mother is at far left, his grandmother next to the lieutenant. Photo by Whinnery.