

# 3RD BN, 12TH INF TAKES HILL 1338

## 1338 Battle Repeated Nightmare

DAK TO — For Captain Donald M. Scher (Huntington Station, N.Y.), Company C, 3rd Battalion, 12th Infantry, the capture of Hill 1338, also known as Ngok Con Kring, was the repetition of a nightmare during which he had almost died one week earlier.

"We've had intelligence that the North Vietnamese plan to hit Dak To with rockets from this position and from that crest," explained Colonel Richard Johnson (Beaumont, Tex.), 1st Brigade commander.

The fighting for Hill 1338 started during the 14th day of the Battle For Dak To, when Companies A and C, 3rd Battalion,

See related story next column.

12th Infantry moved out to conquer its slopes. However, they didn't get too far as sniper fire pinned them down.

### Co C Took Over

Company A had pushed a bare 100 yards when NVA fire sent Ivymen diving for cover. At mid-morning they were still 25 yards short of the top.

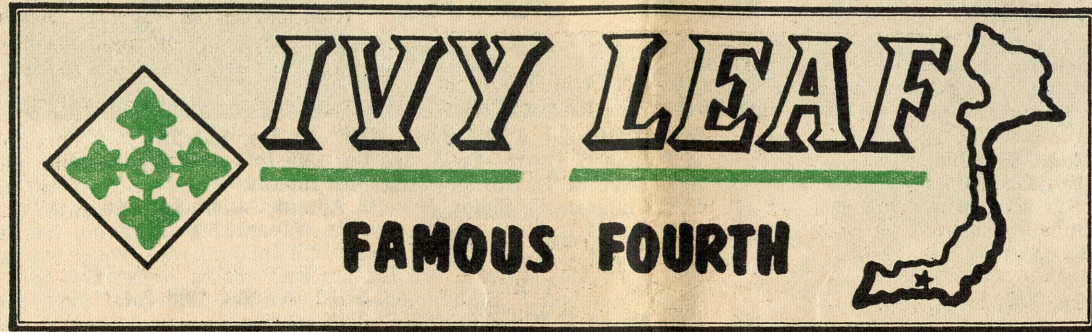
Then Company C, led by CPT Scher, took over the pace and the two companies again tried to move.

But on the hill, NVA were entrenched in bunkers so well fortified that "it would take direct hits by bombs to knock them out," explained COL Johnson.

For CPT Scher it was a bad dream all over again. Just after noon, he reported "some of my men are wounded pretty badly." "I don't want you to start pulling back now. The air strike should be here in about 8 minutes," replied Lieutenant Colonel Hendrix (Metter, Ga.), 3rd Battalion, 12th Infantry commander.

### Nightmare Replayed

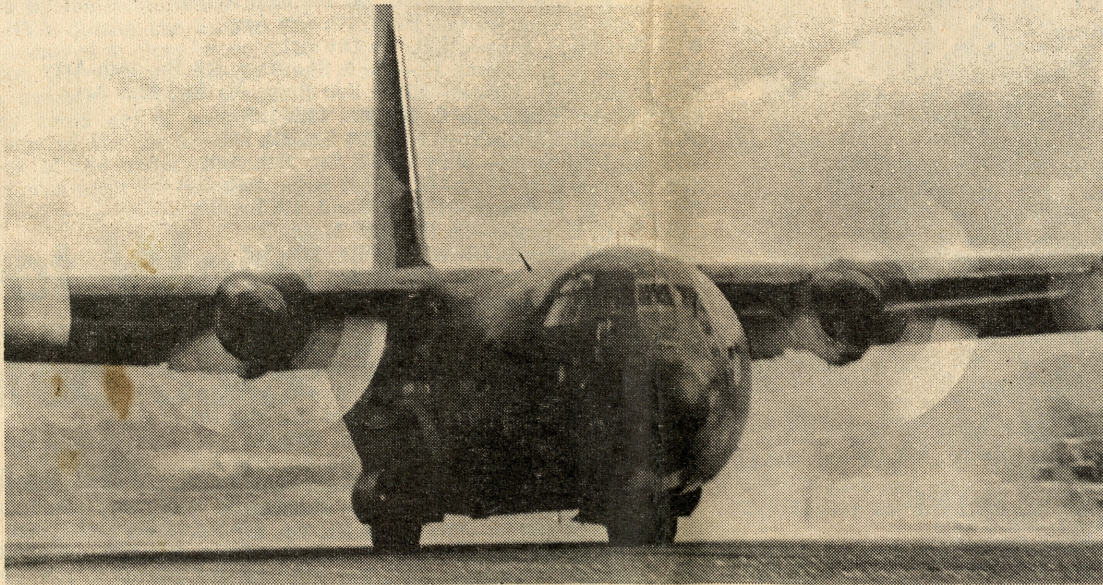
The nightmare replayed (Continued on Back Page)



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CAMP ENARI, VIETNAM

November 26, 1967



FLIGHT 637—arrives on time at Lak To with more supplies for the 1st Brigade during the Battle For Dak To. Enemy mortar attacks on the airstrip destroyed two C-130 transports on the 12th day of the battle. (USA Photo by Ralph Springer)

## Credited With 4 NVA, 5 Bunkers

# Reluctant Ivymen Gets Award

DAK TO — Specialist 4 Bill Thomas (Minneapolis, Minn.), Company C, 3rd Battalion, 12th Infantry, is the kind of Ivymen who is reluctant to be in Vietnam. While he doesn't like fighting he does a job when its given to him and sometimes a little extra.

Major General William R.

Peers, 4th Division commander, stopped by to see SP4 Thomas during a lull in the Battle For Dak To. The Brave stood at attention while the general pinned on a Silver Star for Valor.

During the fourth and fifth days of the Battle For Dak To, SP4 Thomas did a little extra. Captain Donald M. Scher (Huntington Station, N.Y.), Company C commander, said, "If you saw it in a movie you'd say 'What a minute, this can't be true!'"

On one day of the action, SP4 Thomas was a squad leader and lead his squad to the top of a NVA hill toward an enemy trench line. A NVA stepped out and tried to shoot him. He calmly opened up with a shotgun and downed the NVA.

The next morning, the specialist led a reconnaissance patrol up the hill and began compiling an awesome record:

—Told one of his friends was wounded, SP4 Thomas called for volunteers, got four and while his teammates provided cover he rescued the man. The man died later in a hospital.

—Seconds later, he and CPT Scher were lying behind a tree next to the trench system. When a NVA stuck his head out, the specialist scrambled across the top of a bunker, pulled the pin from a grenade and held it until the last possible moment, then dropped it in the trench.

—CPT Scher, who had been yelling orders to his other men, suddenly came into the sights of another armed NVA. SP4 Thomas dived and knocked his commander from the path of an AK-47 burst and dropped another grenade into the NVA bunker.

—Another NVA stepped out to take on SP4 Thomas. The Ivymen shot him.

—SP4 Thomas then crawled across the bunker complex, blew the NVA command bunker with a grenade, downed a machine gunner in another trench with a grenade and for good measure knocked out still another bunker.

In all, SP4 Thomas was credited with killing four NVA and destroying five bunkers. A job which his commanders thought was a little extra—enough to give him the Silver Star.

## Fighting Goes Into 17th Day

DAK TO—As the Battle For Dak To moved into its 17th day, fighting continued throughout the night of Nov. 19. Elements of the 4th Infantry Division, and those under its operational control, were holding three strategic hills surrounding Dak To in the Operation MacArthur area.

At the completion of the 16th day of the battle, 804 North Vietnamese bodies had been reported found although some Saigon sources were putting the figure at over 1,000.

Hills 724 and 1338 were in the possession of the 3rd Battalion, 8th Infantry and 3rd Battalion, 12th Infantry, respectively. Elements of the 173rd Airborne Brigade held Hill 889.

Most of the significant action of the week centered around Hill 1338 and the three-day battle for its capture by the Braves' Companies A and C.

Frequent mortar attacks on the 1st Brigade's command post during days 12 and 13 of the Battle For Dak To made it seem as though the enemy was attempting to keep Ivymen still while they withdrew from the area.

The 3rd Battalion, 12th Infantry seized Hill 1338, also known as Ngok Con Kring, on day 14 with heavy fighting.

As the Battle For Dak

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To moved into its 17th day more fighting was predicted.

"We may have to fight for several more knobs around here," said Major General William R. Peers, 4th Division commander.

While the NVA force has been estimated as division-size in the area, contact in the Battle For Dak To seems to have been primarily with two of the four enemy regiments.



DEBRIEFING—1LT Joe Blake, Company A, 3rd Battalion, 12th Infantry, (far right) debriefs a patrol during the Battle For Dak To. The Braves seized Hill 1338 on day 14 of the battle with heavy fighting. (USA Photo by PFC Andy Pipon)

## Blunt Fact Excites Arty FAC

BAN BLECH — During a skirmish with a North Vietnamese Army company, Company C, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry called in for some needed artillery support.

Responding to the call was Battery A, 3rd Battalion, 18th Artillery whose 175mm howitzers pack a giant punch.

Flying above the area of contact, was the forward air controller (FAC), who radioed a

message to the artillery battery, "Give me a smoke round."

The crew at the fire direction center just blinked at each other and smiled, there is no smoke round for a 175mm gun.

They flashed back, "No smoke, only high explosives."

The puzzled FAC called back in a quizzical manner, "Do you think I can see it?"

The crew back at Smoker's

fire direction center smiled at each other, and in an almost cynical manner called back, "I think so."

The big gun with a loud boom hurled forth its giant projectile and with an ear shattering din, splintered the jungle below the FAC.

The excited FAC blurted back into his radio, "My God, I see it."



# STEADFAST and LOYAL



### Silver Star

SP4 Kenneth R. Stevens—Co B, 2nd Bn, 35th Inf  
 CPT John H. Cavender—Co C, 1st Bn, 35th Inf  
 PSG Robert D. Kinzel—Co A, 1st Bn, 69th Armor  
 SGT John E. Richey—Co B, 1st Bn, 8th Inf

### Posthumous Silver Star

PFC Salvatore F. Polizzi—Co B, 1st Bn, 12th Inf  
 SP4 Bruce A. Paquette—Co B, 1st Bn, 14th Inf

### Distinguished Flying Cross

CPT James A. McGowan—HHC, 4th Div Arty  
 CWO Foy M. Burns—Co B, 4th Avn Bn  
 LTC Robert A. Holloman III—HHD, 4th Avn Bn

### Soldier's Medal

SFC Harold D. Kreps—HHC, 1st Bn, 14th Inf  
 CPT Leonard A. Brennan—HHC, 1st Bn, 14th Inf  
 SP4 Howard D. Ward—HHC, 1st Bn, 14th Inf  
 SSG Robert K. Kaiwi Jr.—HHC, 1st Bn, 14th Inf  
 SP5 Valdis Liepins—HHC, 1st Bn, 14th Inf  
 SP5 John B. McCauley—HHC, 1st Bn, 14th Inf  
 SSG Sam Straughter—HHC, 1st Bn, 14th Inf  
 PFC Roger L. Warford—HHC, 1st Bn, 14th Inf  
 SP4 Michael L. Viers—HHC, 1st Bn, 14th Inf  
 SFC Robert N. Gouveia Jr.—HHC, 1st Bn, 14th Inf

### Bronze Star For Heroism

SP5 Beavy L. Kelly—Co C, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SSG Phillip Gordon—Co A, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 1LT Andres C. Ramirez Jr.—Co C, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SSG Ruperto Frias—Co B, 1st Bn, 69th Armor  
 PFC Dennis Carney—HHC, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SGT Wesley G. Radford—Co B, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SGT Joseph H. Nikodem—Co B, 2nd Bn (Mech), 8th Inf  
 SGT Ralph W. Ely II—Co A, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 1LT Vincent M. Gaughan—Btry C, 4th Bn, 42nd Arty  
 SP4 Henry G. Becerra—Co C, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SGT Joseph E. Bauer Jr.—Co A, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SGT Charles F. Tiede—HHC, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 CPT Walter L. Williamson—Co A, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SP4 Melvin W. Melton—Co B, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 SP4 William D. Rayburn—HHC, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 PFC Roberto C. Vasquez—Co C, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SGT Joseph M. Fogle Jr.—Co B, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 SP4 Scott L. Reitenauer—HHC, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 SGT George W. Leroy—Co B, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 SGT Frank E. Patton—Co A, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SSG James Gaskins Jr.—Co A, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SSG Thomas M. Garrett—Co A, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SGT Johnny D. Turley—Co B, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 SP4 Harry F. McAteer—Co A, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 CPT Martin E. Hamer—Co B, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 2LT Thomas R. West—Co B, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 1LT George L. Rice—Co B, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 PFC Alvin Green—Co A, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SGT Paul B. Yost—Co B, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 SSG Bobby Q. Brock—Co B, 2nd Bn, 35th Inf  
 PFC Maurice J. Israel—HHC, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 SSG Richard L. Tanner—B Btry, 6th Bn, 29th Arty  
 SSG Thomas M. Garrett—Co A, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SP4 Charles F. Gray—Co C, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 PFC Hector L. Vega-Tirado—Co A, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SP4 Jimmie White—Co B, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 CPT Charles M. Bartlett—Hq & Svc Btry, 6th Bn, 29th Arty  
 PFC Robert F. Lord—Co A, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 2LT Gary G. Myers—Co C, 2nd Bn, 35th Inf

### Posthumous Bronze Star For Heroism

PFC Leonard W. Campbell—Co B, 1st Bn, 14th Inf  
 PFC Henry Gomez—Co E, 1st Bn, 14th Inf  
 SP4 Guadalupe Perez—Co A, 1st Bn, 14th Inf  
 SP4 O'Neal Dunmore—Co A, 2nd Bn, 8th Inf  
 PFC Ronald S. Sandel—HHC, 1st Bn, 35th Inf  
 SP4 Richard Tarkington Jr.—HHC, 1st Bn, 22nd Inf

### Bronze Star

CPT Edward T. Ciliberti—4th Admin Co, 4th Inf Div  
 1LT John H. Lundgren—HHC, 1st Bn, 22nd Inf  
 SP4 Theodore S. Sickler—Btry A, 6th Bn, 29th Arty  
 SP4 Francis R. Francoviak—HHT, 1st Sqdn, 10th Cav  
 1LT Francis E. White—HHC, 2nd Bn, 35th Inf  
 1LT Richard J. White Jr.—HHC, 2nd Bn, 35th Inf  
 SSG Juan Rivera—Co A, 1st Bn, 35th Inf

MAJ Lawrence A. Gardner—HHC, 1st Bn, 12th Inf  
 1LT John L. Barth—Co A, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 SFC Laverne E. Barber—HHC, 4th Inf Div  
 SFC Clarence E. Siple Jr.—4th Admin Co, 4th Inf Div  
 SSG Curtis L. Boan—Co B, 2nd Bn (Mech), 8th Inf  
 SSG Roger A. Hill—HHC, 1st Bn, 12th Inf  
 SSG John Mayo—Co A, 3rd Bn, 8th Inf  
 MSG Raymond T. Staudinger—HHC, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 CPT David J. Mix—4th S&T Bn, 4th Inf Div  
 1LT Ronald R. Orr—Hq & Svc Btry, 5th Bn, 16th Arty  
 SFC Curtis Thomas—Btry A, 5th Bn, 16th Arty  
 1LT Russell L. Dornier—HHC, 1st Bn, 69th Armor  
 CPT John A. Oberholzer—HHC, 4th Div Arty  
 WO1 Russell P. Huit—HHC, 4th Div Arty  
 WO1 Emil A. L'Homme Jr.—Hq & Svc Btry, 5th Bn, 16th Arty  
 1SG Rudolph P. Foshee—Hq & Svc Btry, 6th Bn, 29th Arty  
 SSG Chester Pops—Co C, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 SGT Ross M. Rembert—Co A, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SGT Michael Scott—Btry C, 6th Bn, 29th Arty  
 SP5 Lawrence A. Fritz—HHT, 1st Sqdn, 10th Cav  
 1SG Paul E. Brannon—HHC & Band, 4th Inf Div  
 CWO T. C. L. Crow—Co D, 725th Maint Bn  
 SSG Juan J. Garcia—HHC, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 SGT Charles V. Arnold—Co A, 3rd Bn, 8th Inf  
 SP4 Raul Munoz Jr.—Co A, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SSG Lee V. Bates—Co A, 3rd Bn, 8th Inf  
 MAJ William A. Dast—HHC, 3rd Bn, 8th Inf  
 1LT Van T. Drake—Btry A, 4th Bn, 42nd Arty  
 PSG Thomas H. Moffitt Jr.—Co B, 4th Avn Bn  
 SSG Hardy E. Boettcher—Co A, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 SSG Rudy D. Dunn—Co A, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 SGT Hobert Strange Jr.—Co A, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 SP4 James J. Burke—HHT, 1st Sqdn, 10th Cav

### Air Medal For Heroism

1LT Henry A. Willis—170th Aslt Hel Co, 52nd Avn Bn  
 MAJ Ronald Gerard Maxson—Trp D, 1st Sqdn, 10th Cav  
 CWO Berle C. Bigelow—HHC, 1st Bde, 4th Inf Div  
 WO1 Wayne D. Phinney—Trp D, 1st Sqdn, 10th Cav  
 SP5 Dennis E. Nuttbrock—Co A, 4th Avn Bn  
 WO1 Jerry L. Peppers—Co A, 4th Avn Bn  
 WO1 Charles R. Normand—Trp D, 1st Sqdn, 10th Cav  
 SP4 Howard E. Porath—Trp D, 1st Sqdn, 10th Cav  
 CPT Danny A. Young—Co A, 4th Avn Bn  
 WO1 Robert R. Rogers—Trp D, 1st Sqdn, 10th Cav  
 LTC John P. Volmer—HHC, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 WO1 Raymond B. Pollok—Trp D, 1st Sqdn, 10th Cav

### Army Commendation Medal For Heroism

PFC Grover Harrison—Co B, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SP5 David J. Katra—Co B, 1st Bn, 69th Armor  
 PFC Edward C. Bann Jr.—Co A, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SGT Terry A. Ernest—Co B, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SSG Dennis M. Burk—Co B, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SP4 Joseph W. King—Co A, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SP4 Raul Munoz Jr.—Co A, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SP4 Jerry W. Terry—Co B, 2nd Bn, 35th Inf  
 SP4 Raul J. Madrid—Co A, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SP4 Robert W. Little—Co A, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SGT Alex V. Kobets—HHC, 3rd Bn, 8th Inf  
 SP5 Larry D. Crawford—HHC, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 PFC Randolph Lewis—Co B, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SP4 Glenn W. Mills—Co B, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SP4 John E. Stanford—Hq & Co A, 704th Maint Bn  
 PFC Ronald U. Paston—Co A, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SP4 Frank D. Mullican—Co A, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SFC Thomas I. Dean—Co B, 1st Bn, 14th Inf  
 SFC Robert L. Smith—Co B, 1st Bn, 14th Inf  
 SP4 Roy L. Abrameit—Co B, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SP4 Robert C. Staszczuk—Co B, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SP4 Victor J. Renza Jr.—Co B, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SP4 Kenneth N. Barker—Co B, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 PFC Edison N. Lutz—HHC, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 SP4 Leonard W. Morgan Jr.—Co B, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 SGT Jessie L. Cospo—Co B, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 SGT Earl A. Allen Jr.—Co B, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 PSG Jerry D. Tharp—Co B, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 PFC Boyd G. Golds—Co B, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 PFC Charles R. Ahearn Jr.—Co B, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 SGT Ernesto Nunez—Co B, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 PFC Anthony C. Gullo—Co B, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 PFC John C. Baye Jr.—HHC, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 SP4 Mchale J. Wernert—Co B, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 SP4 Michael W. Lani—HHC, 1st Bn, 22nd Inf  
 SGT Leslie V. Hinrichs—B Btry, 6th Bn, 29th Arty  
 SSG Ross Green Jr.—Co C, 1st Bn, 35th Inf  
 SGT David C. Brown—Co B, 2nd Bn (Mech), 8th Inf  
 SP4 Harold C. Snyderman—Trp D, 1st Sqdn, 10th Cav  
 SSG Isiah W. McGriff—Btry B, 6th Bn, 29th Arty  
 SP5 Mauris A. Mattern—HHC, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 SSG Walter W. Evans—HHC, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SP5 Kenneth J. Besterman—HHC, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 PFC Ronald L. Goucher—Co A, 1st Bn, 35th Inf  
 SFC Charles Neal Jr.—Co D, 65th Engr Bn  
 SSG Charles L. McKee—HHC, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SSG Harold J. Magee—Co D, 65th Engr Bn  
 SP4 Leroy Smith Jr.—HHC, 1st Bn, 14th Inf  
 SGT Glenn W. Casey—Co A, 1st Bn, 35th Inf  
 1LT Arthur H. Trujillo—Co B, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SP5 John W. Brooks—HHC, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SP4 Walter E. Davis—Co A, 1st Bn, 35th Inf

### Army Commendation Medal

PFC Kurt Arens—Co D, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 PFC Gary M. Dice—Co D, 1st Bn, 8th Inf  
 SGT Robert J. Masching—Co C, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf  
 SSG Elbert Mathews—HHC, 3rd Bn, 12th Inf

## Chaplain's Corner

### Anxiety Is Costly

By

Chaplain (LTC) Charles E. Gray

One of the most devastating, irritating, and costly illnesses ever to plague mankind is anxiety. It may be called many other names and may cause many other conditions of illness but here we will call it anxiety.

One might at first think that this is a crude effort to write a medical article, but that is not the case. It is Biblical and it concerns all mankind.

Jesus speaks of anxiety in Matthew 6:34. He says, "Be not therefore anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself." In John 14:1, He says something of the same thing when He says, "Let not your hearts be troubled, believe in God, believe also in me."

### To Be Torn Apart

A literal translation of the word "anxious" would be "torn apart." In other words He calls on us to not be torn apart because of tomorrow. In still other words, get your thinking straight.

I would say that most men in combat face an anxious situation. Their sense of rightness tells them that there is a job to be done; their sense of fear tells them to run and hide. Both feelings are quite legitimate and are found in many situations other than combat.

The first person at the scene of an accident may drive on saying to himself, "Everyone will be OK," or "I can't afford to get involved" or something else of a general nature. The real reason may be the fear of seeing death and suffering. His conscience will bother him for awhile, but he will rationalize these things away.

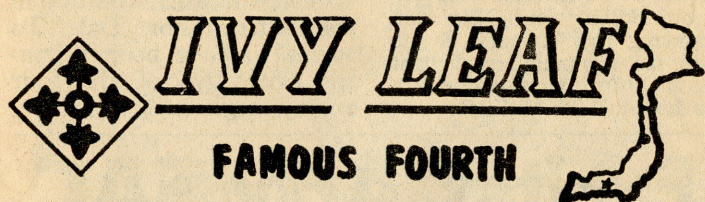
### Face Things Before

It seems that it is "normal" to face many things before they have to be faced and to worry or be anxious about these things long before they take place. Jesus says that these things can tear you apart and this should not be. If our faith is in Him, knowing that He will care for us, our fear and anxiety may vanish.

I have a boy who is now 11-years-old. Up to age 5, every time he approached a doctor who had a needle in his hand, he would scream bloody murder. I told him one day that it was foolish to holler before he was hurt, but that when the needle did hurt him that I would let him scream all he wanted to, and that I wouldn't even be angry with him. His only comment that day following the shot was, "Huh, that wasn't so bad." And he hasn't cried about the needle since that time.

Anxiety for the future, whether it be projected into tomorrow, or into the next year, can ruin us physically and mentally.

"Yea though I walk through the valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no evil for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." (Psalm 23) David looked to God for sustenance and calm as he faced the storms of life. Help is available to us in our anxious moments, if we will look toward God.



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# Dragoon Tells Of Hell Etched In His Mind

By PFC Ralph Springer

DAK TO—Private First Class Mark A. Ray (Flint, Mich.) has only a scratch on his cheek and left hand to show for it but the two days he spent in hell are etched in his memory forever.

Quiet and a bit shy, PFC Ray, a rifleman, Company A, 3rd Battalion, 8th Infantry, is one of the few from Company A that sustained minor wounds when a North Vietnamese Army unit opened up with everything they had on the company which was moving over rolling terrain near Dak To.

Company A and B had moved out from the battalion firebase in search of the enemy which was reported to be all over the area.

"We were making our way slowly up a small rise," PFC Ray recalled. "There was a platoon ahead of mine that had just crested the hill and were on their way down. That's when it all started."

## Hit The Dirt

North Vietnamese entrenched on ridges that bordered the small hillock opened up with machine gun and automatic weapons fire. The lead platoon, caught on the downslope, dove for cover and PFC Ray and his platoon, which had just reached the top of the rise, hit the dirt. The fire was kicking up little clods of dirt and splintering trees all around the hill.

PFC Ray, scrambling to a nearby tree for cover, made it just as mortar rounds came

crashing into the company sending razor-sharp fragments singing through the air.

"I didn't know just what direction everything was coming from," PFC Ray said. "Stuff was flying through the air and everyone was yelling. I just opened up on a ridgeline where I thought they were."

## Almost 200 Bodies

Artillery, gunship and jet fighter support was called in and, with dusk enveloping the area, the hour long contact was broken. The two companies regrouped and moved down the hill and began digging in for the night.

The next morning, patrols

were sent out to check for enemy dead and equipment. They found close to 200 bodies plus a variety of weapons and ammunition. The air strikes and artillery had done most of the damage.

Near noon, when the companies were getting ready to move out, another mortar and rocket attack began. It ended quickly with the aid of artillery from the 1st Brigade's firebase and jet strikes.

The two companies decided to stay at their location for the remainder of the day and night. Knowing that there was a large enemy force nearby, they began digging in even further,

erecting deep sandbag and log bunkers should a mortar attack start.

They waited the rest of the day, watching the sun creep slowly towards the west. Around 5 p.m., the NVA, perhaps smelling victory, launched the largest and fiercest of their attacks.

## Bolder And Bolder

"They started throwing everything at us," PFC Ray said. "First mortars and then rockets. Soon they opened everything up and we were receiving every type of fire they had!"

The NVA, growing bolder as the contact got hotter, moved

from their hillside positions ringing the two company perimeter and started a ground attack.

"I was scared, real scared," recalled PFC Ray. "I fired at anything that moved in front of my bunker. Three bunkers down, an NVA crawled inside a perimeter bunker but a grenade killed him. They were really close. Close enough to be tossing grenades at us. That's how I got my scratches."

Moments after the heavy fighting began, artillery started pounding into the area. Fighters came swooping in, releasing high explosive bombs near the perimeter.

"I've never been so happy in my life as to see those jets coming in," the Ivyman said.

## Another 100 Bodies

It was dark when the NVA stopped their attack. Movement could still be heard all around the perimeter but for the rest of the long night, there were no more incidents.

In the morning patrols sweeping the area around the perimeter, found over 100 bodies and a countless number of weapons and equipment.

Company A, which had suffered the most casualties, began evacuating their men out of the beleaguered area. Even while the choppers were lifting out the wounded, small arms fire was crackling out from the adjacent hillsides.

"I kept telling myself we were going to make it alright," PFC Ray said. "At times though, I was really wondering."

It was the first time under fire for the young soldier who has been with the battalion just three months.

"I received my badge (Combat Infantryman Badge) a month after I joined my unit," he said. "I feel I've really earned it now."



ON THE AIR—CPT Bob Morton (Hayden Mass.), commander of Company B, 3rd Battalion, 12th Infantry, coordinates with his flank security while on an assault during Operation MacArthur during the first days of the Battle For Dak To. (USA Photo by PFC Andy Pipon)

## Fighting For Strategic Position To Control Dak To Region

# Braves Begin Part Of Battle For Dak To

By PFC Andy Pipon

DAK TO — A 1st Brigade unit, on a routine mission to establish a hilltop battalion firebase near Dak To touched off some of the bitterest fighting seen in the Central Highlands which grew into the Battle For Dak To.

Companies A and B, 3rd Battalion, 12th Infantry, had been moving up a steep hillside overlooking the brigade firebase at Dak To. They were within 300 yards of their objective when North Vietnamese Army automatic weapons fire poured down on them.

Company B, the lead element, charged the enemy position before they could be pinned down and overran the NVA force. Company A, which had been back as rear security immediately linked up with Company B and with the sky rapidly darkening, they began digging in for the night.

As the two companies were setting up their night position, mortar rounds began screaming in.

## Jets And Artillery

Lieutenant Colonel John Vollmer (Albuquerque, N.M.), then 3rd Battalion, 12th Infantry commander, called for air support. After the jets had blasted the hill with high explosive ordnance, artillery began pounding the suspected area in an effort to quell the enemy mortar fire. With 105mm artillery shells bursting around them, the Braves settled down for a sleep-

less night.

After an uneventful night, Captain Robert Morton (Hayden, Mass.), Company B commander, sent a small reconnaissance patrol up the pock-marked hill. Nearing the top, the patrol met with heavy mortar and automatic weapons fire.

The airstrikes and night long artillery fire had failed to dislodge well dug in enemy force estimated to be battalion-size.

After the patrol had withdrawn to the company perimeter, jet fighters and A-1E Sky-raidiers were called in to bombard the hill again. With artil-

lery taking over while the aircraft departed to pick up more ordnance, the hill was saturated constantly for two hours.

After the devastating air and artillery support was lifted, CPT Morton advanced his company up the hill again.

## More Mortars

Moving towards the top in wedge formation, Company B again came under intense mortar fire which was also hitting Company A still dug in and providing protective fire. Company B battled their way up the hill and, 25 meters from the top, were forced to withdraw after

encountering murderous small arms fire.

"They were just too well fortified," CPT Morton said later. "We had to withdraw back to our night position. They were everywhere up there; in the trees, in tunnels and in bunkers."

While the two companies began digging even further into the hillside to escape the incom-

## Related Pictures—Pages 4-5

ing mortars and rockets, more airstrikes were called in and, the planes taking turns with artillery fire, again splattered the hill which was rapidly becoming scorched and defoliated from the tons of bombs being dropped.

Thwarted for the second day in their assault on the enemy-held ground, the two companies hugged the ground as artillery pounded the area and the airstrike continued.

## Bathed In Light

After night had blackened the hill, a C-47 Dragonship droned into the area and, with the guidance of the two companies on the ground, fired its miniguns. The whole hill and surrounding ridgelines were bathed in light from aerial flares while red tongues of tracers spilled down from "Spooky."

After receiving sporadic mortar and small arms fire all night, Company A sent up a reconnaissance patrol in the morning. (Continued on Back Page)

## Blackhawks Conclude Good Buffalo Hunt

CAMP ENARI—Elements of the 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry recently concluded a successful buffalo hunt. The Blackhawks civil affairs officer, First Lieutenant Donald A. Jones (High Point, N.C.), organized the operation as a civil affairs project to benefit the Montagnard people of Plei Bong Hoit.

Several months ago the village of Plei Bong Hoit was relocated in an effort to get away from the Viet Cong. In doing so the people were forced to leave much of their livestock behind. 1LT Jones, upon learning the plight of Plei Bong Hoit, set the wheels in motion for an old-fashioned round up.

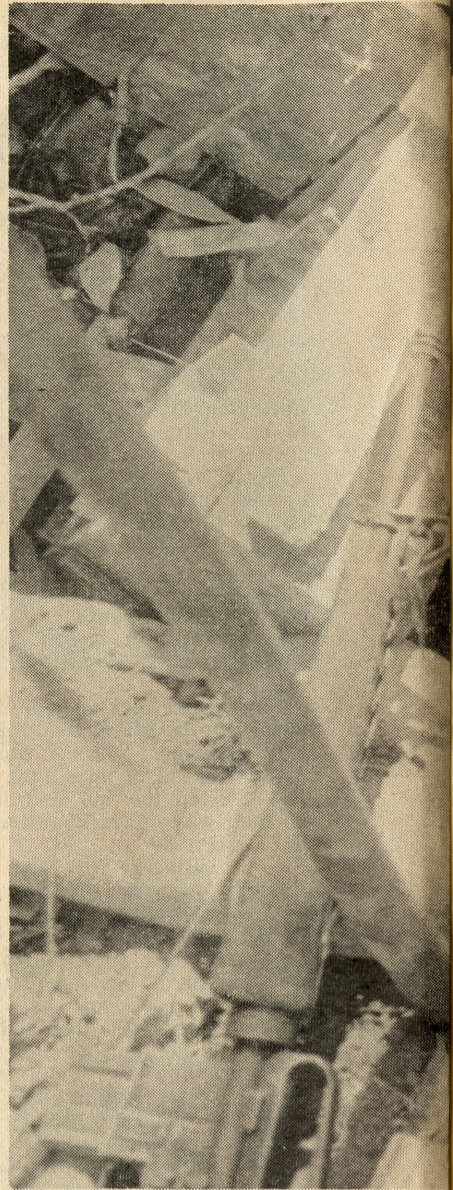
Two armored personnel carriers (APC) from the ground surveillance section of Headquarters Troop, two APCs and one tank from 3rd Platoon, Troop B, provided security for the operation which lasted three days and two nights.

At night, a perimeter was established with the 60 plus villagers, with their own food supplies and blankets, safely protected inside.

The final tally showed a total of 28 water buffalo rounded up. The drive back to the new location of Plei Bong Hoit covered approximately six miles.



A 3RD BATTALION, 12TH INFANTRY BRAVE PASSES NVA EQUIPMENT OUT OF A CAPTURED ENEMY TUNNEL COMPLEX.

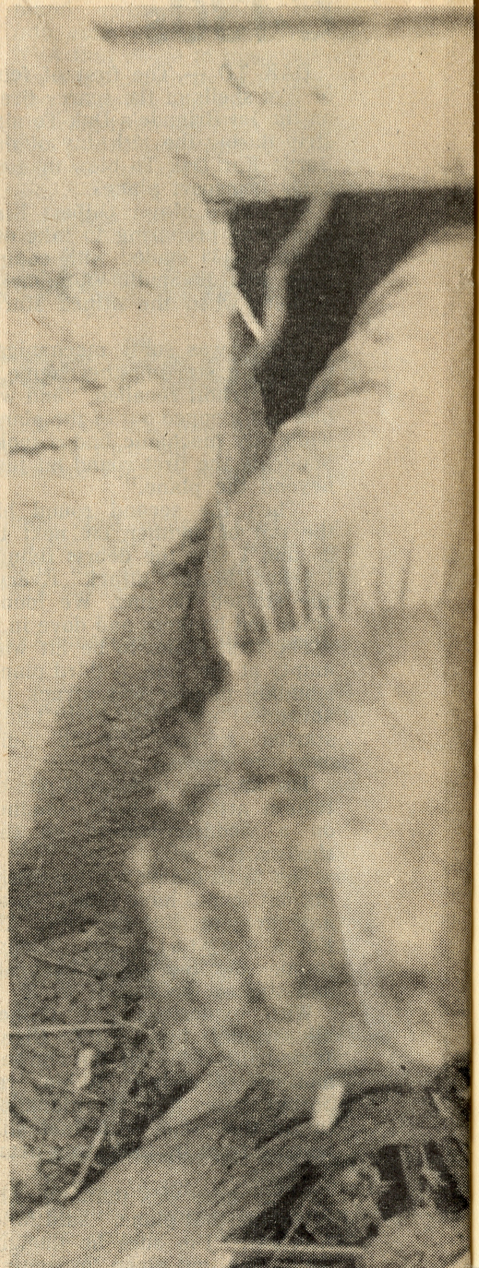


A VOLUNTEER TUNNEL RAT PEER

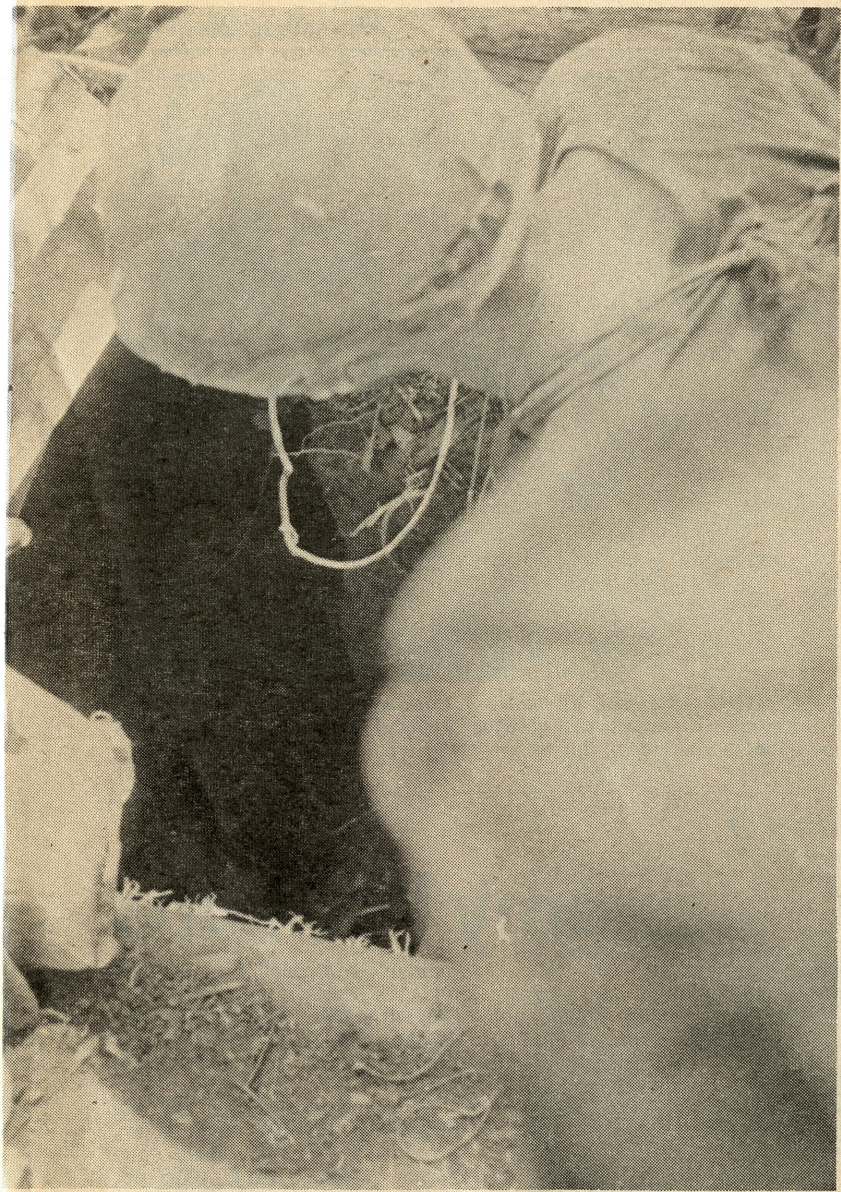
# ***Braves Search NVA Tunnel Complex***



AN IVYMAN LOOKS FOR BOOBY TRAPS IN A TUNNEL ENTRANCE BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH A SEARCH OF THE COMPLEX.



AN IVY TUNNEL RAT CRAWLS OUT



S INTO A CAPTURED HOLE BEFORE DROPPING IN FOR A LOOK.

# **On Hill 1338**



AN IVYMAN LISTENS FOR SUSPICIOUS SOUNDS BEFORE SEARCHING A NVA TUNNEL.



OF A NVA TUNNEL JUST TAKEN FROM THE RETREATING ENEMY.



A VIETNAMESE INTERPRETER ATTEMPTS TO TALK SURVIVORS OUT OF THE TUNNELS.

# Braves' Company C Takes On Entrenched Enemy Company

DAK TO — Company C, 3rd Battalion, 12th Infantry was moving up Ngok Trang Mountain to secure the high ground when they ran into a well dug-in enemy company or more during the second day of the Battle For Dak To.

A patrol had killed two North Vietnamese soldiers the evening before and the company was instructed to make a thorough search of the area and move to the top to set up an overnight perimeter with Company D.

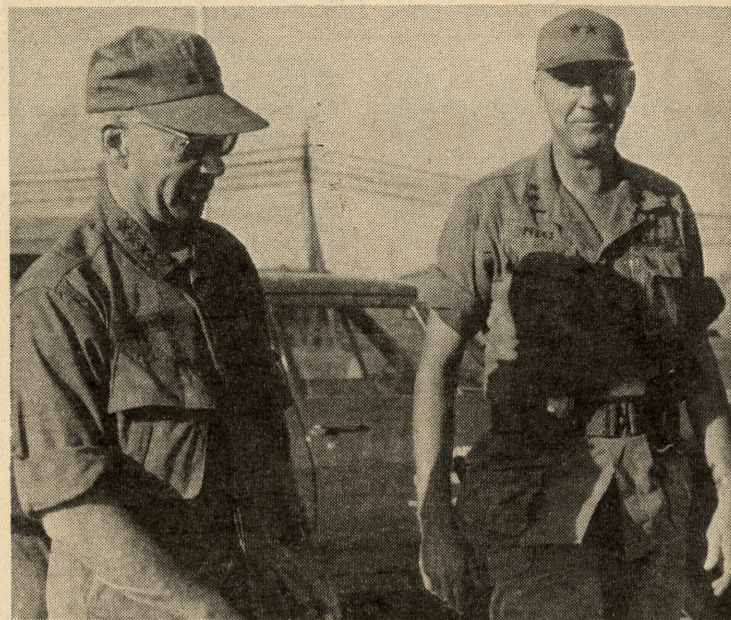
The 4th Platoon from Company C had a patrol looking for enemy activity on the mountain. They moved up the hill and came to a trench which caused the patrol to come to a near halt.

A large force of NVA opened up with automatic weapons and they threw hand grenades from their bunkers. The patrol moved down the hill to a safe distance from incoming artillery and air strikes which they started directing.

Company C assaulted the hill again in full strength. The men crawled most of the way on their stomachs to evade flying shrapnel from enemy grenades. "Chargin' Charlie" finally overran the enemy perimeter and took control of the hill.

Major Carl W. Stiner (Lafayette, Tenn.), the Braves' operations officer, remarked that the enemy was determined in his defense and had to be eliminated one by one with hand grenades and individual weapons before the hill could be taken.

The company tallied a total of 14 enemy bodies and captured one heavy machine gun and many rounds of ammunition.



GREETINGS—General Theodore J. Conway, commander of STRIKE Command, converses with Major General William R. Peers, 4th Division commander, during a recent visit to Camp Enari. (USA Photo)

## Engineer Operation Has Several Goals

By PFC Jack Yraceburn

CAMP ENARI — Engineers from the 4th Infantry Division have taken a page from Lady Bird Johnson's beautification program, applied it to Vietnam, and renamed it Operation Rome Plow.

The objective of Operation Rome Plow is to clear up to 100 feet on both sides of as many roads as possible in the II Corps area.

The 937th Combat Engineers, under the command of Colonel R. C. Marshall (Mt. Holly, N.J.), have been conducting the mammoth operation since April.

"We have cleared roads from An Khe to Pleiku and the 20th Engineer Battalion is now working west of Dragon Mountain in the 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry's area of operations," commented COL Marshall.

"The clearing of the roads will reduce enemy ambushes and also enable track and truck vehicles to get off the main roads to avoid mines," explained COL Marshall.

"The 2nd Battalion (Mechanize), 8th Infantry, attached to Task Force 1/22, is providing security for the Operation Rome Plow," remarked COL Mar-

shall. "Track vehicles provide the best security because they can keep up with the plows."

Major Ronald D. Turner, operations officer for Task Force 1/22 added, "the Rome Plow Operations will create large LZs that could land a hundred choppers if necessary. The road clearings will also aid in aerial surveillance and provide better fields of fire."

The huge plows, backed up by bulldozers and graders, tear down everything in their path and can usually average clearing from half a mile to a mile a day depending on the thickness of the vegetation and the hardness of the trees.

## Careless Click Costs Enemy Their Lives

BAN BLECH — The careless metallic click of a bolt sliding home cost an North Vietnamese Army machine gun crew their lives as they lay waiting by the banks of a small jungle stream.

Specialist 4 Chuck Matthews (Jacksonville, Fla.), a 2nd Bri-

gade Long Range Reconnaissance Platoon member, had been cautiously moving down the edge of a small stream in search of enemy escape routes.

Suddenly he heard a bolt hammering home, and fired a quick but deadly burst from his weapon.

Three NVA soldiers lay dead, sprawled in a heap over their weapon.

He moved in on the enemy position and began a quick search for enemy documents.

The crack of a rifle and a sharp pain in his side told SP4 Matthews that he was no longer alone.

Working his way back to homebase and safety took him about half an hour, the jungle was thick and the enemy alert.

He reached the base of the hill where the other members of his team were positioned, and paused briefly to catch his breath.

"I raced down the hill to give him a hand," remarked Sergeant Dennis Thurander (Detroit), "but he was moving so fast, he ran right past me."

## Dragoons Finish Dayroom

CAMP ENARI — The first of 48 dayrooms to be constructed in base camp was recently completed by the 3rd Battalion, 8th Infantry.

The galvanized tin quonset hut measures 20-by 48-feet, providing enough room for a pool table, ping-pong table, television, bookcases, refrigerator and games that the men have acquired for furnishings.

their own lair.

The lead platoon of Company A, led by Second Lieutenant Robert Isenga (Okemos, Mich.), slid and sweated its way down the perpendicular side of the ravine.

From Above

Catching their breath for the climb up the other side, the men came under intense automatic weapons fire. The platoon fanned out toward the right flank as the rest of the company hurried down the ravine.

From the heights to their rear, Company D began pouring withering fire on the enemy positions to protect the men in the ravine. The only way out was up for Company A. So, the 1st Platoon began maneuvering to the right to outflank the dug-in positions.

Lieutenant Isenga's platoon clawed its way up the side of the ravine toward the smoking enemy carbines. Crawling on hands and knees, clutching at rocks and earth, the men pulled

themselves toward high ground and the enemy positions. The tangled jungle undergrowth concealed them from the NVA, but made progress slow and treacherous.

At the crest of the hill the platoon halted, gasping for breath. They had made the climb without being detected. The enemy was concentrating on keeping a heavy volume of fire on the trapped company below.

Not Detected

The jungle was thick and the sound of battle so loud that the platoon crawled up to within hand grenade range of the enemy from the flank.

Then, on 2LT Isenga's command, grenades were lobbed into each enemy position. The NVA that chose to jump out firing were caught by M-16 rounds. The grenades did the rest.

Firing from the NVA positions died suddenly. From the other side of the ravine the protective fire from Company D sputtered and stopped.

## Enemy Stumbles Into 2nd Bde Recon Position

BAN BLECH — Like seven little Indians marching by in a file, seven armed North Vietnamese soldiers filed out of a woodline towards two Long Range Reconnaissance Platoon members lying frozen in an open jungle clearing.

The 2nd Brigade LRRP team, under Staff Sergeant Cliff Papay (Calhoun, Ga.), was moving down a high speed trail, when they came upon a clearing and six freshly dug graves. After posting security, two of the LRRP members started toward the freshly turned earth.

Suddenly 75 meters away, an NVA emerged from the woodline, soon to be followed by six more.

Freezing in position, their tiger suits blending into the scanty background, the two LRRP members waited for the enemy to pass. Then the NVA pointman spotted them and turned to run.

"I let loose with a burst from my weapon," remarked Specialist 4 Rick Kaiser (Jacksonville, Ill.), "and sent him tumbling end over end."

The rest of the team opened up on the fleeing NVA. "I let go of a round from my M-79 and hit a tree next to one of the escaping NVAs. The round exploded and knocked the tree down on top of him," revealed SSG Papay.



OVER HILL AND DALE—Ivy men of Company D, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry trudge through the jungles near the South China Sea as the 3rd Brigade conducts search and destroy operations in conjunction with the Americal Division. (USA Photo by SGT Allan Hyman)

"These facilities will be used by our men in base camp, as well as all of our boys that are passing through," explained Specialist 4 Leonard D. Harden Jr., (Parkway, N.J.).

The 4th Engineer Battalion is providing the huts as well as one man to assist in the building of each.

"These huts were originally packed in 1952 for use in the

Korean War," said Sergeant Napoleon B. Ballard (Detroit), Company D, 4th Engineer Battalion, who assisted the Dragoons with their hut.

"This particular one has been to Korea, Guam, Okinawa, the Philippines, Japan and Alaska, before coming to Vietnam. Its got more miles on it than I do!" he quipped.

Near Suspected NVA Regimental HQ

# Dragoons Give Up Hot Chow

By SP4 Jerry Redding

DAK TO — Companies A and D, 3rd Battalion, 8th Infantry had spent several days scouring the hills southwest of Dak To for North Vietnamese Army soldiers. Patrols sent out from their combined defensive perimeter suddenly ran into heavy enemy harassment fire as they neared a suspected NVA regimental headquarters.

The patrols pulled back into the perimeter and the two Dragoon companies moved out in strength toward the hill which was under suspicion. Almost at their destination, the Ivymen came under intense enemy fire. After routing the enemy, they dug in for the night.

The next day, indications of a strong enemy force in the area continued. Companies A and D

strengthened their positions and kept their eyes open. A landing zone was cleared and by supertime helicopters began bringing hot meals to the men.

**Dove For Cover**

As the first choppers landed, the NVA opened up with mortars and small arms fire. The choppers were waved off, with the food still inside, as the Dragoons dove into their foxholes.

The M-16s of Companies A and D formed a ring of lethal steel which was breached only once by the numerically superior NVA during the battle. The NVA moved in close beneath the dense, surrounding jungle and the constant mortar pounding. They could get to within 10-15 meters of the perimeter under cover of the undergrowth.

At one point the enemy man-

aged to enter the bunker next to Staff Sergeant Elmer Bent (Upland, Calif.), platoon sergeant, 3rd Platoon, Company A. SSG Bent lobbed a grenade into the bunker and that was as far as the NVA got.

**One Machine Gun**

Two of the three machine guns in Company A were knocked out in the early stages of the fire fight leaving Specialist 4 Cecil Millsbaugh (Burley, Idaho) with the only operable machinegun on the whole company front. SP4 Millsbaugh fed over 2,000 rounds through his gun during the action.

Company D, which was receiving very little fire on their portion of the perimeter, began reinforcing the hard pressed Company A Dragoons. Then air strikes were called in. The explosives landed a bare 15 meters in front of the Dragoons' bunkers.

NVA, between the explosive scorched line etched by the Sky-raidiers and the perimeter, stood and ran toward the Dragoon positions but were cut down before reaching them. Then the enemy fire diminished to sporadic sniper shots while friendly artillery and air strikes continued to pound at suspected NVA lines of retreat.



SLOW AN' EASY—An Ivyman from the 3rd Battalion, 12th Infantry takes it slow and easy as he probes for booby traps along Hill 1338. The Braves captured the hill during the Battle For Dak To. (USA Photo by PFC Ralph Springer)

# Panthers Get Word On Evacuated SSG

By SP4 Steve Frye

VUNG DAT AM — The men of the 2nd Battalion (Mechanized), 8th Infantry received unexpected good news when they learned that a fellow Panther, who left the battalion some two months ago, was going to live.

Staff Sergeant Derry Hanton (Philadelphia), a cook with the Panthers, left in September for evacuation to a hospital in Japan. The husky cook had a stomach operation before coming to Vietnam from Germany and had acquired an infection.

After SSG Hanton arrived at the hospital, he was informed that he had an incurable cancer and was told that he was not expected to live for more than five to six months. The 26-year veteran soldier was sent back to the United States to undergo treatment which might prolong the old soldier's life.

Soon word of this distressing news reached the Panthers. The whole battalion was saddened.

The jolly old cook was known and liked by everyone. He was especially known for the meals that he prepared for the line

soldiers at the battalion fire support base. The chow line came to life when SSG Hanton displayed his cheerful personality.

He was a hard working man. His hard work and cheerful ways gained the respect of all the men.

SSG Hanton was once quoted as saying, "The rest of the cooks and I put in some long hours. We sometimes have to work as many as 16 or 17 hours a day, but as long as the men are happy with the chow, we are glad to prepare it."

After a month or so in the States, it was learned that SSG Hanton didn't have the incurable disease after all. It was mistaken for a tumor which could be removed easily without endangering the old soldier's life. He would live indefinitely.

This news also reached the Panthers.

"I think that this was the best news I've heard", said Specialist 4 Charles Vanoy (New York, N.Y.), also a cook. SP4 Vanoy worked alongside SSG Hanton at the time he had to be evacuated.

For Action With Ivy Division

# Two ARVN's Get U.S. Medals

By PFC William Gruber

CAMP ENARI — Two soldiers from the Army of the Republic of Vietnam were recently decorated by Major General William R. Peers, 4th Infantry Division Commander, for their heroic actions during enemy contact.

The first award, a Bronze Star with "V" Device, was presented at Plei Dolim, Pleiku Province, to Second Lieutenant Rcom Er, commanding officer, 230th Regional Forces Company.

While in a joint operation with an American tank platoon, 2LT Er's unit encountered a reinforced enemy platoon that had fired on an American medical team. He immediately ordered his men to dismount from the

tanks and proceeded to lead them through concentrated hostile automatic weapons and small arms fire on an assault of the enemy position.

Advancing with his men and the armored vehicles, he set an example of superior leadership and courage that inspired his men to rout the enemy troops, preventing them from inflicting additional casualties on the Ivy medical team.

"I present this award to 2LT Er in the name of the U.S. Government and the American people," said General Peers. "But it belongs to all of the men of the 230th Regional Force Company who took part in the action that day. . . I express my deep appreciation and that of the U.S. Military and the American people for their heroic actions."

General Peers made the second presentation at the Dak To District in Kontum Province.

Platoon Leader Huynh Tan, executive officer of the Dien Binh Popular Forces outpost, was awarded the Army Commendation Medal with "V" Device for defending two vital bridges over the Dak Psi River when his unit came under intense mortar and automatic weapons fire from two NVA companies.

Assuming command after the post commander was mortally wounded, Platoon Leader Tan began calling in air strikes and artillery fire on enemy positions. The mortars continued, however, and the enemy began to mass for a final assault.

Assuring that his men were in protected positions, Tan then called for artillery fire on his own position which effectively thwarted the enemy assault.

"Your Platoon Leader Tan is one of the bravest men I have ever seen," said General Peers, speaking to the people of Dien Binh. "And I'm sure he accepts this award for himself as well as all the men of his platoon."

"In defending the people of your village, he also performed a great service to the U.S. Army and specifically the 4th Infantry Division. This is one of the finest things I have seen, and when his example is followed by all of Kontum and South Vietnam the people of Vietnam will be free."

## Rotten Luck

BAN BLECH — Specializing, Calif.), 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry, stepped on a 2nd Infantry, stepped on a spring punji pit and received the shock of his life.

Walking down a narrow path, he stepped to one side of the trail and triggered the spring fixed device.

Flying up in front of him was a deadly punji stake tipped board. He grimaced in expectation of the pain.

But to his astonishment, as the sharp stakes struck him, they merely broke and crumpled to the ground.

"Man was I scared," he remarked, "I thought this was it."

The trap was so old that the stakes had rotted with age. The force of the board against his leg was just enough to complete the final disintegration.



ON THE WAY—Ivy mortarmen cover their ears as they deliver another round in support of the 2nd Brigade near Ban Blech during Operation MacArthur. (USA Photo)



# Battle For Dak To Summary

## Days Nine To 15

**CAMP ENARI** — Elements of the Ivy Division and those under its control in Operation MacArthur continued the Battle For Dak To against an estimated North Vietnamese Army division through its 16th day. A day by day summary of day 9 through 15 follows:

**Nov. 12** — U.S. Forces in the Dak To area were engaged in battle all day against two regiments while the fighting centered in three places.

The 173rd Airborne Brigade reported two companies in contact. The paratroopers received mortar rounds and small arms fire at very close range while claiming at least 30 NVA dead.

On Hill 724, elements of the 3rd Battalion, 8th Infantry continued to search the area of a bloody battle two days earlier.

Late in the day, the 1st Brigade's forward command post at Dak To received 23 enemy 60mm mortar rounds both inside and outside its perimeter.

An engineer work party moving up Highway 14, 25 miles south of Dak To, was attacked by an unknown-size enemy force. Artillery was immediately called on the enemy positions and reinforcements from the 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry were rushed to the scene. The Blackhawks killed 13 NVA, detained two suspects and captured five weapons.

**Nov. 13** — Vietnamese Strike Force troops crashed into a NVA base camp while a key bridge on the main Ivy Division supply route was blown up. However, the key fighting still centered around Hill 724.

Three companies from the 3rd Battalion, 8th Infantry were moving up the side of Hill 724 when the enemy cut off the rear element, Company B. One officer reported that the enemy must have been waiting for the Dragoons for two days. The Ivymen fought their way out killing 92 NVA.

**Nov. 14** — Elements of the 173rd Airborne Brigade fought for more than three hours while Lieutenant General William Rossen, First Field Force, Vietnam, commander, visited the Battle For Dak To area.

Major General Peers, 4th Division commander, reported that he learned from Hanoi radio that General Vo Nguyen

Giap, defense minister of North Vietnam, "is personally in charge of the battle."

"This may well be the most significant battle since Ia Drang," remarked General Peers. The Ia Drang battle was one of the most heralded U.S. victories in 1965, the year of the Vietnam buildup.

General Rossen stated, "The NVA have showed no signs of withdrawing. We have a slight edge on them in size and a hell of a lot more in firepower and mobility."

"We have a prospect of a really significant victory here," he added.

An Ivy Division long range reconnaissance patrol reported running into what was thought to be large elements of the NVA's 17th Regiment north of the battle area. This indicated reinforcements near Dak To.

Two regiments are already known to be committed to the Battle For Dak To while two are suspected to be in reserve.

Forty rounds of mortar fire fell into the area of command posts near Dak To.

**Nov. 15** — Fighting in the Battle For Dak To area slowed down in intensity while air planes and artillery pounded NVA positions.

The 1st Brigade's command post near Dak To received three separate mortar attacks spaced throughout the day. Two C-130 transport planes, an ammunition dump and a Special Forces camp were set ablaze.

The mortar barrages, reported to be placed with precision on the Dak To airstrip and adjoining ammo dump, came at 9 a.m., 5:30 p.m. and 9 p.m.

Tents and buildings of the nearby Special Forces camp were apparently set ablaze by shrapnel from the ammo dump. The Vietnamese residents of the camp and their families were evacuated by Ivy Division armored personnel carriers.

During the third attack on Dak To, during which 12 rounds fell on the ammo dump, a massive explosion occurred. Tear gas stored in the dump was released and drifted over the area. Occasionally jet propulsion fuel blew up with a tremendous roar while smoke billowed hundreds of feet into the

dark sky.

**Nov. 16** — NVA hit the Fighting First Brigade command post for the fifth time in 24 hours as 46 82mm mortar rounds hit the east end of the airstrip.

**Nov. 17** — Major contact in the Battle For Dak To broke out again as the 3rd Battalion, 12th Infantry seized Hill 1338, also known as Ngok Con Kring, overlooking the Dak To area.

Paratroopers from the 173rd took over Hill 889, about 10 miles southwest of Dak To, and captured an anti-aircraft gun which the enemy was defending.

The loss of Hill 1338 deprived the NVA of an excellent position for the deployment of rockets and artillery.

The hill was vital because "the NVA could hit Dak To with rockets from this position and from the crest," explained Colonel Richard Johnson (Beaumont, Tex.), 1st Brigade commander.

**Nov. 18** — It was reported that 46 NVA were killed by the Braves during their three-day drive to capture Hill 1338. Those casualties brought the known NVA death toll for the battle to 804.

General Peers predicted more fighting. "We may have to fight for several more knobs around here," he said.

Two ARVN battalions were in heavy fighting six miles northeast of Dak To.

## VC Blows Self Instead Of Ivy

**VUNG DAT AM** — The day turned out to be a bad one and the last one for a Viet Cong soldier who waited for an American convoy to come down the road. The VC was hidden in an old tea plantation.

A group of engineers attached to the 1st Squadron, 10th Cavalry were sweeping the road for mines.

However, the VC evidently thought he had been recognized. The engineers were approximately 75 meters from the plantation when the VC took off running.

It was to be his last run. He exploded the mine and died instantly.

# Hill 1338...

(Continued from Page 1)

through CPT Scher's head as he pleaded, "We've got to get these wounded out. I've got to get them back."

Then the ordinance began falling on the NVA.

Suddenly one went slightly astray.

"That was close," the captain radioed to the forward air controller (FAC) directing the strikes. "Let me check and see if any of my people are hurt."

"You're asking for damned near perfect accuracy," roared back a seemingly upset FAC.

No one was hurt as the well controlled company commander requested the strikes to land a little closer. The only way to drive the NVA back from his beleaguered men was to drop ordinance within 25 yards of his position.

### Nobody's Smoke

As the jungle erupted into red fireballs from the falling ordinance, a yellow smoke grenade erupted in the trees from someone who shouldn't have been listening to the radio.

The Braves were using purple smoke and no one reported using yellow.

"I don't know the origin of that smoke," radioed LTC Henrix from his helicopter circling overhead, "but it's certainly not friendly. We'll just bring some 20 mike-mike (20mm cannon fire) in over it."

The NVA apparently heard the Braves talking about using smoke grenades. In hopes of either luring a helicopter into firing range or perhaps in a desperate bid to divert the bombs, they set off the grenade.

As the sun began to go down in the mid-afternoon, Company C was getting discouraged.

### -Kept Going

CPT Scher told the Braves' command post, "I doubt if we can get over the top of this thing. It will probably be too dark. We're just sort of all sitting here together. If they mortar us, we're in trouble."

Attempts to remove the wounded from the area were not going too well either.

One helicopter was hit twice before landing and then finally struggled back to Dak To with a gas leak and an injured door-gunner. A second chopper was having difficulty finding the landing zone.

Finally some of the wounded were removed from Hill 1338.

Just after 4 p.m. the end of the battle was in sight as CPT Scher radioed, "We're already moving up that hill. We're taking our chances but we're moving out."

At 4:35 p.m. came the report, "We may make it this time. We still have a few snipers up here. We're moving inch by inch over the entire area. It looks like we may make it."

### Maybe This Time

At 4:40 p.m., "We're almost on top of it now. We're just about over the top. Still a few more holes we're clearing."

There were no more bombs over head. The jets had left for resupply if they were needed again.

The crackle of rifle fire died down. Hill 1338 grew silent.

At 4:42 p.m. CPT Scher picked up his black pushbutton microphone and radioed, "We have the top of the hill . . . and we can hold it."

## Braves Start . . .

(Continued From Page 3)

ing. They spotted a large group of North Vietnamese soldiers clad in tiger fatigues moving down the opposite side of the hill.

Artillery was called in on the fleeing NVA while the remainder of the two companies moved up the hill and secured the area that had been their objective for two days.

The top of the hill was a honeycomb of sturdily built log bunkers and tunnels with deep trenches snaking throughout the area. Among the mass of equipment found at the site were B-40 rocket rounds still in wooden

packing crates, AK-47 rifles, ammunition, machine guns, mortar rounds, clothes, and enough rice and equipment to indicate the NVA were planning to stay for quite a while.

"We definitely took an area from the enemy that was a vital position for them to carry out further plans to try and invade the Dak To area," LTC Vollmer said after the two day siege.

"The force that controls these hills and ridges is definitely in the best strategic position to control the Dak To region. I firmly believe that our battalion hurt the enemy and ruined their plans for military victory and control."



**OFF TO THE BATTLE**—Ivymen of the 3rd Battalion, 12th Infantry await the arrival of helicopters at Dak To to drop them off on a combat assault of Hill 1338. During the 14th day of the Battle For Dak To the Braves captured the enemy held hilltop. (USA Photo by PFC Andy Pipon)

## Mail The IVY LEAF Home

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