

Ivy Men, Enemy Battalions Clash In Pleiku Province

'LOST' PLATOON

Survivors Play Dead While NVA Search Area

Saigon— Eight 4th Division soldiers who lived through a fierce battle when their 30-man platoon was cut off from its main force and overrun by an estimated North Vietnamese battalion have recalled their harrowing experience.

The men from the "lost" platoon of the 1st Brigade's Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry told how they laid face down in mud and grass playing dead, each thinking he was the only survivor, from late last Thursday afternoon until they were found Friday at 8:45 a.m.

During that time NVA searched them for identification, picked their pockets and took watches from their wrists.

Survivors reported being kicked onto their backs by NVA while being searched. One wounded man said an enemy soldier had sat on his back while looking through his pockets.

"I was lying on my stom-

ach playing dead," explained a survivor. "One enemy soldier came over and sat on my back. He placed his hand under my shirt to see if I was breathing.

"I could hear my heart (Cont'd on P-4, Col. 1)

Saigon — Infantrymen of the 4th Division have been engaged in bitter fighting with North Vietnamese soldiers in Operation Francis Marion in the Central Highlands.

The action started last Thursday at 12:30 p.m. when a reinforced company from the 1st Brigade's 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry encountered a NVA battalion in heavy jungle 56 kilometers southwest of Pleiku City.

The major contact in the engagement ended at 7:15 p.m. with sporadic sniper

fire continuing during the night.

During the fighting one of the company's platoons was cut off from the main force while maneuvering to encircle a pocket of NVA troops and attempts to reinforce it failed.

Army gunships and transport helicopters loaded with reinforcements fruitlessly tried to shove the enemy back Thursday night in attempts to reach the unit.

Ground fire was reported as "very heavy" by chopper pilots. Two helicopters were

hit but not downed.

A second company of 4th Division infantrymen heli-lifted to the scene to reinforce the embattled platoon had to chop through heavy elephant grass six to eight feet high.

At daybreak Friday two Ivy companies left their overnight perimeters to look for the "lost" platoon. In the sweep of the battle area the Ivy men found 22 infantrymen dead and seven wounded from the platoon.

They also found 119 NVA dead, three individual weapons and a B-40 grenade launcher.

Total U.S. casualties in the contact were 31 infantrymen killed and 24 wounded.

Saturday at 10:24 p.m. a multi-company force from the 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry in night defensive positions on the forward slope of Chu Goungot Mountain 56 kilometers west-southwest of Pleiku took 175 rounds of enemy mortar and 45 rounds of B-40 rocket fire.

The enemy force, estimated as a battalion, tried to penetrate one company's perimeter but was repelled.

U.S. 7th Air Force pilots (Cont'd on P-4, Col. 1)



STILL ALERT

During a rest break, Specialist 4 Joy D. Massey (Vernal, Utah), Platoon Sergeant Thomas L. Day (Mifflinburg, Pa.), and Sergeant Frank P. Marriot (South Bend, Wash.) of the 3rd Platoon, Company A, 2nd Battalion (Mechanized), 8th Infantry continue to watch the brush for the unpredictable enemy. The Ivy men are taking part in Operation Francis Marion in the Central Highlands. (USA Photo by Sp5 Jerry Craighead)

ENEMY OPENS FIRE

Ivy Soldier Killed During Standdown

Saigon—One 4th Division infantryman was killed and seven wounded and eight enemy killed during Tuesday's 24-hour Allied standdown in honor of Buddha's birthday.

Throughout the Republic of Vietnam U.S. Forces reported 71 truce incidents and 32 were considered significant. A total of 12 friendly forces and 51 enemy were killed and 57 friendly forces wounded in the period.

At 9:20 a.m., a 4th Division, 1st Brigade company, while on defensive patrol 53 kilo-

meters southwest of Pleiku City, came under fire from three North Vietnamese.

The patrol returned the fire. One infantryman and seven enemy were killed. One individual weapon was captured.

A 2nd Brigade patrol 40 kilometers southwest of Pleiku City was fired on by five NVA at 10:30 a.m. The patrol returned fire, killing one NVA. There were no U.S. casualties.

At 12:15 p.m. a 1st Brigade patrol came under fire

from three enemy 52 kilometers southwest of Pleiku City. The enemy fled southwest when the infantrymen returned fire.

One U.S. soldier was wounded and enemy casualties are unknown.

A 2nd Brigade company, located 10 kilometers southwest of Duc Co, took 60 to 80 rounds of 82mm mortar fire at 11:50 p.m.

Artillery and AC-47 Dragonships supported the 4th Division company. Six infantrymen were wounded.

B-52s Strike Eight Times In Highlands

Saigon — U.S. Air Force B-52 crews have made eight strikes in Pleiku Province in support of Operation Francis Marion during the past week.

They hit an enemy troop concentration 48 kilometers west-southwest of Pleiku City before dawn Wednesday.

Stratofortress crews of the Strategic Air Command struck three times Monday, all against enemy troop concentrations 50 kilometers west-southwest of Pleiku City.

They hit enemy fortifications and encampments located 34 kilometers west-southwest of Pleiku City early Sunday and troop concentrations 57 kilometers west-southwest of Pleiku City late that night.

The pilots of the eight-engine bombers struck twice at enemy troop concentrations Friday. In the afternoon they blasted a position 54 kilometers west-southwest of Pleiku City and then just after sundown the target was 10 kilometers west of Duc Co.

Enemy Destroys, Damages Bridges On Highway 19

Saigon — Enemy troops destroyed one bridge and damaged another on Highway 19 between An Khe and Pleiku City last Thursday.

The type of explosives used on the bridges, located 35 and 46 kilometers west-northwest of Pleiku City, is unknown.

Members of the 4th Engineer Battalion quickly arrived at the destroyed bridge and spanned the stream with an armed vehicle landing bridge.

At the second bridge, heavy traffic was rerouted on a bypass and a 2½-ton truck detonated a mine on the temporary road, wounding two soldiers and destroying the truck.

The mine, a 105mm projectile, caused a crater 20-feet wide and five-feet deep, according to reports from the scene.



EDITORIAL

Praise From Gen. Westmoreland

Millions of words have been written and spoken in praise of the thousands of American fighting men engaged in the bitter struggle to safeguard the cause of freedom against communist aggression in the Republic of Vietnam.

The most eloquent praise a fighting man can receive is that which comes from his commander because there is a kinship that exists between them based upon mutual respect and confidence strengthened by the ordeals of combat.

General W. C. Westmoreland, commander of the U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, had this to say about his American forces:

"Who are these men? They are mostly youngsters representing every State of the Union—from the farms, the cities, the factories and the campuses.

"They are the sound product of America's democratic society. They are the sum of our educational system, our medical science and our communications.

"Their excellent morale results from knowledge of their jobs, sound military policies, professional unit leadership and unprecedented material support.

"Their medical care is superb, their food is excellent and their mail is carefully handled. Shortages have been few and of short duration.

"As an individual, the fighting man I command is a tough, determined professional in battle one day, and the next day, a sensitive, compassionate friend helping the Vietnamese people. He is a fighter, a thinker, and a doer.

"He has seen—at first hand—Communist subversion and aggression at work; he has acquired a deeper appreciation of the importance of freedom. And from his ranks in the years ahead will come the confident, alert, intelligent citizens and leaders who will make this nation's future greater than its past.

"With fighting forces like these, a commander cannot help but look forward with confidence as he views the military situation." (AFNB)



Purple Heart

- Private First Class Robert D. Oliver Jr. HHC, 3rd Bn, 8th Inf
- Private First Class James M. Phillips HHC, 1st Bn, 12th Inf
- Private First Class Larry H. Reed HHC, 1st Bn, 12th Inf
- Private First Class Douglas M. Thompson Co B, 3rd Bn, 8th Inf
- Private First Class Homer L. Wiley Co B, 1st Bn, 12th Inf
- Private Vincent V. Balestrieri Jr. Co A, 3rd Bn, 8th Inf
- Sergeant First Class Charles W. Turner Co B, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Staff Sergeant Robert J. Avery Btry C, 4th Bn, 42nd Arty
- Staff Sergeant Charles R. Dunn Btry C, 4th Bn, 42nd Arty
- Sergeant Clayton G. Lewis HHC, 4th Med Bn
- Sergeant Roger L. Curtis Co C, 1st Bn, 12th Inf
- Sergeant John D. Poole Btry A, 4th Bn, 42nd Arty
- Sergeant George E. White Co C, 124th Signal Bn
- Corporal Clayton W. Botosh Btry C, 6th Bn, 29th Arty
- Corporal Hallard Dickey Jr. Btry C, 4th Bn, 42nd Arty
- Specialist 4 Karl J. Anderson Co A, 1st Bn, 12th Inf
- Specialist 4 Kenneth C. Cook Co A, 1st Bn, 12th Inf
- Specialist 4 David L. Gaine Trp B, 1st Sqdn, 10th Cav
- Specialist 4 Joseph H. Kilian Btry B, 6th Bn, 29th Arty
- Specialist 4 Edwing E. Movern Co A, 4th Eng Bn
- Specialist 4 Bertram H. Redler Co C, 124th Signal Bn
- Specialist 4 George V. Roberts Btry D, 5th Bn, 16th Arty
- Specialist 4 Floyd W. Williams HHC, 2nd Bde, 4th Div
- Sergeant Thomas A. Devere HHC, 1st Bn, 33rd Inf
- First Lieutenant Marvin E. McGraw Sr. Co A, 1st Bn, 14th Inf
- Chaplain (Captain) Walter Sauer HHC, 2nd Bde, 4th Div
- Private First Class William E. Bonham 33rd Infantry Platoon
- Private First Class William R. Burke Btry D, 5th Bn, 16th Arty
- Private First Class William D. Gibson Co B, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Private First Class Duane F. Kaminsky Co B, 1st Bn, 69th Armor
- Private First Class Philip A. O'Donnell Co B, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Private First Class James V. Showalter Btry C, 4th Bn, 42nd Arty
- Private First Class Jack H. Shupe Co B, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Private First Class Larry P. Sisler HHC, 2nd Bde, 4th Div
- Private First David A. Stempf Btry C, 4th Bn, 42nd Arty

Good Conduct Medal

- Staff Sergeant Robert M. Holcomb 4th Admin Co
- Specialist 5 Calvin D. Carlson Hqs & Svc Btry, 5/16th
- Staff Sergeant Eugene G. Betchel Co B, 4th Avn Bn
- Staff Sergeant James A. Benge Co B, 1st Bn, 22nd Inf
- Sergeant Norris Rolax Co B, 1st Bn, 22nd Inf
- Staff Sergeant Roberto Ramos-Doncel Co B, 1st Bn, 22nd Inf
- Specialist 4 Jacob Johnson Co B, 1st Bn, 22nd Inf
- Sergeant Donald E. Francois Co B, 1st Bn, 22nd Inf
- Sergeant Earl J. Collins Co B, 1st Bn, 22nd Inf
- Specialist 5 Walter E. Mathews Co C, 1st Bn, 69th Armor
- Sergeant First Class Jack Stier 4th Military Police Co
- Staff Sergeant Rogers L. Towers Co C, 1st Bn, 69th Armor
- Sergeant First Class Clarence Siple 4th Admin Co
- Private First Class Carlos Alvarez HHC, 3rd Bn, 8th Inf
- Sergeant James M. Haukins Co C, 1st Bn, 8th Inf
- Specialist 4 Billy Romero Co B, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Sergeant Bobbie Hill Co B, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Staff Sergeant Audis Hill Co B, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Specialist 4 Richard T. Stevens Co B, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Sergeant Willie L. Goodall Co B, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Specialist 4 Ronald Zuccaro Co B, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Sergeant Harold J. Sanders Jr. Co B, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Staff Sergeant Ernest L. Behn Co B, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Staff Sergeant Dennis D. Duncan Co B, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Staff Sergeant Gilbert Brantly Co B, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Sergeant James C. Baker Co B, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Staff Sergeant Ronald Wells Co B, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Staff Sergeant Curtis L. Boan Co B, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Sergeant Woodrow Bybee Co C, 1st Bn, 69th Armor
- Master Sergeant Frank Arnett 4th Admin Co
- Sergeant John J. Wanger HHC, 1st Bn, 69th Armor
- Sergeant William J. Reilly HHC, 1st Bn, 69th Armor
- Staff Sergeant Eloy Guevara Co B, 1st Bn, 69th Armor
- Specialist 5 John H. Hyde HHC, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Staff Sergeant Benny C. David HHC, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Staff Sergeant Lawrence Brown HHC, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Specialist 5 Herman Livingston HHC, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Specialist 5 John W. Hazelton HHC, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Specialist 5 Edward Hawkins HHC, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Specialist 5 Lloyd T. Hamilton HHC, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Specialist 5 Jodie H. Francis HHC, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Specialist 6 Walter Bucks HHC, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Staff Sergeant James Brown HHC, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Specialist 4 Richard Bosco HHC, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Staff Sergeant Eugene Dudeck Co B, 1st Bn, 69th Armor
- Staff Sergeant Kenneth L. Sports Co A, 1st Bn, 69th Armor
- Specialist 5 Ozzie Freeman HHC, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Staff Sergeant Eurban Herbert HHC, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Staff Sergeant Harvey Davis HHC, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Specialist 6 Oral L. Halsell HHC, 1st Bn, 69th Armor
- Platoon Sergeant Carl O. Davis HHC, 1st Bn, 69th Armor
- Staff Sergeant Gary D. Bridges Co B, 1st Bn, 69th Armor
- Staff Sergeant Robert Hall HHC, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Staff Sergeant James Duben HHC, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Specialist 5 Kenneth J. Moore HHC, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf
- Staff Sergeant Theodore Bunda HHC, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf

Chaplain's Corner

Tragedy Of Life

By Chaplain (Maj.) Howard T. Lee

Most of us would like to live in a world where squares did not have to fit into round holes, where every bit of machinery would click into place and where an answer would be given to every question.

One would think that God would answer such abstract questions as: "Why should I suffer? Why is there evil in the world?"

These are the type of questions which Job asked of God when he fell into misfortune.

After having lost his wealth, his children, his health, keeping only his wife who turned against him, he asked God why he was born and why he suffered this agony.

In the Bible, instead of answering the questions, God begins to ask Job questions, about 20 or 25 of them, such as: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?"

And at the end of all God's questioning, Job is convinced that the questions of God are more satisfying than the answers of men.

The tragedy of life is not what people suffer, but how much they miss. Suffering with no framework is living in a universe where nothing clicks, where there are no answers to any questions.

The tragedy of any life is not what happens; it is rather how we react to what happens.

Why do you think you have tears, if it be not to wipe away the tears of others? What chance have those who have fallen by life's roadside, wounded and half-dead, of help or healing, except from you who also know wounds?

To feel lonely and solitary in a world that does not make sense, in a universe that does not click, is to forget that no one is lonely except a person who is self-centered, who cuts himself off from communion with his fellowman.

To us is given in some measure the power to strengthen the fidelity of a fellowman. This is the "how we react."

Thus daily there are opportunities to unite ourselves with God, to strengthen our faith and fidelity to God so that we may see as Job saw that life's questions are only answered in the plan of God.

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Commanding General . . . Major General William R. Peers
Information Officer . . . Major Daniel R. Zenk

STAFF

Officer-in-Charge . . . Captain Lee F. Hardy Jr.
Editor . . . Specialist 4 Edward J. Salmina



THIS IS HOW YOU DO IT — Sergeant John Lawler, right, of the 2nd Battalion (Mechanized), 8th Infantry commo section explains the workings of the radio set in the armored personnel carriers recently acquired by the unit. The NCO built the display board and teaches a class on APC communications. (USA Photo by Capt. Ed Ciliberti)

Men Of 6/29th Quickly Silence Enemy Mortar

By Sp4 John H. Booth

Oasis—A man's life depends on his speed. In Vietnam, as in all past wars, a man must depend on his ability to think and move quickly.

The men of Battery A, 6th Battalion, 29th Artillery were relaxing after finishing their evening meal. Some were writing letters home while others were playing cards or engaged in other various activities.

They had spent their day as they had others in the past, staying alert for the call of "fire mission" which would send them running to their gun positions.

The men then recognized the sound of enemy mortar shells leaving their tubes somewhere outside the perimeter.

Immediately the artillerymen were up and running, again trying to gain yet another advantage on the North Vietnamese. They managed to man the guns even before the first enemy round had landed.

Throwing cards all over, Staff Sergeant Virgil Cannon (Macon, Ga.) ran with his section to its gun. Before the second round had landed, Sergeant Cannon's crew had its first round on the way to return the enemy greeting.

"I was in the tactical operations center when I first heard the mortars fired," said First Lieutenant Roland L. Hoffer (Atlanta, Ga.). "I had almost pinpointed the direction of the mortars by the time the first rounds had landed."

Reaching the first howitzer

he came to, Lieutenant Hoffer changed the direction of fire to cover the approximate area of the enemy mortar position.

As he heard the mortars going off, First Lieutenant Larry A. York (Kansas City, Kan.) ran to his gun position and shot an azimuth on the enemy position.

He immediately called his information into the fire direction center where First Lieutenant Rudolph J. Dlugosz (Manchester, N.H.) called sections and had them adjust on the newly computed settings.

It took the guns less than three minutes to silence the enemy mortar after receiving the new settings and changing the direction of fire. The time for the guns to fire on the counter-mortar settings was approximately 20 seconds from the time the men heard enemy rounds coming in.

The men of the "Can-Do" battalion never left their guns even though the rounds landed within 20 or 30 yards of their positions.

"They showed determination to beat Charlie at his own game," recalled Lieutenant Dlugosz. "It was their first real mortar attack and they didn't let us down."

1/22nd Medics Treat Montagnard's Wound

Le Thanh — Private First Class Carl Moore (Rockledge, Fla.) and Private First Class Gary Tillman (Lincoln, Neb.), medics with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry, recently treated a punji wound for a villager of Plei De Chi during Operation Francis Marion.

Accompanying Company B in a sweep through the Central Highland village, the two medics spotted a village elder with a thumb swollen three times its normal size. The medics immediately stopped and began treating the Montagnard.

PFC Moore performed an hour's surgery on the infected punji stick wound while PFC Tillman assisted. Eight stitches were needed to complete the operation.

2/8th Soldier Earns Promotion For Solving APC Commo Problems

Oasis—"Shoot, move, and communicate" is the tanker's creed, but it also holds true for the infantrymen riding in armored personnel carriers.

The 2nd Battalion, 8th Infantry, a recently mechanized unit of the Ivy Division's 2nd Brigade, found it was having problems with the "communications" end of the creed.

For solving the problems of track commo, a specialist fourth class in the battalion's commo section earned himself a set of buck sergeant stripes.

"The APC's were new to most of our men," said newly promoted Sergeant John F. Lawler (Gadsden, Ala.), "and the radio setup was most unfamiliar."

The infantrymen who does most of his traveling on his feet, explained Sergeant Lawler, has a very simple radio for his communication, the AN/PRC 25.

The AN/VRC 46 in the APC is more complicated. There are several component parts as opposed to the one compact PRC 25. The radio serves as an intercom in the track.

"The men were doing several things wrong, including improper connection of cables, improper intercom switch settings and other problems," said the sergeant.

These caused maintenance problems.

The solution Sergeant Lawler came up with was a working radio spread out on a display board. Using the display board, he explains to individuals or entire platoons in a class that lasts nearly half a day. Discussed in detail are the functions of each part and how each is connected to the power source and speaker.

Since the end of April

when the program began, Sergeant Lawler has taught more than 400 men of the "Panther" battalion.

"They really appreciate the classes and are learning a lot," commented the sergeant.

The upshot of the program is that Sergeant Lawler is talking more now (in his classes) and traveling less (going out as a radio repairman to a track with commo problems).

WORKING WITH 'PANTHERS'

CIDG Helps In Village Resettlement

By PFC Steve Frye

Oasis—A Civilian Irregular Defense Group from Plei Me Special Forces Camp has been working with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 8th Infantry clearing villages as part of the Edap Enang program.

In the past few days the Montagnard "Strikers" and the Ivy "Panthers" have evacuated 15 villages threatened by North Vietnamese troops operating in the area.

Prior to joining the 4th Division unit, the CIDG troops underwent extensive training in such combat tactics as ambushes, patrol techniques and raids, with special emphasis on reconnaissance work.

Staff Sergeant Charlie E. Carpenter (Madisonville, Ky.), a Special Forces advisor, commented on the training and effectiveness of the Central Highland fighters.

"These men are very conscientious and aggressive," said the sergeant. "Their knowledge of the terrain and the environment makes them extremely proficient on reconnaissance type operations."

Their ability as fighting soldiers has been proven again and again.

Private First Class Gary Paul (San Diego), a rifleman with Company A, relates one particular incident.

"Just before we got our tracks (armored personnel

carriers)," said PFC Paul, "we were operating in dense jungle with a group of CIDG's working as scouts when one of them shouted and began firing into the brush."

"Then the remainder of the group charged what was a well-concealed NVA ambush. They moved right in there, pumping lead into the surprised enemy."

"The CIDG troops were somewhat skeptical of our newly acquired APC's," added Sergeant Carpenter, but now they've become adept at applying tactics peculiar to mechanized unit. They are some of the best fighters I've seen."

Join
Your
4th Division
Association



AIR FORCE FATHER, ARMY SON

It took Lieutenant Colonel Melvin C. Thompson, judge advocate at Phan Rang Air Force Base, eight hours and three modes of transportation to get to the 3rd Brigade, 4th Division's base camp at Dau Tieng where he recently visited with his son, Private First Class Melvin B. Thompson who is a member of Battery C, 2nd Battalion, 77th Artillery. (USA Photo by Sp5 George Swengros)

Ivy men, Enemy Battle In Pleiku Province

(Cont'd from P-1, Col. 5)

and Army artillery supported the infantrymen. The enemy force broke contact at 23:15 p.m.

At dawn Sunday the 4th Division force started an area sweep and had located five NVA bodies and two individual and three crew-served weapons when about 25 more mortar rounds again impacted on their positions between 7:45 and 8:30 p.m.

Air strikes and artillery were called in on the enemy positions, stopping the enemy fire at 8:30 a.m.

The engagements resulted in 33 enemy and 17 U.S. personnel killed, 66 friendly soldiers wounded, one suspect detained and 10 weapons captured.

A fire support base of the 1st Brigade, located two kilometers northeast of the 1/8th's multi-company force and 45 kilometers west-southwest of Pleiku City, took 31 rounds of 82mm mortar fire between 1:30 and 1:55 a.m. Sunday.

Counter-mortar radar located three enemy positions and artillery returned fire. There were no U.S. casualties.

Survivors

(Cont'd from P-1, Col. 2)

pounding and veins popping but he must have thought I was dead, for he got up, kicked me in the side and then walked away."

The enemy moved about the area throughout the evening, continually looking for Americans that were still alive and U.S. equipment.

and enemy losses are unknown.

While preparing to move on a sweep mission 53 kilometers southwest of Pleiku City at 7:02 a.m. Monday, two companies of the 4th came under heavy mortar and B-40 rocket fire, accompanied by a ground probe by an estimated enemy battalion.

The Ivy companies called in artillery, helicopter gunships and air strikes to keep the enemy from overrunning their defensive position. The enemy withdrew at 11:25 a.m.

The results of the clash were 61 enemy and 10 U.S. infantrymen killed, 77 U.S. personnel wounded, four suspects detained, and 17 individual and two crew-served weapons seized.



ON A SWEEP

Ivy men from the 4th Division's 2nd Battalion (Mechanized), 8th Infantry move out to sweep an area where they had just fought a one-sided battle with an estimated North Vietnamese battalion during Operation Francis Marion. (USA Photo by Sp5 Jerry Craighead)

Men Of 1/69th Armor, Montagnards Celebrate Completion Of Village

By PFC Robert Boudreaux

Plei Bong Hiot — Seven men from the 1st Battalion, 69th Armor squatted in a dimly lit, large thatched hut.

Around them, dressed in an assortment of jungle fatigues and loin cloths squatted most of the men from the Montagnard village of Plei Bong Hiot.

Everyone laughed and jostled one another around as they conversed in the tribal Bahnar dialect and sipped rice wine from jugs. They were Good Neighbors joined together in a celebration honoring the completion of the new village site.

In January, due to increased enemy activity in their immediate area, the villagers of Plei Bong Hiot sent a representative to the Government of Vietnam's Le Trung District Headquarters in Pleiku Province with a request that the village be relocated in a more secure area.

On January 23, elements of the 1st Battalion, 69th Armor and 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry arrived at the village location with 5-ton trucks and armored personnel carriers to move the tribe.

By April 5, the move was completed with the construction of a large drinking house, the last structure to be erected in the new village.

With materials provided by the Vietnamese government, labor by the villagers, and technical supervision by the S-5 section of the 69th Armor, a spillway was constructed, feeding troughs for cattle built and 10 acres of land cleared for cultivation.

An earthen dam was also

built, forming a large pool of water which was later stocked with fish.

"The toughest part of the whole project," said Captain Carl M. Cleavenger (Fort Smith, Ark.), S-5 officer, "was the 'cattle drive.'"

"As the number of water buffalo essentially represents the wealth of a village, the drive was of prime importance," continued the captain. "Someone failed to tell the water buffaloes of this. With a great deal of perseverance on the part of the Americans and the Montagnards the animals were rounded up and safely herded to their new home."

Staff Sergeant Grady E. Cowan (Springfield, Tenn.), Specialist 4 Class Lance Wiscomb (San Francisco), Specialist 4 Richard J. Caporale (Toms River, N.J.), Specialist 4 Melvin Graham (Los Angeles), Specialist 4 Walter B. Planner (Davenport, Iowa) and Specialist 4 John Mayo (Kingsport, Tenn.) worked daily conducting medical and veterinary missions in the village.

They, along with Captain Cleavenger, were the guests of honor at the party. The men were all taught the

Bahnar dialect by Ramar Hiot, the battalion's Montagnard interpreter.

"The most successful effort by the battalion in helping the villagers to help themselves," continued Captain Cleavenger, "has been the hiring of men from the village to work with us in our forward base camp. With the money they have earned, they have been able to purchase seed, tools, and other items needed from Pleiku."

"To help acquaint the village with the world around them, movies, magazines, and newspapers have been provided. People from the village are also brought into the forward base camp to watch television on a nightly basis. 'Batman' is their favorite show.

"The relationship between the Montagnards, Vietnamese, and Americans in this area has been greatly improved. By working together we have produced tangible evidence that together we can produce a great nation."

As evening darkened the land the party continued and a tiny village high in the Central Highlands was secure in the knowledge that their government cared.

Donald Duck Entertains Popular Force Families

Oasis — Donald Duck has gone to war in the Central Highlands.

The whacky Walt Disney character opened a film showing recently at the Thonh An District Headquarters.

In addition to three cartoons, there was a movie of a Viet

Cong wife suffering pains of loneliness as her husband fled through the jungle, the story of a victorious Army of the Republic of Vietnam unit operating in the Mekong Delta and a Vietnamese type "Laurel and Hardy" spoof on the Viet Cong.

"The people tell me they really enjoy these films," said First Lieutenant Dung Truong Lam, chief of the interpreter section with the 2nd Brigade, 4th Division. "They would like to see some more American films."

The audience that night was composed of members of the Popular Force unit stationed at Thonh An and their families.

Showing the films were Captain Thomas Douthitt (Derrick City, Pa.) and Staff Sergeant Donald Simmons (New London, Conn.). The two are attached to the 4th Division from the 245th Psychological Operations Company at Nha Trang.

New 3rd Bde Troops Receive Extensive Training

Story & Photos
by

Sp4 Gary M. Silva

Dau Tieng — The men ran, sweat running down their faces. The cadence was

fast, but the soldiers — many still with stateside starch creases in their fatigues — kept up.

They were the newest addition to the 3rd Brigade,

4th Division — replacements.

The replacement center, commanded by Captain Samuel E. Negrea Jr. (Sharon, Pa.), can accommodate 115 men at one time.

"Since October," Captain Negrea said, "we've processed 1,300 new men."

With a working staff of eight people, each new replacement is given almost five days of extensive training before he is turned over to his assigned unit.

Suoi Tre Hall, a new classroom named after the recent battle in which the 3rd Brigade helped killed 631 Viet Cong in four hours, can seat 75 students at one time. In the hall the men learn the finer points of Viet Cong fortifications, patrolling techniques, ambushes and booby traps.

The classroom is not the only training area for the men.

A special area surrounded by barbed wire is filled with American-made Viet Cong traps.

"At first some of the men laugh at the crude ways the

Viet Cong make their booby traps," the 31-year-old captain said, "but when they see the traps actually working the smiles disappear."

The enclosed area is strewn with lethal traps designed to kill, maim and inflict an assortment of agonizing wounds.

A pit, four-feet deep, has numerous deadly punji stakes embedded at the bottom. Normally such a pit would be camouflaged, but for obvious reasons the trap is clearly visible. The new men seldom come close to the edge.

A wicked mace, complete with long bamboo barbs, plunges to the ground. The weight of the weapon alone could break a man's neck — the bamboo stakes guarantee the effectiveness of killing a person. The replacement personnel stress the importance of watching for such weapons.

Complete with a 40-foot tunnel, the area is equipped with foot traps, swinging bamboo traps and minor obstacles designed mostly to inflict small wounds, but serious enough to put a man

in great pain and definitely out of action.

Most of the men arrive at the 3rd Brigade from the 90th Replacement Battalion at Long Binh or Cam Ranh Bay.

Each morning Sergeant First Class Derald L. Leuszler (Buffalo Grove, Ill.) awakens the new men for a full schedule of the Army's "Daily Dozen" and a mile run. The afternoon calls for another jaunt through the brigade's rubber plantation base camp.

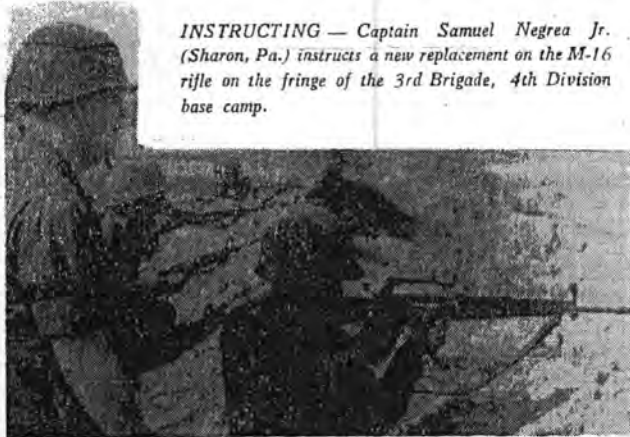
According to Captain Negrea, the men have a rough time with the heat at first, but seem to enjoy the running.

The week concludes with the men relearning the techniques of firing the M-16 rifle, M-79 grenade launcher and the art of throwing hand grenades.

"I believe this training is helping the people because some have returned after going on patrols and said the training they received helped them a great deal," the captain said.



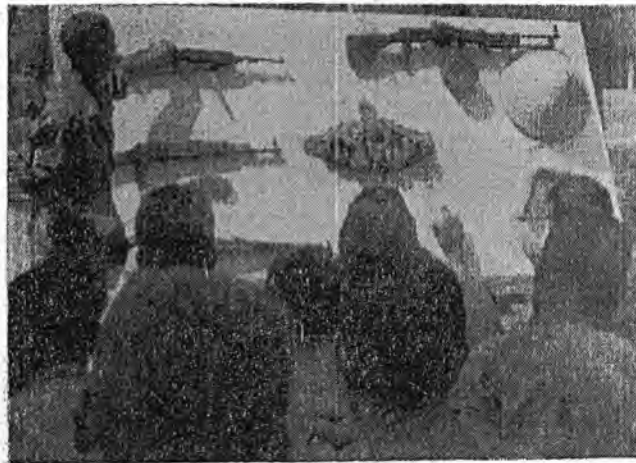
TELLING — A handler and his dog from the 44th Scout Dog Platoon show 3rd Brigade replacements the advantage of having such an animal along on operations.



INSTRUCTING — Captain Samuel Negrea Jr. (Sharon, Pa.) instructs a new replacement on the M-16 rifle on the fringe of the 3rd Brigade, 4th Division base camp.



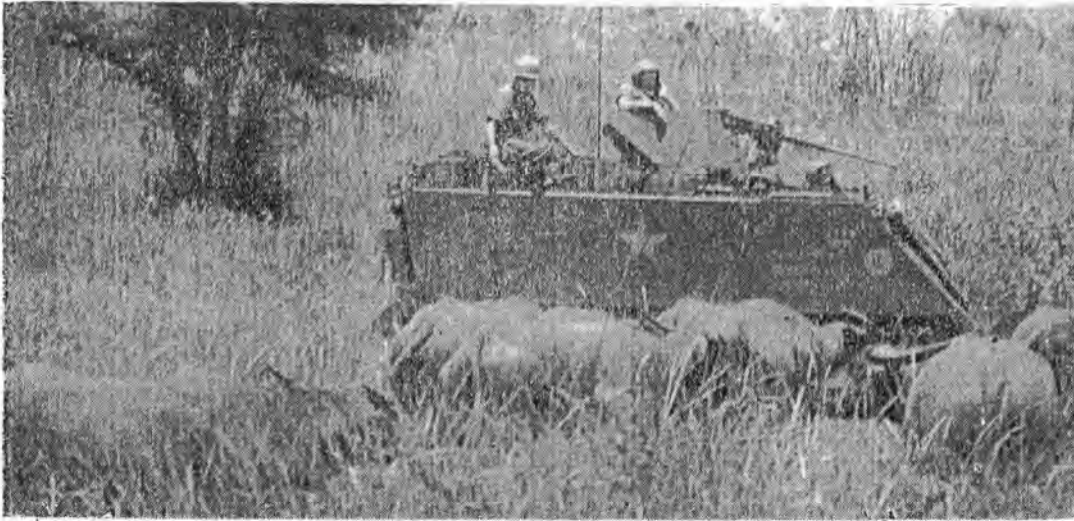
RUNNING — Two daily mile runs are instrumental in climatizing new replacements at the 3rd Brigade, 4th Division.



EXPLAINING — Staff Sergeant John S. Castleman (Inkster, Mich.) explains the firepower and models of different Viet Cong weapons captured by the 3rd Brigade, 4th Division.



SHOWING — Captain Samuel Negrea Jr. shows new replacements the working ability of a man-made trap of the Viet Cong during training class at the 3rd Brigade.



HEAD 'EM UP, MOVE 'EM OUT — Members of a reconnaissance platoon of the 4th Division's 2nd Battalion (Mechanized), 8th Infantry use armored personnel carriers to round up a herd of water buffalo in the Central Highlands 17 miles southwest of Pleiku. The roundup was the final phase of Edap Enang, a program of resettling a group of Montagnards from their former homes in enemy-infested country to a safer area secured by Free World Forces near Pleiku.

WITH MECHANICAL HORSES

2/8th Rounds Up Cattle For Montagnards

Story & Photo
by
Capt. Ed Cilliberti

Oasis — "Duke" Duquemin, trailboss for the 2-Bar-4 spread, surveyed his drovers and gave the order — "Move 'em out!" — which kicked off the spring roundup of longhorns in the scrub southwest of Pleiku.

Watching the wranglers mount-up and begin circling the herd was "Big Jim" Adamson who's operated the 2-Bar-4 since January, spreading his brand in an ever-widening arc all the time.

"Damndest bunch of cowboys I've ever seen," "Big Jim" remarked to his trailboss as the green crew fumbled its way through the beginnings of the trail drive. And the men were indeed

green (no pun on the fatigue uniform intended) in the art of cattle driving.

Actually, the whole thing was an Army operation.

About the only similarity between the real thing and what the Ivy Division's 2nd Battalion, 8th Infantry was doing was the "longhorns." Even that was questionable, for the cattle were really Montagnard water buffalo which have long horns.

The roundup fell to the 2nd Brigade unit after several Montagnard villages had been moved in the Edap Enang resettlement program. The "critters" were too many and too big to take along on the initial village movements.

The herding job fell to the 2nd Battalion, 8th Infantry's

Recon Platoon under First Lieutenant Benjamin F. Maxham (Burbank, Calif.).

The "horses" used in the roundup were armored personnel carriers.

The APC's proved almost as agile as the horse in cutting the buffalo out of thick brush and keeping them together during the day-long drive to a pickup point for transport to the Edap Enang resettlement area.

When the drive began early one morning, Lieutenant Colonel Gordon J. Duquemin (Newport, R.I.), battalion commander, and Colonel James B. Adamson (Honolulu), 2nd Brigade commander, decided to play the scenario by ear.

The water buffalo, about 75 of them, were driven into a central area south of the brigade's Oasis base camp by OH-23 helicopters flown by Major Robert R. Chedester (Omaha, Neb.) and Captain Obe D. Coleman (Ozark, Ala.) of the brigade aviation section.

The plan was to move the buffalo onto a stake truck using infantrymen as drovers. However, the animals "spooked" and scattered.

It was then decided to build a loading pen near the battalion fire support base. The APC's would herd the buffalo to the loading point.

Working together in the second attempt, the choppers and APC's succeeded in reassembling the herd. Using a "C" formation (don't look in the FM, it's not there), the tracks began the slow five-mile drive to the loading pen.

A river was forded and a second group of buffalo was picked up without incident. The drive was going well as the platoon neared the pens 100 meters away.

Then the herd hit a bend in the road, surrounded on both sides by thick brush. The buffalo broke into the brush and the tracks were hard pressed to follow.

Infantrymen were dropped off as foot drovers, but the herd stampeded again, and about half escaped.

A half-hour later, the remnants of the great herd ambled into the loading pen, a funnel-affair of triple-strand concertina wire.

The first day's drive didn't bring home all the bacon, but by the second day, the Recon Platoon had rounded up most of the stragglers. By the end of the week, nearly 100 head of buffalo had been forwarded to the resettlement area.

Platoon Leader Completes 229 Days In Field

Oasis — First Lieutenant Edwin A. Williams III (Milledgeville, Ga.), reconnaissance platoon leader for the 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry, claims he holds the officer's record of the Ivy Division for the number of days spent in the field.

Now with a total of 229 consecutive days amidst the jungle of the Central Highlands, Lieutenant Williams arrived in Vietnam last August 6 with the battalion and stayed with it when it went to the field, participating first in Operations Paul, Revere III and IV, Sam-Houston, and now Francis-Marion.

"I consider myself lucky to still be able to be here after nine months," explained the lieutenant. "Obviously I must be lucky because I haven't been wounded or seriously ill for any extended period of time."

Although there were several other officers who arrived at the same time, many have changed positions and are no longer in the field. Others have been evacuated with malaria.

Lieutenant Williams first served in the battalion as a weapons platoon leader before joining the recon platoon. Now operating independently under the battalion S-2, he and his men carry out reconnaissance patrols and ambush missions for the unit.

3/12th Soldier Honored As Top Ivyman Of Week

Camp Enari — Private First Class James D. Kauffman (Glenolden, Pa.) was honored last week as the 4th Infantry Division's top soldier of the week.

PFC Kauffman, a member of Company B, 3rd Battalion, 12th Infantry, served for seven days as enlisted aide for Major General William R. Peers, 4th Division commander.

Five Self-Propelled Howitzers Arrive At Fire Support Base

Le Thanh — Five 155mm self-propelled howitzers of Battery B, 5th Battalion, 16th Artillery rumbled into the confines of a 4th Division forward fire support base recently, doubling the outpost's artillery firepower.

Under the direction of Captain Richard J. Galliers (Bryon, Ohio), the totally mechanized unit was established and prepared to fire within minutes after its arrival.

"Our fire missions disseminate from brigade or a battalion liaison officer," explained First Lieutenant Gavin M. Queck (Des Moines, Iowa), battery executive officer.

"It usually only takes two to three minutes to fire including the time it takes for the fire direction control people to process the data," the lieutenant continued.

"The greatest advantage of a 155mm self-propelled howitzer is mobility, plus greater range and accuracy. We carry our own ammo and our firepower is second to none," concluded Lieutenant Queck.

With the mission of general support and reinforcing, the battery's personnel have fired more than 37,000 rounds since their arrival at the 4th Infantry Division's base camp October 7.

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