

**IVY LEAF**

***2 Companies Take President's Honors***

**BY SP5 Jeffrey Tarter and SP4 Craig McGowan**

**CAMP ENARI—Two 4th Division units received the coveted Presidential Unit Citation from the President of the United States, Lyndon B. Johnson.**

**General Creighton W. Abrams, commander of U.S. Forces Vietnam, presented the award to Alpha Company of the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry, and Bravo Company of the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry, during a ceremony at the Ivy Division's headquarters here.**

**Also present at the ceremony was the 4th Division's commander, Major General Charles P. Stone.**

**The two companies were cited for a joint heliborne assault against several battalions of North Vietnamese Army forces near the Ia Drang Valley on May 28-29, 1966.**

**For 26 hours, the enemy made repeated efforts to dislodge the American infantrymen from their hilltop position. The NVA finally withdrew after losing 241 soldiers.**

**In the text of the citations, the two companies were praised for "outstanding performance and exceptional valor in action against a numerically superior and heavily-armed North Vietnamese Army force.**

**"Outnumbered and surrounded, Company A fought valiantly, shoulder to shoulder with Company B, as successive waves of the foe sought to overrun their position.**

**"With great professional skill, the officers and men repelled each enemy onslaught. Gallant acts by all men and inspired leadership were the order of the day.**

**"When the rear of battle subsided, the enemy had withdrawn to reorganize his battered units, leaving 241 of his troops dead and numerous weapons as mute evidence of the intensity of the engagement and the valiant efforts of the defenders.**

**"Through their heroic stand, another illustrious page was written in United States military history," the citations concluded.**

**Both units are now part of the Ivy Division's 3rd Brigade, commanded by Colonel Stan L. McClellan of Ventura, Calif., and are currently operating against enemy forces along the Cambodian border in the Central highlands.**

**CPT Beal Accepts Citation**

**Accepting the citation for Alpha Company was Captain Richard A. Beal of Dallas, who commanded the company between March and August this year. He said:**

**"I remember the action back in 1966. At that time I was in the 1st Battalion of the 14th Infantry, 25th Infantry Division, and Alpha and Bravo Company were also part of the .3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. All the battalions were part of a task force which was operating near Cambodia, west of Pleiku in 'the battle of 10-Alpha.**

**"At that time, this was one of the largest battles in the Vietnam War. Both Alpha and Bravo were under extreme enemy fire for a two-day period.**

**"Tremendous amounts of U.S. air and artillery support were being used. There were about six 12.7mm anti-aircraft weapons captured by the two companies, a number of 82mm mortars, and a large amount of other enemy weapons and ammunition.**



*General Creighton Abrams presents Presidential Unit Citation as Major General Stone looks on.*

**"It was a hard-fought battle, but due to the skill of the commanders and the spirit of the men, they did an outstanding job and really put one over on the NVA."**

**Another man at the ceremony who remembered the action was Staff Sergeant Santiago Vasquez of Brownsville, Tex. Sergeant Vasquez now serves with Delta Company, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry, but he was with Bravo Company in 1966.**

#### **Aboard First Choppers**

**"I was aboard the first wave of choppers that landed on the LZ," he recalled. "On the way in we started receiving small arms and anti-aircraft fire. When we landed on the LZ, the people on the first chopper were already engaged.**

**"You could hear the grenades and heavy automatic weapons fire. We got out of the choppers and ran about 10 meters to the woodline of the LZ and hit the ground.**

**"We hollered for more men to come up to our position, and as I looked back I saw a squad of NVA coming at us.**

**"I opened up at them, killing several.**

**"The whole perimeter was engaged. Later on a squad of our men assaulted an anti-aircraft gun which was keeping medevac choppers from landing.**

**"We captured it and employed it against the enemy. Alpha Company came in and was immediately heavily engaged. But with the aid of air strikes and gunships our two companies were finally able to defeat the NVA.**

**"The enemy was very determined, but our men were more determined," Sergeant Vasquez said.**

**Alpha Company is currently commanded by Captain Richard D. Wandke of Vacaville, Calif. Bravo Company's commander is Captain Andrew J. Mundy Jr., of Jersey, Ga.**

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### ***Four Ivymen Receive Cross Of Gallantry***

**By SP4 Craig F. MacGowan & SP5 Jeffery Tarter**

**OASIS—Four soldiers from the Ivy Division's 3rd Brigade have won the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry (Division Level) for their part in allied efforts in Kontum Province.**

**Their actions helped to virtually wipe out two NVA battalions.**

**Receiving the awards at Firebase Joan were Major Robert C. Woodworth of Maple Shade, N.J., Captain John A. Sans of San Jose, Calif., Specialist 4 David M. Bowman and Specialist 4 Joseph McCullough, both of Chicago.**

**Brigadier General Albin F. Irzyk, assistant division commander, presented the awards to the four Ivy men.**

**Major Woodworth, who headed the combined Task Force of ARVN and Ivy soldiers, recalled that the action kicked off with a bombing strike east of Highway 14 between Kontum and Pleiku.**

**"This area," he said, "was the headquarters of an NVA unit assigned to interdicting the highway.**

**"They haven't done it since then," he said.**

**"There were an awful lot of NVA buried in bunkers that had collapsed on them from the air-strikes and artillery.**

**"From later reports," he added, "those airstrikes made two NVA battalions combat-ineffective."**

**Fast on the heels of the air-strikes, ground troops moved into the mountainous countryside. Elements of the 3rd and 4th Battalions of the 42nd ARVN Regiment swept east from Highway 14, while Companies C and D of the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry were airlifted onto high ground overlooking the road.**

**Charlie Company's commander at that time, Captain Sans, recalled: "We had reached our objective on a hill top, stopped and set up our perimeter and sent out some small short range recon patrols.**

**"About 10 minutes later eight to ten NVA ran right past our position 40 meters away. They opened fire on us and we returned it immediately."**

**In the midst of the fight Specialist Bowman opened fire on an NVA soldier who was advancing toward the company command post, wounding him.**

**"He was still alive, waving one arm at us for help and holding an AK47 in the other," declared Specialist McCullough.**

## **Detain Enemy**

**The Cacti Green soldier decided to try detaining the wounded NVA.**

**Riflemen were sent out from Company C and moved around and behind the wounded enemy to distract his attention. Meanwhile Specialists Bowman and McCullough ventured into the open and detained him.**

**Medic worked feverishly to save the NVA soldier's life—and their work paid off.**

## **NVA Messenger**

**After questioning, it was discovered the prisoner was an NVA regiment messenger who revealed thorough knowledge of enemy forces in the area. At the time he was captured, the messenger was also carrying a pouch full of military documents.**

**In addition to the enemy dead, the sweep uncovered several bunker complexes and large amounts of NVA weapons and ammunition.**

**Specialists Bowman and McCullough are still assigned to Charlie company, now commanded by Captain Lee A. Smith of Mobile, Ala.**

**Major Woodworth is now the S-2 of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade, commanded by Colonel Stan L. McClellan of Ventura, Calif.**