



Vol 4 No. 2

TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS

January 13, 1969

Index

Unit	Page	Unit	Page	Unit	Page	Unit	Page
1 Bde TACP	3	159th Med Det	7	3d Bde Photo	1	5/2 Arty	1
1/5	1	2/12	8	3/22	6	65th Engr Photo	7
1/5	3	2/12 Photo	8	3/22 Photo	6	65th Engr	8
1/5 Photo	8	2/12	8	3/4 Cav	8	66th Trackers	3
1/5	8	2/14 Photo	3	4/9	1	7/11 Arty Photo	4
1/8 Arty Photo	2	2/22	1	4/9 Photo	1	Bob Hope Photo	4
1/27	3	2/22	8	4/9 Photo	1	Bob Hope Photo	8
1/27 Photo	3	2/77 Arty	1	4/9	8	LCLC	7
1/27	8	2/77 Arty	3	4/23 Photo	6	LCLC Photos	7

Stun NVA Battalion

Triple Deuce, Arty Stop Ambushers

DAU TIENG - Infantrymen of the 3d Brigade turned the tables on an enemy ambush attempt against a convoy, killing at least 73 of the attackers.

Artillery fire support and the quick reactions of Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion (Mechanized), 22d Infantry, were credited with saving the convoy from being overrun near the edge of the Ben Cui Rubber Plantation, 45 miles northwest of Saigon.

The convoy was enroute from Cu Chi to Dau Tieng, base camp of the Tropic Lightning's 3d Brigade, when it came under intense mortar and rocket attack from an estimated North Vietnamese battalion.

A crater blocked off Route 239 as a large force opened up from wood lines on both sides of the road with small arms and rocket grenade fire.

"My artillery observer and I were flying overhead when he spotted their mortar position and about 50 enemy soldiers coming through a clearing," said Lieutenant Colonel Ralph M. Cline of Rockville, Md., Triple Deuce battalion commander.

The forward observer, First Lieutenant Sam R. Watkins of Greenwich, Conn., called for immediate fire support from Alpha Battery, 2d Battalion, 77th Artillery.

The Up Tight cannoneers immediately began pouring fire onto coordinates radioed by Watkins, disrupting the enemy advance.

"Watkins showed great proficiency and coolness," said Cline. "The artillery fire was right on the money and arrived in less than two minutes."

Meanwhile armored personnel carriers of Bravo Company of the "Triple Deuce" came charging up the road from a stronghold position, arriving on the scene of the ambush in less than five minutes.

With the command track of First Lieutenant John O'Farrell, the company commander, taking the lead, the mechanized infantrymen rolled around a burning truck and pushed into heavy grass on one side of the road.

"Suddenly enemy soldiers were popping up all around us," said Sergeant Luin Amsden of Ellington, Mo. More than 35 enemy were killed as the mechanized infantrymen opened up with machine guns and rifle fire, backed by 40mm cannon fire of two Dusters provided by Bravo Battery, 5th Battalion, 2d Artillery.

As the Triple Deuce men swept both sides of the road, O'Farrell, of Philadelphia, Pa., spotted a slightly wounded enemy who was playing dead. "Three of us saw him lean back to throw a grenade," said Specialist 4 Michael Martz of Hartford City, Ind., O'Farrell's radio operator. O'Farrell and the others blasted
([Continued on Back Page](#)).

Manchus Halt VC Regiment

By 1LT Mack Gooding

TAY NINH - Patrol Base Mole City, nine and a half miles south of Tay Ninh City, was hit with a massive ground assault during the early morning hours of December 22, 1968, by the 272d Regiment of the 9th NVA Division. During the battle, the 4th Battalion of the 9th Infantry Manchus killed 106 enemy.

Patrol Base Mole is located in an area that has been untouched by allied ground forces for over a year and is in the middle of one of the most used infiltration routes in the III Corps tactical zone for NVA units coming into South Vietnam from what is termed the Angel's Wing sector of Cambodia.

The attack began shortly after midnight with a fierce mortar, 75mm recoilless rifle and RPG attack which was followed immediately by a heavy concentration of small arms and automatic weapons fire. "The mortars were coming in so fast you would swear that they were automatic," said Private First Class Walter Schmiel, a grenadier with Bravo Company from Niagara Falls, N.Y.

"Approximately 15 minutes after my listening post spotted movement, the ground attack started on Charlie Company's front. Mortars, continued to come in along with RPGs. We got them to my front and to the south. Tracers, ours and theirs, were going everywhere in the perimeter. After a few minutes we got our artillery coming to the front of Charlie Company and not long after that gunships and the air strikes. We had all the help in the world we could get." This is the way the battle began according to First Lieutenant Wilbur D. Saulters, a platoon leader with Bravo Company from Carson, Miss.

The battle continued for seven hours, with the NVA penetrating the trenchline between two bunkers. Once the enemy troops were in the trench, they were picked off by Manchu marksmen.

The Manchus' commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Lee L. Wilson from Salina, Kans., had supervised the construction of Mole City four days earlier and was certain that the base could withstand any assault. "The enemy threw everything they had at us, and we threw everything we had right back at them," said Wilson. A human-wave attack was repulsed by the valiant Manchus by laying down a massive field on fire. So heavy was the volume of fire that four M-60 machine gun barrels melted down completely.

"Air strikes were right on station after the contact commenced" said Captain Richard E. Foulk, the Manchus' S-2 officer from Twin Falls, Idaho. ([Continued on Back Page](#))



SERVICE WITH A MEANING - Fourth Battalion, 9th Infantry Chaplain Captain William F. Hoehne of Spokane, Wash., conducts a field service at Mole City just hours after the estimated enemy regimental-size assault was defeated by the hard-fighting Manchus. **(PHOTO BY PFC H. J. TSCHIRNER)**



LOST AND FOUND - Private First Class Thomas H. Maddox of New Madrid, Mo., and Private First Class Bob B. Chavous of Perkase, Pa., both assigned to Bravo Company, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry, prepare bundles of weapons captured during the unsuccessful estimated regimental-sized enemy assault on Patrol Base Mole City defended by the Manchus. The Tropic Lightning soldiers killed 106 of the enemy. **(PHOTO BY PFC H. J. TSCHIRNER)**

Near Trang Bang Bobcat Week Busy

In a week of heavy fighting Fire Brigade soldiers from the 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 5th Infantry, killed 56 enemy during operations in the Ho Bo woods.

On December 8 the Bobcat's Alpha and Charlie companies were sweeping near their night location when they received small arms and RPG fire from an estimated enemy company. During the brief fight that followed, the Bobcats killed two VC. One RPG-2 launcher with 11 rounds, three AK-47s and documents were captured in the action.

The following day, Alpha Company, while sweeping, received small arms and automatic weapons fire. The combined force of infantry, artillery and air strikes accounted for 14 NVA bodies, one light machine gun, two RPG-2 launchers, two AK-47s and one wallet.

On the same night a Bravo Company ambush opened up on eight VC, killing two. Blood trails were discovered in an afternoon sweep.

During the morning of 11th Charlie Company, first of the fifth, engaged three armed NVA soldiers, killing them and capturing their RPG-7 launcher and light machine gun.

Later that same day, Alpha Company soldiers engaged two VC killing them and uncovering a base camp. While searching the complex, one suspect was detained.

The detainees told the 2d Brigade soldiers that there were VC hiding in 30 nearby spider holes. The concealed enemy opened up on the Tropic Lightning soldiers. [\(Continued on Back Page\)](#)

ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL (HEROISM)

LTC Andrew H. Anderson, HHC, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 MAJ Cain A. Bridgman, C Co, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
 CPT Edward Mikita, A Co, 2d Bn, 22d Inf
 CPT Keith A. Wilks, B Co, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 CPT George G. Reese, B Co, 25th Avn Bn
 CPT Larry C. Anderson, HHC, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 CPT Thomas A. Cindric, C Btry, 1st Bn, 8th Arty
 CPT Edward C. Schillo, D Co, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 1LT James D. McKinna, HHC, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 1LT Ronnie Q. Jones, A Co, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 1LT William G. Cirincione, D Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 CSM Paul H. Saft, HHC, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SFC Arthur M. Howe, Co A, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SFC Walter H. Langley, HHC, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
 SFC Robert Nelson, D Co, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 SSG Jose R. Acosta, C Co, 65th Engr Bn
 SSG Ben Marzec, C Co, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SSG Stephen B. Duerk, B Co, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SGT James M. Streeter, A Co, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 SGT Brannen E. Edwards, A Co, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 SGT Gerald P. Coffey, A Co, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 SGT Larry D. Southerland, HHC, 1st Bde
 SGT Dennis J. Rushing, C Co, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 SGT Larry G. Worzella, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP5 Bruce D. Paulsen, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP4 Leroy Zeno, A Btry, 3d Bn, 13th Arty
 SP4 Stephen R. Heberling, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP4 Kenneth L. Baus, A Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Arty
 SP4 Charles M. De Bruhl, C Co, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SP4 Jeff L. Land, C Co, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SP4 George Chambers, C Btry, 2d Bn, 77th Arty
 SP4 Ignaius Castaldo, C Btry, 2d Bn, 77th Arty
 SP4 Gary R. Cruse, D Co, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Harry Jordan, C Co, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 SP4 Bruce A. Potter, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav

SP4 James Turnage, HHC, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 SP4 Winston Guillory, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP4 Ronald W. Demontmollin, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP4 Richard V. Heumier, C Co, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 PFC Charles M. Wyatt, C Co, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
 PFC Stanley D. Hester, A Btry, 3d Bn, 13th Arty
 PFC Larry J. Folkerts, A Btry, 3d Bn, 13th Arty
 PFC Douglas W. Kramer, D Co, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 PFC Anson L. Smith, A Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Arty
 PFC Robert L. Dane, A Btry, 3d Bn, 13th Arty
 PFC Melvin R. Moore, A Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 PFC Bobby L. Smith, A Co, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 PFC Benjamin Dunbar, A Co, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 PFC Joseph W. Peace, A Co, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 PFC Martin Espinoza, D Co, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 PFC Willie B. Jacobs, A Co, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 PFC Floyd L. Steward, A Co, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 PFC Richard L. Jaquays, A Co, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 PFC Darryl Brown, A Co, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 PFC Hiroshi Baba, C Co, 65th Engr Bn
 PFC Dave L. Van Agtmael, C Co, 65th Engr Bn
 PFC Theodore Combs Jr., A Co, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 PFC Edward B. Spear, D Co, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 PFC James W. Peden, B Co, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 PFC Leroy R. Rivers, C Co, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 PFC Hollis Lamar, C Co, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 PFC Sherrell Leavins, D Co, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 PFC Rex A. Yarian, D Co, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 PFC Ronald Timock, D Co, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 PFC Joseph A. Mack, Co, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 PFC Thomas Scally, D Co, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 PFC Edward L. Jones, B Co, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 PFC Thomas E. Brown, A Co, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 PFC Kenneth E. Mullin, C Co, 3d Bn, 22d Inf

Every Soldier Should Know Where To Go For Assistance

Did you ever have a pressing problem that you couldn't solve by yourself? Where did you go for help? With whom did you speak?

In the spite of the Army's effort to keep its people well informed, many soldiers just don't know what to do when they run into this sort of situation.

In many cases, just not knowing where to turn for help can result in the soldier getting the **WRONG** information.

Virtually every problem, regardless of its nature, should be first taken to your unit commander. He is interested in you because he is responsible for the well-being of his command. If he cannot provide you an answer or solve your problem, he will direct it to the proper authorities.

Every problem has its appropriate source of resolution within the military establishment. For legal questions, there is the Staff Judge Advocate; for questions about finance there is the finance officer; for character guidance or religious problems there is the chaplain; for administrative questions about some phase of your career there is the personnel officer; for emergencies, the American Red Cross is available.

In addition to these and other specialized agencies there is the Inspector General Complaints System, which has the basic purpose of correcting injustices affecting individuals and of eliminating conditions determined to be detrimental to the efficiency or reputation of the Army.

You have the right to register complaints orally or in writing with an inspector general. While you are not required to submit to an interview by anyone prior to registering a complaint, it is recommended that you first discuss your problem with your unit commander. In any event, it is necessary to obtain permission to be absent from your place of duty to visit an inspector general.

Inspectors general will act promptly on your complaint, request for assistance, or request for information and will advise you of the action taken in connection with your request for inspector general action.

Remember that you and your dependents will save time and have your problems resolved more expeditiously by contacting the proper personnel or agency.

So don't forget that you have some say in numerous matters that affect you personally in the military. It is not only your right, but your duty to bring legitimate grievances to the attention of the proper authorities. The whole thing is aimed at keeping the rights of the individual soldier uppermost in the minds of commanders.

Problems have a habit of cropping up when you least expect them. You can be prepared to meet obstacles by knowing to whom your grievance or request goes to.

Whenever You're Ready GI BILL Can Assist You

Want schooling after your time in the service is up? Here are a few helpful hints to let you know how the GI Bill can assist you in meeting the rising costs of education. When you receive your honorable discharge, look what is available to you!

You are eligible to receive financial assistance to (a) obtain education which you otherwise might not have been able to afford; (b) resume the educational activities which were interrupted by your military service; or (c) further your education or advance your vocational status.

For each month or fraction of a month you serve on active duty, you can receive one month of financial assistance, up to a maximum of 36 months or its equivalent if your studies are on a part-time basis. The money is paid directly to you. You must pay all expenses and whatever tuition is involved.

Educational institutions approved for study both inside and outside the U.S. include public or private secondary schools; junior colleges and teachers' colleges; professional, scientific and technical schools and four year colleges and universities.

Financial assistance is also available to veterans for approved apprenticeship, on-the-job training, or farm or flight training programs.

Your eligibility for these benefits ends eight years after your last release from active duty. This means that you must arrange your program of studies so that it will be completed before you reach the eight-year limit.

Take advantage of this opportunity. These laws express your country's appreciation for your service and assure you of opportunities which you might not have had if you never entered the Armed Forces.

Whether you take advantage of these benefits is, of course, your choice. But the opportunity is there.

YEARBOOK!

The 25th Infantry Division's 1968 Yearbook has been printed and was placed in the mail in late December. A limited quantity of the books are still available through the publisher on a first-come, first-served basis. Persons wishing to purchase a yearbook should send a check or money order to Albert Love Enterprises, Inc., Post Office Box 1000, 3101 McCall Drive, Doraville, Georgia, 30040.

Tropic Lightning

Combat Honor Roll

Added to this week's Combat Honor Roll is Corporal Anthony M. Logallo of C Battery, 1st Battalion, 8th Artillery. Logallo distinguished himself by heroic actions on November 8, 1968. A numerically superior



communist force launched a massive mortar, rocket, and ground assault against Fire Support Base Keene.

During the initial contact, the sixth howitzer section sustained a direct hit, knocking Logallo to the ground.

Although Viet Cong projectiles continued to saturate the area, he dauntlessly moved to his howitzer and loaded a round. Disregarding his own safety, he exposed himself to a heavy volume of fire to secure fuzes and projectiles for countermortar fire.

His valorous actions contributed immeasurably to the thwarting of the aggressor's assault. His personal bravery, aggressiveness, and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, the 25th Infantry Division and the United States Army.

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Page 3

TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS

January 13, 1969

Wolfhounds Fire, & Break VC Attack On FSB Mahone

DAU TIENG - Wolfhounds of the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry, repelled an enemy rocket and mortar attack against Fire Support Base Mahone. Six dead enemy were found the following morning.

The enemy struck at twilight from three sides of the 3d Brigade support base, which is located in the trapezoid 38 miles northwest of Saigon.

Approximately 100 mortars and RPG rounds struck the base. "We were alert to the possibility that they would try a ground attack," said Sergeant Roy A. Everett of the Bronx, N.Y., who is in charge of a mortar platoon.

"Although our first reaction was to seek shelter in a bunker until the mortars let up, we went out and began firing counter mortar fire."

Despite mortars and fragments landing around their positions, Wolfhound mortarmen fought back, pumping out more than 800 rounds during the night.

At the height of the attack, many of the mortarmen were forced to lie flat on the ground around their tubes as they fuzed projectiles to send hurtling toward the enemy.

Meanwhile riflemen around the perimeter of the camp sent thousands of rounds of rifle and machinegun fire toward the enemy soldiers. The attack was broken in little more than an hour, as the enemy force withdrew through treelines on both sides of the hamlet of Thanh An.

Meanwhile artillery from Fire Support Base Wood and from Dau Tieng base camp poured explosives on the retreating enemy. Charlie Battery of the Up Tight 2d Battalion, 77th Artillery, in Mahone sent out more than 900 rounds.

After the battle, Lieutenant Colonel Mark L. Resse of Kansas City, Mo., Wolfhound battalion commander, praised the way his men broke the attack.

"I am extremely pleased by the way the men reacted. They did a tremendous job," he said.

The following morning Bravo Company swept the area and discovered the six enemy dead. At the same time Reese was flying overhead in an effort to discover exactly where the enemy had emplaced his mortar tubes.

Hovering in a light observation helicopter piloted by First Lieutenant L.E. Campbell of Muskogee, Okla., Reese spotted three steel plates in heavy vegetation below.

Not waiting for his infantrymen to secure the area, the battalion commander and his pilot set down twice and picked up the plates, which were needed for evaluation.

"My pilot showed great courage in setting down in these areas without benefit of a securing force," noted Reese.



FOLLOWING MORE than 100 enemy mortar and rocket rounds fired against Fire Support Base Mahone 38 miles northwest of Saigon, Private First Class Les Watkins of Nedosha, Kans., an ammo bearer, looks at some of 17 tail sections from mortars which landed around his position. Watkins and other gunners of the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry, Wolfhounds mortar platoons kept firing during the height of the attack to help break the enemy probe. Six enemy soldiers were killed. **(PHOTO BY SP4 HECTOR NADAL)**

Bird Dog Flies Past 10,000 Hour Mark

By 1LT Mack D. Gooding

TAY NINH - A 17-year-old O-1 Bird Dog, a light observation airplane, recently broke the usual mark of 10,000 air hours and still has 'spirit' for the Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) attached to the 1st Brigade.

Captain Walter Lehman of Phoenix, who flew the Bird Dog past the milestone, gave an explanation of what this meant. He stated, "If you were to drive your car around the world thirty times or 750,000 miles this would be the amount of wear and tear that this aircraft has been through."

Within the 1st Brigade, the U.S. Air Force TACP uses this aircraft for finding and marking positions for air strikes.

Major Everett E. Prichard of Waycross, Ga., who serves as liason officer of the TACP at Tay Ninh West airfield commented, "If we had a Hall of Fame for airplanes I feel sure this particular Bird Dog would be right there."

The O-1 Bird Dogs presently assigned to the 1st Brigade TACP are due to be supplemented with several new, twin engine OV-10s later this month. "Even though we're getting in new OV-10s, the O-1 Bird Dog is a great little airplane," said Prichard. "I hope the OV-10s can stand the test of time as well as the Bird Dog has."

Combat Tracker Team Finds Enemy Weapons, Hoi Chanh

CU CHI - A Tropic Lightning Combat Tracker Team from the 66th Infantry Platoon recently brought in an assortment of enemy weapons and a Hoi Chanh in action at Trung Lap, five miles northwest of Cu Chi.

The team, with their scout dogs were called in by Alpha and Charlie companies of the 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 5th Infantry, to sweep the area around their night laager. Earlier that morning, the infantrymen had undergone a fierce RPG barrage.

The team arrived at the site at 8 a.m. and immediately began the sweep in heavy undergrowth. The terrain was rough, but the dogs led the men to blood and foot trails left by a retreating, hurting enemy.

Sergeant Michael P. Landers of Auburn, Ill., the track platoon leader, related that pay dirt lay just outside the site.

"I sent my visual track to the front. They found a lot of tracks. Everyone had scattered. They usually do when they are beaten back. It's supposed to help them avoid detection," cited Landers.

Landers continued, "The tracks led to a trench line. We followed them until they split up, one going east and one south."

The sergeant sent his visual track east to follow the trench. Landers proceeded south to follow blood trails. As he proceeded, the visual track was busy collecting web gear and miscellaneous equipment. The rest of the way they fired into areas of possible enemy concentrations.

Meanwhile, Landers' dogs had led them to signs of heavy movement. "We had proceeded for about 300 meters when we came upon a hootch. We drew AK-47 fire from a sniper. We moved through the hootch and found blood trails. Our support was sweeping in our direction and when we met them they had a Hoi Chanh with them."

A sweep to the east revealed three AK-47 rifles, numerous Chicom grenades, 57mm recoilless rifle rounds and RPG-2 rounds with launchers.

"The way dogs operate is the most impressive thing about the tracker business. They are lightning fast, extremely sensitive and downright smart. I have all the faith in the world in them," concluded Landers.

Platoon Sergeant Robert Northrup of West St. Paul, Minn., related that the arrival of scout dog teams in Vietnam brought a weapon as good as anything that shoots.

"Three hundred meters away and you know Charlie's there. There's no doubt about it; the dog knows what he is after. He can do one thing better than us - use his nose and ears to locate the enemy."

MEDICAL HELP FOR CHARLIE - Company commander Captain Wayne A. Downing of Peoria, Ill., from Alpha Company, 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry, watches intently as SP4 Dennis Murphy of Garden City, Mich., administers medical aid to a wounded Vietnamese. The suspected enemy was wounded in a Tropic Lightning ambush. (PHOTO BY SP4 E. R. JAMES)





A TREE GROWS IN WASHINGTON - A Christmas tree was added to Fire Support Base Washington for the holiday season. The tree belongs to the 7th Battalion, 11th Artillery.



TO DRAMATIZE their hope that infantrymen of the Tropic Lightning would have a merry Christmas, two Loves Park, Ill., girls sent a giant 15-foot Christmas card to members of the communications section of Headquarters Company, 3d Brigade. Holding the giant message were Specialists 4 Jim Fowler (left) of Fort Pierce, Fla., and Tony Molitor of Loves Park, Ill. **(PHOTO BY SP5 BILL SLUIS)**



AND WHAT DID YOU GET FOR CHRISTMAS? - Troops high atop Nui Ba Den were the first troops in Vietnam to receive their 1968 Christmas Ditty Bags from the Red Cross. The 1st Brigade men eagerly rifling their bags to see what they got are, left to right, Specialist 4 Larry DeShazer of Houston, Tex., Private First Class Clyde Brooks of Franklin, La., Private First Class Ron Hunter of Jonesboro, Ark., and Private First Class John Deckard of San Diego, Calif. **(PHOTO BY 1LT MACK D. GOODING)**

Christmas For Tropic Lightning

A conventional Christmas was not on the agenda for the men of the Tropic Lightning Division this year. Instead of Christmas in Connecticut or Illinois or Texas, the holidays were celebrated in Vietnam.

Instead of the familiar sights and sounds that herald the approach of the season to be jolly, the combat troopers hear the crack of artillery fire and the irregular sound of automatic weapons laying down a base of fire.

On hand to ring in Christmas with the troops were mosquitoes, snakes and other notorious creatures of Southeast Asia. Men accustomed to walking knee deep in snow on their way to spend Christmas Day with friends and relatives, walked ankle deep in dust, a familiar by-product of the dry season.

But Christmas did come to the 25th Infantry Division. Billy Graham brought consolation and reassurance for heavy hearts; the Red Cross Girls - bright smiles and Christmas carols. And there was Hope - a lot of laughs, beautiful girls, great entertainment, the sharp Hope with the States on parade in Vietnam.

Troops in the field during the holidays had quite a few welcome visitors for a change. With Billy Graham, the famous evangelist, came remembrance of the true meaning of Christmas as he flew into fire support bases around III Corps. The troops were anxious to have a few words with Dr. Graham. It was a real experience just to say 'hello.'

Doughnut Dollies, those ever-lovin' gals from the Red Cross covered a lot of ground, from Keene to the top of Nui Ba Den, leading the troops in Christmas carols. Let it never be said that a Red Cross girl isn't everyone's girl friend.

The Red Cross made it a point to make Christmas a meaningful day. Ditty bags came from the States. They contained items of use to anyone in Vietnam: playing cards, stationery, pen lights, chewing gum, fountain pens and candy. Each soldier knew that those back home know he is here and appreciate it.

Hope? You bet there was. Starting with the prayers of those who attended church services that dark Christmas Eve, whether in base camp or in small groups in the field, the hope for peace and a safe return home were dreamed on. Then Hope sprang to life before our eyes in the shape on that famous comedian, the GI's Santa Claus, and his troupe at the Lightning Bowl before 15,000 cheering soldiers.

Beautiful round-eyed women; Honey Limited, the Golddiggers, Miss World Penelope Plummer and Ann-Margret captured thousands of eyes. Big Roosevelt Grier belted out songs and trampoline champion Dick Albers bounced as high as the happiness all around. Bob Hope himself, complete with giant Lightning patch, added all that could be included to round out the show.

The soldiers of the 25th are grateful to those who went out of their way to bring the spirit of Christmas to Tropic Lightning country and help share an unconventional but thankful Christmas.

CAROLS - Red Cross girls and other volunteers brought a traditional touch to Christmas by going caroling to Tropic Lightning's fire support bases Christmas day. (PHOTO BY SP4 LARRY WEIST)



And, Of Course, There Was Hope



THE BOB HOPE SHOW - 1969

Road Sweeping Is Nicest For Soldiers On Motorcycles

TAY NINH - Two Honda 50 motorcycles, formerly owned by the Viet Cong, have been put to good use by elements of the 1st Brigade. Roads are now swept for mines more quickly than ever before.

The Hondas are currently being used to detect enemy road mines, booby traps and trip wires. By using the Hondas the 1st Brigade is saving valuable time in sweeping and clearing the roads. During the monsoon season, the old, time-consuming method of using a sweep team on foot was necessary. During the dry season, however, the Hondas provide an opportunity to work faster.

Major General Ellis W. Williamson came up with the idea and passed it along to Colonel Robert L. Fair, of San Francisco, Calif., commanding officer of the 1st Brigade, for implementation. The 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry was the 'unit' selected to try the Hondas on road sweeps.

Currently only the two captured Hondas are being used for the road sweeps, but six more bikes have been ordered through military supply channels and are being shipped from Japan.

With the Honda roaring down the road in front of the armored personnel carriers, few mines, booby traps and trip wires will go undetected.

Use of the Honda has cut the time required to clear the road considerably. Company B, 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry, now sweeps the road in one hour, instead of the three required by the old method.

The driver of the Honda is an infantryman with prior experience in riding motorcycles. His attire consists of a helmet, flak jacket and an M-16 rifle. When a suspicious object is found the driver dismounts and signals for the demolition team, which scrutinizes the situation and takes the necessary action.



When asked how he felt about driving one of the Hondas, Private First Class Dennis Hill of Pico Rivera, Calif., said, "There is no problem in handling the motorcycle, especially now in the dry season. This method of sweeping the road is much easier and faster. I'm able to cover the same area with the same amount of accuracy in one third the time it used to take."

Both the 4th Battalion, 23d Infantry, and Colonel Fair are very pleased with the success of the road-sweeping Hondas so far.

RAT PATROL RIDES AGAIN - (Above, right) Private First Class Dennis Hall of Los Angeles steers his Honda motorbike along the road to Fire Support Base Rawlins, clearing the road for his fellow infantrymen with the 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry. During South Vietnam's dry season, Tropic Lightning has found that visual is more efficient than electronic observation **(PHOTO BY SP4 DAVE JACKSON)**

Regulars Find Cache Hidden Near River

TAY NINH - While on a reconnaissance-in-force mission seven miles northwest of Tay Ninh, C Company of the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry, discovered a weapons and ammunition cache located on the banks of the Rach Ben Da River.

The 1st Brigade troopers first realized that there may be something in the area when the keen eyes of pointman Specialist 4 Ralph E. Wilks of Niles, Mich., spotted an ammunition container partially exposed in the thicket by the river.

Further inquiry by Specialist 4 Steve Grippi of Ashtabula, Ohio, and Sergeant Bernard Peralta of Los Angeles, disclosed three bolt action 30 caliber sniper rifles protected by spent flare cartridges. Looking further, they also uncovered several NVA uniforms and a wallet containing receipts and an identification card.

Immediately after the first findings, Captain Donald I. Haramoto of Makawao, Maui, Hawaii, set out security and organized a search team. Several freshly used sleeping positions were found and an enormous ant hill brought curiosity into the eyes of one Tropic Lightning infantryman. Private First Class Randy Kitzen of Richardson, N.D., probed the ant hill and found an entrance into the mound which had been completely hollowed out. Searching the cavity, Kitzen found fifty pounds of Russian explosives, several hundred rounds of small arms ammunition, sandbags, NVA rations and detonators used for booby traps.

Philadelphia 4th Grade Class Sends PFC A Record 110-Letter Mail Call

TAY NINH - It's lucky for Private First Class Phillip Smith of Philadelphia, Pa., that Company D, 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry was picked to be the first unit to use the 1st Brigade R&R Center in Tay Ninh - The Holiday Inn.

Smith's company came in fresh from combat operations at Fire Support Bases Grant, Bragg and Buell for a well earned two-day stand down.

The day before they arrived at the Tay Ninh base Smith received over a hundred letters from his hometown, the City Of Brotherly Love.

"My girl teaches a 4th grade class in Philadelphia and her students all wrote a letter to me", said Smith. "Boy, am I flabbergasted."

Two were of special interest to Smith. "One little girl promised to wait until she grew up and then marry me because she said I was so big and strong. Another asked me to pray for her and her school soccer team because they had lost their last three games in a row."



ONE HUNDRED AND TEN LETTERS were waiting for PFC Phillip Smith of

Smith and his friends plan to answer every letter and to send the class a souvenir from South Vietnam. "We'll probably send a Vietnamese flag," stated Smith. "The class has a collection of flags from around the world and it will help to make their collection something special."

PFC Smith suddenly realized that he just couldn't afford any more time for comments to the press. "I just have too much reading to do," he grinned as he started shuffling through his correspondence.

Philadelphia, Pa, when he checked into the Holiday Inn Tay Ninh West. **(PHOTO BY SGT HERB BURDETT)**

LCLC Makes Professionals Teaches Tricks Of Trade

CU CHI - In the northwest corner of Cu Chi base camp lies a problem-solving organization available to all commanding officers. It is known as the Lightning Combat Leaders Course (LCLC), and it strives to eliminate some of a commander's problems.

Within a few weeks of the time a commanding officer gains a new man in his unit, this man may display the qualities of a leader and be placed in the position of a squad or fire-team leader. With each new experience, this leader becomes more competent.

But there is a time element. A man has a 12-month tour; how long will it take for this new leader to reach his full potential of combat effectiveness, and will he have completed most of his tour before he attains professionalism?

Lightning Combat Leaders Course accelerates the process by which a potential leader becomes a reliable professional. During the nine-day course, the students are familiarized with nearly every combat situation and are shown the proper methods of coping with field problems.

LCLC is by no means a strictly classroom school. Most classes are conducted out of doors, and the most widely used teaching aid is the field radio.

After nine days of instruction, a student has a command of military terms used in field communications. He must be able to use the radio quickly to call for artillery support, gunship support and medical evacuation.

Artillery classes are conducted on the base camp perimeter line. After preparatory classes, the student is given the opportunity to call for, direct, and observe artillery fire.

Written exams are frequent. By performing well on these tests and showing leadership qualities during practical exercises, the LCLC student can be the honor graduate and thus be advanced to the next higher grade.

The final examination of one period of the training schedule had greater rewards than a promotion, however. It is the ambush patrol.

The seventh day at LCLC finds the students on an actual ambush patrol outside of the Cu Chi base camp.

Lightning Combat Leaders Course offers another step on the ladder to professionalism. It gives the graduating student a confident and responsible approach to weapons, demolition, support fire power, troop maneuvers and tactical decisions.

Even more important, LCLC gives the student the momentum to make the final step to professionalism - leadership under fire.

STORY & PHOTOS BY SP4 BILL BERGER

AN LCLC student points out the accuracy of a 155mm artillery round bursting during the fire-for-effect segment of the artillery support practical exercise.



AFTER DIRECTING a Huey gunship's final pass, Tropic Lightning's LCLC students await the chopper's landing in order to inspect the ship's armament and discuss call-in procedures with the pilot and its crew.

USING SMOKE to mark their position, LCLC students prepare to run through a simulated medical evacuation with the cooperation of a Cu Chi dustoff chopper from the 159th Medical Detachment (Helicopter Ambulance).



CG CONGRATULATES HONOR STUDENT - Major General Ellis W. Williamson, commanding general, congratulates honor student Staff Sergeant William J. Hamilton of Philadelphia, Pa., for advancing from his rank of E-5. Hamilton, assigned to Company C, 65th Engineers, compiled the highest score in the school's history, 980 out of a maximum of 1,000 points.



WAITING for the cover of darkness, LCLC students make the final preparations before moving out on an actual night ambush patrol. The night patrol is the final and the most important exercise before graduation.

Lightning Troops Smile While Mortars Drop Into Pershing

CU CHI - When the 2d Brigade's Fire Support Base Pershing received over 100 VC 82mm mortar rounds and nearly as many RPG projectiles within its perimeter in 20 minutes, everyone reached for his camera instead of his weapon.

Every clicking shutter seemed to be a little "thank you" to 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry, squad leader Sergeant Frederick W. Kempster from Washington, D.C., who was the man responsible for the harmless delivery of the weapons by U.S. Army helicopter. "We're really proud of this cache today," said Captain Paul Allen, battalion air operations officer.

While on eagle flight and sweep operations in the Ho Bo woods, Kempster spotted several small enemy mortar charge containers in the bottom of a narrow hole. "I alerted the company, and we stopped and put up security immediately," said the sergeant. "As soon as that was done, I turned tunnel rat."

Moving cautiously, the Delta Company squad leader slipped into a large underground room and quickly returned with the first of the Communist-made 82mm mortars.

"With security out, we began searching further in the area and immediately began to turn up more holes with munitions," said Delta's C.O., Captain James F. Ellis, from Falls Church, Va. "We also discovered underground, multilevel living quarters complete with camouflaged concrete lid," he added.

The huge pile of enemy munitions which were taken to Fire Support Base Pershing included 128 82mm mortars, 100 RPG projectiles, and 54 RPG boosters. The living quarters were destroyed by Tropic Lightning engineers from C Company, 65th Engineer Battalion.

CHARLIE WON'T USE THESE - Tropic Lightning squad leader, Sergeant Frederick W. Kempster of Washington, D.C., from the 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry, stacks some of the 82mm mortar rounds he found while on a sweep in the HoBo Woods. (PHOTO BY SP4 CHARLES HAUGHEY)



SHARING A LAUGH - Major General Ellis W. Williamson, 25th Infantry Division commanding general, and Specialist 4 Godfrey D. Mansapit, Merzio, Guam, of C Company, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 5th Infantry enjoy the size of a Christmas Day dinner at Fire Support Base Patton. The general visited 19 field positions on Christmas. (PHOTO BY MAJ ANDREW J. SULLIVAN)

Ambushers Stomped....

(Continued From Page 1)

the enemy soldier, but not before he threw the deadly weapon.

"We were extremely lucky that the grenade fell short," said Martz.

While the Triple Deuce infantrymen battled it out with the ambushers, artillery from Fire Support Base Wood and Mahone and from Tay Ninh and Dau Tieng base camps poured projectiles onto suspected routes of escape.

The convoy also received immediate assistance from Air Force air strikes. Captain Charles McGregor of Detroit, Mich., a forward air controller, was guiding in an F-100 Supersabre strike less than a mile from the convoy's position when it was hit.

McGregor diverted the strike, sending bombs and strafing runs onto a stronghold he spotted less than 400 meters from the beleaguered truckers. More jets and strafing runs were called in by Captain James J. Hourin of Ellenville, N.Y.

Cobra helicopters from the 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry and other 25th Division units poured onto enemy troops fleeing to the north.

Meanwhile Colonel Louis J. Schelter Jr. of Columbus, Ga., 3d Brigade commander, sent Charlie Company of the 2d of the 22d to secure a landing zone as Wolfhounds of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry, made an airmobile assault into a clearing less than a mile from the convoy.

The Wolfhounds, commanded by Captain Lawrence Rubino of Lynn, Mass., fought an engagement with a force which was hiding in bunkers. At least 13 enemy were killed by the Wolfhounds.

Sweeps of the battle area continued for more than a day as the enemy toll continued to mount to 73 confirmed kills.

The Name Sounds Familiar, Or - Hope Springs Eternal

CU CHI - Like father like son, and they both like Bob Hope.

Specialist 4 Harry L. McNeer III of the 25th Infantry Division's Military Intelligence Detachment followed in his father's footsteps when he met Bob Hope this year.

In 1944 Hope was touring in France, and McNeer's father, First Lieutenant Harry L. McNeer, Jr., U.S. Army Reserve, was photographed speaking with Hope backstage.

Twenty-four years later in a different military theater, Bob Hope was confronted by Specialist McNeer of Portsmouth, Ohio, carrying the photo of his father and the comedian together in France.

Specialist McNeer approached Hope prior to his final show in Vietnam at Cu Chi.



FRANCE, 1944 - Bob Hope autographs a souvenir for Harry L. McNeer, Jr., right, then a First Lieutenant in the U.S. Army.



VIETNAM 1968 - Bob Hope and Specialist 4 Harry L. McNeer III look at a photo of Hope autographing a souvenir for McNeer's father in France in 1944.

Mole City Attack...

(Continued from Page 1)

"They did a real fine job. You name it and we had it out there, everything except the B-52s."

"The NVAs were wearing new uniforms and looked well fed. The enemy was armed with brand new weapons and looked like they had come to put up a fight," said Colonel Robert L. Fair, Tropic Lightning's 1st Brigade commanding officer from San Francisco, Calif.

"Once they started the attack, we really gave them h—! We put in about 650 rounds of 155 (howitzer) from Bravo Battery of the 3d of the 13th Artillery located at Fire Support Base Austin, six miles to the east, and the local ARVNs fired approximately 400 rounds of 105 (howitzer) for us. In addition we put in eight air strikes on them, used five spookies and two light fire teams."

"In my 26 years of service," continued Fair, "I've never seen a fight like this one." Every trick in the book was used against what was believed to be the regimental raid on Patrol Base Mole.

Bobcat Week...

(Continued From Page 1)

In the fight that followed eight additional enemy were killed and one AK was taken.

At noon on the 13th, Alpha and Bravo Company of the Bobcats and B Company, 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry received small arms fire and RPG rounds from an enemy force. The units killed 20 VC, and artillery and air

strikes killed five more.

Following the battle, which lasted well into the night, one RPG-2 launcher, one 82mm mortar and five AK-47s were policed up on the battlefield.

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