Redcatchers Find Red Caches

REDCATCHER!

199th Light Infantry Brigade

Vol. I. No. 5 **Feb. 1, 1969**

2/3 Ambush Nets 3 VC In Pineapple

"We set up our night ambush on a dike near My Yen village. There were seven of us from Bravo Co, 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf, plus a Kit Carson Scout, and we set up so we were able to see into the village," said Specialist Four Deryl Gottling of Higginsville, Mo.

Private First Class Carl Brenneman of Sturgis, Mich. said, "We were 1,500 meters from our fire support base and it was spooky out there. We had a "starlight" scope but didn't need it to see the fire in the village."

The men of the "Old Guard" prepared to spend the night on the dike. The Hoi Chanh told them the VC were eating near the fire in the village and might come their way later.

"Our squad leader woke us up later that night and told us he had seen two VC walking along a nearby dike," said Gottling. Brenneman said "Once we had taken cover, we saw three VC walking along the same dike we were on. They walked right up to our Claymore before our sergeant set it off. We didn't even fire our M-16s!"

The Kit Carson Scout spotted two other VC running along another dike. Specialist Four Don Smith of Speedwell, Tenn. opened fire with his M-79 grenade launcher. Next morning, the ambushers checked out the area and found three VC dead where the Claymore had been and a blood trail on the other dike. "Those three VC must have been only three feet from our mine when we blew it," said Gottling. "It was impossible to miss hitting them."

Find AK-47s In Hideaway

"We had been probing rice paddy dikes most of the morning. We were using metal rods and found five or six empty 55-gallon oil drums, so we knew that caches had been planted in the area," said Staff Sergeant James Humphrey commenting on the Dec. 18 sweep by Alpha Co, 3rd Bn, 7th Inf.

Private First Class John Aleshire said, "When I hit something, I got one of the ARVN soldiers that was with us and we dug up a 55-gallon oil drum with 11 AK-47s in it." The oil drum was buried three inches deep in the side of a rice paddy dike. The drum had been laid on its side with a small hole cut out of it. Boards had been laid over the hole and covered with a layer of dirt.

"The AK-47s were packed in grease when we found them. They looked like they had been in the barrel for some time, but seemed to still be in pretty good condition," added Aleshire.

SANTA, CUTIE—Doll and Santa regard each other during a Christmas party given by the 15th MP Platoon in their lounge at BMB. Hundreds of children and other folks were treated to festivities by Brigade units during the holiday period. Story on Page 6. (Photo by Gyallay- Pap)

Blasts Away Cover

Air Strike Shows Bunker Site

Infantry units throughout Vietnam nowadays often directly rely on air strikes by various U.S. Air Force units.

The 199th receives air help from Saigon area bases such as Bien Hoa and Tan Son Nhut.

Just recently the 199th called in an air strike in an area 20 miles west of Saigon that was reportedly an enemy-infested hideout.

Bombs were dropped on the area at 2:30 p.m. and disclosed many new, solid, and what had been well-camouflaged bunkers and fighting positions.

When informed, Brigade Executive Officer Lieutenant Colonel Herbert Ray and a pilot, Captain Donald M. Belter boarded one of the Brigade's high powered light observation helicopters (LOH) and roared off to check out the bunker site.

After circling the area at 2,000 feet, the colonel decided to drop down and see what there actually was. The site was off a canal that led from a river, making it possible for the enemy to move in and out without much trouble. For the enemy, ideal.

What "Charlie" had done was build a false nipa-palm line along a dike. It extended far enough so that it looked as though it was natural growth and not a conspicuous clump of bushes in the middle of a rice paddy.

Noticeable 4 and 5-foot high bunkers and fighting positions were camouflaged with pineapple vegetation and girdled by a variety of trees.

For two hours aerial firing teams consisting of an LOH and a Cobra Gunship set up a perimeter by air and carefully checked the area.

At 6:15 p.m. airmobile troops from Delta Co, 5th Bn, 12th Inf were inserted into the area to get a ground-eye view. All bunkers and fighting positions were investigated and then destroyed. Around sunset, troops and airships were airborne and on their way home.

Separate Searches Reveal More Paddyland Treasures

Being watchful and constantly alert in the field not only saves lives but helps infantrymen spot hidden enemy weapons caches.

While walking point 17 miles southwest of Saigon for the third platoon of Delta Co, 3rd Bn, 7th Inf, Private First Class Clifton Hall, of Natchez, Miss. noticed what he thought was an enemy bunker.

"When I saw there was no entrance," said Hall, "I began probing the mound with my stick. I hit something hard, then called the other guys and we started to dig," he related.

Because of this point man's alert observation, Delta Co uncovered the first of four caches that were found Dec. 23.

This first cache, under a moud of dirt, was found 15 meters from a small canal. Its contents, (60mm mortar rounds, powder charges and fuzes as well as B-40 rockets with booster charges), were hidden in two 55-gal. oil drums covered with sheets of plastic.

Colonel Jeffrey D. Smith, acting commander of the 199th, flew in to examine the cache site. Thirty minutes after he left, Private First Class Gregory Cain of Florence, S.C. and Private First Class Edelberto Hernandez of Allen, Texas started probing the ground across the canal with machetes. They were working directly opposite the first cache, about 15 meters from the canal bank.

"There were more dirt mounds nearby," explained Hernandez, and Cain added, "We were pretty sure that there were more caches in the area when we spotted another dirt mound because the first cache was found under one." Cain and Hernandez uncovered another 55-gal oil drum containing more B-40 rockets and booster charges.

Private First Class Paul Gershon of Sherman Oaks, Calif. saw a woven basket at the base of a nipa-palm tree. "While the others were uncovering the second cache, I started poking that basket with a stick," he recalled. "Under it was a hole and I started digging."

Before the second cache had been taken from the oil drum, Gershon had unearthed two large metal cans. These cans contained 1,000 blasting caps for Chicom grenades.

One hour later Private First Class Angel Robles of Manatai, Puerto Rico, and Sergeant Richard Dix of Fort Myers, Fla. had uncovered the fourth and final cache of the day. Dix was probing a small depression when his machete struck metal. After digging, the Redcatchers uncovered twelve 75mm recoilless rifle rounds and a box containing 25 pounds of Chicom TNT in quarter-pound blocks.

The day's total included 130 mixed RPG rounds, and 150 60mm mortar rounds with fuzes and powder charges, all of which were destroyed.

Before the munitions were blown up, company commander, Captain Leon E. Daugherty of Leavenworth, Kan. remarked: "The men have done a great job. This is a pretty good Christmas present for us."

Operating 13 miles southwest of Saigon, elements of the 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf discovered another enemy munitions cache Dec. 23 containing: sixty-two 60mm mortar rounds, four AK-47 automatic rifles with one empty magazine, five cans of 60mm mortar charges, two cans of 60mm mortar fuzes, eight Chicom grenades, and thirty-six 82mm mortar rounds.

The latter caches, found by "Old Guard" troops near the village of Tan Buu, was buried in 55-gal drums and was estimated to have been in place two months.

There was no enemy contact involved in finding the caches. No US casualties were incurred during the searches.

CHRISTMAS IN THE FIELD meant big dinners, presents, relaxing, and visits from such guests as here, Miss Doreen Miley, Red Cross "Donut Dollie," who helped give out ditty bags to men of Delta Co, 5th Bn, 12th Inf. (Photo by Whinnery)

REDCATCHER!

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"Good Old Charlie"

By SFC Robert E. Jones

"Charlie" is the friendly sounding phonetic alphabet name we have given our enemy in the Republic of Vietnam.

No harm in that, but don't ever make the mistake of thinking of "Charlie" as friendly. He is about as friendly and as harmless as a bushmaster.

Vietnamese national police recently released statistics showing that "Charlie" killed 12,794 civilians in 1968, including women and children. Further, he kidnapped about 8,500 others. More than 27,250 persons were wounded by Victor Charlie.

According to *Stars and Strips*, more than half the terrorist activities took place during the Tet attacks, when Communist assaults on every sizable Vietnamese city or town left more than 7,400 civilian dead and 15,400 wounded.

And even during the "Christmas truce" period (roughly the two weeks preceding Dec. 28), Communist terrorists killed 163 civilians, wounded 274 and kidnapped 276.

This obviously is not the work of a friendly little guy in black pajamas, who is looking for a place in the sun.

He's a killer, and it doesn't bother him to kill his own people.

That's why it seems a shame to waste a friendly name like "Charlie" on him.

"Cobra" might be more apt.

The Chaplain Speaks

Their Own Little World

By Chaplain (Capt.) William F. Peterson

The PX has its typical crowd. The Vietnamese lady is checking out anyone in civilian dress. Uniforms walk through without a hesitation. The cash register grinds out its message; in goes the bills, out comes the change, chip goes the bag all safe and secure by the staple thanks to the stapler. Big rush at the amazing camera counter for the discount film. Jewelry for stateside girl friends? How about name tags? Patches? No special sales down the middle of the aisle today. Not like Christmas.

Some new magazines today. Big crowd around "Mad" and "Hot Rod." Saturday afternoon and aisles are narrow. Lots of uniforms. All pretty much concerned with items, none really interested in the guy next to him...not at the record rack... not at the sporting-goods counter...not at the snack bar.

No one really caring about some guy's sadness at home, maybe even tragedy. No one really cares about some guy's loneliness, or maybe how ugly he feels inside. No one really caring about some guy going without mail or friends for many days.

No, everything is too comfortable today.

I guess that it takes the suffering, the living, the struggle together. Maybe it takes the scared feeling of being in battle. Then you are interested in the guy next to you. Maybe it's arriving at a distant shore thousands of miles from home, then all you have is the guy next to you.

It's a hot afternoon (as always). We're free today. Wonder what I will do tonight. Wonder—Oops, watch it buddy, that's me you bumped into. Some guys—man, they live in their own little world. Stay awake buddy...Now what was I saying...

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

LONG BINH AREA

Lutheran	Sunday	11 a.m. 303rd Radio Research Orderly Room
Latter Day Saints	Sunday	1, 2 p.m. Plantation Chapel Annex
Episcopal	Sunday	1 p.m. Plantation Chapel
Jewish	Friday	7 p.m. Long Binh Post Chapel
	Saturday	10 a.m. Long Binh Post Chapel
Christian Science	Sunday	2 p.m. Plantation Chapel

CAMP FRENZELL-JONES

Catholic Mass	Sunday	9, 10 a.m. 7th Spt Bn Messhall
Protestant worship	Sunday	9, 11 a.m. Brigade Chapel

HOW TO DRIVE A BABY BUGGY: Tickle her feet. Medic Sergeant First Class Richard Meleic of HHC, 4th Bn, 12th Inf makes a hit with his young customer during a December MEDCAP northeast of Saigon. (Photo by Whinnery)

Driving in VN

Report All Traffic Accidents

All traffic accidents should be reported immediately to the nearest Military Police station. You are protected because immediate reporting insure the facts will be gathered while they are still available.

If serious injury, death, or property damage results from a traffic accident involving local citizens, the vehicle should not be moved until a Military Police accident investigation is completed. The Military Police must act in close coordination with ARVN Military Police and/or National Police in constructing a combined report representing the true events leading up to the accident. Your cooperation is essential.

Immediately reporting accidents also insures prompt compensation to Vietnamese citizens for any injury, death, or property damage resulting from the accident. Delay in settlement can cause ill-will directed at the United States and hurt friendly relations with the people of Vietnam. All too often these delays are caused by late, incomplete, or inaccurate reporting of traffic accidents.

To be safe remember that any accident occuring on BMB should be reported to the Provost Marshal's office and accidents occuring elsewhere should be reported to the nearest Military Police station.

Your Trusty Redcatcher Switchboard

Communications are the backbone of modern warfare, particularly for a light, separate infantry brigade such as the 199th. They can mean the difference between success and failure.

The Redcatcher ,switchboard provides a vital service to the overall effective operation of Brigade communications. Often taken for granted when functioning properly, the switchboard is in operation 24 hours a day.

At Brigade forward headquarters, there are three regular operators who take eight-hour shifts at the board. They sit in a small van, jammed with electrical equipment. When things go wrong they've got to know how to fix them on the spot.

The switchboard operator is usually the one who is blamed when you can't get your call through or when you are cut off in the middle of a conversation. It's not a enjoyable job by any means, but it is an extremely important one, requiring a great deal of patience.

"It's not bad until everyone wants to talk to someone at the same time," asserted Private First Class Philip Vasquez of Austin, Texas, one of the operators. "That's when things get complicated."

Anyone thinks they can operate a switchboard. It's simple. All you have to do is stick those little plugs in the *right* holes and push the right switch.

But which is the right plug, the right hole, and the right switch when there are several calls to handle at once? It's not as easy as it seems. Not only that, but the line is insecure and connections are often bad.

"You just have to pay attention to what you're doing, expecially when the action starts," explained Specialist Four Robert Benson of St. Albans, W. Va.

Redcatcher switchboard operators are doing just that, and providing the Brigade with a valuable service.

Customs Laws

By Brigade SJA Office

Are you planning to buy a Sansui receiver, or a Pentax Spotmatic, a set of china or some other bargain from Pacex or that small shop in Hong Kong? Then you'll need to know about the customs tax, or you may lose that big savings.

What's the customs tax? It's a tax levied by the United States Government on certain items brought into the United States. One of its main purposes is to protect American industry. A manufacturer in Taiwan, for instance, may be able to produce a radio for much less than his American competitor, because his employees work for less. The customs tax paid by the United States retailer who imports the foreign made item usually serves to place the foreign made product in the same price range as its American made counterpart.

The rate of the tax depends on the particular item imported. At the present time, for instance, radios are taxed at 12.5 percent of the purchase price, some cameras at 15 percent, bone china at 35 percent. A complete list of taxable items and the applicable rates is available from the Bureau of Customs in Washington, D.C.

Do Redcatchers have to pay this tax when they mail their purchases home or ship them when they DEROS? Several exemptions from customs duties are available to military persons serving in Vietnam.

The -first of these is sometimes called the Hold Baggage exemption. If you DEROS under PCS or evacuation orders you are allowed free entry of your personal and household property. The articles you claim, however, must have been in your physical possession at your overseas station. This exemption will cover any shipment of your property as long as a copy of PCS Orders which were issued prior to the shipment, are enclosed. For the purpose of this exemption, gifts, regardless of value, that you have purchased for family and friends are considered your personal property and are covered by the exemption.

The second exemption is the $10 gift exemption. It applies only to items you send while overseas. Under this exemption, any person in the United States may receive gifts duty free provided that the total value of gifts received in any one day by one person does not exceed $10. A set of items cannot be broken down into smaller units and mailed separately to reduce the value of each package to less than $10.

The third and most popular exemption is the Combat Zone exemption. Under this exemption military person serving in a combat zone may send bona fide gifts duty free to a value of $50 per mailing. In order to qualify for this exemption, the items sent must be purchased through authorized agencies of the Armed Forces of the United States. Items purchased on the local economy do not qualify. Pacex mail order items as well as other items purchased through the PX system at R&R locations qualify for this exemption.

Certain items such as food, pets, firearms and alcohol are governed by additional regulations. Advice on these as well as other customs duty problems is available at the Brigade SJA Office. If you have a question stop by; the trip may be profitable.

Awards and Decorations

Bronze Star Medal (Valor)

1LT George R. Hanrahan-2/3. When his company came under intense enemy fire May 16 he carried a wounded man to safety from an exposed position and then directed accurate artillery on to enemy positions, leading to successful completion of his company's mission.

SP4 David H. Loughrie-4/12 (First Oak Leaf Cluster). While serving as medical aidman Aug. 23, two Republic of Vietnam soldiers and two Americans were wounded by booby traps. Loughrie rushed to their aid, disregarding his own safety. His resourcefulness and courage were instrumental in saving the lives of his fellow soldiers.

SP5 Richard G. Touhy-2/3. On April 27 Touhy was serving as medical aidman when the lead element of his company came under fire from a well-entrenched enemy force and sustained several casualties. Disregarding his own safety, he moved across an open area to aid the wounded and supervise their evacuation. His actions were instrumental in keeping casualties to a minimum.

PVT Donald Wood-4/12. Wood was a medical aidman May 30 when his company came under intense small arms, automatic weapons and rocket fire from an enemy force of unknown size. Seeing a seriously wounded man in an exposed position, Wood moved to his aid through enemy fire, killing one enemy soldier who fired at him enroute, and rendered first aid. He continued to give medical treatment after he was wounded by shrapnel himself and refused medical aid until his wounded companion had been safely evacuated.

PSG Leroy Williams-4/12 (Second Oak Leaf Cluster). While leading an ambush patrol Oct. 29, Williams and his men spotted an estimated platoon of Viet Cong approaching. Sensing the ambush, the enemy bolted and attempted to escape. Williams exposed himself to enemy fire and was able to kill or wound several of the enemy soldiers, thereby being directly responsible for the success of his unit's mission.

SP5 Jerry W. Van Wyngarden-40th P.I. Det. While serving as a combat photographer with an infantry company on Aug. 29, the unit's lead element came under intense small arms, automatic weapons and rocket fire from a well-entrenched enemy force. When the lead element took several casualties, Van Wyngarden unhesitatingly advanced through the intense hostile fire in order to assist the medical aidman. He then took pictures of the engagement. When he raised up to obtain a better picture, he was wounded, but despite the painful wound, he continued to take pictures and assist the aidman.

1LT Frederick R. Struthers-4/12. While serving as a platoon leader on Sep. 7, his company came under heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire from a well-entrenched enemy force of undetermined size. One man was severely wounded and fell into an open area. Struthers exposed himself to the withering enemy fire as he reached the man and carried him to safety, rendering first aid until the medical aidman arrived. He then returned to the rest of his men and directed their successful efforts in forcing the enemy to withdraw.

CPT Robert E. Ward III-5/12. While in command of a riverine relief force moving up the Rach Tam River May 13, the force came under enemy rocket, machine gun, and small arms fire from both banks of the river. Ward directed the boats out of the enemy's killing zone. After calling in supporting artillery, he maneuvered his company on line and successfully overran the enemy bunker complex. Although the enemy attacked again the next morning, Ward called for and then adjusted artillery fire and the enemy force was decisively beaten.

SP5 Richard A. Shanower-40th P.I. Det. While serving as a combat correspondent on a joint ARVN-US riverine assault operation, his craft came under rocket and small arms fire. Shanower returned the fire and then directed the Vietnamese pilot of his boat to move to the rescue despite continued heavy enemy fire.

SFC Henry K. White-4/12. As a platoon sergeant on a joint ARVN-US search and clear operation, he went to the aid of two ARVN soldiers who were wounded by a booby trap. In going to their aid, White was wounded himself by another booby trap but he continued to give instructions to his rescuers and thus prevented further casualties.

1LT Lee R. Swanson-4/12. While leading a probe element into a minefield Oct. 3, a booby trap exploded wounding him and several of his men. Swanson calmed the men, administered first aid to the wounded and moved to the rear of the element to guide in a rescue team. He then supervised the medical evacuation of the wounded, carrying one man to the evacuation site himself.

CPT Bryant S. Sneed III-3/7. On May 17, Sneeds company was serving as a blocking force when it was attacked by approximately 15 enemy soldiers. He directed return fire, wounding five of the enemy with accurate rifle grenade fire. Receiving sniper fire from the rear he dispatched a squad to engage the sniper and then he carried resupply ammo to his squad and deliberately exposed himself, enabling his men to pinpoint the sniper.

Bronze Star Medal (Meritorious) (Posthumous)

SSG Michael Walker-7th Spt Bn.

Bronze Star Medal (Meritorious)

SFC Forest E. Sweitzer-503rd Chem Det; SSG David D. Souza-E, 4/12; SSG John W. Mitchell-D trp, 17th Cav; 1GS William L. Colglazier-B, 4/12; SP6 Mason O. Folmar-HHC, 199th; CPT Robert D. Tyson-D, 4/12; SP6 Willington Permansu-179th M.I. Det; SFC Robert Boyer-HHC, 199th; SSG Alfred P. Clayton-A, 7th Spt; SGM Joseph H. Cormier-HHC, 2/3; SP5 John E. Crews-HHC, 4/12; MAJ Ray B. Proffitt-HHC, 2/3; CPT Clarence Laffin Jr.-HSB, 2/40; 1LT Michael J. Barres-E, 3/7; PSG T.J. Calhoun-D Trp, 17th Cav; SFC Hezekiah L. Clark, Jr-HHC, 199th; SGT Richard K. Bliven-71st Inf Det; SGM Danny L. Casey-HHC, 199th; CPT Grosvenor W. Fish Jr.-HSB, 2/40; SFC Gerome E. Overpeck-71st Inf Det; SGT Gerald A. Kallen-71st Inf Det; SSG Ronald M. Lutz-E, 2/3; SP4 Clyde Washington-71st Inf Det; CPT George E. Berkley, Jr.-HHC, 199th; CPT James L. Satchell-HHD, 7th Spt; SGT Sidney R. Miller-71st Inf Det; 1SG George L. Holmes-C, 4/12.

Army Commendation Medal (Valor)

SSG James C. Epps-D, 3/7; 2LT Phillip S. La Riviere-B, 2/40; CPT Robert D. Tyson-D, 4/12; SP4 Danny Bare-A, 4/12; SP4 Curtis Pearce Jr.-A, 3/7; PFC Willie Wiley-A, 4/12; SP5 Roman Carlos E. Rodriguez-HHC, 4/12; SP4 Willie G. Youngblood-B, 2/3; SGT Roberto Garza-A, 4/12; SSG Bradley B. Fordham-A, 4/12; PFC William J. Klinger-A, 4/12; 1LT Robert E. Allen-B, 4/12; SP4 Donald W. Hill-HHC, 3/7; SP4 Ronald D. Evans-A, 4/12; PFC Roger Henry-B, 4/12; SGT Robert W. Gehle Jr.-A, 4/12; PFC Frank C. Bellone-A, 4/12; CPL Richard Dix-B, 2/40; 2LT David L. Thursam-D, 5/12; SP4 Gary F. Tomey-A, 4/12; SSG Harvey Wood Jr.-D, 3/7; PFC Josef A. Meraszek-B, 4/12.

Air Medal (Valor)

W 1 David M. Watters-HHC, 199th.

Brigade Summary

Dec. 16:

Redcatchers today found 11 AK-47 rifles and a small amount of ammunition, equipment and supplies during reconnaissance operations 10 miles south of Duc Hoa.

Elements of 3rd Bn, 7th Inf discovered the rifles in a well-camouflaged barrel and also destroyed eight bunkers in the "Pineapple" region southwest of Saigon.

The Brigade's 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf. uncovered small caches of ammunition, equipment and supplies while destroying five bunkers 9 miles south of Duc Hoa.

Dec 18:

During continued reconnaissance-in-force operations, Brigade elements held two detainees, destroyed eight bunkers and captured a small amount of enemy propaganda material, including two typewriters, while operating in and around the "pineapple" region south of Duc Hoa.

Dec. 19:

Troops from Delta and Bravo Cos, 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf detained three persons and destroyed nine bunkers 12 miles west of Saigon.

In the same area, infantrymen from Bravo and Delta Companies, 3rd Bn, 7th Inf, destroyed 13 bunkers and four sleeping positions.

Dec. 20:

Elements of 3rd Bn, 7th Inf destroyed 12 bunkers, 1 hootch and 1 sampan in the "pineapple" region south of Duc Hoa.

Other elements in the same area also destroyed six bunkers, one tunnel, and two booby-traps.

During a night ambush, infantrymen from Bravo Co, 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf, killed three VC (BC) and captured one Chicom grenade and two AK-47 rifles, 1 mile south of My Yen village.

Other elements of 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf destroyed four bunkers and held three detainees 1½ miles west of My Yen village.

Dec. 21:

Elements of 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf, in action 9 miles west of Saigon, found a cache including 31 RPG-7 rounds, 42 RPG-7 charges, 11 AK-47 rifles, eleven 120mm mortar rounds, 32 Chicom grenades and 11 demolition charges. Later, in an area nearby, one 30-pound Chicom Claymore mine, three 82mm mortar rounds, one 82mm mortar bipod and a fifty-five gallon drum of oil were discovered.

One VC (BC) was killed by other Brigade elements in brief contact 6 miles southwest of Duc Hoa.

Dec. 22:

Infantrymen from 3rd Bn, 7th Inf destroyed 50 enemy bunkers and one hootch 3½ miles southwest of Duc Hoa.

Five miles southwest of Duc Hoa, artillerymen from 2nd Bn, 40th Arty, destroyed five bunkers.

An air strike in the same area destroyed eight more bunkers while members of 5th Bn, 12th Inf added seven more bunkers to the day's total.

Elements of 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf destroyed one 30-lb. Chicom Claymore, one 81mm mortar round booby trap, and held one detainee for questioning.

A dental medcap (DENTCAP) conducted by the Brigade Civic Affairs Section (S-5) in Ho Nai village, resulted in the treatment of 230 Vietnamese civilians.

Dec. 23:

Brigade elements today uncovered several significant enemy ammunition caches southwest of Saigon.

Operating 17 miles southwest of Saigon, 3rd Bn, 7th Inf Redcatchers found a cache-complex which included: 130 mixed RPG rounds, one hundred-fifty 50mm mortar rounds, one hundred-eighty 60mm mortar detonators, two nundred 60mm mortar powder charges and fuses, twelve 75mm recoilless rifle rounds, 1000 Chicom grenade detonator fuzes and 25 lbs. TNT.

Elements of 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf uncovered another enemy munitions cache 13 miles southwest of Saigon containing: sixty 60mm mortar rounds, four AK-47 automatic rifles with one empty magazine, five cans of 60mm mortar charges, two cans of 60mm mortar fuzes, eight Chicom grenades, and thirty six 82mm mortar rounds.

Dec. 24:

Redcatchers found another enemy cache during recon-in-force operations near the village of Tan Buu today.

Infantrymen from Alpha Co, 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf, found a cache containing: more than two hundred-twenty five 234 Chicom grenades, 6,000 loose AK-47 rounds, one 55-gallon drum of gasoline, 40 B-40 rounds, more than 110 rifle grenades, 150 blasting caps, and two 75mm recoilless rifle rounds.

In the same area, three bunkers and 50 pounds of enemy TNT were destroyed.

Other operations resulted in six enemy bunkers and eight booby traps destroyed.

Dec. 25:

Brigade elements operating 6 miles southeast of Duc Hoa,

(Continued on Back Page)

HOLE-IN-THE-DOUGHNUT OF BARBED WIRE framed Redcatcher when concertina wire was set up around the perimenter of Bravo Co, 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf, with an assist by the 87th Engr Co. (Photo by Hansell)

1LT Morris Won DSC with 4/12

The Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's second-highest decoration for valor, was presented to First Lieutenant Wayne H. Morris July 14 by General Creighton W. Abrams, MACV commander, in a ceremony at Brigade Fire Support Base "Stephanie."

Lieutenant Morris distinguished himself in action Dec. 6, 1967 while leading his infantry platoon, part of 4th Bn, 12th Inf on a reconnaissance-in-force mission near Phouc Lac in Bien Hoa province.

Moving through heavy jungle in search of an enemy weapons emplacement, the platoon suddenly encountered heavy opposition from a well-entrenched NVA-Viet Cong battalion, incurring heavy casualties from claymore mines, automatic weapons, and rocket fire.

The violent attack disorganized the infantrymen and pinned them down. Disregarding the intense fire, Lieutenant Morris rallied and reorganized his men, then led attacks on the enemy. Driven back three times by the enemy battalion's firepower, he was ordered to withdraw and reorganize.

"He was up front of all the men in every rush we made on the VC bunkers," commented Specialist Four Charles W. Dickinson. When forced to withdraw to reorganize, Lt. Morris "risked his life for all the wounded," continued Dickson, "to get them all to safety and (then he led his men) back in to get the VC"

1LT Wayne Morris

Other Redcatcher units reinforced the U.S. units in contact.

After evacuating the casualties, numbering half the original platoon, Lieutenant Morris led the reinforcements in finally overrunning and defeating the enemy forces.

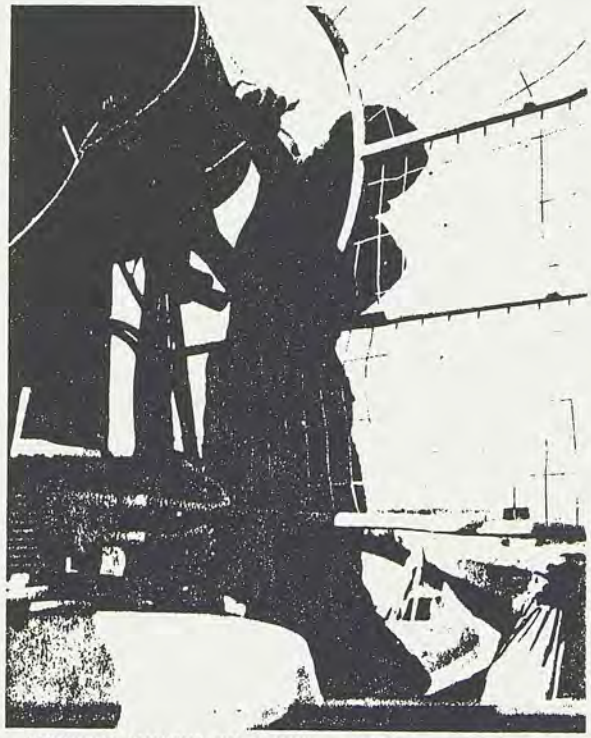
The infantrymen killed more than 60 enemy in the action. They also captured 200 grenades, 48 mortar rounds, 17 Claymore mines, 4,000 pounds of rice, 32 packs, 150 sets of mixed uniforms, medical supplies, documents, and approximately 260 cooking utensils.

Stated Specialist Four Ray D. Jones, "his (Lieutenant Morris's) actions kept our platoon organized while less than 20 meters from a large enemy force in bunkers. I cannot figure out why he wasn't hit. We were in close contact twice for nearly an hour."

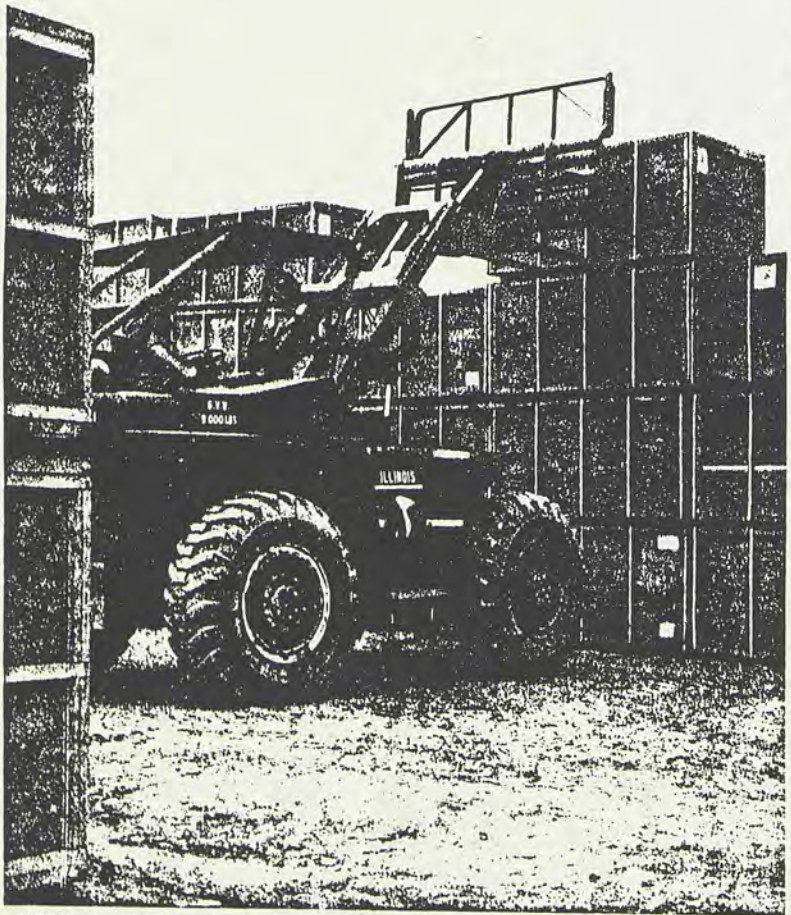
7th Spt Bn Keeps Redo

Story and Photos by S

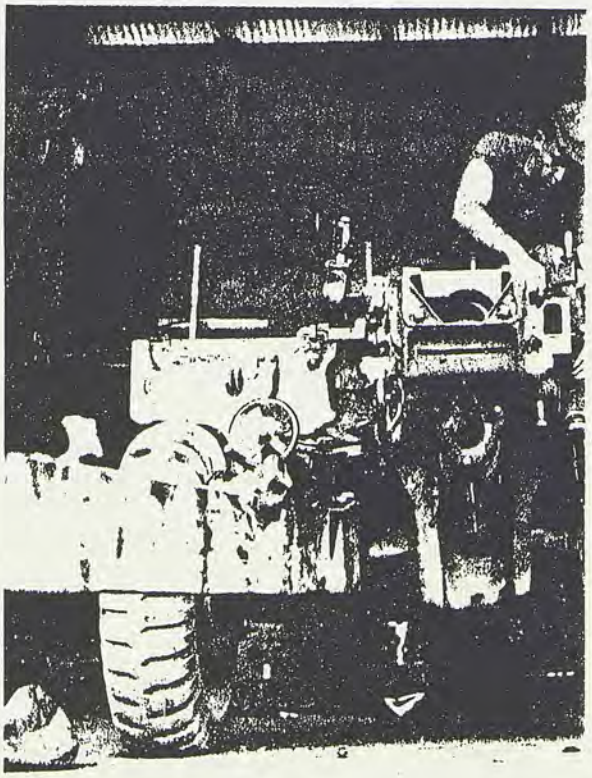
SUPPLYING WATER, Private First Class William L. Hanson of Madison, Wisc. checks gauges on his water truck as he pumps water into one of the more than 50 water points at BMB.



AIRBOAT MOTOR COWLING is tightened by Specialist F Efrain Gonzalez of Los Angeles, who works in the engineeri section.



FORKLIFT in 7th Spt Bn's stock yard at BMB is about to unload crate containing napkins, paper cups and plates bound for various mess units.



ARTILLERY REPAIRMAN Private First Class Junior R. works on 105 mm howitzer at Bravo Co's maintenance yard.

catchers from 'Hurting'

SP4 Peter Gyatlay-Pap

The demanding logistical task of sustaining the daily operations of the 199th Brigade is the responsibility of the 7th Spt Bn.

Under normal conditions this chore is massive both in scope and variety of service.

In critical times of combat, however, demands upon the support battalion increase with the level of fighting. During last year's Tet offensive and May attacks, support turned out to be a key factor in enabling the Brigade to swiftly employ devastating firepower on the enemy.

Brigadier General Frederic E. Davison, a colonel and acting commander of the Brigade during the Tet and May attacks, summed up the effectiveness of 7th Support when he said, "When everyone else was hurting, the 199th was not."

Organized June 1, 1966 at Ft. Benning, Ga., the battalion has improved and expanded its facilities since arriving in Vietnam with the Brigade in December, 1966. Its mission is to provide the Brigade with all classes of supplies and equipment, as well as medical, administrative, and personnel services.

"Being part of a separate Brigade, we operate much the way a support command does for a division," explained Lieutenant Colonel Jack Gray of Asheville, N.C., commanding officer of the battalion. Organic are three companies; the 71st Long Range Reconnaissance Platoon, 76th Combat Tracker Team, 49th Scout Dog Platoon, and the Redcatcher Training Center are also under its administrative jurisdiction.

Bravo Co, the largest, which handles supply and maintenance, is the "workhorse of the Brigade," according to the Colonel.

In a routine week, the company issues 84 tons of "A" rations (hot meals) and 24 tons of "C" rations to units within the Brigade, providing for over 15,000 meals per day.

In addition over 100 tons of ammunition and more than 100,000 gallons of petroleum products are drawn and issued each week, along with bulk quantities of field gear, uniforms and supplies of all kinds.

Hauling some 100,000 gallons of potable water to the 58 water points at the Brigade main base is a 24-hour chore for the drivers, who at times are subjected to sniper fire along the route.

"I was driving at night toward BMB," recalled Private First Class William Hanson of Madison, Wis., "when a round suddenly punctured the windshield in front of me. The bullet entered my open side window, missed my head by a foot or two, and went out the windshield, leaving a nice cobweb."

His reaction? "Heck, all I could do was drive on."

The maintenance platoon of Bravo Co. is divided into the engineer, service, electronic, automotive, armament and aviation sections, which service and repair "any piece of equipment the infantry has out there," according to section leader First Lieutenant James A. Fillmore or Warren, Ohio.

"It's our job," he continued, "to see that anything out in the field that breaks down gets fixed and shipped out again, or replaced, if neccecssary."

Heavy equipment often seen in the maintenance yard includes airboats, armored personnel carriers, generators, and howitzers. Items such as radios, radar, small arms, typewriters and other office machines, and electronic equipment are found in the individual shops in the compound.

"When the need arises," added Fillmore, "we go out to the infantry and artillery units to service broken-down equipment, such as generators or artillery pieces."

Another feature of Bravo Co is its consolidated mess hall, whose kitchen staff has managed to snare the II Field Forces Vietnam "Best Consolidated Mess" award seven of the last eleven times.

The medical company of the battalion administers to sick and wounded soldiers and has facilities to perform many services short of major surgery.

Three doctors and a dentist are staff for a 30-bed dispensary, although they are sometimes sent to field areas to render aid. Dental officer Captain Jerry Cremer has been traveling to accessible forward base camps to fill teeth in the battalion's new mobile dental van.

In an average week, up to 500 patients are treated by the company on sick call, of which three-quarters return to duty immediately. Almost 100 immunizations are given, 150 laboratory procedures initiated, and approximately 15 X-ray exposures taken. Charlie Co's ambulance platoon carries up to 150 patients per week in 50-odd trips to Long Binh post's specialized medical facilities.

Administrative and service personnel at Brigade headquarters are attached to the support battalion's Alpha Co.

By day they can be seen working work at the adjutant general's offices, finance, special services, staff judge advocate, and the post office.

At night they are called on to man bunkers and post guard. The 7th Support Battalion's ready-reaction force, consisting of cooks, clerks, and mechanics, responded quickly to help repulse the Viet Cong Tet attack against the Brigade main base last year.

The Special Service R&R center processes over 100 allocations and departures each week. Special Services has also added to its facilities a complete photo lab and a 4,000 volume library. Awards and Decorations handle about 250 recommendations for awards every month, while the Brigade Post Office, taking a breather after the Christmas mail crush, distributes about 500 sacks of incoming mail to Brigade units weekly.

The 7th Spt Bn, in sum, lives up to its motto of "On Call to Serve."

Four
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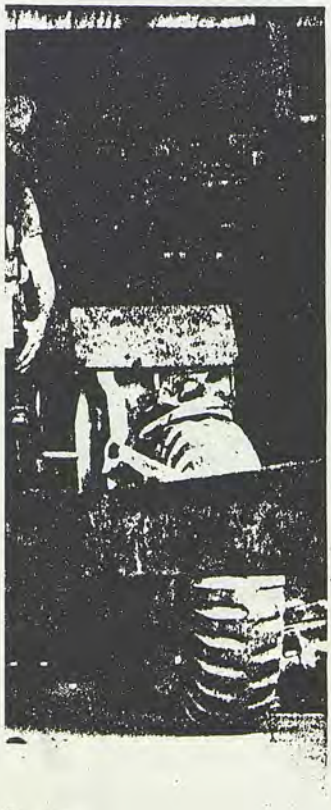


R. Osborne of Knoxville, Tenn.
rd.

ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIER gets new parts from Specialist Four Herman C. Haden of Martinsville, Va., a mechanic with Bravo Co-APC's are the heaviest vehicles maintained by 7th Spt Bn.

Holiday Celebrations

Warm Young, Old Hearts

By SP4 Peter Gyallay-Pap

Christmas has always been a time for sharing. For the men of the Brigade, the recent holiday period proved no exception.

Individual acts of sharing Yule food and small gifts with civilians young and old were observed in forward areas and base camps. At the Brigade main base, parties were given to orphans of nearby Ho Nai village and to civilian workers and their families.

The 199th's Red Cross Field Office also distributed over 1,000 "friendship bags" containing school and health items, plus toys, to young villagers in the Brigade's area of responsibility. The bags were contributed by individuals and groups in United States communities.

The Civil Affairs section of the Brigade distributed most of the bags, and along with its 4th Bn, 12th Inf counterpart, treated over 1,500 patients during Christmas Week MEDCAPS in Ho Nai. The latter unit also provided the Ho Nai "Charity House" nursing home and orphanage with hundreds of soap bars, canned fruit, juice, canned food, candy, cakes and assorted cookies.

The Charity House has also been the recipient of good-will services from Specialist Five John Dirby, a Redcatcher from Hawaii, who regularly conducts English classes for the sisters in charge, who in turn teach the language to hundreds of children at their parochial school. He and Lieutenant Norman K. Welch, both in the Brigade's headquarters, and who have been helping the Charity House for months, sponsored Christmas Day festivities there for hundreds of children living in the adjoining hamlet.

Cooks of the 7th Spt Bn's mess hall donated money for a pre-Christmas party given to 75 Vietnamese KP's and their children. Charlie Co Commander Captain Charles C. Brandt of New Orleans played Santa and gave out presents to the youngsters, one of whom was a crippled orphan boy from Ho Nai invited as a special guest by Mess Sergeants Johnny Beelend and Arthus Ford, both from Georgia.

Elsewhere in the Brigade, almost a hundred boys and girls from Bethany Orphanage of Ho Nai were treated at BMB to a Christmas party given by the MP's.

The 152nd and Headquarters MP platoons contributed almost $250 on payday in November to cover the costs of refreshments, presents and a specially tailored Santa's outfit worn by Bruce Howell of Columbus Ohio, otherwise a criminal investigator for the Brigade.

"The kids were a bit hesitant at first, admitted Howell, "but during the party they all warmed up to the idea and were even impressed with it. They had a good time."

The highlight of the affair, which was held at the Cross-Pistol MP Lounge, turned out to be the kids themselves, who presented an impressive stage show complete with colorful home-made costumes, songs—some with English holiday greetings—well-rehearsed dances, and even clown scenes by the boys.

"It was a big surprise to everybody," said Sergeant First Class Arthus A. Bouthillier of Thomsonville, Conn., one of the organizers of the function.

Brigade Provost Marshal Major Richard A. Spaulding was impressed with the "work and effort of the orphans and sisters, whose show really made our Christmas Day."

At a forward location southwest of Saigon, the 5th Bn, 12th Inf civic action shop donated boxloads of clothing, sendal thongs, dolls and other toys to the Dien Quang Orphanage on Highway Four.

Another holiday affair for over 50 workers and their families was given by the Deputy Installation Coordinator's office at BMB. Held outside their grounds, the function was smartly arranged in a carnival-type setting, with attractions such as booths for apple-bobbing, knocking over cans with balls, and areas for relay races, tug-of-war and soccer. Refreshments were served in another booth and consisted of the usual goodies of cake, ice cream, cookies and soda.

Specially built see-saws and even a latrine were made for the guests.

A dozen DIC members instructed children in the games, while also taking an active part in them; they kept things orderly and gave out prizes that included Vietnamese T-shirts, shower sandals, toilet articles and 100-piaster notes.

"Our section (DIC) thought up the idea, but the entire Brigade helped us out," said Sergeant First Class Robert Boyer of Camden, N.J., one of the organizers. "The prizes and refreshments were furnished by mess halls, clubs, and Civil Affairs shops, as well as DIC members themselves."

VIETNAMESE ORPHAN dressed for a dancing presentation, gets a gift from Santa and gives a cool appraisal in return. (Photo by Gyallay-Pap)

STICKY FINGERS from goodies vex young lady from Ho Nai village at the DIC carnival, but sticky feet from the ice cream carton go unnoticed. (Photo by Eckert)

YOUNG LAD tries apple-on-a-string, urged on by Specialist Four Donald W. Snow of Vetura, Calif. (Photo by Eckert)

VIETNAMESE ORPHAN is held by MP Specialist Four Timothy A. Cook of Benton Harbor, Mich. during Christmas party. (Photo by Gyallay-Pap)

SISTERLY TOTS are fed ice cream by Commo Specialist Four David G. Priest of Miami, Okla. at 7th Spt's pre-Christmas party for KP's and their children. (Photo by Eckert)

Education Through Reading

Where are the soldiers of old who used to read comic books so avidly? They are on the way out just like the M-1 rifles they carried. There are still diehards but, for the most part, today's soldier is better educated and his reading material more sophisticated.

Education does not necessarily depend on the amount of schooling one has. Some men who have not even completed high school have educated and informed themselves by reading newspapers, magazines and books. Reading stimulates thought and stimulated thought brings about a curiosity to learn more.

Go to any battalion fire support base camp and you will find someone ready and able to discuss intelligently any subject you can think of—from religion and politics to economics and Einstein's Theory of Relativity. Take a look at what the guy in the next bunker is reading sometime. It's likely to surprise you. It may be the latest book on the best-seller list, or even James Joyce or Jean-Paul Sartre.

The comic books are still present but, as a steady diet, they leave something to be desired. Knowledge is becoming more and more important in this growing age of science, learning and technology.

Soldiers who could not afford to go to college and many who were not able to finish have made plans to take advantage of the government educational aid to veterans after separation. Men who failed to graduate from high school may receive their diploma while serving in the Army, and it will be accepted at most universities.

The importance of education in this age of specialization cannot be emphasized enough. Statistics show that those men who go back to school after leaving the Army usually graduate and that they appreciate their hard-earned degrees more than those students who have not been called to serve their country.

When you leave the Army, by all means go back and finish your education. It will pay off in the long run.

SP4 Hensler SOM For December

Specialist Four Charles P. Hensler of Pittsburg, Pa. was the December Soldier of the Month and the fourth soldier so selected since the idea was initiated at Brigade in September 68.

Because of hard work and self-discipline, he was chosen as the enlisted aide to the brigade commander of the 199th and assisted acting commander Colonel Jeffery G. Smith and also Brigadier General Frederic E. Davison upon his return from the States in January.

Hensler has been in Vietnam for 10 months and worked as a rifleman with Bravo Co, 5th Bn., 12th Inf.

For his selection as a Soldier of the Month, he was granted a 3 day R&R and also given a custom tailored suit, a twenty five dollar savings bond and twenty five dollars in cash. Like the three previous enlisted aides, he flew combat missions in the chopper "War Watcher" as a radio operator.

After serving in Vietnam he plans to continue school.

BACK-BREAKER—Specialist Four Edfin L. Moreland works out by doing squatting exercises with a 219-lb. homemade weight. Behind are others he fashioned from cement and steel bars. (Photo by Helmers)

Makes Own Problems

Weightlifter Strains Toward Uplift Goal

By Sp4 Jere Helmers

You would think that all field soldiers work hard enough during the day and are ready to relax when duty hours are over.

Not true of Specialist Four Edwin Morland from Lancaster, Kan. Once he is free, no matter how late in the evening, he retreats to his homemade gymnasium at the fire support base of 5th Bn, 12th Inf and works out with improvised weights.

At first he tried making weights out of sandbags tied to the ends of a steel bar. This wasn't good enough, and so he obtained some cement and different size cans and set to work. He poured the cement in no. 10 and five-gallon cans. While the cement was setting, Morland stuck a steel rod in the center of the can, thus having a cement weight on each end of the rod. He constructed several sets of weights, which he uses daily, ranging from 35 pounds to 210 pounds.

The weights weren't enough to work out with, so he had some high-tension springs sent from home. To complete his field expedient gymnasium he constructed a bench press for doing his excercises.

One of Morland's greatest desires is to throw the javelin in the Olympics. Although no one actually urged him, he started throwing the javelin in high school. In 1967, while attending Highland Junior College, he set a record for the javelin throw of 230 ft. 2 in. at the National Junior College Track Meet at Garden City, Kan. During all his time throwing the javelin, he has never received any formal coaching.

When asked why he works out every night, after doing a hard day's work, he replied, "I like to stay in shape."

Morland was in the field for six months as a line soldier. During this time he received a Bronze Star Medal and a Purple Heart. He is presently assigned to the headquarters company, where he is a vehicle driver, and works on various construction projects around the fire base camp.

'Old Guardsmen' find Transport Versatile

By SP4 James Christofferson

If the Viet Cong were using Paul Revere's "One if by land, two if by sea" signal system against the 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf, the signalman would probably have burned down the church tower in frustration.

The "Old Guard" infantrymen are not to be outguessed as to their mode of transportation for a particular operation, as they assault the enemy by land, sea, and air, or any combination of the three.

A recent sweep operation in the Ben Luc area southwest of Saigon illustrates the point.

The operation began as the soldiers were transported from their company positions by helicopter and inserted into the rice paddies, where the sweep was to originate.

Next, the Redcatchers walked the predetermined route, searching along a several-thousand meter axis in three elements that covered a total area of more than twelve thousand square meters.

Reaching the banks of the Song Co Dong River, the troops were loaded onto LCM's (Landing Craft, Medium) and taken down the river to Highway 4, where they mounted trucks and were returned to their fire support base.

Thus, in a single operation, the battalion employed four distinct means of transporting the infantrymen from point to point.

With such versatility available for nearly every combat operation, it is doubtful that the Viet Cong will adopt the early warning system made famous by the Boston colonists.

If they do, they'd better have a good supply of lanterns.

VN Mailing Privileges

Redcatchers are reminded that free mailing privileges extend only to personal letters and voice recordings.

The limits on personal mail require that the letter not exceed 5 by 11½-in. dimensions. Enclosures in personal letters are limited to snapshots and clippings. Publications such as magazines and newspapers, including *Redcatcher!*, cannot be mailed free.

A word of advice: Mailings that violate these rules are not returned to you. The person who receives them has to pay the extra postage.

So do yourself and your friends a favor. Observe postal regulations.

Your Patch

Hey, Redcatcher!

Ask your buddy if he knows what the Redcatcher patch stands for.

Chances are he won't know.

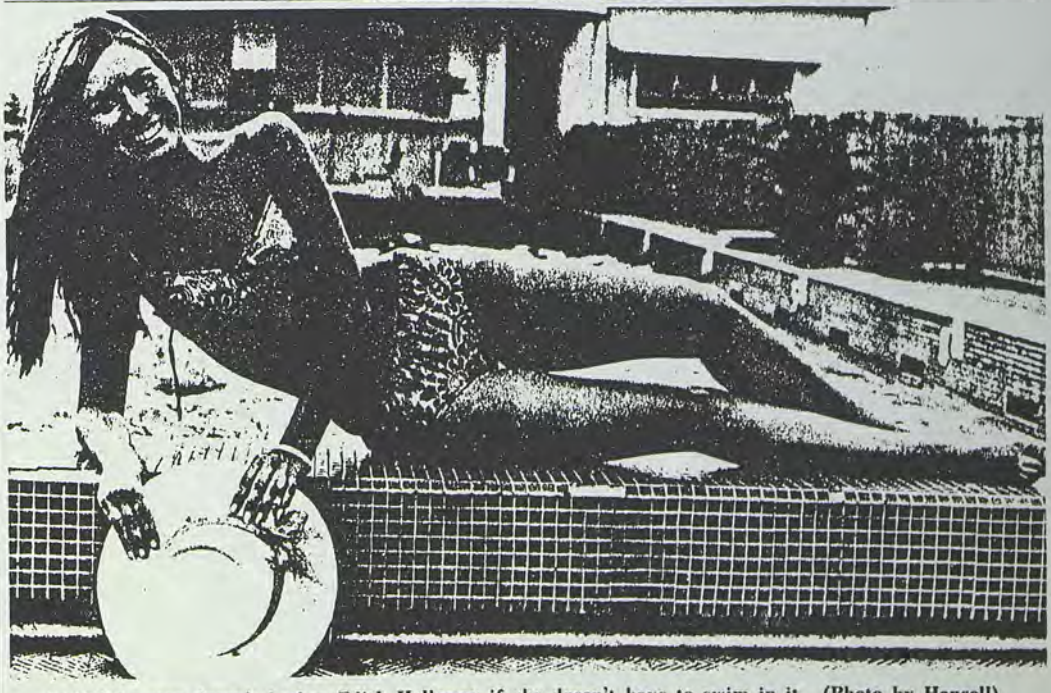
Now you can tell him, with authority, that the blue and white colors denote the Infantry. The spear, an early Infantry weapon, in flames symbolizes the evolution and firepower of the modern Infantry. It represents early Infantry's use of thrusting weapons and projectiles thrown or shot from bows, ballistas and catapults.

Contrary to popular Brigade belief, the RED BALL in the center of the patch represents man's splitting of the atom... the Nuclear Age in which Infantry fights side by side with weapons of sophisticated warfare.

The yellow flame signifies the advent of gunpowder and the development of a new trend in Infantry warfare. Fusillades through the centuries echoed from the reports of the matchlock, the flintlock, the percussion cap and repeating rifle.

Infantry warfare becomes more massive in the face of these weapons, but the repeating rifle dominates, with modifications, to this day.

The overall patch is symbolic of the development of Infantry and Infantry support through the ages. The oblong blue shield of the patch is a depiction of the shields used by the forerunners of modern Infantry, namely the Greek Phalanx and the Roman Legion.



SAIGON water doesn't bother Edith Holloway if she doesn't have to swim in it. (Photo by Hansell)

STAFF SERGEANT James F. Newton was smiling when he counted his nearly $9,000 total reenlistment entitlement in December, including a bonus of $8,000 —highest ever paid in the Brigade. At right is Sergeant First Class Donald E. Fleming, Brigade career counselor.

Summary

Continued from Third Page

while in a defensive position, reported receiving one grenade from an unknown size enemy force. The enemy withdrew immediately. One Redcatcher was wounded.

Dec. 26:

"Old Guard" infantrymen from 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf located another cache buried in a metal container 8 miles southwest of Saigon today.

The enemy cache included: eight 12mm mortar rounds, six 122mm warheads, six 12mm rocket fuses, 100 lbs. of Chicom TNT and a small amount of web gear. The cache appeared to have been in place two months.

Five bunkers were also destroyed, along with a small amount of miscellaneous supplies.

In other Brigade action, one VC was killed and three sampans destroyed in two separate encounters west of Saigon.

Dec. 27:

During reconnaissance-in-force operations south and west of Saigon, Redcatchers continued to uncover enemy munitions and supply caches, and to destroy enemy bunkers, fighting positions and booby traps.

Delta Co, 3rd Bn, 7th Inf discovered a cache 8 miles west of Saigon containing forty two 82mm mortar rounds, three hundred 82mm charges and four Chicom Claymore mines.

Alpha Co, 3rd Bn, 7th Inf killed one VC (BC) and destroyed 42 bunkers, found 5 lbs. TNT, 7 AK-47 magazines, 45 rounds AK-47 ammunition, 50 rounds of M-14 ammunition and 100 lbs. rice.

In the same area Echo Co, 3rd Bn, 7th Inf destroyed three bunkers, eight fighting positions, two sampans and detained one person.

2/3 Recon Platoon Prefers Field Work

Acting alternately as infantrymen and ambassadors of good will, the reconnaissance platoon of the 2d Bn, 3d Inf performs a unique and varied role.

Situated astride a major Viet Cong infiltration route into the Saigon area, the element conducts day and night operations in an effort to check elusive enemy movement.

The platoon also works in conjunction with an ARVN company operating in the same area. The Americans and Vietnamese have established good relations to combat a common foe, and the cooperation evolving from this effort has resulted in the capture of numerous caches and sharing of intelligence information.

Formed last February at the conclusion of the Tet Offensive, the recon platoon has established itself since then as an effective fighting force and a good ready-reaction force for the battalion, and it has been used extensively as both.

The most memorable day for the "veterans" in the platoon occurred at the outbreak of the May Offensive. The recon platoon was conducting a three-day reconnaissance mission southwest of Saigon, and as they lay in the middle of a rice paddy hoping to observe enemy movement at night, one man spotted something to his front.

The movement was soon discovered to come from groups of twenty to thirty enemy soldiers on at least three sides of the Americans. The platoon was pinned down all night and most of the following morning as it called in artillery and gunships to drive back the superior enemy force.

One of the more memorable and less harrowing experiences for the men was when they were asked to instruct their ARVN counterparts in firing the M-16 rifle. At the same time the two groups conducted combined patrols and night ambushes, trading their respective "tricks of the trade".

Sergeant Terry D. Bowman, a squad leader and one of the original volunteers in the platoon, said, "Most of us volunteered for recon because we felt that it would be more of a challenge, and that the men would be a lot closer than in a regular line platoon."

At Midnight: First 1969 VN Reenlistment

Staff Sergeant Amos F. Woods of Shelbyville, Ill. and a member of the 199th Brigade, nailed down another "first" at precisely midnight Dec. 31 by becoming the first serviceman in Vietnam to reenlist in 1969, during a ceremony at the Brigade's forward headquarters.

It wasn't a new experience to Sergeant Woods, since he was also the first to reenlist in 1963 while serving with the 38th Arty Bn in Germany.

As the seconds neared 1969, Colonel Jeffrey G. Smith, Acting Brigade Commander, began reading the reenlistment oath to Woods while keeping an eye on the wall clock. Pausing slightly, Colonel Smith pronounced the date just as the second hand moved into the new year, assuring the battalion maintenance sergeant with 3rd Bn, 7th Inf his second "first."

Outside, flares lit the sky of the new year.

Sergeant Woods entered the service in 1954 as a heavy equipment operator and was sent to Germany in 1956. He left the service in 1959.

He rejoined the Army in 1961, returning to Germany with the 38th Arty as a 'dozer operator and gunner. It was there he accomplished his initial first in beating others to the reenlistment.

After serving a stint with the Korean Military Assistance Group as an advisor and maintenance sergeant from 1965 to 67, Woods was sent to Vietnam with the 87th Engr Co of the Brigade. He has now extended twice.

CSM Valent Top Brigade EM

Those in the Brigade who have crossed paths with Command Sergeant Major Othon O. Valent know him as a "fighter" with definite views on military and related subjects.

Born and raised in a tough New York neighborhood, where he boxed and played football at Textile High School on West 19th St, he joined the Army in January 1941. His enlistment was extended slightly when the United States entered the Second World War in December.

After paratroop training at Ft. Benning, he made combat jumps in Normandy and Holland with the 101st Airborne Division and marched into Germany with it. His fighting spirit not only earned him medals, quick promotions and the nickname "Jump," but also equally swift demotions when it occasionally overflowed.

After the war, Command Sergeant Major Valent was discharged and attended the Delahanty Institute while working as a shipping clerk. Five months later, in January 1945, he was back in the Army with the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment in Germany. When the unit broke up, he joined the 82d Airborne, where he remained until the Korean War.

As platoon sergeant in the newly formed 187th Airbone Regimental Combat Team, he fought in the Korean War, where he made two more combat jumps, and rose in rank to first sergeant by April, 1951.

Following the war, he served successive tours in Japan, Germany, the U.S. and again Korea with the 11th Airbone and 24th Infantry Divisions, the 197th Light Infantry Brigade (Ft. Benning) and the 2d Infantry Division. Prior to coming to the 199th in July 1968, he was sergeant major of the Fifth U.S. Army at Ft. Sheridan, Ill.

Known to many as "Top," CSG Valent is an affable man who is often seen about Brigade areas with a 'big stick' expression, looking for inefficiencies. He spent Christmas with Colonel Jeffrey G. Smith, Acting Brigade Commander, distributing gifts to the troops in the field. Respected by enlisted men and officers alike, he recently pointed out some differences between the American fighting man of today and the WWII soldier. He said, "These kids today, they're smarter, they're quicker, and have more ability than my counterparts then. This is a must with all the new weapons and sophisticated commo with which they must contend. I would say the firepower of a company today is about equal to that of a battalion in World War II or even the Korean War..."

Of a soldier's bearing he says, "The American soldier is more intelligent today and more adaptable to the strains of combat. There is less griping, which was a fad among everyone then, today. The soldier takes better care of himself and is provided with all kinds of modern clothing and equipment unheard of then."

Soldier's interests? "There are less sports and interest in sports than there used to be. But today, you have all kinds of gadgets—transistor radios, TV's and tape recorders, plus there's more entertainment for the soldier today."

Army programs? "I've been enrolled in the Army extension courses since 1948, and have now the equivalency of a college education. The professional soldier must stay abreast of new developments, get involved, or else he loses touch."

"The NCOC program is one of the best new programs in the Army for lads with potential to be leaders. They're taught the technical knowledge and leadership principles that save field commanders the trouble and time of training subordinates."

Upon retirement in a few years, CSM Valent plans to intensify his interest in fishing, hunting, raising bird dogs (pointers, setters and Laborators), and building boats. In the meantime, he plans to stay with the Brigade for an extended period because, "It's a good outfit."

REDCATCHER Command Sergeant Major Othon O. Valent talks with old friend, Command Sergeant Major William O. Wooldridge of MACV. (Photo by Hansell)

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