

## 1968 News Jan-Mar

Charlie Co 1/35

17 January 1968  
Stars & Stripes

### *"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 preplotted 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.

### **Roger Ladd, Recon 1/35th**

Stars & Stripes  
15 Jan 68

### *Good Night's Sleep on a Mine*

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!"

**Delta 1/35th  
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 new," 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.

**IVY LEAF**  
**10 Mar 68**

### ***Battery Fires 500,000<sup>th</sup> Shot In War***

LZ BALDY—Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 9th Artillery recently fired its 500,000th round in support of the Ivy's 3rd Brigade. Major General Samuel Koster, Americal Division commander pulled the lanyard firing the memorable shell.

The 105mm round was fired from Landing Zone Uptight, south of Chu Lai where the 3rd Brigade is conducting Operation Muscatine with the Americal Division.

**IVY LEAF**  
**10 Mar 68 Ivy**

### ***Pocket Becomes Mascot's Hiding Place***

LZ BALDY — Many units stationed in Vietnam are adopting pets as mascots. Specialist 4 Tony Robertson (Shelbyville, Ill), a squad leader With the 3rd Brigade's 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry, currently operating with the Americal Division, recently told of just such a mascot, a small dog which makes his home with Company E's 2nd platoon.

The dog, which answers to the unlikely name of Griswald, was obtained in a trade between the men of Company E, and the dog's original owners, the children of the village of Que Son in Quang Nam province.

Rejecting the soldier's initial offer of a box of "chop-chop" (chewing gum), the high-pressure tactics admirably executed by the kids eventually netted them a box of gum and two comic books. This made Griswald one of the higher priced mascots in recent Army history and established his position as a dog to be reckoned with.

Griswald adapted quickly to the Army way of life. After eating and then carefully evaluating all the different meals contained in a box of C-rations, he soon displayed a definite preference for chicken and noodles — followed by a can of warm cocoa. The only ration he would have absolutely nothing to do with was ham and lima beans.

Griswald suffered a few moments of anxiety when the company came under heavy mortar fire last month but he easily overcame his fear by burying himself in SP4 Robertson's hip pocket.

"It couldn't have been comfortable but Griswald didn't seem to mind it too much," added SP4 Robertson with a grin.

The dog, just plain mutt, has one habit that is not particularly endearing to his admirers.

"Griswald wakes up at three every morning," said SP4 Robertson. "That wouldn't be too bad except that he wakes everybody else up too."

**Anyone who fails to respond to the dog's personal reveille must face the righteous wrath of an irate pup deprived of his chicken and noodles.**

**The prospect is frightening.**