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PLEIKU, VIETNAM

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Philippe Saunier, Bravo Co., 2/35th Inf, 1965-67

Has kept this edition of the "Bronco Bugle" safely tucked away in his scrapbook for over 30 years. Thank you Philippe for sharing these articles with us.

This "Bugle" edition closely followed the "Battle of LZ 10 Alpha."

**3RD BRIGADE
T.F. BLASTS
NVA REGIMENTS**

Many men of the 3rd Brigade Task Force have spent a few days they will never forget on Operation "Paul Revere", southwest of Pleiku.

These men, primarily of the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 35th Infantry, were caught in the middle of the toughest battles yet fought by men yet of the "Bronco" Brigade, and have made a tremendous show of toughness typical of the 3rd Brigade soldiers.

On Saturday (May 28), Company B of the "Cacti Blue" Battalion was heli-lifted into an LZ (Landing zone) south of Plei Djereng.

Upon entering the LZ, they immediately came under small arms fire from an NVA (North Vietnamese Army) force in the heavily wooded area around the 80 by 150 meter landing zone.

The soldiers of "Bravo" Company were engaged in a bitter fire-fight with the elements of the 33rd NVA regiment for the entire day. The subsequently captured five 12.7mm anti-aircraft weapons, the first to be captured by any brigade element.

That afternoon, A Company, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry was brought in 'to support "Bravo" Company.

When both companies were in the LZ, they were again hit by an estimated reinforced rifle company in at least three direct assaults by the NVA force on the east side of the LZ.

Both B Company of the 2nd Battalion "Cacti Blue and Company A of the "Cacti Green" Battalion were hit during the night of the 28th by estimated rifle company assaults and 82mm mortar fire.

The following morning, Brigadier General Glenn D. Walker, the brigade commanding general, alerted the 1st Battalion to send one more company to reinforce the brigade's elements at the LZ.

Company C was selected to be the reinforcing unit to be committed on the 29th.

However, while forming up for the air assault they were informed that the LZ was once again under attack.

When Company C finally landed in the landing zone, the small task force, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Robert Kingston, set up a tight perimeter.

Again that night, there was heavy action on the north and northeastern side of the LZ.

The next morning, patrols were put out to the east. During the morning, A Company was once again in heavy contact.

All during the night of the 30th, the units had sporadic mortar and small arms fire on their location, as well as probing along most of the perimeter.

On the morning of the 31st, unit patrols were sent out several thousand meters on search and destroy sweeps and became heavily engaged with elements of the 32nd and 33rd NVA Regiments in the area north and northeast of the LZ.

Also during the morning, the rest of the 1st 35th was brought into the same LZ.

The 2nd Battalion, 9th Artillery's Battery C sent in two 105mm howitzers to support the infantry units' activities.

The units have uncovered base areas and other support activities the enemy had in the area around the landing zone.

Since Tuesday, the NVA have not stood to fight in any large force. There has been sporadic contact with small units or just individuals trying to fight to the end.

The "Bronco" Brigade elements are now in the process of locating the NVA elements and his caches of supplies. When they are found, the units carry back what they can and the rest is destroyed.

At press time, the total NVA killed during the operation stood at more than 300 by body count, and the brigade units had captured nearly 20 NVA soldiers.

Many weapons, both crew-served and small arms, have been recovered from the NVA during the battles. Included in those weapons were five 12.7mm antiaircraft weapons, a 50 calibre machine gun, a light machinegun, and an 82mm mortar tube.

Other weapons were 6.72 heavy machine guns, 6.72 light machineguns, 6.72 automatic rifles, SKS (7.62) Russian rifles, and assault weapons, both Russian and Chinese made.

Significant items captured were two powerful Chinese radio transceivers, possibly the first ever captured in Vietnam.

Additionally, thousands of rounds of small arms ammunition and hundreds of hand grenades were recovered from bodies of NVA soldiers.

Lieutenant Colonel Philip Feir, the "Cacti Blue" commander was asked how he felt about the action of his "Bravo" Company. He said, "I can only call it a magnificent performance. I, and everyone else, am very, very proud of B Company."

Captain Anthony Bisantz, the commander of A Company, 1st Battalion, 35th, when asked the same question of his company, summed up his feelings with just one word: "Superb!"

Quick Action = Captured Weapons

The 3rd Brigade Task Force of the 25th Infantry Division is now the proud owner of five North Vietnamese anti-aircraft guns thanks to the quick actions of B Company, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry.

The weapons captured on Operation "Paul Revere" currently underway southwest of Pleiku, almost stayed with their original owners.

The company was airlifted into a landing zone which turned out to be a hornet's nest. Before the choppers could set down, the first wave received heavy enemy fire. B Company returned their fire and immediately counterattacked the enemy stronghold.

The battalion commander, Lt. Col. Philip Feir had this assessment of the combat assault, "We feel very fortunate to have gotten them (the assault force) into the LZ at all because we rounded up five 12.7mm anti-aircraft weapons in the LZ. As a matter of fact, we were able to get into those position areas in two cases before the NVA soldiers could get into the weapons areas themselves."

Colonel Feir pointed out that these were the first anti-aircraft weapons that the 3rd Brigade Task Force has captured. He had this to say about how his men reacted, "I'm absolutely thrilled with the tremendous performance they put on out there against an overwhelming enemy force."

"MIGHTY NINTH" HAS CHARGED BATTERY

The 2nd Battalion, 9th Artillery, boasts of one of the most charged up batteries in Vietnam.

During the 25th Infantry Division's 3rd Brigade Task Force's recent heavy contact with North Vietnamese Army (NVA) units, two Infantry companies needed additional firepower. As a result, A Battery of the "Mighty Ninth" was brought into the action.

During one hectic afternoon and night they expended more than 500 rounds. Because of the heavy enemy fire coming in on the infantry companies, the battery fired for 24 hours without a break. All the while, small arms and mortar fire were falling on the battery. Most of the men didn't sleep for some 48 hours.

The action, took place on Operation "Paul Revere" currently underway southwest of Pleiku. First Lieutenant Richard Higgins, the battery executive officer, had this praise for his men: "It really made you proud to see the men in this battery because they were shooting their

howitzers to save those other men (infantrymen) at the same time the mortar rounds were landing in this area."

Bde. Doctors "FINEST"

"Dustoff coming in!" The radio call spurs the men of Company B, 25th Medical Battalion, of the 25th Infantry Division's 3rd Brigade Task Force into action.

"Dustoff" is the code name for helicopter evacuation of sick and wounded personnel of the ground forces to the brigade's forward hospital.

When "Dustoff" is heard, the doctors and enlisted assistants scurry about to prepare for receiving patients.

On the brigade's present Operation "Paul Revere," southwest of Pleiku, the medical company was able to show its efficiency in treating injured personnel of the brigade.

On Saturday, elements of the task force met heavy contact with what they know to have been a North Vietnamese regiment. Naturally, there were some friendly casualties.

"Every wounded man who reached our hospital alive, reached the next higher echelon alive, thanks to the finest doctors I have ever worked with," said Doctor (Captain) William Gardner, the "Bronco" Brigade surgeon.

All patients suffering head or eye injuries were immediately evacuated to Pleiku or Qui Nhon. Other patients requiring major surgery are evacuated to either Pleiku or An Khe, then sent off to Qui Nhon to recuperate.

"A seriously wounded man can be on an operating table in Pleiku within a half hour after he reaches us," stated Doctor (Captain) Edward Denison, the B Company commander.

"Although we have full surgical facilities, we don't use them unless it is a dire emergency." Doctor Gardner pointed out.

Holding an average of 30-45 patients a day, the doctors treat anything from a punji stake wound to gunshot wounds to fevers.

"We hold all patients we feel we can get back to duty within a week. All others we evacuate," Doctor Denison said.

The doctors showed great respect for the "Dustoff pilots and medics.

"They have lost two choppers during this operation while attempting to extract wounded soldiers from the battle areas," Doctor Gardner emphasized. "They also had a medic shot in both legs."

The "Dustoff" unit supporting the 3rd Brigade Task Force is the Pleiku Platoon of the 498th Helicopter Air Ambulance Company.

"This 'Dustoff' system is the major reason that this war has such a low mortality rate. Lower than any other war."

There is less than 2% mortality after the casualty reaches the first medical facility," Doctor Gardner pointed out.

The helicopter evacuation is not the only reason for the low mortality rate, however, the speed with which the doctors get the patient's wound stabilized is also very important.

"We just get the patients in and out as quick as we can, that's about it," Doctor Denison explained.

The soldiers of the 3rd Brigade can feel secure in the fact that they are in the best of hands with the doctors of the "Bronco" Brigade.

"BRANCOS" MAKE NEW FRIENDS

The village of Plei Jong Le has now got a water system that is the showpiece of the district thanks to the assistance of the civil affairs team of the 25th Infantry Division's 3rd Brigade Task Force, which is now conducting Operation "Paul Revere" southwest of Pleiku.

It all began with a sick call the civic action team was making in the village a few days ago.

The members of the team were treating the sick when they noticed a woman getting water from an underground stream through a single, small bamboo reed.

Talks with the village chief and residents of the village that afternoon revealed all wanted a new water system but did not know how to go about improving the old method.

With the advice of the civil affairs team, three four foot long pipes supplied by the U.S. agency for International Development, and the enthusiasm and hard work of the villagers themselves, a new spillway was constructed. The spillway increased the volume of water that could be obtained from the stream many, many times.

The civil affairs team, with this one act of improving the Montagnards' welfare, has gained the 3rd Brigade Task Force, as well as other American forces operating in the area, a large group of friends.

BUGLE READERS GET A LOT MORE THAT OTHER PEOPLE MISS!!

GOLDEN DRAGON FOR 1/14

Most members of the 3rd Brigade Task Force of the 25th Infantry Division don't realize it, but they have a "Golden Dragon" in their midst. The "Golden Dragon" is a four foot long iguana caught by a man of B Company, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry currently on operation "Paul Revere," southwest of Pleiku.

When the men, part of a surveillance post from the company's 3rd platoon, saw the animal they figured it would make a good mascot for the "Golden Dragon" battalion.

The commanding officer of B Company, Captain Richard Barry, agreed with his man and presented the animal to the battalion commander Lt. Col. Gilbert Procter. The new found

dragon reminded the Colonel of a cartoon character that had appeared in the battalion newspaper and he named it "Danny Dragon."

"Danny" now resides near the battalion command post tied to a nearby tree by a rope attached to his harness. The men of the battalion, wanting nothing but the best for their new mascot, built a hootch for it.

There are, however, problems that must be dealt with when an iguana is your mascot. Within a few days after "Danny" arrived at his new home several men had to spend the better part of an afternoon trying to extract him from the crank case of a jeep where he had become lodged. The 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry's "Golden Dragon" now prefers to stay near his hootch.

ARMOR UNITS HONORED BY ARVN

Two armor units of the 3rd Brigade task force, 25th Infantry Division, were presented black berets and made honorary members of ARVN (Army, Republic of Vietnam) armor at a Vietnamese Armor Day ceremony held at a staging area about ten miles west of Pleiku, Sunday (May 29).

The berets were presented to representatives of the 1st Battalion, 69th Armor, and "C" Troop, 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry, by Major General Vinh Loc, ARVN II Corps Tactical Zone commander, during the rain-soaked ceremony.

Lieutenant Colonel R. J. Fairfield, Jr., the "Black Panther" (69th) Battalion commander also received a plaque from the ARVN 3rd Armored Cavalry Squadron, Lieutenant Colonel N. T. Luat, on behalf of the men of his unit.

Although the Vietnamese Armor Day is May 27, the ceremonies had to be postponed because of operational commitments of both units. The "Black Panthers" of the 69th Armor and the men of "C" Troop are currently participating in Operation "Paul Revere."

In addition to the honoring of the 3rd Brigade armor elements, General Vinh Loc awarded decorations and promotions to nearly 35 Vietnamese soldiers for actions during a recent operation in which they took part.

After the ceremonies were over, the participants and guest feasted on beef, pork, and goat, specially prepared for the buffet-style luncheon.

As soon as the festivities were over, the American armor soldiers (the first to operate in the Vietnamese central highlands) were on their way back to battle "Charlie" on Operation "Paul Revere."

The ARVN soldiers also found themselves committed on another operation less than three hours later.

Calling All Agents!

Shades of James Bond! Has anyone seen Secret Agent 001 or 002? If you do, they are agents for the 25th Infantry Division's 3rd Brigade Task Force currently conducting Operation "Paul Revere," southwest of Pleiku.

Two Montagnard villagers, who recently came into the brigade's forward command post location, voluntarily gave information concerning both the North Vietnamese forces and Viet Cong activities in the area.

As rewards, the village chief and his cohort were given food, clothing, and cards which identify them as "Secret Agent 001" and "Secret Agent 002."

To identify the two non by name or village would compromise their effectiveness to the "Bronco" Brigade, so they must remain anonymous.

The brigade hopes to be even more effective against the Viet Cong with this employment of the sophisticated techniques of "James Bond."

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