

1968 News Sep-Dec

IVY LEAF

Hard Head

OASIS A 3rd-Brigade sergeant learned the value of a steel helmet when a piece of shrapnel tore into it instead of his head.

The incident occurred near Ban Me Thuot when Company C, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry, commanded by Captain Thomas Steuber of Milwaukee, Wis. made camp for the night.

Sergeant First Class Pineino of Isabela, P.R., was walking around the perimeter when a mortar came soaring in and exploded near the camp.

"The first thing we knew," said one Ivymen, "Sergeant Pineino had his helmet in his hands and examining it.

"There was a hole in it, but the helmet had diverted the shrapnel, saving his life."

"I've always been a firm believer in the steel helmet," said SFC Pineino.

IVY LEAF

Elephants Make A Small Circus

By SP4 John Trimble

OASIS — It had been a dull day for a small patrol of Company C, 2nd Battalion,. 35th Infantry, commanded by Captain Thomas Steuber of Milwaukee, Wis., until they ambled into a small Montagnard village, and became the audience of a circus.

The 3rd-Brigade squad had left the company firebase early in the morning on a cordon and search in an area near Ban Me Thuot.

The 4th soldiers walked and searched all day in the torrid, steaming jungle; they found nothing. The sun began to sink behind the tall trees as they started the long, exhausting trek back to the firebase.

Along the way they had to pass through a Montagnard hamlet. The villagers had always been friendly and given them fruits and other small treats when they journeyed through.

The Ivymen expected a treat, but little did they know that it would be a circus act.

As the soldiers entered the hamlet, they noticed three elephants in the center.

"It was a shock," said Private First Class Jimmy Smith of Fayette, Ark., "I knew there were elephants down here but these were the first I'd seen."

The 3rd-Brigade Ivymen scattered among the awesome beasts, looking over the giants.

Before they knew what was happening the Montagnards were riding them around and putting on a show for the weary men.

"It was almost as good as a circus show," PFC Smith added.

IVY LEAF

15 Sep 68 Ivy Leaf

Ivymen Hug Live Grenade

OASIS — Two Ivymen were recently left holding something much more dangerous than the proverbial bag — two "live" hand grenades.

The incident occurred near Dak To at a 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry firebase. The 3rd Brigade unit was settling down for the night when a loud, splashing noise from a nearby stream caught the attention of Private First Class Jason Braunstein of Brooklyn, N.Y., and Sergeant Jim Waterman of Columbus, Ohio.

Knowing the area was NVA-infested, SGT Waterman and PFC Braunstein each pulled the pin from a grenade and prepared to throw the explosives. No sooner had they drawn their arms back when a message crackled over their radio,

"Our Company Commander called and told everyone to refrain from firing rifles or throwing grenades, he wanted to see what was out there before we opened up, Jim and I had already thrown the pins away, so we were left holding on for dear life," said PFC Braunstein.

The seconds ticked by dangerously slow. Both men broke out in a cold sweat. One slip, a loose grip... how long can it last.

Sergeant Waterman radioed and informed the company commander of their predicament, They were given permission to throw the grenades.

"Boy, I was never so happy to be rid of anything in my life," said PFC Braunstein.

"Those three minutes seemed like thirty years," he added.

Heavy grenade and automatic weapons fire were directed on the suspected enemy position. Due to the thick foliage and lateness of the hour, the "Cacti Green" were unable to check on enemy casualties,

"I definitely learned my lesson. From now on I'm going to look before I throw," said PFC Braunstein.

IVY LEAF

22 Sep 68 Ivy Leaf

Rots 'o Ruck

OASIS—The incident occurred as Company B, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry, led by Captain Jonathan Tower of Essex, Conn., was making a sweep of a large hill two miles from its night location near Kontum.

"Nothing had happened all day," said Specialist 4 Depremo of New York. "Suddenly sniper rounds started coming at us from our rear. We took cover and began returning fire instantly."

The battle lasted only a few minutes. The 3rd Brigade soldiers sent the enemy fleeing.

"I couldn't believe my eyes as I looked at my rucksack," he said. "There was a large hole in it." It was a sniper round.

IVY LEAF

22 Sep 68 IVY LEAF

'Aloha Airlines' Holds High Score—300 Kills

By SP4 John Trimble

OASIS—A small helicopter swoops out of the clouds, spraying the ground below with machine gun fire. Three unsuspecting Viet Cong fall.

Aloha Airlines has done it again.

The 3rd Brigade's Aloha Airlines originally functioned solely as an observation outfit. It later flew combat missions in addition to observation flights.

To most people, the name Aloha Airlines is synonymous with an Hawaiian commercial airline. But to the men of the 3rd Brigade, it is a hard-fighting helicopter support section.

When the 3rd Brigade was stationed in Hawaii before coming to Vietnam, its aviation unit took the name of Aloha Airlines as its call sign.

The men in the unit used the name jokingly at first, but later it stuck. Permission was obtained from the actual airline to use the name, and ever since there have been two Aloha Airlines.

The unit originally boasted four OH23 helicopters, "bubbles" as the men who fly the small aircraft call them. Today it has three light observation Cayuse helicopters and one OH23.

Aloha has earned an outstanding reputation in Vietnam, having accumulated a confirmed record of 300 enemy killed. All kills were made by gunners sitting next to the pilot, holding M60 machine guns in their laps.

While flying observation missions in the early days, the small helicopters would often receive heavy fire from enemy ground positions. It was then pilots began taking gunners along for protection.

"We really didn't become a combat unit until we moved to the Duc Pho area," explained Chief Warrant Officer Charles Grigsby of Steubenville, Ohio. "In addition to flying observation missions, we began to fly in support of combat assaults.

"We flew in support of the 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry one day and got a count of 25 NVA killed," continued Mr. Grigsby. "We were flying about 10 feet from the ground. We flew so low the enemy was throwing Chicom grenades at the ship. It was hit 18 times by AK47 rounds."

Aloha's gunners came from many different sections in the brigade.

Staff Sergeant John B. Howard of Louisville, Ky., a mess steward, flew 85 missions with Aloha—on his time off from cooking.

"I flew in the mornings when I was off duty," he said. "Many times the VC and NVA wouldn't suspect that we were carrying machine guns."

Aloha Airlines in Hawaii, having learned of the unit's record with the 4th Division invited all those who had served with Aloha in Vietnam to stop by their offices, if they were ever in Hawaii.

On his R&R Mr. Grigsby went to Hawaii and visited the airlines.

"They gave me the royal treatment," he said. "They took me on a tour of the islands and I had a great time."

The commercial airlines also supplies the helicopter unit, with stickers saying "Aloha Airlines," and with T-shirts that have "Aloha Airlines" written across the front.

Aloha no longer maintains a combat status, but to many men who have served with the 3rd Brigade, the daring maneuvers and blazing machine guns of the bubble will never be forgotten.

IVY LEAF

Infantry Contacts Increase

US/ARVN Slay 97 Enemy

CAMP ENARI—Fourth Division and Vietnamese soldiers killed 97 enemy troops in the Central Highlands as infantry contact continued to increase this week.

A reconnaissance patrol operating north of Dak Seang found a position recently used by a enemy size force. Five NVA were observed in the area, air strikes were called in, with secondary explosions observed. Later that afternoon more NVA were sighted in the same location. The patrol reported the enemy soldiers to be accompanied by a tall blond-haired Caucasian, wearing a khaki uniform, brown boots, a baseball cap and armed with an

unidentified weapon. Also sighted was a water buffalo carrying enemy mortar tubes. Gunships rushed into the area with unconfirmed results at this time.

The heaviest fighting occurred near Due Lap when the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel William C. Moore, were attacked from all sides with mortars, rockets and ground attacks. The fighting lasted over an hour and a sweep of the area later found one wounded NVA who was detained. A large supply of weapons were found in the area including 4 light machine guns, an unknown number of AK47s and SKS's and one B40 rocket launcher. Total enemy body count reached 23.

Contact renewed between the two units two days later as the Ivy-men encountered an estimated battalion size force of NVA regulars, killing 32 of the enemy soldiers. Ivy casualties were again light.

Also, a large supply of weapons was found in the area including four light machine guns, an unknown number of AK47s, and one B40 rocket launcher.

A minesweep team of the 299th Engineers discovered three Russian mines along Highway 14 north of Kontum. The mines were destroyed leaving large craters.

IVY LEAF

"It's good To Help Out"

Village Refugees Receive Ivy Aid

By SP4 Hans Lange

BAN ME THOUT—For more than 2,500 Montagnard and Vietnamese refugees in and around the hamlet of Duc Lap, life was beginning to look glum.

They had been forced to leave their villages near the Cambodian border by retreating North Vietnamese Army (NVA) regulars who were being pursued by Ivy-men of the 2nd Brigade, commanded by Colonel Herbert McChristal. Their very existence was threatened.

But hope was only a few miles away, at Duc Lap, since fighting had ceased there. It was a relatively safe spot to seek refuge. And they came—with their salvaged household goods, their elders, and their children.

The great influx of refugees stumped hamlet leaders. Where could they all be housed? The leaders arose to the challenge and so did the Ivy-men of the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel William C. Moore of Alexandria, Va.

The industrious Montagnards set up house in abandoned school buildings and makeshift shelters, but they were not homes. Food was scarce, and many of the people were sick or had received injuries in the exodus to Duc Lap.

Word of their plight soon filtered to the Cacti Blue civil affairs team, headed by First Lieutenant Harry F. Bernard of Pittsburgh. They responded with medical aid, food and even tents.

Daily visits to the four primary refugee areas are now conducted. With the Battalion Surgeon, Captain Dame! Marks of Oak Park, Mich. leading the team, as many as 290 refugees have been treated in a day.

The day for the team begins in the early afternoon. There's other work to tend to in the morning. They load their three-quarter-ton vehicle with a medical chest, food, soap, toothpaste, candy and tobacco. Most of their supplies are donated by Ivymen. There is a chest in the S-5 tent for that purpose and it fills up every day.

Once the supplies are on the vehicle, the men climb aboard—usually two medics, two security men, an interpreter and anyone else who can spare a few hours. Captain Marks makes the trip when time permits.

This particular trip is to a refugee site that the Cacti Blue team has not visited before.

After a short drive from the battalion base camp, the vehicle pulls into the refugee area, and immediately it is swamped by the people there.

The interpreter, Private First Class William E. Carlson of Lander, Wyo., who is also a medic, jumps out first and begins asking anyone who will listen to direct him to the chief.

Soon the chief is pointed out and PFC Carlson speaks to him.

"Tell your people that we have come to treat their illnesses and injuries. Have them form a line at the rear of the vehicle, we have men there who can help them."

The chief agrees and soon there is a line forming. The medics go to work.

The line keeps moving. Colds are treated, as are open, bleeding sores, skin rashes, boils and other infections. In less than two hours, 170 of the refugees have received some type of medical aid or advice. The day before the number was 290, but that took more than two hours.

"It's good to be able to help these people," says Specialist Howell. "They need so much."

After physical ailments are cared for, candy, soap, toothpaste and tobacco are passed out, giving a boost to the spirit. Food is then given to the chief. He is instructed to parcel it out equally among all the refugees in the camp.

The truck is then loaded again, but this time it's not as full; it is heading back. Tomorrow there will be more people, and more medicine, food, soap and candy for the kids. Only the site will change.

IVY LEAF

Duc Lap Sweep Garners 200 Bunkers

By SP4 Larry Hagan

BAN ME THUOT—After suffering heavy losses, the NVA were driven from the Duc Lap Special Forces Camp and forced back into the jungle.

Now, even the jungle offers, little sanctuary for them.

Combined forces of, 4th Division's 2nd Brigade, labeled Task Force Bright and commanded by Lieutenant Colonel John Daniels of Alexandria, Va., have pursued the communists deep into the forest and denied them the chance for a second attack on the camp. In a single day, elements of the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel William C. Moore of Alexandria, Va., uncovered nearly 200 NVA fortifications southwest of Ban Me Thuot.

Bunkers Recent

The majority of the positions appeared to be less than two days old.

Heavy drops of rain still clung to the trees as the men of the Cacti Blue moved out on the day's operation.

Air and artillery power had earlier been employed in the area northeast of Duc Lap. It was now the battalion's task to move in and sweep the area.

Company B had barely begun its sweep when it uncovered a small complex of bunkers and foxholes tucked away in a shallow ravine. The company cautiously approached the complex. Reaching the first bunker, a Cacti Blue soldier thrust his M16 into the opening and cut loose with a quick burst, "just to make sure nobody was home."

As the dust settled, the Ivyman peered into the fortification

Nobody home.

Moving out, the company soon found a smaller complex and the slow painstaking process started again.

Night Location

Nearby, the Cacti reconnaissance platoon uncovered an enemy night location.

Freshly dug fox holes and makeshift shelters offered mute evidence that the NVA platoon had used the facility the night before. However, the previous evening had seen a B52 strike fall a short distance from the NVA, probably making sleep impossible.

After spending what must have been a sleepless night, the enemy fled.

As the platoon checked through the abandoned night location, a sweep, conducted by Company A, under the leadership of First Lieutenant Donald Latella of Philadelphia, uncovered a well camouflaged NVA kitchen complex, complete with mess area and cooking facilities.

The stoves had been dug into the ground with a network of tree limbs criss-crossed over their top. As smoke traveled through this network, it would be defused, making it more difficult to detect.

Large cooking pots were found scattered throughout the facility and freshly cut foliage covered the entire complex.

Hurried Departure

It appeared that "Charlie" had again been forced to run for his life.

Meanwhile, Company B was continuing its search of the area. While assessing the damage inflicted by the B52 strike, the company broke into a small clearing and discovered an abandoned anti-aircraft position.

"The place was littered with old ammo boxes and foxholes," recalled Specialist 4 Dick Larson of Stewart, Mich.

After stopping for chow, the units moved out again.

Company A made the final and largest discovery of the day.

Strange Bush

Sweeping along a ridge line, the unit's point man spotted a log protruding from a bush that "just didn't look right."

Moving in to investigate, the Ivymen uncovered a battalion-sized bunker complex.

About 150 bunkers with overhead cover were found hidden in the dense undergrowth. Some were sleeping bunkers and others were fighting positions, but all were less than 48 hours old. As with the smaller complexes, the Ivymen carefully searched through the fortification.

Smoke belched from the tiny entrances as grenades and rifle fire preceded the men into the underground dwellings.

All evidence seemed to indicate that the enemy had prepared the location, but had not had time to move into the bunkers.

Air and artillery units were notified of the discovery and plans were made for the destruction of the complex.

For the people of Duc Lap and the defenders of its neighboring special forces camp, the battle had ended, but for the surviving NVA, the fight was only changed.

IVY LEAF

SP4 John Trimble Reports on Dare-Devil's Exploits

High wire Expert: The Great Wallenda As A LRRP

NINETEEN MONTHS AGO Specialist Barry Toll of St. Petersburg, Fla., was walking a high wire with the Great Wallendas, the world renowned high-wire act. Today, he is walking a different kind of-tight rope—the jungles of Vietnam.

The 4th Division soldier is now serving in the 3rd Brigade Long Range Patrol (LRP) team, after spending five months with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry.

Before entering the Army, the Ivyman performed in circuses all over the world and on many popular television programs, working with the Flying Armors

and the Great Wallendas. Performing with the Flying Armors, he appeared on the Ed Sullivan Show, the Jackie Gleason Show, the Gary Moore Show, Hollywood Palace, Coliseum and the Hippodrome.

After entering the Army he distinguished himself by winning the Vietnamese Gallantry Cross and the Army Commendation Medal with "V" device for gallantry displayed during his first combat experiences in Vietnam.

Starting at a very early age, the Ivyman learned gymnastics at an elementary school in Cleveland. "I liked tumbling but my real love was the horizontal bars," he recalled.

At Cleveland he developed the muscles and confidence that would later make him a sought-after circus performer.

"I really didn't have any thoughts about getting into circus acts," said Specialist Toll, "until my family moved to St. Petersburg. "It's funny, but the high school I attended didn't have a gymnastic program. The city had a youth center which was big on gym. It had the bars, trampolines, and even a high wire."

"A friend of mine wanted to get into circus shows. He taught me a lot about the high wire and other acts." the soldier continued.

The youth center in St. Petersburg is run by Bob Fisher, a former trapeze artist. According to Specialist Toll, he used to have a trapeze act in the 1930s,



known as "Fisher's Fearless Flyers." Mr. Fisher still had many contacts in the circus business.

"The circus is like any other profession. The people who have a good act like to keep it going even after they're too old to perform," Specialist Toll explained. "If their children can't carry on for them, they try to find other young people who can take their place. Bob is always on the lookout for promising young people. That's how I really got started in performing. 'The Flying Armors' were looking for another trapeze man. Bob thought I had potential, so he had Regy Arnold (the owner of the act) watch my stunts. He liked me, so I was hired."

All of this took place before the Ivyman had finished high school. He performed on the trapeze during his summer vacations. Since circus acts usually work only in the summer, the young performer could easily continue his classes. The winters are spent in training, at Sarasota, Fla., for the next season's acts.

By the time he had finished high school Specialist Toll had grown too big for the trapeze. His own body weight and size had made him a risk on the bars.

"I had worked around the Wallendas before. They found out I was available and asked Regy if they could hire me. That's how I got started with them," said Specialist Toll. The Great Wallendas are the only high wire act ever to successfully perform the seven-man pyramid.

He joined the Great Wallendas after a tragic fall that killed two and injured all of the other performers. They were performing the pyramid without a net at Ft. Worth, Tex., when one of the high wire walkers lost his balance and fell, causing the others to topple off the thin cable.

"I trained all winter with the Great Wallendas. They were just beginning to get in shape again after the fall. Our training was worse than advanced infantry training (AIT). I made my first appearance on the wire in the early part of 1966, when we opened our season in Cleveland," continued the 3rd Brigade soldier. "We traveled all over the states and Europe putting on our show.

"My act included a three person pyramid, riding a bicycle across the wire, dancing on the wire and a few other little tricks that are fairly hard to do. I never appeared in the seven-man pyramid. I was working up to that when I quit the act."

About four months after the former wire walker quit working with the Great Wallendas, he was drafted.

In both basic and AIT he won the award for the highest physical training (PT) score. "My gym work has definitely been an asset to me in the Army. The PT test was simple compared to the training I'd had with the Wallendas," the Ivyman explained.

Specialist Toll has also been an asset to his leaders in the Central Highlands.

He helped his platoon cross swift-flowing streams on two occasions and later hung from a helicopter skid to snatch a fellow soldier from what could have been a fatal situation.

Once, when his platoon was going on a routine night ambush it came upon a stream that was too swift and deep to wade across.

"We had to move fast since it was getting dark," said Specialist Toll. "We found a long thin pole and stretched it across the stream. I walked across it taking a rope with me. After I got the rope across we were able to make a hand walk for everyone else 'to use."

On another occasion he walked a tight rope across a small river, carrying delicate supplies that would have been ruined by the water.

The Ivyman's confidence in handling himself at great heights paid off another time for one of his LRP buddies.

The team had been on a mission in a "hot" area and was being extracted. They had heard enemy soldiers around them all day and feared the NVA would open up when the extraction helicopter came down. Consequently, the aircraft had to fly in and out as quickly as possible.

When the chopper made its pick-up run, one LRP, who had been providing rear security, was unable to make it to the helicopter before it was already too high to board. Specialist Toll climbed onto one of the skids and grabbed the LRP with what he called a "trapeze hand lock." He then pulled the almost abandoned soldier to the safety of the helicopter.

Chances are we could have picked him up on run, but I couldn't see taking any more risks than necessary," commented the Ivyman.

Another combat experience he says he will never, forget occurred when he was with the 3rd Brigade's infantry battalion The company was involved in a major fire fight on April 5 (1968) with elements of the 1st NVA Division, massed in the mountains west of Kontum.

"The day after I got there my platoon was on point (the lead platoon of the company).

After leaving the company firebase that morning the company made its way through the dense foliage towards the objective.

"Then the NVA opened up, throwing everything they had at us." the Ivyman recalled.

"The first four guys in front of me fell wounded. When the shooting started, I hit the dirt and waited to see exactly what was happening. We fought for a while and then got the word to fall back." ‘

When the company had managed to withdraw, it regrouped in a secure area.

First Lieutenant Benjamin Youmans of Atlanta, Ga., the platoon leader, discovered that three men were missing from his platoon. The three had somehow, gotten separated from the rest of the platoon, and were not able to fall back with it.

Lieutenant Youmans asked for a volunteer to go back and help him rescue the stranded men. Specialist Toll volunteered for, the hazardous mission.

"On our way back to them we were shot at many times, but we got to the men."

By this time the three men, one of whom was wounded, had become tense.

"We calmed them down and patched up the wounded man.

Then we started back. We were shot at again but we made it without getting a scratch."

"I had never felt fear like that in any of my circus acts. I have a great deal of respect for these guys who fight here day after day," the.. former trapeze flyer said.

After serving five months with "Charlie" Company, Specialist Toll was reassigned to the 3rd Brigade LRP team. "It's almost like a trapeze act. Everyone knows, his function and we are very close friends."

IVY LEAF

1/35th Receives New CO

OASIS—In a change of command ceremony, Lieutenant Colonel Garrett Buckner of Lexington, Ky., assumed command of the 3rd Brigade's 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry.

Colonel Buckner replaced Lieutenant Colonel William L. Mundie of Springfield, Mo., when the former commander was evacuated due to illness.

The ceremony occurred outside the Special Forces camp at the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry's firebase.

Following a brief speech by 3rd Brigade commander, Colonel Stan L. McClellan of Ventura, Calif., Colonel Buckner addressed his men.

"Just yesterday, I visited Colonel Mundie in the 71st Evacuation Hospital in Pleiku where he informed me that to his everlasting sorrow, he will be unable to rejoin the battalion. He is being evacuated to Tokyo tomorrow, began Colonel Buckner.

"I have always thought the world of Colonel Mundie and am sorry to have to assume command under these unfortunate circumstances. But I am proud to be a member of the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry and am sure the 'Cacti Green' will continue its outstanding performance," he concluded.

Prior to his new position, Colonel Buckner served as the 3rd Brigade's Executive Officer. A West Point graduate with 23 years service, Colonel Buckner holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration.

Colonel Buckner received the "Cacti Green's" colors from Sergeant Major Guy Sullivan of Franklin, Tenn.

IVY LEAF

Choppers Come To Rescue

Bees Assault MEDCAP Team

BAN ME THUOT — When insecticide failed, they called for a chopper to blow the invaders away.

A medical team from the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry, piled into their jeep and rumbled down the road toward a nearby village.

It was a routine assignment, a MEDCAP. The sun shone brightly overhead and everything appeared normal.

As the vehicle rolled down the road, an Ivy medic swatted at the bee buzzing around his head. Nothing unusual, just a bee.

The tiny insect flew away with an indignant buzz and seconds later returned with two friends.

Still unconcerned, the medic batted at the trio.

Glancing at the bee-sieged Ivyman, Dr. (Captain) Daniel Marks of Oak Park, Mich., the battalion surgeon, froze.

Huddled only inches above the man's head, a large mass of bees pulsed softly.

"There must have been hundreds of them," Captain Marks recalled.

"Stop batting at those bees," whispered the Captain.

Slowly the driver brought the vehicle to a stop and the Ivy-men slithered out.

Armed with a can of insect spray, the driver approached the vehicle and opened up with a heavy burst.

Instantly, the bees came howling out of formation and the Ivy-men dashed for cover.

As the dust settled, the insects returned to "their" vehicle.

The spray had done nothing to remove the buzzing menace. It had only made them angry.

Captain Marks stared at his invaded jeep for a moment and then made the "command decision.

The army doctor strolled over to a nearby helicopter, which was waiting to be refueled, and spoke to the pilot.

With a satisfied grin, Captain Marks returned to his men.

The chopper lifted off, hesitated for a moment and then moved directly over the "captured" vehicle.

The chopper's blades churned away, creating a miniature hurricane around the jeep.

Moments later, the bees were gone, literally blown away by the one hundred mile per hour winds created by the aircraft.

The MEDCAP team reclaimed their transportation and headed on their way. There is more than one way to skin a bee.

IVY LEAF

Ivymen Rout NVA From Volcano

By SP4 Hans Lange

BAN ME THUOT—The volcano rises majestically, pointing its crown 880 meters into the Central Highland sky southwest of the hamlet of Due Lap.

It sits strategically overlooking rolling hills and fertile valleys to the north and east, and more rugged terrain to the west and south.

Thousands of years ago it spewed hot, molten rock for miles in each direction. In May of this year it served as a launching site for North Vietnamese Army (NVA) mortars during the second offensive.

In late August, four enemy anti-aircraft guns were throwing hot lead at 4th Division helicopters flying to break the siege of the Due Lap Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG).

The volcano has been a favorite staging area for the NVA. Cambodia is only three kilometers to the west, easily accessible via dried stream beds and high-speed trails.

But change came dramatically when Ivy Division soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel William C. Moore of Alexandria, Va.; the 1st Battalion, 22nd infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel John Daniels of Alexandria, Va.; and from the 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Joseph T. Palastra Jr. of Salinas, Kan., moved into the area.

The NVA were methodically routed out of their lair and driven to seek sanctuary across the border. Attempts to re-infiltrate in large numbers have repeatedly been thwarted.

On the rim of the volcano, where the foe previously ruled, now sits a company of Ivymen—Company A, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry, commanded by Captain Richard B. Walker of Bloomington, Ind.

"Whoever has this high ground dominates the whole valley," said Colonel Herbert J. McChrystal of Arlington, Va., commander of the 2nd Brigade, while visiting Alpha Company's location.

"You can see how important this is to us," the colonel continued. "Down below, to the northwest, is Ban Sar Pa, a Popular Forces outpost. The enemy could overrun it if no one were up here.

"On the other side of the crater, to the south and west, is what we call Coffin Corner. Our artillery has nailed a lot of lids on NVA graves down there."

Directly to the north of the volcano is Fire Support Base Pack Rat, home of the 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry. There, Lieutenant Colonel Palastra echoes Colonel McChrystal's words.

"We have what the NVA needs, the volcano. And believe me, we're going to keep it"

IVY LEAF

Aids in Montagnard Harvesting

'Magic Bus' Runs For Help

By SP4 Hans Lange

BAN ME THUOT — The "magic bus" slowly makes its way up and down the steep inclines near the hamlet of Due Lap in the Central Highlands.

On its westward run it is usually empty. But on its eastbound trip there are often as many as 15 Montagnard refugees aboard . . . along with everything they can carry. And that's a load even the magic bus struggles under.

The bus really has no magic, nor is it a bus. It's a standard Army three-quarter ton truck which First Lieutenant Harry F. Bernard of Pittsburgh, civil affairs team officer of the 2nd Brigade's 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry, has turned into a shuttle vehicle for 2,500 Montagnard refugees temporarily housed in Due Lap.

The refugees were forced to make their homes at Due Lap when driven out of their villages near the Cambodian border by retreating North Vietnamese Army (NVA) soldiers after the heavy fighting at the Due Lap Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) Camp.

The "Cacti Blue" civil affairs team has been aiding them since they began arriving. Medical aid, food, even shelter has been provided. And now the truck.

Once the refugees were settled and assured of their safety, they began heading back to their destroyed villages every day to harvest crops.

It meant about a four-mile walk twice a day, once carrying only their tools, once with their baskets heavily-laden with food, plus anything else salvageable.

Lieutenant Bernard couldn't put the truck and his men at the disposal of the refugees all day. There was still other vital civil affairs work to be carried out. But he was able to use the truck for a few hours each afternoon when the Montagnards returned from their fields.

"At first, they were skeptical," says driver Private Hardy D. Eason of Waterbury, Conn., "but they soon realized riding that distance was better than walking it, especially with the load they were carrying on their backs."

"We finally convinced them," says Private First Class William E. Carlson of Lander, Wyo., the interpreter for the Cacti Blue civil affairs team.

"These people are proud," he continued, "and change is something they do not really accept. Once they saw that we were helping them accomplish what they were doing, they accepted us and the truck. That's when they started calling it the magic bus."

"They have really grown accustomed to us," adds Private Eason. "You should see them rush up to us when we pull into view. I don't know how they can carry so much stuff and still be able to run, even the women. When they get to the truck, Bill (PFC Carlson) and I give them a hand getting aboard and then we head to Due Lap and their temporary homes."

The truck makes as many as 15 trips a day, shuttling about 200 Montagnards from their fields to the three main refugee centers in Due Lap.

And it will continue until the refugees are able to rebuild their villages, which is the next project for the Cacti Blue civil affairs team.

IVY LEAF

Sept - Oct 1968



Mighty Ninth Blasts

With Round 10,000

BAN ME THUOT - Since moving to their present location near Duc Lap, Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 9th Artillery, commanded by Captain James Starkey of Minneapolis, Minn., has compiled an excellent record.

In a 45-day period, during September and October, Battery fired over 10,000 rounds and accounted for 169 Confirmed enemy kills.

"When we first moved here, our battery was split up," said

Captain Starkey. "Out of six 105mm Howitzers in our unit we only had three. During a three day period these three guns fired over 1,000 rounds. After four days our other three guns arrived.

"We were in direct support to the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry commanded by Lieutenant Colonel William C. Moore. But if anyone gets in trouble, we will always, help out."

Battery B has fired many counter-artillery attacks and has blasted numerous suspected enemy positions with astonishing results. They have tangled with the 20th and 95th C Regiments, which are part of the 1st NVA Division.

"Not only have we been busy firing in support of our units but also in building up the LZ," said Captain Starkey. "To look at this LZ now you wouldn't believe we were in the jungles of Vietnam. Our men have worked hard and have done an outstanding job."

IVY LEAF

29 Dec 68 Ivy Leaf

'Cacti Green' Down Tiger

By PFC John Uhlar



HUNTING PARTY - Members of a patrol from D Company, 35th Infantry pose with an 8-foot long tiger they killed in the mountains east of Pleiku. The soldiers, on a night patrol when the tiger began stalking them, shot the cat after waiting nervously until it came within three meters of their position. (USA Photo by PFC John Uhlar)

CAMP ENARI — Big game hunters spend lavish sums of money for high-powered rifles, hunting attire and knowledgeable guides to fill their trophy rooms with game.

Private First Class Joe Barber of Detroit, and Private First Class Bob Luster of Tiffon, Ohio, members of a patrol front Company D, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry, commanded by Captain Ernest P. Hotart of Bryan, Tex., may never make the big game hunter status.

But they will have pictures and relics of a 400-pound male tiger which would surely make big game sportsmen green with envy.

While working in support of the 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Donald W. Moreau of Leavenworth, Kari., the patrol was to secure an area along Highway 19-E.

Patrol leader First Lieutenant James Tefteller of Gilmer, Tex., had placed his men in their positions. After five hours of jungle quiet, PFC Gilmer and Luster spotted movement far to their right flank.

"We both thought the movement was coming from a stray water buffalo," stated PFC Barber, "so we held our fire in order to continue the mission."

More than an hour passed and the movement in the brush continued in circles around the position of the two Ivymen.

"The noise came closer," said PFC Luster, "but we still could not distinguish what it was. It was about three meters away when we first saw it was a tiger," he exclaimed.

Without much time to think, the two men opened fire on the now crouched jungle cat. Five full magazines were emptied into the cat as it leaped toward the men and then fell back, dead.

In the morning, the unusual KIA was carted back to Black-hawk Firebase where infantry and cavalrymen marveled at more than seven feet of tiger.

Tiger suits in the jungles of Vietnam have become a common sight, however, when it is still on the tiger it can be a nightmare, as two Ivymen now know.