



Vol 4 No. 13

TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS

March 31, 1969

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Deadly Fire and Maneuver Help Bobcats Crush 28 NVA

By SGT Jan Anderson

CU CHI - Once again the Bobcats have shown their proficiency for undermining Charlie's plans. Company A, 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 5th Infantry in conjunction with one platoon from Company A of the 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry killed 28 enemy soldiers.

With superb co-ordination the Bobcats worked out like a pair of kings on a full checkerboard. Prior to setting up a night laager in the Hobo Woods, long known as an enemy haven despite constant sweep operations, a point man of the Bobcat's Alpha Company came under fire.

Further indication of the enemy's presence was observed from the air where a large bunker complex had been sighted. Two Huey Cobra gunships were radioed in and sprayed the area with fire from rockets and miniguns.

Utilizing three platoons, one of which was attached to Company A of the 2d Battalion, 14th Infantry, Alpha Company commander Captain Randall L. Yeargan of San Antonio, Tex., ordered each element to begin a cautious sweep through three separate hedgerows. As each platoon advanced on its respective hedgerow, three individual battles began to emerge.

The key reason for the battle's tremendous success lay in tactics of fire and maneuver, an exercise with which any infantry AIT graduate will feel all too familiar.

Each platoon systematically moved into its own bunker-and-spider-hole infested hedgerow. The third platoon, led by 1LT Paul Robinson of Otisville, Mich., was credited with timely organization of his men and accounted for eleven enemy dead.

Moving in the best fire and maneuver formations, the platoon's men gave each other cover as they proceeded to

rid each bunker of its occupants.

"The only reason we were so successful was because everyone functioned together," remarked Staff Sergeant Roy Alexander of Peoria, Ill., third platoon sergeant.

According to Alexander the biggest weapon employed against the enemy was the hand grenade. The third platoon alone used twelve grenades to drop into individual holes.

Other weapons also played key roles. Specialist 4 Gerald Murch of Glasgow, Mont., was pretty convincing with his M-60. He shot one NVA who decided to pop up at the wrong time.

Sergeant John Mondino of Zeigler, Ill., found his M-79 grenade launcher a handy piece of hardware, especially when he scored a direct hit on one fleeing enemy troop.

Alpha Company's first platoon, under the leadership of 1LT Andrew C. Allred, used nearly identical tactics to overrun its respective hedgerow.

Specialist 4 Robert Gast, of Cincinnati, Ohio, shot one NVA who had been passed up by the lead element. Gast's action was indicative of the teamwork employed and no doubt saved a member of his unit from being shot in the back.

By nightfall, the ordeal had (Continued on Back Page)

SAFETY IN COMBAT

A SOLDIER WHO PLANS AHEAD IS A BETTER MAN THAN ONE WHO ONLY REACTS. PANIC AND UNCONTROLLED FEAR ARE FREQUENT REACTIONS OF PERSONNEL WHO ARE UNPREPARED FOR EMERGENCY COMBAT SITUATIONS. CARELESSNESS, UNNECESSARY EXPOSURE, LACK OF AGGRESSIVENESS HAS LED TO MANY INJURIES AND DEATHS. BE PREPARED AND ACCOMPLISH THE MISSION.

Warriors Go Underground, Find Hospital

CU CHI - In an airmobile assault into the Boi Loi Woods north of Cu Chi, 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry Warriors unearthed a Viet Cong hospital complex.

The 2d Brigade troops found the first signs of the hospital only 250 yards from their helicopter landing zone. The lead element was moving through the heavy underbrush when the pointman spotted what appeared to be a freshly used bunker.

First Lieutenant Tyrone J. Staten of Gary, Ind., told his platoon to check out the area thoroughly. Shortly thereafter the men began emerging from the tunnels and bunkers with various forms of enemy supplies. The security element began receiving automatic weapons fire, and the tunnel rats had to turn their attention to the enemy himself.

The company then moved back to the landing zone to allow artillery and air strikes to soften the enemy positions.

Darkness delayed further attempts to pursue the enemy until the following morning. Two lifts returned the Warriors and Company C, 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry to the area the next morning. The two companies swept through the area without contact. After the sweep the supplies were evacuated to Cu Chi.



STEADY HOLD - Looking like a model for basic training marksmanship beginners, Private First Class Martin B. Reiss, East Meadow, Long Island, of the 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Manchus fires into an enemy position 15 miles southwest of Tay Ninh. (PHOTO BY PFC RALPH NOVAK)

Hawaii Senate Resolution Cites 3 Units

CU CHI - The legislature of the State of Hawaii has recently recognized three Division units in an official Senate Resolution. The Resolution commends the men of the 1st and 2d Battalions 27th Infantry Wolfhounds, and the 1st Battalion, 8th Artillery.

Senate Concurrent Resolution Number 14 reads as follows:

WHEREAS, 1969 will mark the twentieth anniversary of the support of the Holy Family Home in Osaka, Japan by the officers and men of the First and Second Battalions, 27th Infantry and First Battalion 8th Artillery; and

WHEREAS, the officers and men of these distinguished units are for the second time in those twenty years engaged in combat while supporting their adopted wards, and

WHEREAS, never in the annals of our Armed Forces has such a humanitarian project been sustained so faithfully and for such an extended period; and

WHEREAS, the extremely generous monthly donations by members of these units have provided decent and happy lives for many hundreds of abandoned children and

WHEREAS, the humanitarian actions of the members of these units personify the ideals of brotherhood and love inherent in the word 'Aloha', now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 1969, the House of Representatives concurring, that our warmest respect and congratulations be extended to the officers and men of the First Battalion, 27th Infantry, the Second Battalion 27th Infantry and the First Battalion 8th Artillery for their unparalleled demonstration of international good will and brotherhood, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be forwarded to the Commanding Officers of each of the three units through Major General E. W. Williamson, Commanding General, 25th Infantry Division.

David C. McClung
President of the Senate
February 27, 1969



DURING A SWEEP through a rubber plantation that skirts Highway 26 eight miles east of Tay Ninh City, Tomahawks of Company A, 4th Battalion

(Mechanized), 23d Infantry, keep a wary eye open for signs of Charlie. **(PHOTO BY SGT ROGER WELT)**

Decorated

BRONZE STAR MEDAL (HEROISM)

LTC William J. Cummings, HHC, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 MAJ George B. Sweet, 25th MI Det
 CPT James F. Harvey, C Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Arty
 1LT Lauren E. Johnson, 2d Bde Mobile Training Team
 1LT Gary G. Martin, HHC, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 1LT James W. Conway, A Btry, 7th Bn, 11th Arty
 1LT Gary W. Carlson, B Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 1LT Michael D. Jackson, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 1LT Dennis Gnas, Co D, 2d Bn, 12 Inf
 1LT Andrew D. Malloy, Co B, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 1LT Jerry D. Pruitt, HHC, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 1LT John W. Slawson, Co C, 2d Bn, 27th Inf
 1LT Andrew C. Allred, Co A, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 1LT Eddie G. Rigsby, Co A, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 1LT Michael D. May, Co D, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 1LT John R. Moore, A Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 2LT Jerome P. Klar, A Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 1SG Harvey L. Harper, Co B, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 1SG Ernest C. Randolph, Co A, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 1SG Douglas C. Raab, 25th MI Det
 MSG Phillip F. Dice, HHC, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 PSG Robert C. Lewis, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SFC Nathaniel E. Meador, Co C, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SFC Herbert D. Wright, CoC, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SSG David D. Buckner, HHC, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SSG Stephen B. Duerk, Co B, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SSG Emmanuel G. Montanez, A Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SSG Tommy Brewington, A Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SSG Levern C. Brown, A Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SSG Jack B. Kimberlin, B Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SSG Alejandro, Co D, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 SSG William D. Shaw, Co A, 3d Bn, 22d Inf
 SSG Ronald D. Hughes, A Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav

SSG Thomas E. Kelly, Co A, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 SSG Bernard R. Gdowski, Co C, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SP6 Tommy D. Bass, HHC, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SGT Billy R. Terry, Co A, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SGT La Von Freeman, Co B, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SGT Lowell E. Leopold, Co D, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 SGT Cecil G. Law, Co B, 1st 27th Inf
 SGT William J. Haase, Co D, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 SGT Roy L. Alexander, Co A, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SGT Timothy Harris, Co A, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SGT Daniel Rothstein, Co A, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SGT William A. Cargill, 25th MP Co
 SGT Jerry E. O'Malley, A Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SGT Mel T. Bernard, Co F, 50th Inf
 SGT Gerald J. French, B Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SGT Terry Valore, HHC, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
 SGT Daniel G. Updike, Co A, 4th Bn, 23d Inf
 SGT Glenn D. Covert, Co A, 2d Bn, 14th Inf
 SGT David H. Foss, Co E, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 SP5 Donald E. Deck, A Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP5 Thomas E. Ruschkewicz, C Trp, 3d Sqdn, 4th Cav
 SP4 Richard H. Losey, HHC, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Guy S. Lopez, HHC, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 James A. Leonard, HHC, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Dennis A. Gilmore, Co A, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Carlton G. Harwell, Co B, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SP4 Jerome L. Bradwell, Co B, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SP4 Kenneth J. Taylor, Co D, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 SP4 William C. Stuart, Co D, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 SP4 Perry A. Helms, Co B, 1st Bn, 5th Inf
 SP4 John F. Sherwood, Co C, 1st Bn, 27th Inf
 SP4 Ronald A. Williams, Co D, 2d Bn, 12th Inf
 SP4 John C. Clancy, Co D, 2d Bn, 12th Inf

First Re-Enlistment Could Be 'Pot of Gold' in Your MOS

There is a 'pot of gold' awaiting those of you who reenlist for the first time and hold one of the nearly 300 military occupational specialties designated as critical by the Army.

The pot of gold is in the form of the Variable Reenlistment Bonus (VRB). It can add as much as eight thousand dollars - tax free - to your regular enlistment bonus. The VRB is only available to men and women reenlisting for the first time. You must also meet the following requirements:

1. You must serve at least 21 months of active service in your current enlistment before reenlisting.
2. Be in the grade of E-3 or higher and in certain MOSs, E-4 or higher.

3. Reenlist for at least 48 additional months of service.
4. Reenlist within three months of the expiration date of your term of service.
5. Be qualified in one of the military occupational specialties designated as a critical skill by the Department of the Army. These skills are listed in AR 600-200.

If you meet all of the above requirements, you can collect a VRB in addition to your regular reenlistment bonus. Bonuses ranging up to \$10,000 have been paid.

The VRB critical skill areas cover virtually all branches of the Army and all types of jobs. Among the Critical skills are Hawk Missile Launcher repairman, field artillery crewman, cook, carpenter, aircraft repairman, radio teletypewriter operator, light or heavy vehicle truck driver, radio repairman, automatic data processing repairman and data processing systems analyst.

The sum of money that first term reenlistees receive through the VRB program can mean a lot in future years. You can buy a car, start a stock portfolio, have enough money to get married and raise a family, or just salt it away in the bank. For tax purposes, the bonus paid or earned in Viet Nam is TAX FREE.

All the pertinent information is available to you, including a U.S. Army pay rule that enables you to figure within seconds your reenlistment bonus and VRB.

Master Sergeant Donahue, the career counselor supervisor for the Tropic Lightning Division, has 12 full time counselors ready to assist you.

Division reenlistment officers are located at Dau Tieng, Tay Ninh, and three offices at Cu Chi. Locations at Cu Chi are DIVARTY, DISCOM and the Personnel Service Division of the division headquarters area.

If you want to call, instead of stopping by, the telephone numbers for Dau Tieng are 148 or 240 Tay Ninh - 412 or 430, and at Cu Chi, 5234.

Tunnel VC's Home: Be a Home-Breaker

Over a period of almost 30 years of fighting a stronger enemy, the Viet Cong have developed extensive underground tunnel systems. As a result, the problem of finding and destroying his troops and supplies has become a critical one.

TYPES OF TUNNELS

For systematic identification and reporting, four categories have been designated by Army Engineers. Tunnels are classified as to size - small, medium, large, and complex.

Small tunnels are commonly located in or near a village, and the entrances are often found in wells. There are normally no compartments and no branch tunnels.

A variant of the small tunnel is the ambush tunnel. As its name implies, it is used for ambush and is usually located near a path, trail, or road expected to be used by friendly forces. It is generally designed to hold from three to five men and will have only one entrance and one exit.

Medium tunnels are large enough for a platoon or company-sized force from 30 to 50 men. They will have several entrances and exits.

Large tunnels are usually of sufficient size to hold a battalion-sized force (150 to 300 men). This type of tunnel may have as much as 15 meters of overburden and contain four to five levels with large rooms connected by a network of smaller tunnels. It is usually extensively compartmentalized.

A tunnel complex is made up of a series of interconnecting tunnels, rooms, and bunkers. Tunnel complexes are constructed with several levels.

The enemy uses this type of tunnel for almost any facility requiring a relatively large work area, including hospitals, ordnance shops, and headquarters.

All tunnels are constructed with sharp turns and trap doors to lessen the effects an explosion, to decrease gas penetration, and to provide secret connections between one part and another. They may have false branches and when vacated are normally booby trapped and mined.

USE OF TUNNELS

From a tunnel the enemy can launch an attack, then disappear. They also can provide a route for undetected passage under friendly communication routes.

LESSONS LEARNED

Tunnel analysis has listed certain indicators of tunnel construction - dirt piled up under brushy vegetation or

around the base of large trees. Here are some other tell-tale signs:

1. Soil not common to the surrounding area or dirt found in an unusual configuration.
2. Existence of unexplained bamboo tubes or metal pipes in the surface of the ground; these may be ventilation tubes.
3. The enemy may withdraw to a tunnel area after having been spotted.
4. Sniper or small arms fire may be directed at friendly troops sweeping an area to deliberately lure them away from a tunnel complex located on the axis along which they were originally moving.
5. Conscription of a large number of local people over a relatively long period of time.

TROPIC LIGHTNING

Combat Honor Roll



Added to this week's Combat Honor Roll is Private First Class Lester Grigsby of A Battery, 1st Battalion, 8th Artillery. He distinguished himself while serving as forward observer attached to Company A, 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry.

While established in a night laager position, Company A came under a massive communist assault. During the initial contact, Grigsby secured a radio and moved through the murderous Viet Cong fire to the perimeter and began adjusting artillery fire on the enemy.

After giving the initial corrections to the FDC, his radio was rendered inoperable by an RPG round.

Undaunted, he exposed himself to a holocaust of exploding projectiles as he returned to secure another radio. After obtaining a radio, he returned through the bullet swept area to the perimeter and effectively resumed adjusting artillery on the hostile force.

His valorous actions contributed immeasurably to the defeat of the hostile force. 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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'Busiest Airfield in South Vietnam'

Tower Treats Teeming Tay Ninh Air Traffic

TAY NINH, One of the busiest Army airfields in South Vietnam now has the newest, most complete mobile control tower the Federal Aviation Administration can provide.

The new control tower is air-conditioned, has a completely self-contained power unit and allows a 360 degree field of vision. It has a recording system to tape all transmissions between aircraft and the tower, two backups in

the event of a systems failure, a siren and loudspeaker for alarm purposes and a direct-reading barometric pressure altimeter.

During the troop buildup in Tay Ninh in November, 1968, the airplane traffic more than doubled. The inadequacies of the old tower became even more apparent.

"During November ours became the busiest Army airfield in South Vietnam," said Major Robert C. Scully of Adams, Mass., airfield commander.

"This is where we came into the picture," said Captain Arthur N. Brown of Longview, Tex., serving with Alpha Company, 588th Engineer Battalion. "We were commissioned to erect a 54 foot tower to support the new control room."

The Tay Ninh tower project had top priority and construction went quickly. Cement footings were poured and huge eight by three inch timbers were lifted into place for bracing. A 50-foot crane did much of the heavy lifting, and when the height of the tower passed the point where the crane could be used effectively, a complex system of pulleys designed by the 588th took over.

Without incident the timbers were expertly raised and placed in their final positions.

Next came the construction of several equipment shelters and a reinforced generator pad. Then after a short wait, the pre-fabricated control room arrived from Long Binh and was lifted into place by the Army's workhorse, the Ch47 Chinook helicopter.

The 362d Aviation Support Detachment under the supervision of James Weaver of the Federal Aviation Administration began to integrate the systems prepared by them for use with the tower. Wiring was completed: instruments were installed and tested. Within 24 hours the tower was operational.

Air controllers in Tay Ninh work atop one of the tallest structures in Tay Ninh base camp with a full view of the air strip and helipads.

Twin-engined Caribous and C-130's, and Cayuse, Cobra, and Chinook helicopters are observed and controlled using the finest, most modern air traffic equipment.

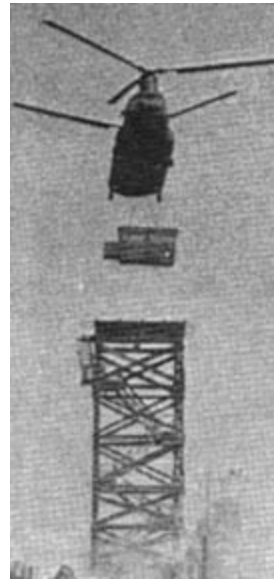
"We are tooled up to handle any and all problems," continued Scully. "The crowded skies of Tay Ninh are under control."



AT WORK - The 362d Aviation Support Detachment wasted little time in getting down to business in the new tower. Specialist 5 David J. Cranfield of San Carols, Calif., communicates with an approaching aircraft, while Specialist 5 Steven R. Wilkins of Williamson, Vt., and Specialist 4 Warren L. Finch of Croton-on-Hudson, N.Y., attend to paperwork. (PHOTO BY 1LT MACK GOODING)

AN FAA mobile control tower is hoisted into place atop the 588th Engineer Battalion's structure by a

Muleskinner helicopter. (PHOTO BY
1LT MACK GOODING)



Regulars Mortar VC Mortar Position

TAY NINH - Enemy forces launched a mortar attack on Fire Support Base Washington which proved to be fateful for the Viet Cong.

Mortar rounds were hitting outside the wire at Washington and were being adjusted into the center of the base, occupied by C Company of the 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry. Before the enemy rounds hit, the Regulars' mortar platoon was placing suppressive fire on the enemy launching position.

Specialist 4 John Harrison of Greensboro, N.C., was on duty in the mortar platoon's fire control center when he spotted the flashes from the enemy tube. "They were set up in a woodline about 1,000 meters from us," said Harrison. "I shot an azimuth toward the flashes and estimated the distance. The first round was only a few meters off and the second was right on target," continued Harrison.

A total of 283 high explosive and illumination rounds found their objective during the action. Three 81mm mortar tubes belonging to the Regulars were kept busy for about three hours.

"Spooky" was flying overhead when the attack occurred and spotted approximately 150 enemy soldiers headed toward Washington. Along with two helicopter gunships, "Spooky" engaged the VC and broke up their mission.

A sweep the next morning by the 1st Brigade troopers turned up pieces of metal which appeared to be from a mortar tube. The enemy mortar position was completely leveled by the suppressive fire placed on it.

GET READY! SET! GO! -
Regulars of the 3d Battalion,
22d Infantry, prepare to
charge off of a chopper as
they near a landing zone close
to an NVA base camp.
(PHOTO BY SP4 DAVID DE
MAURO)



PSYOPS Seeks Chieu Hois Broadcasts Tell It Like It Is

TAY NINH - Every night a lone helicopter lifts off from the helipad at the 1st Brigade base camp in Tay Ninh, carrying the 1st Brigade PSYOPS team fully armed with a 1,000 watt broadcasting system.

The team's mission: Tell the VC and NVA forces hiding under the cover of darkness the allies' message of peace and willingness to welcome them under the Chieu Hoi Program.

One particular night's message had a little something extra. The enemy troops could hear the voice of a former female comrade pleading with them to turn themselves in.

A petite 18-year-old girl named Hung, from the village of Ben Cau had surrendered to an ARVN ambush patrol only two nights before. After a quick debriefing by the ARVN forces and a full day of processing through the Tay Ninh Chieu Hoi center, Hung was busy talking into microphones at the 1st Brigade civic action office.

The taping session produced a 30 minute message addressed to the members of her former VC squad. This tape plus a leaflet bearing her message and picture were delivered to the VC the very next night.

As a result of the special broadcast and leaflet drop, three more members of the squad turned themselves in, bringing their AK-47 rifles with them.

"The new Hoi Chanhs also prepared a tape to be used on our broadcasts, and we had a leaflet printed showing their pictures and messages," said Major Clarence M. DeYoung of San Diego, Calif., the 1st Brigade S-5 officer. "We hope to bring the rest of the squad shortly."

"In the past the Ben Cau area has been somewhat of a VC-infested area, ' ' continued DeYoung. "Lately, however, we have been making inroads due to MEDCAPS, the security we've been providing for the villagers and now our successful PSYOPS operations."

DeYoung noted that the detainees are pleasantly surprised over the treatment they receive from the ARVNs and the Chieu Hoi center and are more than willing to help persuade their former comrades to surrender.

The 1st Brigade civic action team is well on the way to converting VC country into a stronghold of South Vietnamese government supporters.

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JUST THE RIGHT SIZE - A small Vietnamese boy is just the right size to weave a basket from the inside out. Photographer SP4 R. B. Williams, caught this scene while the 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry Wolfhounds were on an operation west of Cu Chi. But life isn't all work for Vietnamese boys as the photos below show. There's time for soccer games and even some capitalistic ventures for fun and profit.

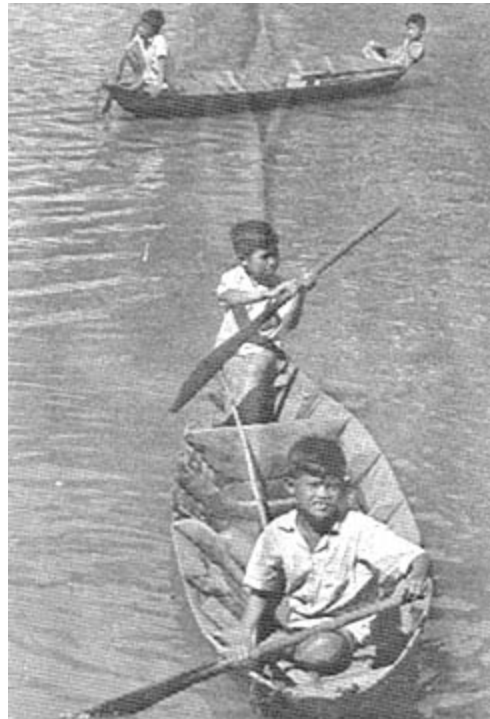


There Is Time for a Little Work... A Little Play and a Little of Each



TIME OUT FOR SOCCER - Even outside Fire3 Support Base Mahone with its 105mm howitzers, Vietnamese youngsters find room for a game of soccer. **(PHOTO BY SGT HECTOR NADEL)**

A COMBINATION of work and play and fun and profit is found by these small Vietnamese boatmen who offer a ferry service across a canal at a sugar mill. **(PHOTO BY SP4 R.B. WILLIAMS)**





TEAMWORK is essential in demolitions work. As his partner readies the last charge, this demo man carries a double load to the pick up zone.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE - A time fuse for a cone-shaped explosive is prepared. The charge will be placed in an enemy bunker beneath scattered bamboo. (PHOTOS BY SGT CHARLES HAUGHEY)



Moving quickly and efficiently, the demo team of the 65th Engineer Battalion destroys enemy bunkers. And Charlie's underground war is brought to the surface.



A DEMOLITION TEAM member hustles to put distance between himself and the last explosion as an earlier charge explodes right on schedule.



WITH A FUSE behind him already burning, a demo man races past his working comrade to begin setting the next charge. The leap-frog method was necessary to destroy an enemy bunker complex quickly before his company was to leave on an eagle flight.

Floppy, a Homing Pigeon Dog Jumps Eagle, Makes It Back

TAY NINH - Rin Tin Tin, Lassie and Yukon King have nothing on Floppy, the all purpose point dog-mascot-homing pigeon of the 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Manchu's Charlie Company.

However dubious his pedigree might be, Floppy has established his value and loyalty to the Manchus, most recently by finding his way back to their Fire Support Base Sedgwick across seven miles of Vietnamese countryside after missing the return eagle flight of an airmobile operation.

Charlie Company had left early in the morning for the operation, and by noon had reached its pickup zone, recalled Private First Class Norman L. Russell, Indian Rocks Beach, Fla.

"When the second wave was set to go, Floppy jumped in the chopper with our CO (Captain Ramon T. Pulliam, Chattanooga, Tenn.), where he usually stays," Russell said. "But just as we were taking off, Floppy jumped out, and we thought we'd lost him. Everybody was feeling pretty bad about it, too."

Around 11 p.m., however, Floppy came prancing jauntily into the Charlie Company command bunker, having made his own way over seven miles, crossed the 100-yard-wide Cam Vo Dong River, and infiltrated the maze of barbed wire that surrounds Sedgwick, which used to be Patrol Base Mole City.

The Manchus welcomed the unscathed Floppy back with a couple of cans Of C-rations, and their relief at having him return wasn't just sentiment, according to Private First Class Michael W. Tanner, 610 N. Ridgeway Lane, La Habra, Calif., Pulliam's radio-telephone operator.

"Floppy always stays right up with our point man, and he can smell the Viet Cong long before they can ambush us," Tanner said. "He hasn't failed us yet and even when we were hit here at Sedgwick, he was restless and barking all night."



A SOUTH VIETNAMESE RF-PF SOLDIER models a VC gas mask found in a cache southeast of Fire Support Base Reed. The allied soldier was on a sweep with 2d Brigade troops from D Company, 2d Battalion, 27th Infantry. **(PHOTO BY SP4 KARL KARLGAARD)**

Lightning Strikes Twice For Sergeant First Class

DAU TIENG - Most people maintain that lightning never strikes twice, but for Sergeant First Class Robert S. Spears of Mount Holly, N.J., it has—once in Germany and now in Vietnam.

Spears' first encounter with lightning occurred in 1944. He was a young sergeant, just finishing desert training at Camp Clipper, Calif., and on his way to England with the 578th Field Artillery Battalion.

After several months of training, the 578th landed on Normandy Beach after D-Day. When the call came for volunteers to fill infantry units before the Battle of the Bulge, he volunteered.

ZAP! He was assigned to the 78th Lightning division.

After Fierce fighting with the 78th in Belgium, Remagen and the Ruhr Valley, where he received the Bronze Star with V, Spears returned to the states and was discharged in 1945.

One year later he returned to the Army as a military policeman, and spent most of the next five years serving with units of the 82nd Airborne Division, where he earned the Master Parachutist Badge.

After a brief stint in Europe, Spears was assigned as a prisoner of war escort guard in Korea in 1953.

Following several more tours in Europe, lightning struck him the second time. He was assigned to the "Tropic Lightning" division where he serves with the 3d Brigade. He serves as administration supervisor in the adjutant section of brigade headquarters at Dau Tieng.

APO Mission - Lift Morale

DAU TIENG - Load 16 tons and what do you get?

Just about two weeks' work for the postal clerks at Army Post Office 96268 in Dau Tieng, that's what. The busy mail clerks at the 3rd Brigade APO handle nearly a ton of mail every day - and better yet, that ton of letters and packages is distributed to the troops "ASAP."

Staff Sergeant Jimmy Arnold of Odessa, Texas, and his six-man section pride themselves in the speed with which they deliver much-wanted letters to the men of the 3rd Brigade. Transportation of mail from Tan Son Nhut and Cu Chi to Dau Tieng isn't as frequent as they would like it to be, but Arnold and his boys do their best to see that once the mail arrives it is distributed in no time flat.

In addition to its routine postal functions, the APO provides financial services for men of the 3d Brigade, and, as if this weren't enough, it handles personal baggage for medical evacuees.

Besides handling incoming mail, the clerks ship out about 500 pounds daily. During Christmas season, of course, this figure is almost tripled.

Arnold recalled last Christmas' daily average of 5,000 pounds. A back-breaking 10,000 passed through APO portals one day during that season.

Surely men like Arnold and his postal specialists should be counted among the ranks of the proverbial 'unsung heroes' of war.

Lucky Medic Listed QIA

TAY NINH - While on an air-mobile operation six miles north of Tay Ninh City, Specialist 4 Greg Hara of San Jose, Calif., almost became the first American soldier to be quilled in action.

Hara came across a runaway porcupine who was fleeing the troop movement. "I didn't know what hit me," said Hara. "I was walking along a jungle trail with the rest of the group when he came running out of the brush and hit my left ankle. At first he was stunned, but then he got up and ran off."

Hara is a medic with Charlie Company, 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry.

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TROPIC LIGHTNING NEWS

March 31, 1969



ON LINE - Tropic Lightning soldiers from the Fighting Aces of the 2d battalion, 34th Armor, mount up for a mission.

Dreadnaughts' AO: Saigon to the DMZ

CU CHI - The 2d Battalion, 34th Armor, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Duane Teague of Terre Haute, Ind., has one of the most widespread areas of operation of any unit in the 25th Infantry Division.

Alpha, Delta, and Headquarters companies of the 34th work primarily in the Tropic Lightning division area. They provide mobile striking power for 2d Brigade infantrymen.

Cu Chi is the base of logistical operations for the Battalion. Delta Company provides the support specialties for maintaining an armor battalion in the field.

Bravo Company of the 34th Armor supports operations of the 1st Infantry Division near Lai Khe, while Charlie Company operates out of camps Evans and Eagle north of Hue.

Company C, nicknamed Fighting Aces by General William Westmoreland, is under the operational control of the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile), in the northern I Corps area.

The Dreadnaught armor works closely with the 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry, in combined armor operations. A recent mission became a textbook example of the value of armor in Vietnam.



Charlie Company of the 34th Armor was conducting a combined operation with airborne infantrymen and South Vietnamese Popular Forces in the Dong Hoa area. The combined operation drove to the planned line of departure with the infantry mounted on tanks. Then while a 15 minute barrage of artillery prepared the forward area, the infantrymen dismounted and fanned out between the 12 tanks on line. As the last artillery round whistled overhead, the task force moved out. While they swept the area the Dreadnaught armor provided reconnaissance by fire in areas of suspected enemy concentration.

Suddenly an observation helicopter received fire from five locations. Dropping white smoke, the chopper pulled back behind the tanks. Canister, high explosive (HE), 7.62mm and .30 caliber rounds pounded the enemy positions.

Smoke, blasts and tracers pointed deadly fingers at the enemy. Soon there was no more enemy fire.

MAKING WAVES - (Above, right) Displacing 52 tons of water, a Dreadnought tank "swims" through a stream near Hue, where the armormen are under the operational control of the 101st Airborne.

Story and Photos by SP5 Doug Elliott



DOWN RANGE - A high explosive round screams off toward a suspected VC sniper position from a Fighting Aces tank.

COMBAT ASSAULT - With the combined elements of the 101st Airborne and South Vietnamese Popular Forces 2d Battalion, 34th Armor, troopers sweep across the sands in northern South Vietnam near Long Hoa.



Staunch UpTight Artillerymen Save HQ From Enemy Siege

DAU TIENG - "Up Tight" artillerymen of the 2d Battalion, 77th Artillery, fought as infantrymen to save their headquarters and fire direction center from being overrun.

During a massive North Vietnamese Army attack on Dau Tieng base camp of the 3d Brigade in which 73 enemy were killed, the Up Tight Battalion headquarters was threatened.

Specialist 4 Phillip Fadley of Anderson, Ind., was the first to spot a group of NVA sappers who had penetrated the perimeter. The enemy troops were inside the Battalion motor pool placing satchel charges. The enemy force was apparently maneuvering for position from which to attack the fire direction center, which is in a large underground bunker.

Fadley alerted a group of cannoneers including Major Robert Moose of Russellville, Ark., Up Tight executive officer. Moose led a patrol of artillerymen in defeating the enemy attack.

Moose, Fadley, Sergeant Roy Lischinsky of Tillson, N.Y., and Private First Class Charles Bailey of Barberton, Ohio, opened fire on a group of NVA in the motor pool, hitting two and pinning down the remainder.

As they kept the enemy glued to the ground, Specialist 4 Merlin Beedy of Garden City, Ka., crept forward from his position atop the fire direction center to a small trench alongside the motor pool. From there he threw hand grenades at a suspected enemy position.

A sweep of the motor pool the following morning turned up six enemy bodies in the motor pool.

As dawn broke, Specialist 4 Stephen V. Ladouceur of (14111 Sorrento Ave.) Detroit, Mich. spotted an enemy sniper in a tree across the airstrip. Ladouceur, who is a driver for the Up Tight battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Vernon Lewis of Marshall, Tex., leveled his M-16 rifle and brought the sniper down.

Commenting on the men's fighting efforts, Moose said "my artillerymen did an outstanding job of rooting out the enemy. They displayed great courage and coolness under fire. They fought in the best tradition of our battalion."



FAST AND PRECISE — Hornet slicks of the 116th Assault Helicopter Company drop in to extract 2d Brigade soldiers from the 2d Battalion, 12th Infantry, after a sweep north of Cu Chi. (PHOTO BY SGT. CHARLES HAUGHEY)

The VTR Unsticks the Stuck

TAY NINH - An emergency call flashed over the radio. An armored personnel carrier from 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry was stuck in the mud off Highway 26, eight miles east of Tay Ninh City, it was imperative that the APC be pulled out immediately.

The distress call was quickly relayed to the Battalion's support platoon, and without delay the Tomahawk support element went into action.

A VTR (vehicle track recovery) and its three-man crew raced to the scene.

"We were ready to move out seconds after the call for help came in," said Specialist 4 Carol Sigmon of Vale, N.C. "Within minutes we had pulled the APC out of the mud and back onto firmer ground."

This was a typical mission for the men of the Tomahawk support platoon. They remain on-call 24 hours a day to answer any emergency that might arise.

The VTR, better known as the "track retriever," is a machine of many talents, ranging from towing armored personnel carriers to lifting barbed wire out of five ton trucks. The versatility of the VTR has exceeded all expectations in Vietnam.

"Working the Tomahawk support unit has been a very interesting experience," said Specialist 4 Robert R. Mason of Box 85, Hardesty, Okla. "Though the hours are long, it's very satisfying to know that what you are doing is appreciated."



(Above, right) A VTR, commonly called 'track retriever' from the 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry rumbles down Highway 26 on its way to help a disabled Tomahawk armored personnel carrier. The track retriever has proved its worth again and again, from towing large vehicles to lifting barbed wire from five ton trucks. (PHOTO BY SP4 ROGER WELT)

Regulars Take Tip, Find Readied Rockets

TAY NINH - While on a reconnaissance mission four and one-half miles north-east of Tay Ninh City, Bravo Company, 3d Battalion, 22d Infantry uncovered three 107mm rockets ready for firing.

The rockets were found in a well only one mile north of Fire Support Base Buell. The Regulars were tipped off about the location of the rockets by a Vietnamese boy who was tending cows in the field. The boy was rewarded for his help under the Voluntary Information Program which pays piasters to civilians when they lead allied troops to enemy supplies.

"The Vietnamese boy was very happy and proud of what he had done," said Bravo Company commander First Lieutenant Hugh E. Stephans of Charleston, S.C. "He approached one of our Vietnamese scouts, Vo Van Dang, and told him in Vietnamese about the whereabouts of the rockets. My interpreter, Staff Sergeant Tran Hau Tinh, informed me what was happening, and after we pulled the rockets out of the well I gladly rewarded the boy."

The Regulars' S-5 Master Sergeant Paul Gargis of Lima, Ohio, commented on the program.

"The Voluntary Information Program offers a great deal of incentive to youngsters, especially," said Gargis. "Once they have found out that they will be rewarded for their finds, they will hunt far and wide for weapons. Their help means a great deal, since it aids us in capturing the enemy's weapons before he can use them against us."

Bobcats...

(Continued From Page 1)

lasted three hours. Illumination flares gave the Bobcat Company enough extra light to thoroughly rid the area of enemy soldiers. The next morning the company again swept the area of the previous day's contact.

The NVA unit paid a high price for its initial sniper fire. Twenty-eight enemy lost their lives to the mechanized units, and blood trails were found leading away from the area.

Of the trophies taken, probably the most impressive was a .30 caliber machinegun mounted on wheels.

Other weapons captured included 14 AK-47 assault rifles, 1 60mm mortar tube complete, 40 CHICOM grenades, 40 rounds of butterfly bombs, 7.82mm mortar rounds, 2 RPG-2 launchers, 3 RPG-7 launchers, 20 RPG-2 rounds, 5 RPG-7 rounds and numerous documents.



ADMINISTERING PLASMA to wounded member of his unit during recent action is medical aidman Specialist 4 Rondual E. Tice of St Petersburg, Fla., assigned to the 2d battalion, 12th Infantry. During the battle, elements of the 2d Brigade killed 170 members of an estimated NVA Battalion near Trang Bang. **(PHOTO BY MAJ JOHN FAIRBANK)**

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