

Despite Heavy Ground Fire

Scouts Blast 45 NVA

By SP4 Jerry Norton

Feb. 15 through 21.

Helicopters from the 2nd Brigade Scouts killed 45 NVA soldiers Feb. 17 and supporting ARA killed five more in the biggest battle of the week of

The 1st Cavalry accounted for 198 enemy dead during the week in mostly small conflicts in Phuoc Long Province.

The biggest clash began when members of Ranger Patrol 45

spied 30 armed NVA moving northeast on a trail. Too small a unit to engage the enemy themselves, the Rangers put in a call to the Brigade Scouts.

By the time the Scout Team arrived, the NVA had moved off the trail and into firing positions. They started the fight by firing AK-47s at the LOH. The Cobra half of the team quickly retaliated, slamming rockets into the bamboo, marking dive after dive to kill 15 NVA.

The surviving Communists attempted revenge two hours later, trying to down the 1st Cav birds with more small arms fire. That futile effort was met with a devastating barrage from the Cobra's miniguns and rockets. Thirteen more NVA were dead.

At 2:15 three NVA were spotted a few hundred meters from the original contact. More rockets flashed from the Cobra, bringing the fleeing enemy to a dead stop. A few minutes later the LOH killed eight more evading enemy.

After re-arming, the Scouts were back making a final assessment at 5:30 when the remaining enemy opened up with AKs. The Cobra killed two of the NVA, then covered the LOH as it eliminated four more NVA with strafing runs. Aerial Rocket Artillery from 2nd Bn., 20th Artillery (ARA) reinforced the Scouts to kill five more NVA.

Despite the frequency of ground-to-air fire, there were no U.S. casualties in the operation.

(Continued on Page 8.)

ARVNs Find Caches, Capture Tons of Rice

By SP4 Jerry Norton

FSB BUTTONS - Bare rice bowls may be in store for NVA troops in eastern Phuoc Long Province. With some help from the 1st Air Cav's 2nd Brigade, ARVN Airborne units have found more than 50,000 pounds of rice northeast of Song Be.

The first cache find came Feb. 19. The 4th and 3rd Companies of the 8th Airborne Bn., ARVN Airborne Division, were working out of FSB Django to interdict enemy movement and activity on the Jolley Trail, a major enemy infiltration network.

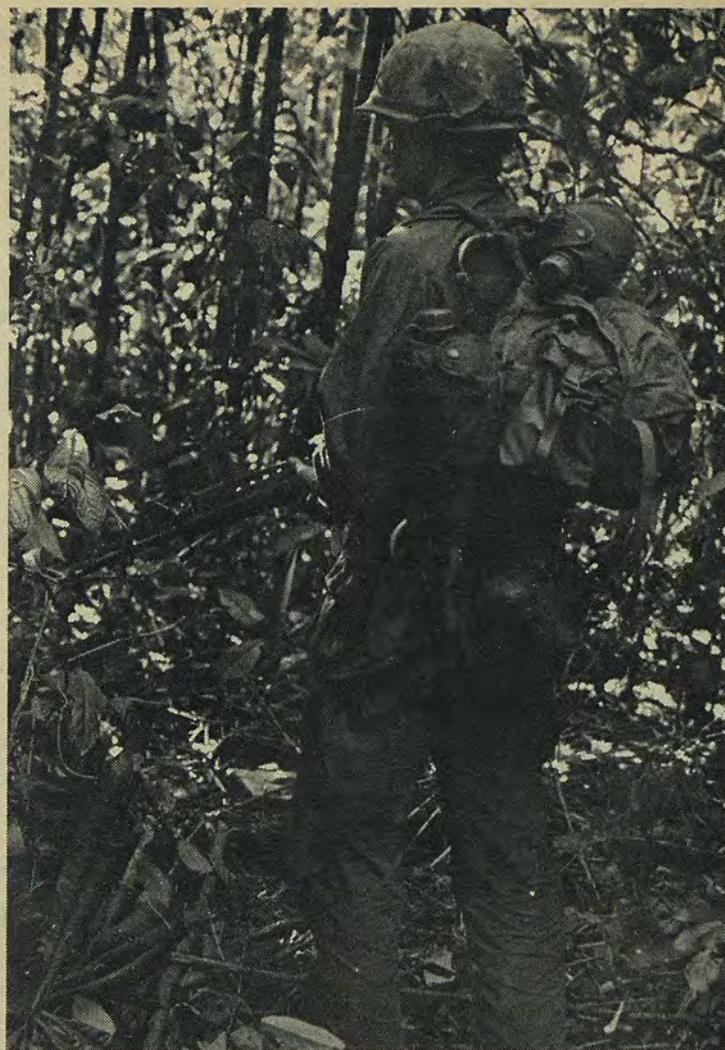
Breaking through thick jungle 15 miles northeast of Song Be, the 3rd of the 8th discovered 26,400 pounds of rice. The polished rice was packaged in 132 pound bags with Chinese markings, 200 bags in all. Many of the bags were neatly stacked and covered with plastic.

A few minutes later, the 4th of the 8th found 80 more bags hidden in lush vegetation 100 meters away. These were 220 pound bags totalling 17,600 pounds.

The 1st Cav got into the act later in the afternoon. Operating seven miles further northeast of Song Be, the Cav's Ranger Team 35 spotted a small enemy force moving along a trail. The team opened up on the enemy, who fired a few shots and then dashed toward quieter parts of the jungle. They left behind a dead comrade and eight bicycles loaded with medical supplies and 1,500 pounds of rice.

The 3rd of the 8th ARVN Airborne had good hunting again the next day. In the same area as their previous day's find they located 5,500 pounds of rice in 110 pound bags.

Major Burton D. Patrick, 2nd Brigade operations officer, said, "The rice was probably destined for NVA in the Jolley Trail area and for units further south. They'll have to look elsewhere for food now."



Specialist Four Dave Babinski peers through the jungle while on a mission with Company C, 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, near fire support base Fort Compton. (USA Photo by SP4 Bill Ahrbeck)

Village Welcomes Doctors

MEDCAP's Here

By SP5 Al Persons

QUAN LOI - The scene might have been somewhere in France during World War II as the two American vehicles on patrol slipped through the giant iron gate that led into a picturesque courtyard surrounded by buildings of predominantly French architecture.

As the vehicles circled the

courtyard and came to a stop, hundreds of children and adults came swarming from out of nowhere to greet their visitors.

But the scene was not France. It was a small Vietnamese hamlet called Soc Trao set deep in the heart of the French rubber plantation that surrounds the 1st Air Cav's Quan Loi basecamp.

The patrol was one of mercy as was reflected in the smiling, hopeful faces of the villagers who surrounded the vehicles.

Captain (Dr.) Ray Peterson and Specialist Four Gary Chapman, both of Charlie Troop, 15th Medical Battalion, opened their medical supplies and set up a makeshift aid station in the center of the courtyard. Meanwhile, members of the Civil Affairs office and security platoon entertained the children with their usual crazy "GI" antics and games.

The long line of villagers waited patiently as they were given medical treatment one by one. They all went away satisfied.

"We can't work miracles and cure all of their illnesses right on the spot," said Peterson, "but we can give them something to soothe the symptoms and tide them over until the next time."

But if they weren't miracle workers they were the next best thing. The smiles of gratitude that beamed from the red dirt-stained faces of the children were evidence of that. The brightest smile, perhaps, came from a small boy on crutches.

As the Civil Action Patrol packed up to leave, the villagers knew another MEDCAP would come again soon.



Kit Carson Scout Sergeant Nguyen Tue points the way for command group of the crack 1st Air Cav infantry platoon from Alpha Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry. The Alpha Troop "blues" had just made a combat assault into the area and were moving out on a recon mission.

(USA Photo by SP4 Bob Borchester)

... For God And Country

By Chaplain (LTC) Charles F. Powers

Christ came into my office the other day and just stood there, and I was impatient to get on with it. I had work to do.

I wouldn't have minded if he had been wounded for I do very well with guys who have been wounded; but he just stood there, with that look in his eyes, and he needed a haircut.

I didn't ask him to sit down, he'd have stayed all day.

Let's face it,

You can be crucified just so often, then you've had it.

I mean you're useless, no good to God, let alone anybody else.

So I said to him after awhile:

"Well, what's up... what do you want?"

And he laughed, stupid, said he was just passing by and thought he'd say "hello."

Great.

I said, "Hello."

So, he left.

And I was so teed off,

I couldn't even read the magazine.

I went and got a coke.

The trouble with Christ is,

He always comes at the WRONG TIME.

Cav May Stay Awhile

Rollbacks Continue

The U.S. Army's 9th and 82nd Divisions have left Vietnam and the 1st is on its way. Redeployment is the name of the game.

But the Cav probably won't follow for quite some time according to usually informed sources such as Time and Newsweek magazines. Because of its airmobility, the Cav will probably be used as a backstop, ready to help out if the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) gets in serious trouble in any part of the country.

President Richard M. Nixon announced the withdrawal of 25,000 troops from Vietnam last June and has since announced that a total of 115,000 will be withdrawn by April because of "the success of the training and equipping program for South

Vietnamese forces."

The Midway Island announcement in which the president told of the original withdrawal set up the criteria governing future withdrawal. They are: 1) the progress in training and equipping South Vietnamese forces, 2) progress in the Paris Peace talks and 3) the level of enemy activity.

As Vietnamization of the war continues and the enemy activity continues to remain relatively low, the further withdrawal of American forces is expected to continue gradually.

Withdrawals are being done on a unit basis but, just because a unit goes home doesn't mean the individuals in the unit will all return to the States. The 12 month tour is still in effect.

Generally, the soldiers who

have been withdrawn from Vietnam have been within 60 days of their DEROS. Troops with longer time left have been transferred to another unit. And replacements for the units left in Vietnam are still facing the full 12 month tour of duty.

Because nearly one-fourth of the U.S. Army is still serving in Vietnam and everyone leaves within a year, the heavy turnover means that some individuals will serve second and third involuntary tours.

The primary consideration in selecting an individual for a second tour is need for his particular grade and military skill. The Army's objective is that no individual will be returned to Vietnam for a second tour until all others of the same grade and skill have served an initial tour there. Whenever possible, individuals of other grades and skills are substituted to eliminate problems.

Even if a unit is returned to the States an individual in the unit who is sent home probably will not stay with the unit. Only a relatively small number of personnel are returned with the colors of an inactivated unit with the rest reassigned to other units in the States.

Troop reductions in Vietnam are being managed, as much as possible, to give equal length tours for all personnel.

Grunts Get VIP Briefing At FSB Ike

By SP4 Ron Merrill

FSB IKE - They were all listening as intently to Captain Edgar telling them the general enemy situation as the VIPs who been in the room before them.

These 1st Air Cavalry Division VIPs were of a different sort, however. They were the 1st Platoon, Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry and they looked like anything but VIPs in their dirty fatigues.

"I guess I started giving the grunts these briefings back in October when I became the S-2 (intelligence officer) for the battalion," said Captain Michael Edgar, a veteran of six months as a company commander in the field.

"These men are real interested in just who they are fighting against -- what regiments, divisions, etc. are operating in the area. I feel the Cav has the most important mission in Vietnam and if these men get the big picture they will do a better job because they will know as best I can tell them what they're up against," said Edgar.

He gets the bulk of the heavy questioning when the men start getting briefed on the area where they are going to be inserted.

When the briefing was over and the platoon began dispersing to their bunkers and details, Private First Class Richard Mikulka said, "This gives us a good idea on what we can expect day after tomorrow and I for one like to know what to expect."

Dogs Effective But Don't Have Radar

By SP4 Dennis Thornton

QUAN LOI - Tracking down NVA can be a dog's life.

At Quan Loi, it's the specialty of the four-footed sniffers that make up the 34th Scout Dog Platoon of the 1st Air Cav.

Alert teams of a man and a

German Shepherd or Black Laborador dog walk point for any area company that requests their services. Although dog handlers are reluctant to tell "war stories," the 18 teams in the platoon have found more than their share of caches and enemy soldiers.

"Under good conditions, which we seldom find over here, these dogs are very effective," Sergeant Thomas White said. "They do find the enemy and a great morale-booster for the grunts."

But, he added, the scout dog teams have limitations and must be used right in order to be effective.

"Many people believe dogs have a radar screen in front of them and will detect everything," White said. "But the dogs are not 100 per cent guaranteed. They can't fly or climb trees or work 24 hours a day."

White went on to answer some of the "questions we get asked 30 or 40 times every time we go out."

The dogs are ineffective in the rain and, unlike blood hounds, do not follow a ground trail. They pick up an air scent which disappears in the rain or if the trail is more than two days old.

Three days is supposed to be the maximum time a team stays in the field because the handler only carries enough dog food to last two days and because "the dogs wear out before the men," White said.

"Most people say a dog should last longer than a man but don't stop to think that a dog has twice as many feet to pick up and has higher to jump over logs and thickets," added Specialist Four Mike Tarwacki.

Although the handlers grow very attached to the dogs they cannot take them home to the States. Because of the possibility of spreading jungle diseases to

other animals, none of the dogs ever return. If they are not killed in action they are put to sleep when their useful life is over. The oldest dog still in service is seven.

"My dog has saved my life a few times but I also try to take care of him," White said. "Once we were entering a bunker complex when my dog smelled fish cooking and took off after the enemy. I yelled 'watch me' to the pointman and went after him. Fortunately for both of us, the NVA had just left."

On dog was killed in the line of duty recently but none of the handlers has been seriously wounded in over a year. If either the dog or handler is wounded, they are medevaced together from the area.

Being part of an airmobile division, the dogs also naturally like to fly on 1st Cav helicopters. "If there's a group of guys waiting to get on a bird, my dog charges right through, trailing me behind, and is always first one on," laughed Sergeant Jerry Shirley. "He sits and watches the choppers circle out in the field, maybe knowing that it means we're going home."

Morale is high among the dog handlers and they like their job, although they don't find many other people that would want the risks and hardships of their job.

"We try to do our best to be of some help," White said. "We do what we can to help the men in the field because we're out there only three days every ten days to two weeks. They're out there all the time."



The CAVALAIR is published weekly under the supervision of the Information Office, 1st Air Cavalry Division, APO SF 96490, and is an authorized Army publication. The command newspaper is printed by Pacific Stars and Stripes, Tokyo, Japan.

Opinions expressed in the CAVALAIR are those of its editorial staff and not necessarily those of the Department of the Army.

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A 1st Cav scout dog team works out. Although the dogs "can't fly or climb trees," they are effective in tracking down NVA or finding bunker

(USA Photo by SP4 James McCabe)

Mechanics Work all Night

They Keep 'Em Flying

By SP4 Ron Merrill

TAY NINH - They don't fight the war with rifles or machineguns but with socket and ratchet wrenches, oily rags and phillips screw drivers to keep the Army's flying firepower in constant operation.

The helicopter mechanic can be seen almost any night working into the hours of daylight, as he does his part in keeping the 1st Air Cavalry Division airmobile.

The Chinooks, Hueys, Cobras and LOHs which make up the

mighty olive drab armada of the Cav are kept in the air above III Corps through the efforts of mechanics like Specialist Five Kenneth Clack of Alpha Company, 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion, based at the 1st Brigade basecamp at Tay Ninh.

"Oh, I guess my day starts at about six-thirty in the morning and ends sometime around midnight," chuckled Clack. "If there is something wrong with a ship (helicopter) we have to fix it at night - that night - cause it usually has to fly the next day."

On the average of once every four days, a 1st Cav 'slick' (Huey) will pass the 25 hour flying mark and have to go into the shop, which can sometimes consist of only a revetment fashioned from dirt and PSP. It takes Clack and his team of mechanics, usually from four to six men, about six hours to perform this intermediate inspection.

"The most important thing on one of these inspections is to check the oil in the transmission and engine for any metal particles," said Clack. But these inspections also include pulling secondary fuel filters, oil screens, oil jets and checking the gear boxes in the tail section.

The big preventive maintenance inspection comes after the helicopter has been flown 100 hours, when the team of mechanics go over the bird with a fine toothed comb for a couple of days, trouble shooting for anything that might possibly go wrong.

"It might take as many as six hours to change the main rotor blade, if everything goes right," he said.

Working late into the night under huge floodlights that draw not only pesky insects but also make good targets for enemy rockets, the mechanics toil away, keeping the Cav's choppers in the air.

Need More Than Oats For Today's Cav Horse

By SP4 David Roberts

QUAN LOI - When the original 7th Cavalry was winning the West it took little more than a bucket of oats and a bale of hay to keep "ole Dobbin" on the move.

However, in today's modern, highly mobile 1st Air Cavalry, it takes a crew of highly trained technicians and specialists to keep the modern day Pegasus airborne.

Replacing the handful of oats in the feedbag, immense 20,000 gallon trucks of JP-4 (Jet Petroleum Turbine fuel) are needed to keep the mammoth fleet of 3rd Brigade helicopters in the air. The raw oats fed to Dobbin, the modern aviation fuel requires constant filtering and checking to assure against possible contamination which could result in the grounding of dozens of the Brigade's birds.

"Insuring against contamination by constant checking and filtering is an all important function in maintaining the unit's mobility," said Captain John M. Jats. Jats is

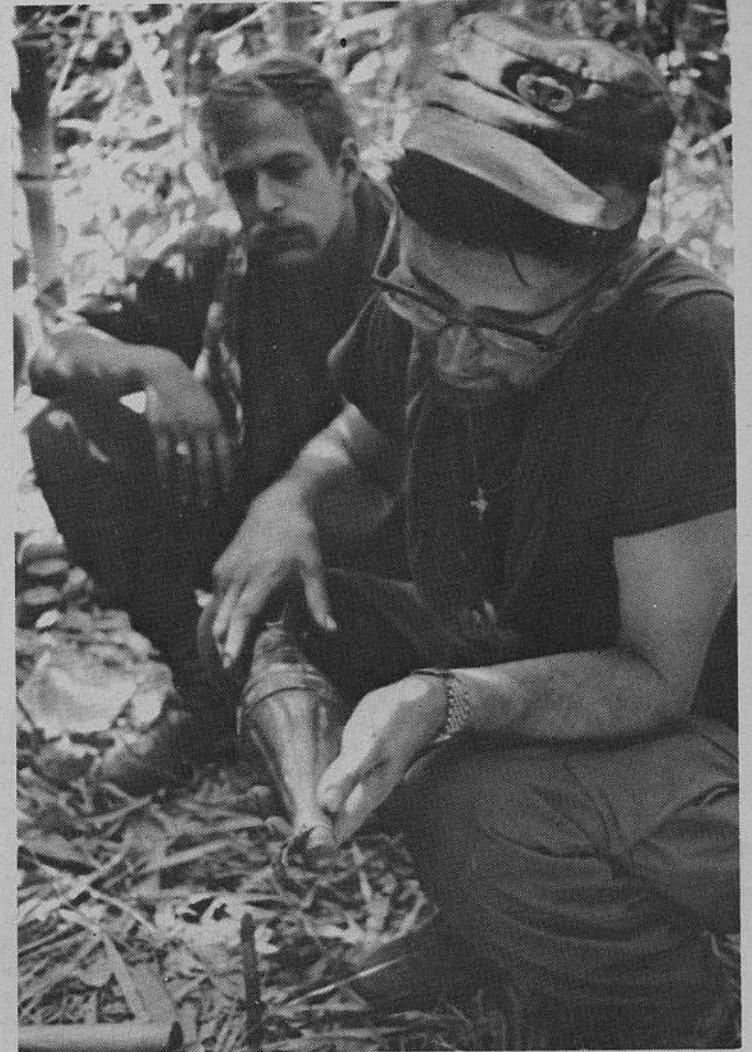
the officer in charge of the Quan Loi Petroleum, Oil and Lubrication (POL) point.

The long filtration system begins when the fuel is first offloaded in the Saigon area to the waiting tanker trucks that will eventually deliver the fuel to Quan Loi. Once the daily convoy reaches Quan Loi the fuel is again siphoned through an 18 inch screen filter that removes all foreign matter. After traveling through the four inch hoses it is again strained by a massive filtering system before entering the huge storage bladders.

"Once the weekly samples are taken, tagged, then sent to a lab for analysis in Long Binh, the only aircraft petroleum laboratory in Vietnam. Here the one quart sample is tested for impurities," Jats said. "We take all precautions before the fuel enters the aircraft."

Pumping more than 50,000 gallons of fuel daily, the Quan Loi POL point services more than 175 helicopters as well as all track and wheel vehicles operating out of Quan Loi.

B-40 Rocket...



He can't read the label but there's no question about the origin of this B-40 rocket. 2nd Lt. Roger Urbaniak examines the rocket found on a patrol by Delta Company, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry while 1st Lt. Gary Huestch looks on (USA Photo by SP4 James McCabe)

Leaders Get the Job Done

TAY NINH - There is one man in Vietnam with a great opportunity to exert much and lasting influence on the men he works with - the platoon leader.

"If a leader has motivation, responsibility, initiative and loyalty, there are few missions he can't accomplish," observed Captain William Mazingo, commander of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry.

"For my leader," added Private First Class Steve

Feudner, pointman for Alpha's second platoon, "I always want a man who knows what to do in any situation, gains the confidence of his men, yet is willing to listen to them."

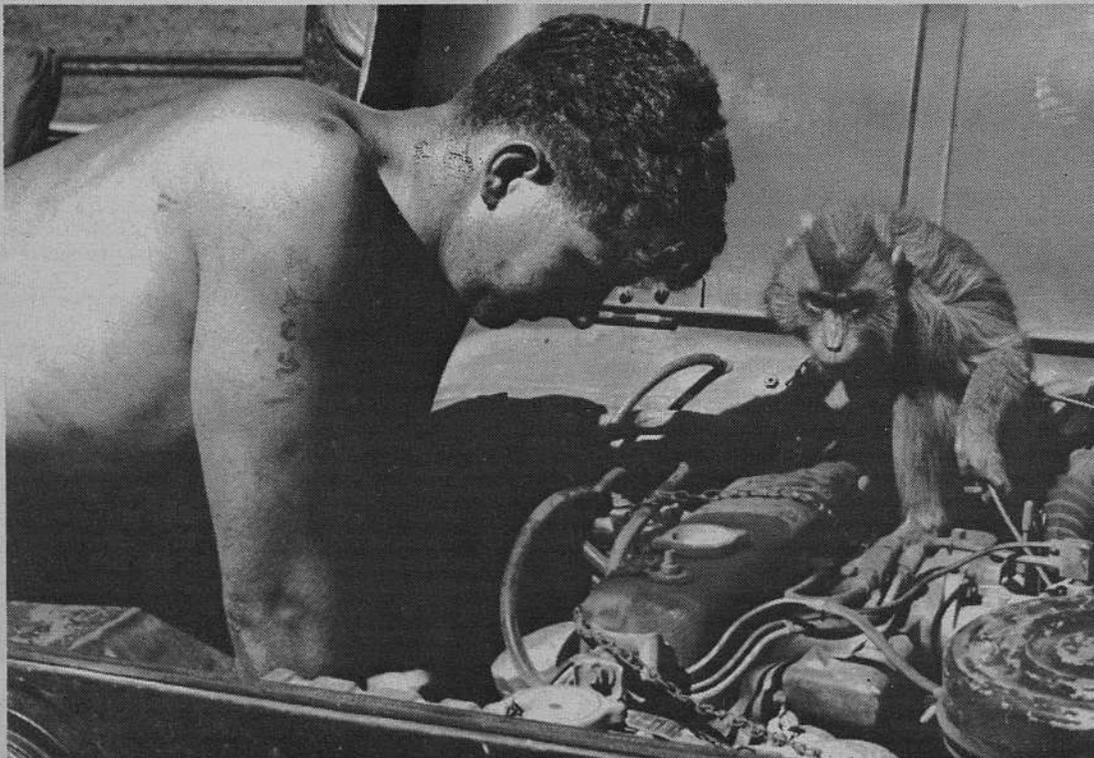
Both Captain Mazingo and PFC Feudner agree that one man who meets their standards is their second platoon leader, 1st Lieutenant Richard Nelson.

"The platoon leader's job," explained Nelson, "involves

knowing where you and your men are at all times and how you will react to any given situation at any time with the resources at your disposal."

"Being a platoon leader is rewarding," he said. "There is a thrill in command, in taking a group of people who don't know you, passing on what you've learned, and later having some old-timer tell you that your platoon really worked well as a unit."

Grease Monkey...



Specialist Four Lacey Milam, a mechanic with the 1st Air Cav's 2nd Brigade has more help than he needs on this repair job. Grease Monkey, the unit's mascot, has been part of the "extra help" for several months at FSB Buttons. (USA Photo by SP4 James McCabe)

Monkey Business At Buttons Motor Pool

By SP4 Ron Wright

FSB BUTTONS - It's small and furry and, to the dismay of the 1st Air Cavalrymen of Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade motor pool, it is all too often a grease monkey in every sense of the word.

The animal, a baboon-like anthropoid, is the mascot of the motor pool and reigns over their domain including the parking lot, repair tent and sleeping quarters, causing mixed feelings and uncommon disturbances.

"With four hands she can manipulate anything, but usually manipulates it in reverse, causing any number of small problems," said Sergeant Orville Smith, the owner of the monkey.

The monkey in its own right has taken a fair amount of harassment, but seems to think of it as a game. "We turn her loose occasionally and once even got so fed up with her that we dropped her outside the berm, but she always returns. The motor pool is as much her home as ours," said the sergeant.

The monkey was purchased from local civilians for 1,500 piasters and, after receiving shots from an Army vet, she immediately accepted the motor pool as home.

The only really sad moment of her stay was about three weeks after her arrival at the motor pool. "The monkey was pregnant and we all felt like expectant fathers, but evidently the change of atmosphere was too much and the off-spring died," Smith said.

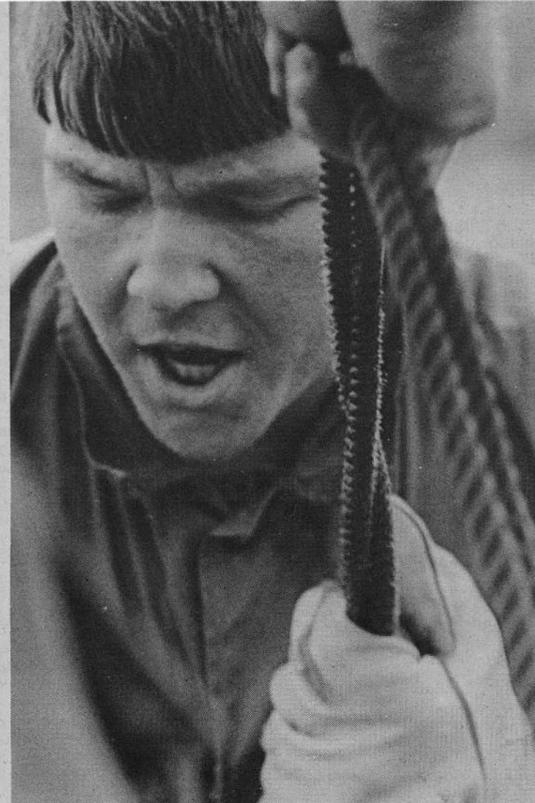
Other than that incident, the monkey seems to be doing well. "We feed her everything from nuts to bananas and she seems to thrive," Smith said. "All too often she discovers our goodie packages from home and we are constantly looking for new hiding places."

It looks as though the grease monkey of the 2nd Brigade motor pool will continue to reign supreme - queen of the mechanics.

Her favorite pastime? Monkeying around with a monkey wrench, of course.



Because Skytroopers sometimes find themselves in a situation where they have to use a rope ladder in or out of a helicopter hovering over the treetops, the long climb up the rappelling tower (left) is made via the wobbly ladder. Right, the tension and perhaps a bit of fear shows in a Cavalryman's face as he prepares to hurtle out into space shouting "First Team," then rappelling down the rope.



Faces in the class tell the story. From a yawn to rapt attention all eyes are glued to the instructor who just might say something that will save your life.

Life-Saving Introduction to Viet Taught at First Team Academy

By SP4 Barry Bjornson

BIEN HOA - "First Team!" The cry pierced the morning air as the body flew through the air, jerked to a stop and then slowly descended along the rope to the ground. A quick ten pushups and the new 1st Air Cavalryman took his place in formation, watching those to follow.

The one thing which most often remains in the minds of Skytroopers about their first week in the airmobile division is rappelling off the huge tower at the division training center, The First Team Academy, in Bien Hoa.

Throughout his four to seven day stay at "Charm School," the newcomer to the Cav is oriented in many subjects. Representatives from various sections brief the individual of their services, from tracker dogs to artillery support.

The most important day at the Academy is spent on the range. After a short march out past the basecamp perimeter the group is divided into two smaller sections. One group goes to the 25 meter zero range to

sight in their M-16s. The others march on a little farther, to the grenade range, where they will throw a "frag" (fragmentation grenade) and fire the M-79 grenade launcher.

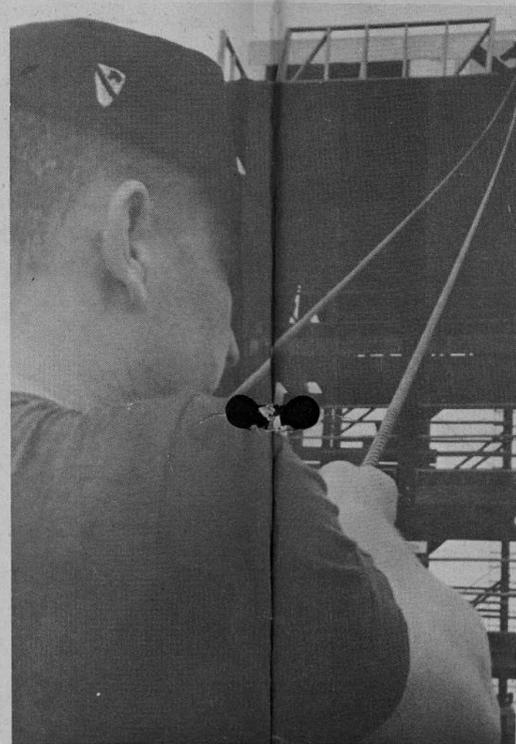
After each individual has taken his turn on each range, the two small groups combine for a practical exercise in squad leadership tactics. This includes an exercise in fire and movement.

It is said that teachers make the school. If so, the Academy is outstanding, for the cadre are all experienced infantrymen. Their lessons are often made clearer and more realistic by the use of personal experiences to stress a point.

The Skytroopers have a wide variety of views on the training at the Charm School. For many of them, the infantrymen, it is a good review of previous training. For others, it may be their first contact with enemy weapons, the M-79 and squad tactics.

"I'm not sure what I'm gonna be doing over here," explained Private Richard Martinez, pointing to his weapon, "but I want to know how to use this."

USA Photos by SP4 Dean Sharp and SP4 Bob Conway



A completely new experience all Cav replacements is diving backwards into the air almost 50ft above the ground, hoping that the rope is really safe. The man, the one at left, will learn that it's a valuable skill for the jungles of Cav Country. Safety is stressed at the Academy and instructors always test the equipment first (above) and give a demonstration rappelling.



Experienced infantrymen who have seen it all, try to pass their skills on to the Academy students in the three days of instruction. One instructor shows how a Viet Cong booby trap is constructed and camouflaged (above) while another points out a punji stake pit (below) so the replacements will know what to look for and avoid.





ROTOR WASH

C as in Charley...

LTC Monteith Takes 1st of 21st

QUAN LOI - In a brief ceremony held at 1st Battalion, 21st Artillery in Quan Loi, Lieutenant Colonel Gerald E. Monteith accepted the unit colors replacing Lieutenant Colonel Mac D. Saunders as unit commander.

Lieutenant Colonel Monteith previously was Chief of Officer Assignments with USARV before assuming command of the 105 mm. artillery battalion.

Lieutenant Colonel Saunders, commander for the past seven months, has been reassigned to Ft. Hood, Texas where he will assume command of the 1st Armor Division Artillery Battalion.

The unit guide-on was officially presented to the new commander by Major General E. B. Roberts, Commanding General of the 1st Air Cavalry Division.

CAVALAIR Takes Second Place



PHUOC VINH - Major J.D. Coleman, 1st Air Cav information officer (above, left), recently accepted a certificate designating the CAVALAIR as the second best division offset newspaper in Vietnam.

Colonel Joseph Kingston, 1st Cav Chief of Staff, presented the award in brief ceremonies at Phuoc Vinh.

The weekly newspaper was cited for "promoting efficiency, welfare and morale through excellence in editorial content, news interest and effectiveness of design." The award was signed by Lieutenant General Frank T. Mildren, USARV Deputy Commanding General.

Villagers Get Mid-Wife Kits

QUAN LOI - Facilities at the two Bu Dop government-operated dispensaries got a boost recently with the addition of several mid-wife kits supplied by the "Garry Owen" Brigade S-5 office.

Members of the 3rd Brigade Civil Affairs section, headed by 1st Lieutenant Tony Arnold presented the kits to the District Chief who, in turn, distributed them to the dispensaries.

The two Bu Dop dispensaries, staffed by government health officials, serve approximately 5,200 people.

In accepting the kits, the District Chief thanked the 3rd Brigade representatives for their support of the community while assuring them that the kits would be of significant assistance to the medical staff in their service to the community.

Reunion Held in Jungle

By SP4 Bill Rufty

FSB GRANITE - The jungles of Vietnam are an unlikely place for a class reunion. But for Captain George F. Smith and 1st Lieutenant Robert J. Hoffmeister the next year will see practical application of classroom instruction.

While attending St. Peters College in Jersey City, N.J., Hoffmeister was student of Smith in the school's ROTC program. Assigned as platoon leader in the 1st Air Cav Division, Hoffmeister learned that his new boss, the commander of Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Cav, was none other than his old prof, Captain Smith.

"I was Bob's instructor for Leadership Lab, Map Reading and Basic Combat Tactics," said Smith. "Now we are both realizing the fruits of our student-teacher relationship."

Although each man had a high regard for the other, neither thought that he would ever see the other man after the 1968 graduation.

"It's like so many people you meet throughout life," said Hoffmeister. "They impress you very much and it's unfortunate that you will never see them again. When I learned that I would be working with Captain Smith, I just couldn't believe it."

With the ivy walls replaced by thick bamboo, Vietnam will provide a rigorous test of classroom techniques and of the ability of the men to improvise on their own.

"I don't plan to fail this course," Hoffmeister said.

Arlene Charles, a young actress who toured Vietnam with Johnny Grant last summer, must have borrowed this shirt from a friend. What else could the "B" stand for? She's undoubtedly the best looking "Charley" we've seen in a long, long time.

Redlegs Build 'Mini-Astro'

By SP4 David Roberts

QUAN LOI - Houston has its Astro-dome and 1st Air Cavalrymen at Fire Support Base Vivian had their Mini-Astro.

What's a Mini-Astro? According to the men of Battery B, 1st Battalion, 21st Artillery, it's a "Super Shower."

"We started out building a shower but we wanted to make it just a bit different," Specialist Four Jack Hansen said. Hansen designed and supervised the building of the shower. The entire project took two weeks, 500 empty ammo boxes and a lot of ingenuity.

"It comes from 11 months of on the job training," Specialist Hansen said. "Almost everything on a fire support base is built from ammo boxes."

The shower itself was made from two 55-gallon drums and housed in the center of the large dome. Around the shower, an enclosed boardwalk, complete

with benches, provided a place for Skytroopers to change clothes.

The final touch was a coat of stain, made by mixing gasoline with tar paper that comes within the ammo boxes. "Mix it, then let it set in the sun for one hour

and you have light oak; two hours and you have mahogany," he said.

But in the airmobile 1st Cav you can't wait too long. Two weeks after the shower opened the firebase was closed. Hansen vowed to rebuild.

Ralliers Flee Taxation

By SGT Ronald J. Miller

FSB LEE - Disillusioned with heavy taxation and lack of food, a Montagnard village chief, his assistant and nine family members rallied to the Republic of Vietnam.

Six years of working for the NVA, turning over three of every five tons of rice produced, convinced the hamlet chief of Bu Lo that there must be a better life.

The 11 ralliers turned themselves in to the district chief of Duc Phoung Province where they were welcomed heartily, received food and

clothing and were given 9000 piasters for three weapons they turned in.

"They were warmly received by the villagers of Duc Phoung," said Specialist Four William Toland a member of the Psychological Operations (PSYOPS) team of 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry. "Everyone was glad that they made the decision to rally."

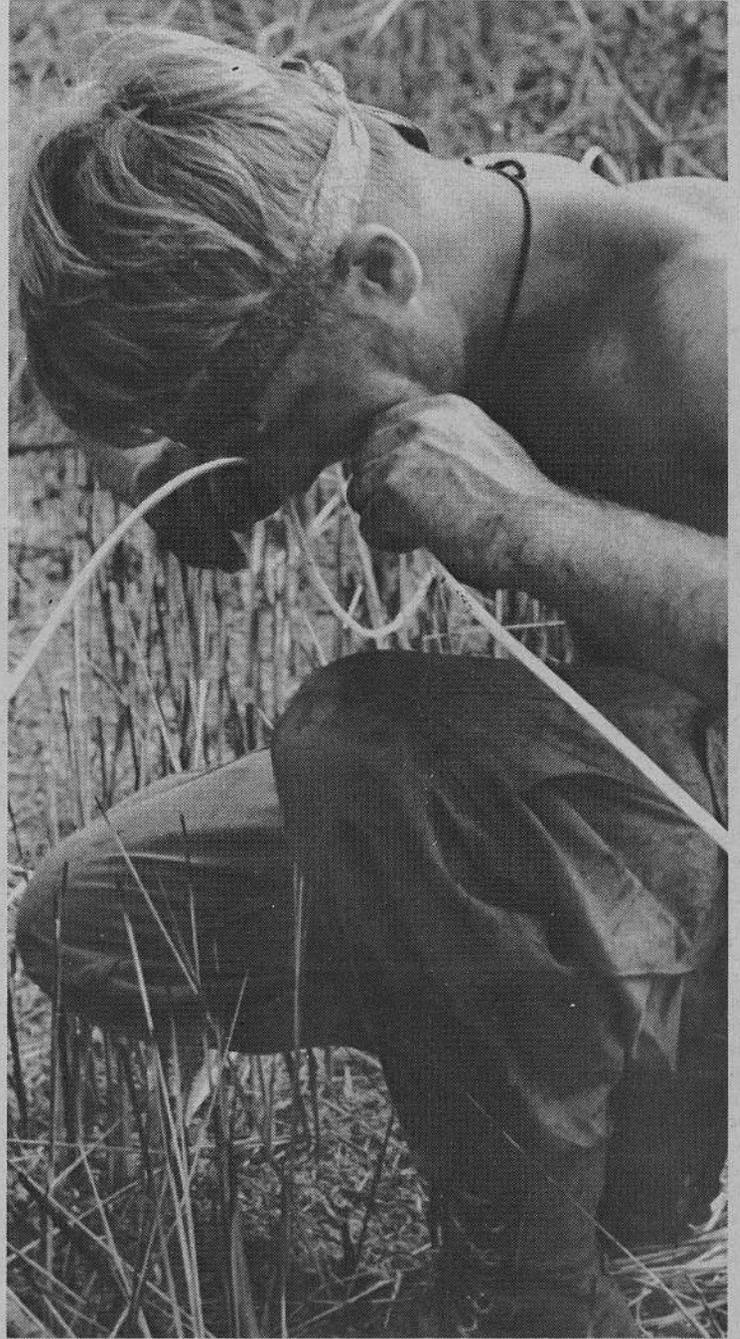
Happy with the decision he made, the hamlet chief said he had been influenced by the Cav's Chieu Hoi leaflets and tapes broadcast from low-flying PSYOPS helicopters.

Engineers Blast Treeline At Firebase Westphal

USA Photos by SP4 James McCabe

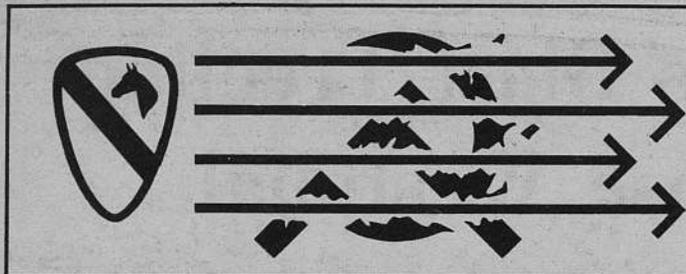


BLASTING LZs is one of the primary jobs of Company B, 8th Engineers. They recently cleared the treeline safely away from the perimeter of FSB Westphal with explosives. PFC Roland E. Rancourt (left) strung out the many feet of detonating cord attached to the explosives while Specialist Five Richard Dale, a handkerchief tied around his head to keep perspiration out of his eyes on the hot job, bit off a part of the cord (right) then attached it to some of the explosives (below).



BOOM. Artillerymen at FSB Westphal duck behind their howitzers on the shout, "Fire in the hole." Then the trees and brush disappear behind a cloud of dirt and smoke. Within a few days a new firebase springs up in the clearing.





ACTION OF THE WEEK

By SP4 Ron Merrill

In a hard-charging action on Feb. 12, ARVN Airborne units caught an NVA bunker security element in a vise that killed 21 and sent the rest scurrying to escape.

The action began when the 5th ARVN Airborne Bn., ARVN Airborne Division, decided to clear an area that the enemy was using as a base for harassing FSB Diana. The area was an 80 bunker complex two miles west of FSB Diana and 27 miles northeast of Tay Ninh in the AO the 3rd ARVN Airborne Bde. shares with the 1st Air Cav's 1st

Brigade.

The 5th Battalion commander, Major Nguyen Chi Hieu, had his 2nd Company serve as an anvil, moving to the north side of the complex to block the enemy's escape routes. The 4th Company moved into the complex from the southwest, with the goal of flushing the NVA out and driving them into the 2nd Company.

Major Hieu was with his 4th Company on the ground as it headed into the complex. So was Major Paul B. Morgan, an American combat assistant.

The company came under fire

from small arms and automatic weapons as it began its drive at 10:40 a.m., but that failed to slow down the paratroopers.

The three columns, one on each side and one in the center, drove into the complex across a 500 meter front. Preceding them was a wall of fire from air strikes. Every half hour the air strikes hit the area in front of the advancing 4th Company.

There was little the enemy could do in the face of such determination. Most broke and ran, only to be eliminated by deadly bursts from the 4th Company's M-16s. The few who managed to escape that hazard ran straight into the barrels of the 2nd Company.

ARVN and 1st Air Cavalry tube artillery, Aerial Rocket Artillery from the Cav's 2nd Bn., 20th Artillery and Hunter-Killer helicopter teams from Alpha Troop, 1st Sq., 9th Cav, gave added punch to the ARVN thrust.

By early afternoon the only NVA remaining in the complex were dead. The enemy had lost its haven to a devastating combination of ARVN Airborne troops and 1st Cav support.

Cats Member Returns For Final Curtain Call

By SP4 Ron Merrill

FSB JAMIE - Sergeant Bill Reed came back just once more before his DEROS, back to the 1st Air Cav's Fire Support Base Jamie.

Two months ago Reed, a squad leader for Company C, 2nd Bn., 7th Cav auditioned and won a spot on an in-country touring musical group, the "Nashville Cats," which has toured throughout Vietnam.

Wanting to see 'ole Jamie' and some of his friends just once more before he left country, Reed said, "I just raised enough hell down in Saigon about Jamie that they finally adjusted the group's schedule so we could get out here."

A veteran of 10 months in the field, Reed admits that he wished everybody could have done what he has and seen what he has in the last two months.

"But in a way I guess I feel a bit guilty about being able to do this," he added.

The Sergeant who traded his rucksack and M-16 for a guitar got off the noisy Chinook at Jamie and began straining his neck looking for people he had served with.

As he cleared the first bunker, Sergeant Peter Carello yelled out, "Hey, Bill, over here, over here."

When Reed left Charlie Company to go on the USO tour, Carello took over his squad. For 20 minutes before the band started entertaining the Skytroopers, Carello gave "his old boss" an instant replay of events of the last two months.

Reed listened carefully, told of his experiences, then exchanged addresses with several friends.

He wouldn't be back again.

Scouts Ignore Fire To Destroy 45 NVA

(Continued from Page 1.)

The day before the Scout action, helicopters were active elsewhere in Phuoc Long Province. NVA in khaki uniforms were loitering near bunkers and hootches four miles west of Bo Duc when they were spotted by a Hunter-Killer Team from Bravo Troop, 1st Sq., 9th Cav.

The helicopters whipped rockets and minigun bullets into the enemy positions. Artillery and air strikes finished the job. Seven NVA had been killed when the contact ended.

Early on the morning of the 16th, a 229th Helicopter Bn. Infant, a Huey equipped with special night vision equipment, detected enemy moving along a road 16 miles northwest of Song Be. AK-47s answered the bird's initial gun run. A second salvo of miniguns and rockets from Infant silenced the NVA's weapons, killing six enemy and causing secondary explosions.

Charlie Troop, 1st of the 9th helicopters killed five NVA northeast of Duc Phong on Feb. 19. The next day A Troop, 1st of the 9th eliminated five NVA in Tay Ninh Province.

The hardest fought ground action of the week was on Feb. 18. Enemy fire downed a Huey near the position of Alpha Company, 1st Bn., 12th Cav 23 miles north-northeast of Song Be. Alpha Company blasted their way through the enemy to secure the bird, then exchanged fire with the NVA for an hour and a half. Nine NVA were killed by Alpha Company's fire, while artillery cut down five more.

In addition to heavy casualties, the NVA in Phuoc Long Province suffered from slices into their supply system. On Feb. 15 Charlie Company, 1st Bn., 12th Cav captured 22,000 pounds of rice in 220 pound bags northeast of Duc Phong. In the same area the next day Charlie Company Skytroopers found 46 heavy duty bicycles.

Not far away three days later Ranger Team 35 encountered an enemy supply group moving down a trail. A quick firefight killed one NVA and scattered the rest. The enemy left behind eight bicycles and 1,500 pounds of rice.

Pointman Must Be 'Just Plain Sneaky'

By SP4 William K. Block, Jr.

TAY NINH - "You have to be just plain sneaky to be a pointman," said Sergeant Don Perkins of Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cav.

The pointman, the lead man in the company's column as it snakes its way through the jungle, must be "sneaky" enough to read the enemy's mind or at least his telltale signs.

He must find the enemy before they find him.

"You have to use common sense," said Specialist Four George Oviatt. "Any signs of fresh tracks, freshly cut trails or trees, booby traps, any unnatural mounds or holes - anything that might show recent enemy activity - has to be spotted and reported."

"You learn where to look for bunkers, but ambushes are harder to spot; you simply have to react quickly and a little luck never hurt."

The pointman walks at his own pace. He has to see everything at once and blaze a trail at the same time. He carries less on his back than other riflemen to enable him to cut his way through dense vegetation, a machete in one hand, his rifle in the other.

His job is perhaps the most taxing on the nerves of any job involved in the war effort. As long as he is up there on point, he can never relax. He has a whole company depending on him.

"It's hard to stay on the azimuth you're given," said Specialist Four Charles Byers. "You have to pick out a reference point, usually a tree."

Sounds are also important, of course. The noise of the company moving makes it difficult to hear the enemy to the front. The pointman has to designate between weapons being cocked, trees falling, or even frightened animals or birds.

Sometimes he will go 50 to 100 meters and then suddenly and for no apparent reason just stop, wait, look and listen.

Now and then a sign of danger will be spelled out for the pointman. Alpha Company found one recently posted on a tree next to a trail leading into a bunker complex. Translated from Vietnamese by a Kit Carson Scout, the sign read, "To search is to die."

The pointman, undismayed, continued on. The men who died were five NVA on the same trail the following day.



Specialist Four H.B. Rae of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry is all concentration as he searches the jungle ahead for signs of the enemy, hardly noticing the inconveniences of crossing a small stream northeast of Tay Ninh. Cav pointmen have the vital job of keeping their eyes and ears open and their company alive.

(USA Photo by SP4 Bob Borchester)