



WELCOME TO "A WALK WITH THE 35TH"



[Back to History Index](#) | [35th Infantry Regiment ASSN Home](#) | [Contact](#)

Various News Articles From 1966 to 1970

'Operation Blue Light' Moves Tropic Lightning

Reprinted from The AIR Division Advisor (RVN) January 7, 1966.

The Air Force's "Operation Blue Light," a massive airlift of elements of the Army's 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division from Hawaii, is now beginning its second week.

Military Airlift Command (MAC), formerly known as the Military Air Transport Service (MATS), is carrying out the airlift of some 3,000 soldiers and 3,200 tons of cargo. This troop airlift, the longest in war times, began Dec. 24, when an advanced party of more than 100 members of the 3rd Brigade and 103 tons of equipment arrived at the Pleiku air base in the central mountain region, 240 miles northeast of Saigon.

Air Force Lt. Col. Russell J. Revel of Hutchinson, Kan., MAC airlift commander here, supervised the unloading of nearly 50 tons vehicles and 75 troops from the time the planes landed.

Colonel Revel is assigned to MAC's 22nd Air Transport Squadron.

The Air Force's C-133 jet turboprop and the C-141 jet transport are the primary air-craft being used in "Operation Blue Light." These aircraft are backed up by C-124 Globe-masters and C-130 Hercules transports.

More than 26 aircraft are involved in the operation. Throughout the airlift, a C-133 will be landing at Pleiku nearly every four hours, while the C-141s will touch down about every 10 hours.

Flying more than 6,000 miles across the Pacific from Hickam AFB, Hawaii, all airline crews make two stops enroute to Pleiku. The first stop for both the C-133 and C-141 crews is Wake Island.

From that stopover, the C-133 crews go to Kadema AB, Okinawa, and the C-141 crews fly to Clark AFB, Philippine Islands. The flight time, including the stopovers, is about 30 hours for the C-133 crews and 18 hours for the C-141 crews.

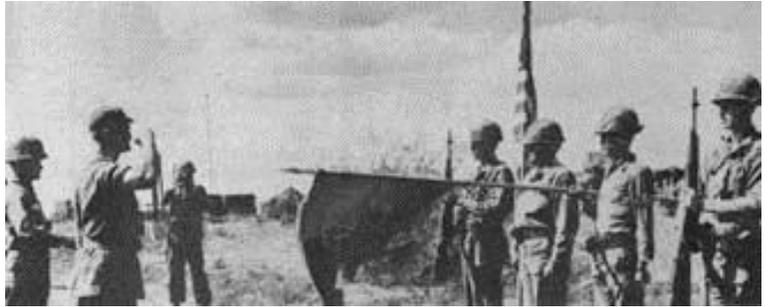
Colonel Revel explained that the stopovers are for refueling and servicing of the aircraft to enable them to have a quick turnaround time in the combat area. While at Pleiku, the air-craft engines are kept in operation during an average 25-minute ground time.

Some 270 men from MAC units are directly involved in "Operation Blue Light." Also, there are about 80 men from other major commands participating in the airlift. Most of the airlift command men and aircraft come from units in MAC's Western Transport Air Force (WESTAF) with backup support provided by the Eastern Transport Air Force (EASTAF).

General Westmoreland Visits Tropic Lightning - Pleiku



Gen. Westmoreland fires the first artillery round to be sent off by the 25th Inf. Div. Artillery in combat zone since the Korean War.



General Westmoreland salutes the national colors and the 25th Inf. Div.'s 3rd Brigade flag during his visit to the brigade area near Pleiku. To General Westmoreland's left is col. Everette A. Stoutner, the brigade commander.

PLEIKU, VIET-NAM—The first round of artillery fired by a Tropic Lightning unit in a combat zone since Korea was sent off by the highest ranking American military leader in Viet-Nam, Gen. William C. Westmoreland, during his recent tour of the 25th Inf. Div. 3rd Brigade area near Pleiku.

The grey-haired general landed in the brigade area by helicopter with a three-helicopter escort. Col. Everette A. Stoutner, 3rd Bde commander, escorted the general throughout his tour.

After a brief meeting with the brigade staff, General Westmoreland and his party were escorted to the 2/9th Arty area where the general fired the first artillery round to be sent off by the 25th Inf. Div. in Viet-Nam.



Col. Everette A. Stoutner, commanding officer, 3rd Bde., presents two pineapples from Hawaii to general Westmoreland during the general's visit to the brigade.



General Westmoreland autographs the first artillery round to be fired in a combat zone by Tropic Lightning artillery since the Korean War.

The Viet-Nam commander told the soldiers of the "Mighty Ninth" that he was very happy to have them here, as well as the other men of the 3rd brigade.

"You men have a great reputation carried over from World War II and Korea and I am sure you will live

up to it here in Viet-Nam," General Westmoreland told them.

"During my visits to Honolulu for conferences, my friends in the 25th Division would tell me that they felt kind of bad not being in this (war) over here. So when the need arose for troops in this area, I specifically asked for a brigade from the 25th Division to secure the Pleiku area.

"Now with you men here, I feel very secure," the general added.

"I kind of wish that the North Vietnamese would send a couple of PAVN divisions down here so you could chew them up," he closed.



Lt. Col. Edward F. Callanan (right kneeling), commanding officer, 1st Bn., 35th Inf., hands the first promotion of the 3rd Bde in Viet-Nam to SSgt. Charles E. Norris.



General Westmoreland talks to the men of C Btry, 2nd BN., 9th Arty.

With that, the general and his party went to the 1/35th Inf. command post where the American Forces in Viet-Nam commander met Lt. Col. Edward F. Callanan, the "Cacti Green" commander and the 1st Bn. staff.

When he arrived at the chopper pad, Colonel Stoutner presented the four-star general with two fresh Hawaiian pineapples, hand carried from Honolulu specifically for that purpose.

"Those are two of the largest pineapples I have ever seen," General Westmoreland stated, "thank you very much Colonel Stoutner.

Tropic Lightning News - 19 Jan 1966

3d Bde, 25th Infantry First VN Operation

PLEIKU, (25th INF-IO)—The 25th Infantry Division's 3rd Brigade Task Force, located near this provincial capital in the central highlands of Vietnam, has completed its first operation since entering Vietnam.

Battery C, 2nd Battalion, 9th Artillery, under the command of Cpt. John Oliver, was given the mission of positioning itself some 7500 meters to the front of the outer perimeter of the brigade to conduct harassment fire into the mountains nearby.

Assigned to provide security for this 105mm howitzer battery was Company A, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry, under the command of Capt. Anthony Bisantz.

The small task force departed its area at 9 a.m., January 19, and arrived at the destination an hour later.

The unit utilized infiltration route techniques and created a circular perimeter around its final position. The 1st platoon covered the right flank, the 2nd the rear, while the 3rd platoon watched the (left) right flank. The 105mm howitzer created the front of the perimeter.

The Infantry company set out 81mm mortars and established its barrage. The mortars and the artillery pieces conducted harassment fire throughout the night.

Before the firing started, however, Captain Bisantz and an interpreter entered a village near their position, to explain to the village chief and his people what they would be hearing during the night and why the small force was so near.

The village chief reported to the infantry company commander that his village is hit by the Viet Cong nearly every night. He gave Captain Bisantz the location of the two suspected VC groups.

This information was in turn given to the battalion intelligence officer.

After the completion of the task force's mission, the motorized elements returned to the brigade area.

Honolulu Advertiser – Late Feb 1966

Busy Day for Pleiku

By BOB JONES Advertiser Military Reporter

PLEIKU—About 15 soldiers from the 25th Infantry Division were sitting in the candle-lit bar in downtown Pleiku when the Vietnamese Army youngster hauled out a grenade and pulled the pin.

"I will blow up this whole place," he said in Vietnamese, still holding onto the handle which activates the eight-second detonator on the little green bomb.

The Schofield Barracks soldiers of the 3rd Brigade Task Force didn't understand any Vietnamese, but they didn't have any trouble interpreting the drunken soldier's meaning.

Soldiers stampeded out the front and back doors, and the place was cleared in about three seconds. By that time, one of the girls in the bar had persuaded the Vietnamese to put the pin back in the grenade and everything returned to normal.

THAT, AND assorted little training accidents, is about all the excitement the Schofield Barracks soldiers are seeing here for the moment. Brigade medical teams reported that three soldiers have been shot accidentally, but brigade spokesmen so far have not released the soldiers' names.

Also, five men were hurt— one suffering a broken collarbone—when their jeep hit a rut and flipped over.

THE MEN are training for, the day when they will go out as combat assault teams, reportedly against regular North Vietnamese battalions which intelligence has pinpointed in the Pleiku area.

When they do move, they will be flown into battle by many former 25th Aviation Division pilots who have been flying with the 1st Cavalry Division (Air Mobile) since last fall.

Thirty-eight of the division's best-trained pilots were shipped over to Viet Nam last September and October to fill the flying needs of the new cavalry unit which uses armed UH-1 helicopters to land assault troops.

THERE WAS a movement of 24 pilots in September and 14 in October, which stripped the division of most of its seasoned chopper pilots.

Among the former Schofield men who now will be flying with the 170th Aviation Company here are: Capts. Art Finch, Pat Doyle, Dave Larcomb, Bill Snyder and Marty Reilly.

They are all part of the 52nd Aviation Battalion, which is supporting the Hawaii Brigade here with armed helicopters.

ON JAN. 17, the 1st Battalion of the 14th Infantry Regiment (Golden Dragons) came ashore at Cam Ranh Bay and was air shipped to the brigade position here north of the vital Pleiku airfield.

The 2nd Battalion of the unit is still at Schofield. Most of the other elements of the brigade came directly from Hawaii to Pleiku by Cross-Pacific airlift of men and equipment by the Military Airlift Command, formerly MATS. The arrival of the 3200 US troops has heightened commercial activity in the town of Pleiku, which is made up of Vietnamese and indigenous tribespeople called Montagnards.

WICKER baskets which once sold for as little 80 piastres (about 75 cents) now are up to \$1.80. Storekeepers charge U.S. soldiers as much as 75 cents, too, for a bottle of beer which normally costs 20 cents.

The Vietnamese Army officers' club downtown has a ballroom where only a few Vietnamese are seen since all the Americans came to town. Now GIs dance the twist and samba there with Vietnamese hostesses who have taken to wearing Western dresses and skirts rather than the traditional ao dai costumes.

A DOZEN bars catering to the GI have sprung up in what were once houses. There is no electricity in most of them, and the only light comes from half a dozen candles around the room.

The bars have wire mesh over the windows and doors to prevent someone tossing a grenade in from out on the street, and the soldiers are told to go in town only in pairs or groups, never alone.

Curfew downtown for all U.S. troops is 11 p.m. There are no taxis in Pleiku, but little Lambretta motor-scooters with frames mounted on the back each haul about six soldiers back to the base. Sometimes, the GIs have to get out and help push the straining "taxi" up the stretch of hill toward Camp Holloway.

PLEIKU IS a dirty, town. Sewage sits in open ditches, and most of the GIs who eat and drink downtown eventually come down with a touch of diarrhea. But the people are friendly, and the red patches of Hawaii's "Tropic Lightning" division have come to mean prosperity to them.

Sometimes in small, almost unnoticeable ways, troops from Hawaii are making themselves some friends.

Sunday was such a day. Warrant Officers Ray Watson and Paul Lancy were sitting at a downtown bar sipping a beer.

EVERYONE WAS feeling pretty morose. In came an 8-year-old Vietnamese girl the men had met downtown earlier that day when she sold them some peanuts on the street.

"She's the cutest thing I've ever seen," Watson said. "Just like my own little girl."

Watson and Lancy accompanied the little girl, Phuong, down the street to a market and outfitted her with a new pair of the two-piece pajamas many Vietnamese children wear. It cost them only \$1.80.

Since then, the kids, have learned to flock around the "Tropic Lightning" troops when they come to town. They've got the message that these hard combat soldiers have an incurable soft spot for kids who remind them of their own youngsters back home.

The Sunday Star Bulletin & Advertiser – 3 April 1966

Everyone Got Sore When They Killed Sgt. Spears

By **BOB JONES** Advertiser Military Writer

BAN BRIENG, Viet Nam—Everybody says that Sgt. Benjamin G. Spears was a great guy to have in the outfit and a scrappy little jungle fighter with an M-16 rifle.

He was going to come back to Honolulu and marry his girlfriend as soon as he could hang up the camouflaged fatigues that he wore with the reconnaissance platoon of the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry (Cacti).

That made everyone twice as sore when a North Vietnamese infantryman killed Spears with a burst from an old Thompson sub-machine gun on a mountain trail near here.

SO SORE, in fact, that they went to some unusual lengths to kill the Vietnamese and to recover Spears' body at a time when it looked like the platoon was going to be lucky to get out of there with only one dead.



Note: Sgt Knepper was later KIA 24 June 1966

S/Sgt Damien K. Kaaihue, 29, of Lahaina, was with Spears. So were two other Hawaii GIs attached to the flank squad: S/Sgt Sergio T. Gatpatan and Sgt. Warren Knepper, 23, of Hawaii. (addresses deleted)

"We'd just cleared a village and were heading to the landing zone where the helicopters were going to pick us up," Kaaihue said. "It was about 10:30 in the morning and sudden] we ran smack into those two PAVN (North Vietnamese) crossing the trail and going down to get water.

"THEY TURNED around and ran like bell. One was faster than the other, but I fired my M-79 (grenade launcher) and got the one. The other got away in the jungle.

"I yelled to the platoon sergeant that the guy was coming his way, but he couldn't find him.

"It turned out he had a buddy who had Stayed behind with their packs. They had dug into a Montagnard grave because it was soft dirt and made a foxhole out of it.

"Then they pinned down the platoon with fire from those damn machineguns. We couldn't see them to fire back.

"SGT SPEARS came over to where we were. We were going to try and work our way around their position. I turned and yelled to the guy on my right and when I looked back, Spears wasn't there.

"Then I saw him. He was laying on the ground and had been hard to see because of his camouflage fatigues. The first shot had got him right through the head.

"I crawled over and dragged him behind a log, but the Thompsons just cut right through the dead log and they hit Spears again.

"I WANTED to get him back, but I couldn't. The bullets were hitting right behind my heels as it was and so I just played dead for a while until I could crawl out of there under some protective fire.

"Capt. John Fielding, the battalion Intelligence officer, asked me if I was sure Spears was dead and I said yes. He said we'd better get out of there.

"But that's when we decided we had to get Spears out, too. We were going to call in an air strike all over the area, but we figured that would get Spears' body too..

SO ONE of the guys went up and marked the place where the PAVN were dug in with a smoke bomb, and then we called in the air.

"The first bomb run by the A-1s (Skyraiders) landed right on the spot and got both PAVN right in their hole. And they didn't even touch Spears. So we dragged him out and just left the PAVN there."

SPEARS AND Kaaihue had been over here last at Vinh Long, as shotgun riders on U.S. helicopters. They had hoped to get back home together, too.

Kaaihue takes it all philosophically. Some of his other shotgun buddies have been killed here, too.

"Only about nine months to go over here," he said as we talked about the war and about dead friends under the shade of a tree.

"But like a pregnant woman who's going to have a baby, you feel that's a long wait."

The Army Reporter – 29 April 1966

Broncos Return to Base After Weeks In The Field

PLEIKU, (25th INF DIVIO) — After almost seven continuous, dusty weeks of combat operations, the "Broncos," 25th Infantry Division's 3rd Brigade, have returned to their Pleiku base camp.

Following a massive airlift of most of the brigade south to Ban Me Thuot on February 25th, the men of the brigade fought to the north and west on operation Garfield.

Garfield ended on March 24th. At that point the brigade's base was located at Buon Brieng, a small Montagnard outpost 60 miles north of Ban Me Thuot.

Without a break, the "Broncos" linked up with the 1st Cavalry Division for operation Lincoln on March 25th. The "Tropic Lightning" soldiers continued to strike at the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese.

On March 31st, the brigade again shifted its base north. The new base of operations was a Special Forces camp, 100 miles northwest of Buon Brieng, at Duc Co, five miles from the Cambodian border.

The moves from Ban Me Thuot to Buon Brieng to Duc Co were made by road. This was the first time highway 14, the north-south route through central Vietnam, had been opened by US Forces.

During the two consecutive operations the "Broncos" posted an impressive record of communist harassment.

On operation Garfield the brigade accounted for 103 North Vietnamese and eight Viet Cong killed. Air and artillery strikes in support of brigade operations accounted for another twenty North Vietnamese killed.

Twelve Viet Cong were captured, and 78 suspects were also detained by the brigade.

The brigade posted one of the highest captured weapons-to-enemy killed ratios to date in the war. A total of 65 weapons were taken, including 47 small arms, 16 automatic weapons, one American M-79 grenade launcher, and one 75mm recoilless rifle.

Large quantities of ammunition were captured during Garfield. This included 102 hand grenades, 38 B 40 rockets, 1200 12.7mm rounds, 27,300 small arms rounds, and 3 Claymore-type mines.

A complete field hospital was also captured by an element of the brigade. The find resulted in over 100 pounds of drugs and a large assortment of surgical instruments captured.

A total of 400 uniforms, 234 rucksacks, 11 telephones, a switchboard, and 150 pounds of documents and photographs were also captured. Three hundred enemy structures were destroyed.

After Lincoln, Colonel Everette A. Stoutner, the 3rd Brigade Commander said, "I think the greatest benefit to us on this operation was the fine experience we gained working with the battle-tested 1st Cavalry Division."

The Army Reporter – 29 April 1966

52nd Avn. Supports Tropic Lightning

DUC CO, (25th INF-IO)---Sitting on the apron of this small Special Forces camp are many UH-1 "Huey" helicopters of the 52nd Aviation Battalion which are being used to support the 25th Infantry Division's 3rd Brigade.

The 52nd Battalion's choppers helilift units ranging from sections to a battalion of infantry or more.

On combat assaults, the infantry unit boards the choppers and heads for a landing zone (LZ) which has been "prepped" by Air Force strafing or bombing, artillery fire, or by armed "gun" helicopters.

The "prepping of an LZ is usually done by the Air Force jets or by 105mm howitzer fire from the "Bronco" Brigade's 2nd Battalion, 9th Artillery. However, the proposed LZ might be out of artillery range and there might not be any aircraft available from the Air Force. In this case, the battalion's "gun ships" are called upon to prepare the zone for the infantry element.

Once the choppers set down and the troops are off-loaded, the "Hueys" head for home.

Meanwhile, the word "dustoff" might be heard on one of the radios. This means someone has been wounded and must be evacuated to the hospital at the brigade's command post. This type of mission often means that the time taken in retrieving the wounded man could mean the difference between life and death.

Using a different type of helicopter, the CH-47 "Chinook," the 52nd has heli-lifted the 105mm howitzers of the "Mighty Ninth Artillery into inaccessible terrain on several occasions so that they could readily support the infantry elements on the operation.

Another mission the aviation battalion is called upon to do is aerial observation.

Using small, single-engine planes of the "Piper Cub" variety, the pilot and one passenger head for the wild blue yonder to see if they can spot any enemy troops or emplacements. Many times they do, and almost always these sightings are taken under fire by artillery, Air Force jets or by friendly troops on the ground. These small aircraft provide an "eye in the sky" for the brigade commander and the battalion commanders.

At the forward command post of A Company, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry, there is now a landing zone.

When the helicopter pilots were given the job of re-supplying the forward company of the "Cacti Green" Battalion, they would have to take the supplies in by slinging them in nets and dropping them in, literally, from a height of 80 to 100 feet, because of the tall trees that covered the area. The answer was to cut down some of the trees.

The infantry company, along with some engineers from D Company, 65th Engineer Battalion, cut down trees and used explosives to blow up the tree stumps.

Then they built a "crib" out of logs to allow the helicopters to land. The landing is still a bit tricky.

Tropic Lightning News – 29 April 1966

3rd Brigade Fetes Montagnards

Bearing gifts of soap and candy, members of 3rd Brigade recently moved into Dak Ri Lang, a remote Montagnard village about 65 miles northwest of Pleiku, to show the villagers there how Americans battle the other war.

Based five miles east of the village on operation Longfellow, the reconnaissance platoon from Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry, mounted, their gun jeeps for the trip.

Other jeeps from the battalion carried not guns but supplies for the villagers. One bore the cases of soap and candies contributed by Zonta International Club, of Meriden, Conn., while another was laden with medical supplies.

After a 20-minute ride, the group pulled up outside the village. Security guards moved into position and Captain John F. Field, battalion intelligence officer, from Cromwell, Conn., entered the village.

Battalion Surgeon Captain Jack P. Baldwin and his assistants immediately set up shop. Through interpreters, they explained they were there to help the sick and diseased Villagers. In an hour, the medics had treated more than 30 villagers, who were suffering with anything from infected sores to mild pneumonia. Treatment ranged from swabbing with soap solution to massive doses of penicillin.

PFC Joseph H. Peavey, of Bangor, Me., and Specialist Five Alford B. Childres, whose family is living in Korea during his tour in Vietnam, handed out vitamin pills to the crowd.



Meanwhile, Capt. Fielding asked his interpreters to have the village chiefs gather the rest of the more than 350 Montagnards in the village square, where he distributed gifts of soap and candy to the assembled villagers.

According to Capt. Baldwin, the disease and infection rate in the village would be halved if the people had soap available and used it regularly.

Cpt John Fielding handing out candy to Montagnard villagers

Stars and Stripes

6 March 1967

1/35TH LIEUTENANT WINS SILVER STAR

CU CHI - 1st Lt. William H. Dalehite, of the 1st Bn., 35th Inf., "Cacti-Green" was presented the Silver Star by Maj. Gen. John Norton, commander of the 1st Air Cav. Div., at an awards ceremony held at the battalion's forward command post last week. The Army's third highest award for valor was awarded Lt. Dalehite for heroism while serving with the Cacti Green on Operation "Paul Revere IV" in the mountainous regions near the Cambodian border. While operating on a search and destroy mission, Lt. Dalehite immediately organized, maintained and directed an assault on the enemy. In order to properly organize his assault, he exposed himself to the heavy automatic rifle fire from the trees to his front and from the bunkers. Discovering that two of his men were wounded and lying in an exposed position, Lt. Dalehite took immediate action. He personally led the platoon medic to the two wounded men and covered their position in the process. Immediately after the wounded had been secured, Lt. Dalehite renewed his platoon's attack at the center position from which the heaviest enemy fire was coming.

Stars and Stripes

11 March 1967

MARCH 11, 1967 25TH INFANTRY UNIT FINDS HOSPITAL PLEIKU "Outside of the extremely unsanitary condition they operate in their medical facilities are surprisingly good," said PFC James L Brown, a member of the 25th Infantry Division's 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry's Reconnaissance Platoon as it uncovered a Viet Cong underground hospital facility.

Brown took professional interest in the hospital section of the cave complex his platoon was securing and exploring because he is a line medic. Among the items Brown discovered in the natural caverns were drugs such as penicillin manufactured in the United States, syringes full of anti-tetanus serum from the Soviet Union, and numerous medical pamphlets and instruction books written in Vietnamese.

"We also found a stone slab that was evidently used as an operating table," said Brown.

STOOD OFF HUMAN WAVE
Hovering Off, Down in Vietnam
By JOSEPH ALSOP

Dragon Mountain, Pleiku: THE MEN of the Fourth Division are modern marcher lords, guarding the Cambodian border and fighting the North Vietnamese invaders from Cambodian sanctuary as the Percys and their men guarded the Scottish march and fought the rough, kilted raiders in the English North in the Middle Ages.

There is very little hint of the Middle Ages, it must be admitted, in the Fourth Division's base camp here at Dragon Mountain. The orderly, somewhat cumbersome yet overwhelming primary deployment of American power has nothing medieval about it. But go forward for a bit to the high jungle along the frontier where the companies and battalions are engaging the enemy.

The helicopter soars aloft, gaining altitude until it is downright chilly, and then follows the road constructed by a miracle of engineering, and a miraculous number of vast machines to supply the brigade's "fire support base" in a jungle region where Elijah's ravens would have been hard put to nourish the old prophet.

HOVER-DOWN is on a pimple in the highest mountain jungle which has been scraped bare by the miraculous machines to receive an almost equally miraculous number of grim-looking artillery pieces. Grimly, almost incessantly they fire. But the brigade commander, a weathered, wise old colonel, explains that "There's nothing much going on, anyway, compared to a day or so ago."

He leads the way to the CP dugout where there is a young major who appears to have been borrowed from Central Casting. The major belongs to the 25th Division which has a battalion "getting the feel" of this area with the colonel's brigade.

The colonel asks him to tell about the time "a couple of days ago when there really was something going on" —meaning the time when a company stood off a night ambush by a North Vietnamese battalion.

THE YOUNG major is not uncritical, for it appears that the company's three platoons were not positioned to give each other fully effective support. One lone platoon had to take the brunt of the fighting. "But they stood up to a human-wave charge of more than 250 men," says the major with considerable pride.

The colonel adds what the major left out. Long after dark, when his division's outfit ran into trouble, the major landed blind in the only helicopter landing zone anyone knew about in that particular bit of jungle. In order to carry out the wounded he then managed to guide 17 successive helicopter landings in pitch darkness, among high trees, with no aids but a radio and a "survival light."

"Hell, it worked," says the major. And on the way back to the base's precarious helipad the colonel jerks his thumb at a beardless warrant officer and muses, "That boy made four of those landings. He really flew a milk run."

REFLECTIONS on the nature of this sort of milk run make the hover-off all but unnoticeable. But now the helicopter is hedgehopping, for this is enemy country and flying just above the treetops gives the other side a poorer chance to shoot. Flying thus, the jungle is unimaginably lovely—trees green; trees scarlet, trees maroon, feathery emerald bamboos in clearings and leafless trees of purest silver filigree.

THE BATTALION commander, a Hawaiian colonel who looks a bit like Duke Kahanamoku in his middle years, said, "There's nothing much to interest you here. We moved up two days ago because two of my companies are so far forward."

Around the artillery pieces, in this newly opened patch in the jungle, there are soldiers digging like moles — which did not used to be a habit in the U.S. Army. The Hawaiian colonel has an impressive Negro operations officer and an exec with a German name and a Wilhelm II handlebar mustache.

In this tropical back-of-beyond, with enemy forces lurking everywhere and "two more days needed to get dug in real good," everyone is sweaty, but everyone seems utterly unconcerned.

Stars and Stripes
About 18-20 April 1967
25th Inf Kills 45 Viet Cong In Coastal Battle Near Duc Pho

DUC PHO, (25th INF-IO)-In the first seven hours of Task Force Oregon the 3rd Brigade Task Force, 25th Infantry Division killed 45 Viet Cong in a battle on the coast near here.

Thirty VC were killed by the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry automatic weapons fire and 15 more were killed by artillery fire thrown into the area.

Five U.S. soldiers were wounded, none seriously.

The Bronco Brigade, after completing Operation Pershing south of Bong Son and after participating in the final two days of Operation L e j e u n e, closed in on the Duc Pho area by air and sea to begin "Oregon."

The brigade's sea assault was the first of Task Force Oregon. The assault started a sea re supply route from Qui Nhon to Duc Pho.

Earlier, the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry was the first element of the 25th Division to battle VC in Duc Pho District. Killing 43.

Stars and Stripes
29 May 1967 (Tan Phong)
Cacti Men Kill Thirty NVA

DUC PHO —The sudden flash and sharp crack of enemy mortar explosions shattered the silence. The incoming rounds signaled the beginning of a three-hour night battle which many men of the Recon Plt and Co B of the 2nd Bn, 35th Inf, will long remember.

The "Cacti" had been sweeping an area where there had been recent clashes with units of an NVA battalion. It was late afternoon when the infantrymen set up their perimeter for the night. Ambushes were set along enemy routes.

At 2:30 the first mortar rounds landed and contact was made for the third time in three days.

The NVA hit the Cacti with everything they had. It was estimated 100 to 150 rounds of 60mm and 82mm mortar and recoilless rifle were fired at the infantrymen. The enemy then assaulted, supported by two machine guns, attempting to penetrate the perimeter.

Artillery immediately began to pound the charging enemy and was lifted only long enough for the gunships and "Spooky" to have their chance.

My platoon was on ambush when the first rounds landed," said 2LT Walter Twyford. "We moved back to the perimeter as fast as we could. The men on the perimeter were running low on ammo when we arrived after slicing through the enemy on the way in."

The recon platoon, also on ambush, moved back to reinforce the perimeter.

Dug in behind rice paddy dikes, the Cacti fought to hold off the furious assault by the NVA unit. The enemy charge carried them close enough to throw grenades over the paddy dikes. Gun ships from the 1st of the 9th Air Cav with flawless accuracy delivered their ordnance within 20 meters of the infantrymen driving back the enemy assault.

With the enemy momentum broken the Cacti swept the enemy back.

Daybreak revealed a battlefield littered with bodies of NVA. A total of 30 NVA were killed and three captured. Sixteen weapons were captured including a 57mm recoilless rifle and three light machine guns.

Stars & Stripes

17 January 1968

"Off Target Shell Does Dual Duty"

TAM KY, Vietnam (IO)-- A Btry., 2nd Bn., 9th Arty., chalked up one of the most unusual enemy kills in the Americal Div.'s area of operations recently when a smoke marker round killed an NVA soldier.

Operating north of Chu Lai, one platoon of C Co., 1st Bn. 35th Inf., on reconnaissance spotted several NVA in a clearing near their position.

Two of the enemy were dropped with M16 fire while other headed for cover. Platoon leader, Lt. Gary Nogle called the company's artillery forward observer Lt. Bert Landau, for assistance from A Btry.

From a nearby hill, Landau called for a marker round on one of his pre-plotted positions. The first round was slightly off target and Nogle radioed back the correction. Feeling that this would put an artillery round a little too close to the infantry patrol, Landau set up a compromise reading calling for a second marker.

As the round whistled overhead the GI's saw an NVA step out from behind some bushes to retrieve a fallen comrade hit by small arms fire.

By a strange quirk of fate, the smoke round burst considerably lower to the ground than usual and happened to be right over the stunned NVA who was killed by the metal fragments.

Stars & Stripes

15 Jan 68

Good Night's Sleep on a Mine (Roger Ladd, Recon 1/35th)

TAM KY, VIETNAM (IO) - When an infantryman is tired, he can sleep just about anywhere. For 1st Lt. Roger Ladd of Modesto, Calif., this included sleeping on top of a "bouncing betty" mine. It wasn't until the next afternoon that his dangerous bed was discovered.

Ladd's platoon, the reconnaissance platoon of the 1st Bn. 35th Inf., 4th Div., had been operating as a blocking force the first day and found a good night location, an LZ that they considered to be safe.

They used the normal precaution in checking the area and then began to set up for the night. Ladd laid out his gear, inflated his air mattress and settled it on the mine. It didn't detonate.

Nor did it detonate the next morning when the platoon moved out. The mine went undiscovered until the platoon returned.

Ladd went back to his sleeping area, not realizing how much his luck had already been pushed. But this time, as he laid down his rucksack, he noticed the mine's characteristic three prongs. Some of the

camouflage had been knocked away.

The mine was detonated in place and Ladd spent the night in that very spot because, as he put it, "It was the one spot around here I knew was safe!"

26 January 1968

Crossing Viet River Is Half of the Battle

DUC PHO, Vietnam (IO) - It isn't often that the infantry has to worry about such things but 2nd Lt. Fred de Witt recently reported that no one in his platoon was seasick.

Just a few minutes before, D Co., 1st Bn., 35th Inf., had moved up to the Song Thu Bong River north of Chu Lai. They were to cross the river and pursue enemy troops known to be operating on the other side.

The mission was complicated though, when a bridge indicated on the map was found to be blown in half and impassable.

As Capt. George Davignon pondered the problem, he noticed six reed boats on a small island in the middle of the river. Summoning Sgt. Roger A. Smith, Davignon discussed his plan.

"The next thing I knew," said 1st Sgt. Thomas C. Mathis, "the two of them were swimming the river, naked as a bird's tail and with no weapons."

The pair clambered onto the island and spotted five Vietnamese hiding in a bunker. Startled by the attire-or lack of it-of their discoverers, the Vietnamese emerged from their shelter. After haggling a while over price, D Co. had an amphibious assault force.

The river crossing was completed, and D Co. moved out in pursuit of the enemy

Stars and Stripes

10 Feb 1968

Scout Copter Crew Joins Battle, Gives Good Account

LANDING ZONE BALDY, Vietnam (IO) - A pair of OH-13 scout helicopters returning from a routine reconnaissance mission, decided to look in on an air assault and wound up killing 31 members of the 2nd North Vietnamese Army Div. three miles northwest of here.

Their curiosity was the start of a battle which claimed 128 enemy, members of both NVA and Viet Cong units.

At approximately 11 a.m., tube and aerial rocket artillery were preparing a landing zone near the village of Tra Kieu Nam for an air assault by elements of the 1st Bn., 35th Inf. The elements were planning a cordon and search of the village to look for Viet Cong.

As the barrage pounded into the landing zone; W.O. Phillip Flanagan, of Virginia Beach, Va., and W.O. George Francioni, Richmond, Va., decided to have a closer look.

Flanagan spotted five uniformed enemy soldiers with weapons running from the scene. Francioni opened up with an M60 machine gun and an M79 grenade launcher, killing the five.

Suddenly, a platoon-sized element sprang up a couple of meters away in a tightly-knit group and began to run towards a stream bed east of the village.

"It was the most I've ever seen in one group in a single area since I've been over here," recalled the 20-

year-old Francioni.

Flanagan called for aerial rocket artillery and gunships. But everybody seemed to be busy with other missions, so the two scout ships took things in their own hands.

The enemy broke up into small groups of 10 and scattered.

Five tried to escape by hiding in a clump of bushes where they proceeded to fire on the scout ships. Flanagan and Francioni and their respective doorgunners cut them down in a matter of seconds. The ship was not hit.

"As soon as we spotted them it was pure mass confusion," Francioni recalled, "I've never seen anything like it."

While Flanagan and Francioni headed back to LZ Baldy, Maj. George D. Burrow, commander of B Troop, 1st Bn., 9th Cav. 1st Air Cav. Div., and his crew appeared on the scene.

After receiving fire on a wide swing, Burrow directed his gunships on top of the crowded NVA and gunned down 10 along the stream bed.

"We got an indication of their position when we received fire as we made a wide swing. We worked on them from a distance before moving in on top of them. By then they were really scared," said the 35-year-old major.

Meanwhile, another company was told to stay in nearby rice paddies as the gunships poured 7,000 rounds into the enemy. "On several occasions one NVA would shoot at us and we would uncover five or six in the bushes," said W.O. Larry Kreps, co-pilot.

When Burrow ran out of ammo, he flew to an adjacent rice paddy and reloaded ammo from another gunship.

On the third pass over the stream bed they killed five more NVA and Pfc. Mike Simpson, doorgunner, shot it out with one NVA who showed determination in attempting to down the gunship. Simpson finally won out, but not before the NVA had put a scare into the crew every time he aimed his AK47 automatic rifle at the gunship.

"We threw everything at them, expending all our M16 ammo and innumerable grenades," Kreps said after the long fight.

The Observer
31 JAN 1969
VC Are Forced to Diet

BAN ME THUOT (USA) - A large cache of Viet Cong rice was discovered in a practically deserted village north of here recently by two Kit Carson scouts attached to Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry of the 4th Infantry Division.

The two scouts, Vung Van Loc and Dao Pham Xuan, found the rice in barrels hidden under the floors of huts throughout the village. When all of the rice had been collected, there were 52 barrels containing an estimated seven tons.

The unexpected find occurred during a routine cordon and search of the village of Mewal. Lieutenant Colonel Joseph S. Sulenski, commander of the 2nd Battalion, emphasized, "the alertness of the Kit Carson's triggered the finding of this important cache which might otherwise have been overlooked."

The men of Alpha Company were equally lavish in praising the scouts. The Kit Carson's just walked around saying there is rice here, here and here. They, were really squared away," said Sergeant David W Kemple.

Captain Walter L Corey, Alpha Company commander said that Interrogation of the few villagers present indicated that. Mewal has been used as a Viet Cong resupply center. "There has been a squad that comes in here to at night to rest and eat," he said.

"Any rice which is hidden belongs to the VC," continued the captain. "Rice is supposed to be stored in the open. If it is, we will not disturb it. We will give the captured rice to war refugees."

In addition to the rice, the search yielded one sight from a 60mm mortar tube. Five Viet Cong suspects were detained.

Stars and Stripes

8 Feb 1969

His Meal Was Just an Oink Away

BAN ME THOUT, Vietnam (Special) – A "quick pig" took advantage of Sgt Dale E Fronheiser, of Boyartown, Pa.

A Co., 2nd Bn., 35th Inf. had just completed an operation near a Montagnard village and was breaking for chow.

"We hadn't eaten for quite awhile, and I was getting cheese burgers ready." said Fronheiser. "They were already sizzling. I had hot peppers, hot sauce, and some great cheese ready to spread all over the meat.

"I turned my back for just a second and one of the village pigs took the meat right off the grill.

"I wound up sitting through a night ambush hoping my stomach wouldn't start growling.

"If we ever go back to that area it's going to be ham and cheese sandwiches for the whole company." Fronheiser said only half joking.

The Army Reporter

Fourth Locked in Combat

CAMP ENARI - Combat activity increased greatly throughout the 4th Infantry Division's area of operations. Attention remained focused, however, on an area 20 miles north of Plei Djereng, where two companies of the 1st Bn., 35th Inf., initiated contact and remained locked in combat with North Vietnamese military forces for most of the week.

Contact began with Company D penetrating a hastily-evacuated enemy base camp in the thickly jungled area north of Plei Djereng. It was estimated the camp quartered at east a platoon-sized unit. Twenty Five fortified sleeping positions and a hut were destroyed and 20 60mm mortar rounds were evacuated.

The following day, Co A found one NVA body in the area, while nearby, Co. C, following a blood trail, discovered a large cave complex housing numerous documents, thirty-one field packs, fifty NVA uniforms, and an undisclosed amount of machinegun ammunition, two NVA pistols, over a ton of rice, and several photos.

The following day Co. D reported itself engaged in heavy, day-long contact with enemy of unknown size. NVA small arms and mortar fire was countered by US gunships and artillery throughout the day.

Co. A linked with Co. D in an effort to crush the enemy. The fighting continued on as the two companies expended a withering volume of fire against a well-entrenched enemy force.

IVY LEAF
13 July 1969
Cacti Blue Soldiers Crash Enemy Meal
By SGT Michael Tousey

HIGHLANDER HEIGHTS — The point element of Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry interrupted a group of five North Vietnamese (NVA) relaxing at breakfast ten miles southwest of Kontum City and killed one.

The action began when the scout dog working with the point element of Bravo Company alerted the Cacti Blue soldiers, and before the action subsided 21 NVA were dead.

"After the dogs warning we all got down and carefully surveyed the area," said Specialist 4 Charles Tanner of Campbell, Mo., the point man. "We saw a poncho hanging in a tree, and some packs and gear on the ground."

First Lieutenant John Barbeau of Sparta, Ill., and Sergeant Dale Eagle of Newberry, S.C., opened fire killing one. The four other NVA who were eating breakfast fled the area when the firing began.

Then we moved out again with my platoon on line," said Lieutenant Barbeau. "We found several open packs containing 60mm and 82mm mortar rounds; apparently they were trying to get the rounds out of there but did not have the time."

The company began to receive heavy fire again and pulled back to call in additional artillery and air strikes. More than 500 rounds of artillery were poured into the area.

"The enemy mortars were approximately 200 or 300 meters away after we pulled back," said Captain Stanley E. Traeb III of Detroit, Bravo company commander. "It took about 24 seconds from the time the round left the tube for it to reach us, so we moved by counting to 20 after the shot and then hitting the ground.

"As soon as the round went off, we would get up and move for another 20 seconds. There were NVA on our right side, and I would guess they had a forward observer from the way the rounds were coming in."

Bravo Company pulled back to allow room for the artillery, gunships and air strikes to work and prepared to return for a sweep of the area the following day.

The sweep uncovered 21 NVA bodies.

From Stan Traeb - Bravo Company 1969

The action described did occur on 6/10/69.

We actually surprised a Heavy Weapons Company from the 24th NVA regiment as they set up their defensive perimeter for the day and the 5 man group initially engaged was their OP position. The main body was about 25-50 meters further in and they had fighting positions dug behind Bamboo clusters. A prisoner was taken the next day with the assistance of Recon and he identified the unit we had engaged.

We were actually able to overrun their position and occupy it for a short period of time before they

cranked up their 82's (3 tubes) and started pounding the daylight out of us. We took about 75 -100 mortar rounds and 36 casualties later, I ordered a withdrawal to a casualty evacuation point some 200 meters or so to our rear and called in TAC Air.

Delta Troop 1/10th Cav was monitoring our push and sent their entire slick section (6 Huey's) to Dust-Off our casualties. Once the casualties were safely away, we were in a position to direct an air strike, but were ordered to fall back to our previous night lager by Big 6 as he indicated that he would spot for the Tac Air.

There were some standout performances that day let me tell you! Lt William Wallin from 2/9th Arty was our FO and what a job he did! He did a little number called "Three Quads, Three Deflections" and we ended up having a 105mm round hit their position about every 5 meters apart in an area of about 150 meters by 150 meters.

Lt John Barbeau performed in his customary Heroic nature while leading the 1st Platoon (which incidentally came out of the field on 6/13/69 with 7 men). Bill Delaney, CP security, took care of an NVA who had decided that he was personally going to take out the entire CP by himself. The heroism that all members of Bravo 2/35 Inf displayed that day had to be seen to be believed. Nothing in this life has ever impressed me as much as what Bravo showed me at LZ Penny between May 8th and June 13th of 1969. We had well over 65% casualties in a 35 day period and came out of the bush with a 39 man Company. This also included the Weapons Platoon which had been detached from the Firebase and sent out to the bush as replacements.

In all, we had been in 6 Major firefights, had been responsible for over 15,000 of artillery fire, and were officially credited with killing over 120 NVA. The KIA count was a figure determined by S2 as opposed to physical count. Bravo never reported more than what we physically found. We knew we hurt them since the 24th NVA withdrew back to Cambodia while we were still at Penny. However, Bravo had also paid a price. God must have been watching over us then since we only had 1 confirmed KIA from Bravo. A Dog Handler had been critically wounded also but we never got a follow-up report so I pray that he survived.

This article was accurate in every detail except the confirmed NVA body count.

Stan Traeb: Bravo Company 2nd Battalion 35th Infantry; May - Sept 1969

The Army Times 4th Div's 3rd Bde Returns Home

CAMP ENARI — The much-traveled 3rd Bde. of the 4th Infantry Division has left Vietnam as part of the Phase III Redeployment.

The brigade arrived in Vietnam in January 1966, as part of the 25th Infantry Division. The "None Better" soldiers inherited an area of operations that was diverse and mysterious. Craggy mountain ranges stood beside triple-canopy jungles.

From May to August 1966, the brigade, working under the operational control of the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), participated in one of the largest campaigns of the Vietnam conflict- Operation Paul Revere. When operations ended, more than 900 NVA regulars had been killed.

In addition to fighting the enemy, the 3rd Bde. engaged in civic action programs aimed at helping Vietnamese and Montagnard villagers establish self-help projects. During this period, the resettlement village of Edap Enang was built to eliminate a source of forced labor for NVA units.

The brigade's first Medal of Honor in Vietnam was awarded posthumously to Capt. Joseph X. Grant, a platoon leader with Co. A, 1st Bn., 14th Inf., in November 1966. A lieutenant at the time, Grant braved an enemy barrage to rescue an injured fellow platoon leader and received multiple wounds in the

process.

The second brigade soldier to receive the Medal of Honor was Staff Sgt. Kenneth E. Stumpf. While serving with the 1st Bn., 35th Inf., during operations near Duc Pho, Stumpf rescued three of his wounded squad members and made a successful one-man assault on an NVA machine gun position.

(Not mentioned in this article were 1Lt Stephen Karopczyc, awarded posthumously, and 1Lt Ronald Ray, both having been awarded the Medal of Honor while serving with the 25th Inf. Div. - ED)

On August 1, 1967, the 3rd Bde., 25th Infantry Division, became a unit of the 4th Infantry Division and the 25th Division received the Ivy's 3rd Bde. in exchange.

At that time, the Tropic Lightning's 3rd Bde. was located some 200 miles from its division headquarters.

Brigade operations during Tet of 1968 succeeded in driving the entire 2nd NVA Division from the coastal plains and jungle near southern I Corps.

The 3rd Bde. was an integral element in the division's Operation MacArthur during 1968, aimed at clearing enemy units from the 9,000 square miles of Pleiku, Kontum and Darlac Provinces. More than 5,000 enemy fell before Ivy guns during Operation MacArthur, for which the 4th Division was awarded the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Palm.

By early March 1969, the brigade increased emphasis in support of the Government of Vietnam pacification program. The brigade helped villagers develop defenses against the enemy who had resorted to hit and run attacks against allied installations.

But the brigade did not sacrifice its combat operations while carrying out its pacification programs.

The 1st Bn. 8th Inf. arrived in Vietnam in early August 1966 as part of the 4th Division. Among the numerous valor awards presented to the battalion were four Medals of Honor. Three of the citations were presented posthumously to Platoon Sgt. Bruce Grandstaff, Pfc. Leslie Bellrichard and Staff Sgt. Frankie Molnar. The fourth individual cited was 1st Sgt. David McNerney.

The 1st Bn. 35th Inf.; 2nd Bn. 9th Arty.; and 1st Bn., 69th Armor, all came to the division from the 25th Infantry Division. All had come to Vietnam with the Tropic Lightning Division in early 1966.

While in Vietnam, the 1st Bn., 69th Armor, and the 1st Bn. 35th Inf. were both awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for action between April and October of 1968.

On Jan. 15, 1968, the Medal of Honor was awarded to Spec. 5 Dwight Johnson of the 1st Bn., 69th Armor, for heroism in holding off the enemy with a variety of small arms after his tank had thrown a track.

By 1970, the brigade itself had seen more than 1,340 consecutive days without rest of complete stand-down. And now, they're receiving some well-deserved relaxation.

Redeploying to the United States as 3rd Bde. elements were: 1st Bn., 8th Inf.; 1st Bn., 35th Inf.; 2nd Bn., 9th Arty.; and the 1st Bn., 69th Armor.

The brigade was feted before departure at ceremonies at Pleiku Air Force Base. The colors were returned to Ft. Lewis, Wash, where the unit will be inactivated.



STANDING TALL - With flags flowing, members of the 3rd Brigade stand at attention under the command of Colonel Gilbert Procter during farewell ceremonies at Camp Enari (Ivy Leaf photo by Sp4 Tom Hodson)