



Vol 3 No. 52

TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS

December 23, 1968

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Santa Is A Cavalryman To Children From Bac Ha's Catholic Orphanage

On Christmas Eve the 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry, will celebrate with 100 Vietnamese children - all orphans from the Vietnam War between the ages of 4 and 6.

The men of the 3/4 Horse Squadron, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Robert S. McGowan, realize that one of the major battles in Vietnam today is achieving mutual understanding between Americans and the Vietnamese people.

For this reason, last September, Command Sergeant Major Wilbur T. Duggins, Vine Grove, Ky., the Squadron's top enlisted man, initiated a plan to celebrate Christmas with the local Bac Ha orphanage. The cavalry troopers donated hundreds of dollars to the purchase of presents for these children.

This money was sent home to Duggins' wife in Vine Grove, Ky., and the family of Captain Garrett Marcinkowski of Cohasset, Mass. Through the Waiting Wives Club of Vine Grove and business associates of Marcinkowski's mother, over 100 presents were bought, wrapped and shipped to Vietnam. In addition, much clothing and candy was sent.

On Christmas Eve the story of Christ's birth will be explained by interpreters attached to the squadron. The Division band will fill the air with Christmas carols.

Then Santa Claus will drop out of the sky in one of the squadron's helicopter gunships. Each of the 100 orphans will receive a gift from Santa Claus as well as plenty of candy, cake and ice cream.

The Christmas spirit will be alive this year even on the battlefields of Vietnam.



SANTA - CW2 Russet Mattison of Mountain Lake, Minn., dons the white beard and the red and white togs of Kris Kringle as he distributes Christmas gifts to the children from the Catholic orphanage in Bac Ha.

GREETINGS - Santa cheers up a young girl obviously engrossed in the cake and ice cream provided at the Christmas party in the 3/4 Cavalry Enlisted Men's Club.



Yule Spirit Infiltrating?

It will never be confirmed officially, but Captain Marigold 'Duke' Wellington of the 1st Battalion (Magnetized), 007th Infantry Gumshoes is worried about his bunker line. Incidents at Fire Support Base Tinsel indicate either Christmas is coming to Vietnam or the Viet Cong are trying psychological harassments.

This report would not have come to light but for PFC Alfred Dreyfus. In his own words: "I was giving the old man's office a casual cleaning when I accidentally happened on the report. It was in a folder covered with Christmas Seals inside an envelope at the bottom of a strong box in the bottom drawer of the captain's locked desk."

The incidents began December 1st when dawn revealed the bunkers hung with stockings. At 2:30 a.m. on December 11th, First Sergeant Otto Bismark awoke in a cold sweat thinking his bunker was on fire. It took him only minutes to recognize the aroma of roasting chestnuts, which suddenly vanished.

Two nights later the sergeant of the guard answered a call from PFC Thomas Edison who swore he had a reindeer in his starlight scope. Before the sergeant reached the scene, the apparition vanished, but both men heard the sound of harness bells, faintly and clearly.

One of the most unnerving experiences happened to Specialist 4 Sigmund Freud as he was closing the bunker club

December 17th. Suddenly he noticed an exceedingly small man in a red suit sitting on the cash box. The little man said he was from Elf, Gnome and Dwarf, Virtue Research Associates, Inc., and asked Freud if he had been a good boy during the year.

Med Tools Found

DAU TIENG - Thanks to an observant patrol of 3d Brigade, a Viet Cong doctor has unwittingly donated his surgical instruments to the district dispensary at Dau Tieng.

Bravo Company of the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Wolfhounds unearthed the surgical instruments and other medical supplies in a 200-bunker hospital complex 50 miles northwest of Saigon.

The hospital, carefully hidden in a deserted rubber plantation, also yielded four enemy bodies and a shop where the enemy was manufacturing grenades and other ammunition.

After the surgical instruments were taken to Dau Tieng base camp and cleaned under supervision of the 3d Brigade civic action section, they were presented to the dispensary of Tri Tam district.

"We know how highly these instruments are valued and wish there was more we could do at this time," said Colonel Lewis J. Ashley, 3d Brigade commander.

Golden Dragons Rebuild Roadway

CU CHI - Operating with village, hamlet and district inhabitants and officials, elements of the 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry, helped to rebuild 1,000 meters of road from Duc Hoa to Giong-Cam, a community of 750 people.

The recent civic action project in Duc Hoa district by the 2d Brigade soldiers has proved to be as successful as the combat operations in the area.

"While part of our forces secured the area, others worked alongside the Vietnamese people using materials we supplied," stated First Lieutenant John Grier, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Golden Dragon civic action officer.

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Decorated

BRONZE STAR

CPT Terry S. Schwartz, HHC, 4th Bn (Mech), 23d Inf
 CPT David F. Guerrieri, HHB, 2d Bn, 77th Arty
 1LT Lawrence W. Rice, A Btry, 2d Bn, 77th Arty
 1LT Ronald J. Komar, 25th MI Det
 1LT Thomas Komline, 372d Radio Research Co
 MSG Whitney M. Walker, Hq & Co A, 25th Med Bn
 1SG Alfred 'Hendrickson, HHC, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 PSG Davie L. Dobins, Co A, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 PSG Leroy Robinson, Jr., Co C, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 PSG Marion D. Wright, HHC, 4th En (Mech), 23d Inf
 SFC Donald Brown, Hq & Co A, 25th Med Bn
 SSG Buford Jones, Co C, 4th Bn, 9th Inf
 SSG Terry J. LeBlanc, Co D, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SSG Marvin'ewis, Co E, 65th Engr Bn
 SSG Burl Malone, Co C, 4th Bn, 9th Inf
 SSG Vernie Nance, Co A, 25th Avn Bn
 SSG Clarence L. Kreuser, Co B, 25th Sup & Trans
 SSG Richard W. Beetle, HHB, 2d Bn, 77th Arty
 SSG Alvin R. Cobbs, HHC, 65th Engr Bn
 SSG Kenneth B. Sowards, B Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SSG Ralph C. Zilker, HHC, 1st En (Mech), 5th Inf

SGT Terry R. :Nystrom, Co B, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SGT Walter R. Scott, Co D, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 SGT Charles B. Camarillo, HHC, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SGT Richard F. Andrews, HHC, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SGT Joseph Versluys, Co C, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 SGT James A. Waldron, Co B, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SP5 Robert A. Norwood, Co C, 25th Med Bn
 SP5 Russell E. Garriss, HHC, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SP5 Glenn W. Rushing, Co B, 25th Avn Bn
 SP5 Pete R. Canales, HHC, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SP5 Jon L. Horn, HHC, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 SP5 Glen E. Pfefferkoin, HHC, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SP5 Thomas A. Ames, HHC, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SP5 Robert E. Manning, 372d Radio Research Co
 SP5 Frederick L. Sandrock, HHB, 2d Bn, 77th Arty
 SP5 Roger Gomez, HHC, 25th Sup & Trans.
 SP5 Lee S. Gross, HHD, 25th Avn Bn
 SP5 Ralph C. Irwin, HHC, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 SP5 Dennis W. Murphy, 372d Radio Research Co
 SP5 Erwin L. Mallernee, HHB, 2d Bn, 77th Arty
 SP4 Bruce Korogi, Co C, 2d Bn, 27th Inf

SSG James M. Whitefield, Co D, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SSG Norman Prevo, Co C, 4th En, 9th Inf
 SSG Gilberto Sanchez, Co C, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 SGT David L. Brandau, HHC, 2d Bn, 77th Arty
 SGT Ronald C. Kramer, Co B, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SGT John P. O'Brien, Jr., Co B, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SGT David A. Rebarchek, HHC, 4th Bn (Mech), 23d Inf
 SGT Leonard Royston, Co C, 4th Bn, 9th Inf
 SGT James R. Watson, HHC, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SGT Stanley J. Bartosevich, 372d Radio Research Co
 SGT Frank P. Cruikshank, HHC, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 SGT Arthur L. Lundgren, HHC, 2d Bde
 SGT Edward Purdy, Co C, 4th Bn, 9th Inf
 SGT Gerald L. Richardson, Co B, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SGT Donald J. Smith, HHC, 2d Bn, 77th Arty
 SGT Lawrence H. Mitchell, Jr., Co B, 4th Bn, 9th Inf
 SGT Harry B. Niedringhaus, Co B, 4th Bn, 9th Inf
 SGT Dale D. Pinkert, B Btry, 3d En, 13th Arty
 SGT Barry A. Spinks, Co C, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SGT Joe A. Webb, HHD, 125th Sig Bn
 SGT Louis C. Carroll, Co A, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 SGT Arthur L. Mc Duffie, Co B, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SGT William A. Noble, HHC, 2d Bn, 27th Inf

SP4 Julius Johnson, Co C, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 James M. Fitzgerald, HHC, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SP4 Freddie L. Peters, HHC, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SP4 Sydney L. Rankin, HHC, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SP4 Walter Baumgarten, Co C, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Barry B. Baumgartner, Co B, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SP4 Jerry M. Blalock, Co B, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SP4 Joseph Bott, Co C, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 David L. Crouch, Co B, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SP4 Melvyn A. Dolinke, Co B, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SP4 Emory Johnson, Co B, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SP4 Daryl C. Mickens, Co C, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Remijio Montez, Co B, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SP4 Robert A. Roughton, Co B, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SP4 Charles R. Scott, Co D, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Hugh Sprott, Co C, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Alvin L. Starks, Co B, 1st Bn (Mech), 5th Inf
 SP4 Tommey E. Swafford, Co D, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Larry G. Cox, Co C, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 John A. Marano, Co D, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 John W. Nichols, 372d Radio Research Co
 SP4 Frederick E. Shaw, Co D, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Alfred G. Wallace, Co D, 1st Bn, 27th Inf



Tropic Lightning Tots

The Commanding General Welcomes

The Following Tropic Lightning Tots

**To The 25th Infantry Division – As
 Reported By The American Red Cross.
 Born To:**

CPT and Mrs. Frank W. Clarke, Div. Surgeon's Office, a girl born Dec. 2
 CPT and Mrs. James P. Rackstraw, Co D, 2d Bn, 14th Inf, a daughter, born Dec 2.
 CPT and Mrs. Thomas R. Miller, Co B, 36th Sig Bn, a daughter born Nov. 25
 1LT and Mrs. Gary T. Tryon, Svc Btry, 1st Bn, 27th Arty, a daughter, born December 1
 SP4 and Mrs. James W. McPeak, 20th Trans, a daughter, born Dec 1.
 SP4 and Mrs. Dennis J. Stanley, 554th Engr Bn, a daughter, born Dec 1.
 SP4 and Mrs. Michael A. Ocdy, Co B, 65th Engr Bn, a daughter, born December 1
 SP4 and Mrs. Lee E. Thompson, 94th Maint Co, a daughter, born December 3
 SP4 and Mrs. John A. Pheil, 20th Trans, a daughter, born December 4

MARS Can Send Voice From Home

Many soldiers who are new in country have never heard of the Mars radio-telephone system which is available to them in Vietnam.

You can place calls to the United States through MARS. The facilities are available to all government personnel.

Calls are charged only for the long distance rates between the Stateside MARS station and the party you are calling. The bill goes to the party you call. Charges range from \$17.00 from Hawaii or Alaska to the Continental United States, down to \$5.00 or less within CONUS.

To place a MARS call, go to the Cu Chi MARS station, between the 125th Signal Battalion and the 12th Evacuation Hospital. You can also call 5210/5136 between 1800 hours and 1100 hours.

There is also a MARS station at Dau Tieng Base Camp. Their phone number is DTG 250/252.

Personnel at Tay Ninh Base Camp may make MARS calls at the Holiday Inn from 1800 Sunday to 1800 Monday, and 1800 Thursday to 1800 Friday. Call TNH 133.

Callers must be prepared for considerable delays. A request for a call made by telephone remains effective only until 1100 hours each day. The waiting room at the Cu Chi station remains open 24 hours per day.

Dry Season

Don't Choke, Burn, Faint

With the coming of the dry season, all personnel must make every effort towards minimizing such seasonal hazards as fire, excessive dust, clogged coolant systems, heat exhaustion, dry rot of airlift webbed equipment and aircraft accidents.

All units are required to initiate vigorous dust suppression programs. Field helipads will be peneprimed by the unit located at the pad.

Fire hazards such as high grass and brush should be removed. At fire bases fire lanes and breaks will be cut, and where practical, dry grass will be burned from an area before it is occupied.

Geneva Accord Guards Rights For Detainees

How does one treat a detainee?

Your position is similar to that of a police officer who takes a suspect into custody at the scene of a crime. The policeman must treat his suspect as potentially dangerous, but he must remember that there is also a chance that the suspect may be entirely innocent.

You are not allowed to try, convict or punish your prisoner. As long as he is in your custody he is simply a detainee and is entitled to all of the protections of the Geneva Conventions.

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Three Eagle Flights Make It A Full Day For Regular Company

TAY NINH - Fighting positions, bunkers, rice, RPG rounds, it doesn't make any difference to battling Bravo Company, 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry - they find them all.

On a recent series of Eagle flights saturating an area 12 miles west of Tay Ninh base camp, Bravo started the day by uncovering a burial ground containing 11 empty graves and three with enemy bodies, approximately 10 days old.

Surrounding the grave site were six spider holes and six brick lined fighting positions.

"Our engineers destroyed the fighting positions with charges of C-4. We searched the area thoroughly with negative results and prepared for our next insertion," said Captain George Feathersen, Bravo's commanding officer from Houston, Texas.

The Regulars were airlifted out a few thousand meters away and headed back into the jungles. Shortly after starting their search they came across what once was an enemy aid station. What must have been the hospital, a thatched hut ten feet square, occupied the center of the complex. Six bunkers, five feet square, skirted the complex. Each had three feet of overhead cover, but this posed no problem for the engineers who set about the task of reducing them to rubble.

Soon Bravo was airborne once again on their way to the third insertion of their already busy day. This time they uncovered 15 bunkers and 21 fighting positions.

"By this time our engineers were running short of demolitions," said First Lieutenant John Law of Troy, N.Y., then a forward observer with Bravo. "I put in a call to our battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Hunt, and he arrived in his command and control ship with all the resupply we needed to destroy the complex."



HOLDING A RADIO SPEAKER to his ear, Specialist 4 Hubert Tremble of the 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry, talks with a Chinook pilot delivering supplies to the unit's night laager site. (PHOTO BY SP4 CHARLES HAUGHEY)

'Never Thought I'd Be Here' Soon Gives Way to 'Short!'

CU CHI - "Vietnam, I never thought I'd be here", commented one of the new replacements.

By the time this soldier gets his permanent duty station he is weary, tired, and bewildered. He is not sure what to think. As he goes through his reinforcement training he is subject to hearing his fellow soldiers yelling "Short!" and just plain letting him know that he's new in country.

Private First Class Christopher S. Stnews, of Salt Lake City, Utah, a replacement for Company C, 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23rd Infantry, had this to say as he arrived in Vietnam, "I'm very confused, just like being in any other new situation, but as time goes by I will become established, and life will be a lot easier."

This is the typical opinion of the new arrival. Time does go on and the new combat soldier turns into a veteran.



RTO - During a push through heavy vegetation in the area of the Iron Triangle, 35 miles northwest of Saigon, a radio-telephone operator stops to listen for sounds of enemy movement. Private First Class Edward Daniels is RTO for a forward observer of the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Wolfhounds. (PHOTO BY SP4 HECTOR NADAL)

Wolfhounds Kill 3 VC

CU CHI - Bravo Company of the 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry, killed three VC and detained one suspect in action near the Phu Cuong Bridge.

"We were using engineer work boats to carry the men," Captain Charles Holt, Garland, Tex., recalled. "When we got to the mouth of the canal, the two boats landed, one on each side, and the men dismounted."

"The VC probably weren't aware that we were coming their way," said Sergeant James Robertson, Jacksonville, Fla., "because they sure left many articles of web gear, clothing, a fishing net and ponchos."

The Tropic Lightning soldiers, while searching the area later that day, found another body and detained one suspect.



BRAVO COMPANY of the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Wolfhounds moves swiftly toward cover after touching down in a hot landing zone two miles north of Fire Support Base Mahone, 40 miles northwest of Saigon. (PHOTO BY SP4 HECTOR NADAL)

Vietnam . . . The Move Out Phase



LOOKING FOR CHARLIE - A platoon leader and his RTO walk along in a seemingly serene setting not knowing whether a raging battle lies a minute, a day or a week ahead. (PHOTO BY SP4 ROBERT O'HARE)



ON THE MOVE - Private First Class Terrance Eggen, Plentywood, Mont., moves out with his unit, D Company, 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry. (PHOTO BY SP4 CHARLES HAUGHEY)



BIG BANG - Charlie Battery, 2d Battalion, 77th Artillery demonstrates awesome firepower of the 'Beehive' canister round to Wolfhounds of the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry. (PHOTO BY SP4 HECTOR NADAL)

ENGINEERS of D Company, 65th Engineer Battalion sweep a little-used road south of Dau Tieng to enable mechanized infantrymen of the 1st Battalion, (Mechanized), 5th Infantry to push towards the Trapazoid, 38 miles northwest of Saigon. (PHOTO BY SP4 DON MOUSSEAU)



GIVEN A HAND - Specialist 5 Michael Urban, of Stanford, Conn., receives a helping hand while sweeping with C Company, 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry. (PHOTO BY SP4 ROBERT O'HARE)



AGAINST THE SILENCE of the approaching night, the sound of Lightning armor rumbles in search of VC, The tank belongs to the 2d Battalion, 34th Armor. (PHOTO BY SP4 DOUG ELLIOTT)

Aero-Rifies Extract Cache Found By LRP

CU CHI - From out of a hedgerow, a smoke grenade was tossed into a clearing no bigger than a football field.

Off in the distance the thumping of approaching rotor blades could be heard. Within moments four slicks dropped into the LZ and discharged their human cargo.

The highly mobile Aero-Rifle platoon of Delta Troop, 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry, was on a mission in the famous mushroom area. Their objective - a rice cache that was spotted six miles north of Cu Chi on the banks of the Saigon River.

The cache was discovered by a long range patrol team (LRP) of the 50th Infantry. Staff Sergeant David H. Ridell of Lincoln Park, Mich., team leader, radioed the information back to the 3/4 Cav Headquarters.

The fast-moving Aero-Rifle Platoon, led by First Lieutenant Joe Owens, was dispatched to the area with two cargo nets and other sling-loading equipment.

The Aero-Rifle Platoon and the LRP made a joint sweep of the area near the first find. Within 45 minutes, five tons of rice hidden under bushes had been uncovered.

An hour and 45 minutes after their arrival, the men had loaded both nets to capacity with 7,500 pounds of rice. The remaining 2,700 pounds had to be dumped into the river.

Story And Photos By SP4 Jerrell Jarvis

TOTE - Specialist 4 Ernest W. Johnson of DeRedder, La., carries away part of the rice discovered by the 50th Infantry long range patrol team in the mushroom area.



RICE - Staff Sergeant Harold Brown of Richmond, Va., loads cargo nets with rice bags for shipment back to Cu Chi base camp. The removal of the five-ton cache was undertaken by men of the 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry.



LIFT OFF - A Chinook lifts two cargo nets of rice back to Cu Chi base camp. The cache was discovered by long range patrol teams of the 50th Infantry.

GI's Pinned Down, Ex-VC Saves Day

DAU TIENG - A 'Kit Carson' scout for the 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Manchus staged a daring one-man assault against an enemy fortification, breaking a siege of his platoon.

The Alpha Company platoon became pinned down by enemy machinegun fire during a sweep in thick woods 11 miles east of Tay Ninh City.

The 3d Brigade infantrymen had gone in as a reaction force after Charlie Company of the battalion was pinned down by an unknown sized enemy force. The Alpha Manchus were pushing into a tangled hedgerow when they received a fusillade of machinegun fire from a bunker hidden deep in the brush.

"It looked as if a couple of them had dug in behind a tree to our left," said Sergeant First Class Johnny F. Elliott of Columbia, S.C.

He directed the platoon's return fire toward the stronghold until ammo began to run low.

Suddenly the 'Kit Carson' scout, a veteran of seven years as a North Vietnamese Army platoon leader, crawled forward and began to hurl grenades into the enemy bunker.

The Manchus were amazed as Staff Sergeant Tran Van Chinh continued to inch forward, firing his pistol until it jammed. Then he grabbed an AK-47 assault rifle discarded by hastily retreating enemy soldiers earlier in the day and completed the assault.

"He ran up and fired a burst through the entrance of the bunker, then went inside," said Elliott. Two dead Viet Cong plus an assortment of ammo and enemy rifles lay inside.

Moving up, men of the company policed up five AK-47 assault rifles, an M-16 rifle, 14 RPG-7 anti-tank rocket grenades, a pair of riot gas grenades, 15 pounds of documents, a radio, an RPG-2 rocket grenade launcher with four rounds, 25 pounds of canned food and 50 pounds of rice.

The Manchus also found seven dead in fresh graves, two of which were believed to have been dug during the previous night.

Tran, who is nicknamed 'Yim' by men of the company, turned himself in under the Chieu Hoi program and was assigned as a 'Kit Carson' last January.

"He was really fantastic out there," commented Private First Class Wilfredo Ruiz of New York City, who witnessed Yim's bravery.

**ARTILLERY
SUPPORT -**
Cannoneers
emplace
105mm
howitzers
to support
Tropic
Lightning
and
Regional
Force
troops in
their
sweeps into
War Zone
C. (PHOTO
BY SP4 DON
BROWN)



National Guard Captain Returns Home After 'Weekend Drill' With 65th Eng Bn

CU CHI - Connecticut National Guard Captain Rene C. Provost is going home after his longest weekend drill in 13 years of service in the Guard.

He has spent the last 12 months on active duty in Vietnam as a company commander for the 65th Combat Engineer Battalion here.

Captain Provost enlisted in the Connecticut National Guard five days after his 17th birthday.

"I knew even then what I wanted to do," he said, "and that was join the Guard. I would have joined on my 17th birthday, but it took five days to process my papers."

After five years as an enlisted man, Provost attended a special 11-week Officer Candidate School for National Guard and Reserve Officers at Fort Benning, Ga., and was commissioned a second lieutenant Dec. 5, 1960.

Provost, 30, married and the father of two preschool-aged daughters, volunteered for active duty in September, 1967, on the condition that he be assigned directly to Vietnam. In addition, he volunteered for the nine-week Ranger course at Fort Benning prior to leaving for overseas.

Captain Provost, then a recreation director for the city of Killingly, Conn., and a company commander of the 250th Engineer Company (Panel Bridge), Connecticut Guardsmen was the first to volunteer under the new program.

"I know it sounds corny," Provost said, "but I felt like I wasn't doing enough in the Guard. It was always eating at me. It made me spend some restless nights making up my mind."

"A lot of the kids I had coached at the recreation center started dropping by to see me after their tours. It made me feel kind of bad. Almost like I wasn't helping - sitting at home while they were in Vietnam."

"I talked it over with my wife," he said, "and she agreed that if I really wanted to enlist I should go ahead. She was a big help. If she had been against it in any way, I wouldn't have enlisted."

Provost arrived in Vietnam on Nov. 27, 1967. He was immediately assigned to the 65th Engineer Battalion here as company commander of Headquarters Company. In April, he assumed command of Alpha Company. In May, after returning from emergency leave to attend the funeral of his father, he was assigned as company commander of Bravo Company, the post he held until his DEROS.

"I spent over 11 months here as company commander," Provost said, "and I couldn't have been happier. It's a demanding job, but the rewards of seeing your ideas put to work make it all worthwhile."

"I know it sounds kind of funny to say it," Provost said, "but I've enjoyed my tour here. If the holidays weren't so close, I would probably extend."



ANOTHER TEN CLICKS - "You must be kidding" seems to be the reaction of Specialist 4 Daniel Rothstein, an RTO with Alpha Company, 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry, to the last transmission. The Fire Brigade trooper had his thoughts dampened during operations near Duc Hoa. (PHOTO BY SP4 E. R. JAMES)



BEWARE OF VC - Specialist 4 Thomas A. Nagy, of Northampton, Pa. (left) and Specialist 5 Emanuel J. Holloman of Baltimore, Md., erect a sign advising the Vietnamese to reject the Viet Cong who mine the roads and kill civilians in cars and busses. Both are members of the civic action team from the 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry.

Specialists And Their APC Bring Precious MEDCAPs

A single armored personnel carrier churns down the main supply route, throwing up billowing clouds of dust in its wake. At first it looks like any other APC until one notices the number of the combat medical badges worn by the crew and the white letters spelling out 'MADCAP' on the track commander's cupola.

In fact, this is a MEDCAP personnel carrier, and the artist who painted this sign had the momentary satisfaction of releasing the frustration besides the rewards he found in the medical civic action program.

Specialist 5 Emanuel J. Holloman of Baltimore, Md., rides on the top of the track in the loose-jointed fashion of one who has spent a great deal of time racing down roads, diving into, and humping over, eroded ruts and mine craters.

His eyes squint and his lips are pressed tight against the dense dust, wind and exhaust fumes. Holloman is the head and heart of the 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry's civic action program, and he has just signed up for his fourth straight year in Vietnam.

Lieutenant Colonel Clemens A. Riley, the commanding officer of the 3/4 Cav, considers Holloman so good that he has given him the monumental task of trying to repair the wounds of a small section of a country torn by the ravages of war.

The APC slows down as it enters the small, village of Gia Binh where the MEDCAP is going to be performed. It backs into the town square, drops its ramp, and the team of civic action workers and medics unload two trunks of medical supplies and arrange them around a table in a shaded portion of the square. Children pour out of the doorways and narrow alleys, laughing and shouting.

The crowd grows larger with the addition of mothers carrying sick children; and old men and women, bent with the accumulated burden of years of labor in rice paddies, come to have their pains treated.

Around the perimeter of the crowd, Vietnamese soldiers stand watching, some dressed in black fatigues with scarlet scarves, others in olive green with carbines slung over their shoulders. It is a carnival atmosphere and the crying of children being given shots doesn't dampen the gaiety of the crowd.

For three hours the medics treat everything from simple scratches to skin diseases that haven't been seen in the states in 50 years. A seemingly endless stream of patients pass by and fatigue begins to appear on the faces of Holloman and his team.

Two hundred and seventeen patients later, the supplies are loaded back on the track, and the medics prepare to move out. There are more patients, but time is getting short.

Holloman and Specialist 4 Thomas A. Nagy of Northhampton, Pa., make up the civic action team of the 3/4 Cav, and at any time of day their jeep may be seen traveling along the MSR, Nagy at the wheel, Holloman gazing across the fields toward villages he knows like his own Baltimore neighborhood.

He speaks fluent Vietnamese and he has so many friends among the people that he is at home in any one of the villages bordering the MSR from Hoc Mon to Go Dau Ha.

In Ap Doi Moi, he and Nagy just finished helping to build a house for Nguyen Van Dung and his mother whose original home was destroyed in a battle.

Later in the day, Nagy loads crates of oranges and eggs he has scrounged into the back of his jeep and takes them to the children of the Trung Tam orphanage outside of Bac Ha, which the 3/4 Cav is arranging for a church in Minneapolis to adopt.

Holloman remains behind to catch up on paper work. Tomorrow he will drive up to Tay Ninh to pay a Vietnamese family for the damages done to its property when an APC broke loose from its towing cables.

Story And Photos By

SP4 Robinson Truitt



THE SPIRIT OF CIVIC ACTION - Holloman shows the meaning of civic action as he helps a villager in Ap Doi Moi build his home.

CLASS IN SESSION - In the Tran Tam orphanage near Bac Ha, Holloman speaks Vietnamese with the children. Holloman has just signed up for his fourth year in Vietnam.



MEDICAL CIVIC ACTION - Specialist 6 James E. Giss, Louisburg, N.C., gives a tetanus shot to a child during the MEDCAP.

ENJOYING HIS WORK - Fluency in the Vietnamese language makes Holloman a natural for school teaching. One youngster looks as if he has to leave the room. The kids know and respect the team's ways with words and medicine.



Manchu Civic Team Blesses Trung Lap

CU CHI - In the past few months, it has become increasingly more apparent that the psychological war is as important to the allied effort in Vietnam as the tactical war.

While the battle to overcome the enemy continues, civic action teams are working to win the understanding and cooperation of the Vietnamese people.

Manchus of the 2d Brigade's 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry, have engaged in a month-long project that has already shown remarkably quick, tangible results and direct benefits for the local civilians.

The program included the construction of a public reading room, services of an American-staffed dispensary and the distribution of clothing and food to the people of Trung Lap, north of Cu Chi.

First Lieutenant Yves C. Veenstra, Manchu Civic Action Officer, described the program as a "wonderful co-operative venture involving both the Manchus and the citizens of Trung Lap."

The reading room, furnished and stocked with reading material, is an 18 foot by 12 foot brick structure that should help to increase educational standards through the easy availability of reading matter.

The dispensary, which operated for 30 days in the community, treated over 1,800 patients. In co-operation with the nationwide program, yellow T-shirts with red stripes, symbolizing the Vietnamese flag, were given to the children while canned food was given to their parents.

The program was concluded with the Bau Dieu-Trung Lap district festival in November sponsored by the 2d Brigade and the Manchus.

Medicine Man Tomahawk Style

TAY NINH - The American doctor in Vietnam finds himself in the role similar to that of the old frontier doctor. In this modern age about 90 per cent of the doctors specialize in a certain medical field, but not in Vietnam.

The doctors in Vietnam have several things in their favor that the old practitioners didn't have. Time has brought about advancement in technology and also refinement of instruments.

Captain Robert P. Doyle, of Joppatowne, Maryland, is one of the new breed of doctors. Dr. Doyle is the chief medicine man of the Tomahawks, 4th Battalion, (Mechanized), 23d Infantry. Like many of his colleagues in Vietnam today he is young and well versed in his new role.

"Vietnam has opened my eyes to many diseases and health conditions that I would never have been associated with back in the United States," commented Doyle. "My medical knowledge has increased, and I feel that I will be a little better qualified than the next doctor after being exposed to this experience over here."

CG's Christmas Letter

To The Officers and Men Of The 25th Infantry Division

The Christmas season presents an opportunity for renewing those spiritual sources from which we draw our faith in the dignity and brotherhood of man.

As American soldiers in Vietnam, we are physically removed from the ties we normally associate with this holiday. For us, the traditional wish of happiness and good cheer is a hope for the future. For others, the joys of the season will be tempered by the knowledge that their fellow men live in peril and adversity.

To every Tropic Lightning soldier and his loved ones at home, I send my warmest good wishes along with my personal respect and admiration for your dedicated professional performance during the past year.

To those of you who are enduring Christmas away from home for the first time, I offer the thought that by your presence in Vietnam you are making a meaningful contribution to that peace on earth and goodwill among men which the Christmas spirit seeks. Your military service is, in a real sense, the greatest gift you can give for it represents protection and safety without which home and family would be less meaningful and more perishable.

As we observe the Christmas season this year, let us all rededicate ourselves to the purpose of attaining a better world with peace in which to enjoy its blessings.



ELLIS W. WILLIAMSON
Major General, USA
Commanding

Christmas At Cu Chi-Last Year



More Of Same For This Year!

Saboteur Stopped Cold At Phu Cuong Bridge

CU CHI - Alert 2d Brigade soldiers killed a would-be saboteur recently at the Phu Cuong Bridge.

Men from B Company, 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry Wolfhounds, under the operational control of the 2d Battalion, 34th Armor, using fragmentation and concussion grenades killed a Vietnamese woman dressed as a Buddhist nun in the water beneath the bridge.

The 2d Brigade soldiers keep constant surveillance of the waters surrounding the bridge. The water around the structure is sealed off from civilian traffic.

To protect against sabotage, the Tropic Lightning soldiers toss hand grenades into the water.

The woman's body was discovered when it floated to the surface. There was a nylon cord attached to her left wrist. The cord was prepared to hold a demolition charge.

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