

1969 News Feb

IVY LEAF

2 Feb 1969

***Cited Posthumously, Heroic PFC Awarded***

CAMP ENARI — The Silver Star has been awarded to Private First Jerry W. Jefferson of Paris, Ky., for his actions during a fire fight with a large enemy force, Nov. 30.

Private First Class Jefferson was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry, at the time of the action.

The citation reads in part: "PFC Jefferson's squad was deployed to a position northwest of Due Lap and assigned the mission of setting up an ambush in this area of known enemy activity.

"Private First Class Jefferson, the point man of the friendly element, was cautiously maneuvering through the dense terrain toward the proposed ambush site when he spotted an estimated company-sized North Vietnamese force advancing on his position.

"Immediately, he informed his squad leader, of the imminent danger and the small element tactfully deployed into an ambush defensive on both sides of the trail. As the enemy moved to within 20 meters of the ambush site, the friendly squad placed an intense volume of accurate automatic and small arms fire into the ranks of the advancing insurgents.

"Undaunted by the intense onslaught of enemy fire, PFC Jefferson maneuvered effectively to confuse and disrupt the enemy, while at the same time directing a barrage of deadly fire on the hostile positions with his weapon.

As PFC Jefferson was moving in an effort to flank the enemy force he was mortally wounded by the heavy enemy fire, but not before he expended a tremendous volley on their position."

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***Steal Away With Big Cache***

***'Cacti Blue' Find Weapons***

BAN ME THUOT — During a sweep near their firebase, Landing Zone Loyal, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry discovered a large cache along a stream bank.

The find included 41 B40 rockets, 14 Chinese-made Claymore mines, 10 60mm mortar rounds, two rifle adapters for rocket grenades, four carbines and two SKS rifles with telescopic sights.

Also four submachine guns, one BAR machine gun, two bags of B40 charges, one-half bag of small arms ammunition and two metal containers of 7.62mm rounds.

## Hurt The Enemy

Pleased with the success of his men, Lieutenant Colonel Joseph F. Sulenski, of Chicago, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry commander stated, "This find can only hurt the enemy in this area. The really significant aspect in stopping VC capabilities is the large number of B40 rockets and Claymore-type mines found."

The Third Platoon, led by First Lieutenant Edward L. Hoover of Newark, Del., was the point element as the company searched along the stream bank.

"We were on the river bank, Privates First. Class Michael A. Ruiz of Colusa, Calif., and Jerry J. Flieger of New York and I were up front. The cache was at the bottom of the bank, covered by a tin roof in plain sight. All three of us saw the tin cover," said Lieutenant Hoover.

"We took precaution to insure the cache wasn't booby-trapped and the lieutenant opened it," said PFC Ruiz.

"Those-B40 rounds look a lot better lying there than coming in against our bunker line," added Captain Walter Corey, of Concord, N.H., Alpha Company commander.

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### *Ivy - Vietnamese Units Join In Successful Enemy Hunt*

**BAN ME THUOT** — A week of cooperative effort between the 45th ARVN Regiment and 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry, was successful both in furthering the war effort and in building mutual friendship and respect between the men of the two units.

"It was a very good cooperative effort," said Colonel Joseph S. Sulenski of Chicago, commander of the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry. "The ARVN's were successful in killing seven and detaining several, and we recovered a large cache of weapons and ammunition.

"The entire action was successful in keeping the VC off balance in this area."

Some elements of the two allied units worked very closely together, even setting up a combined firebase, Landing Zone Loyal. The officers and men of Company A, Company C, and the 4.2 mortar platoon had an opportunity to meet their allies on a sustained basis.

"They are extremely good on these 105s," said Specialist 4 Thomas Jones of Detroit, referring to an element of the 232nd Artillery, ARVN.

"It was just like having Americans with us," continued Specialist Jones who is in the

4.2 mortar Platoon. "One man played the guitar well and knew a lot of American songs. The fire support was some of the best."

Captain Le Huu Thach of Saigon, commander of the 232<sup>nd</sup> Artillery, emphasized that his men also enjoyed sharing the firebase.

"The commanding officer and enlisted men all helped us with many things Your platoons helped clear our battery area. Some enlisted men came here and talked with us.

"We shared equipment. We even cooperated in formations to gather up the trash."

"I have never seen a more security conscious group," said Captain' Walter L. Corey of Concord, N.H., commander of Alpha Company. "There was perfect military courtesy and friendship at all levels of officers and enlisted men.

The forward observer attached to Alpha Company, First Lieutenant Russell T. Owen of St. Louis, Mo., had a number of opportunities to observe the ARVN artillery in action.

"Battery C," stated Lieutenant Owen, "is as efficient, fast and accurate as most comparable American units I have seen in Vietnam."

### **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.

### **IVY LEAF**

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### ***Lone Enemy Walks Blindly To Dead End***

BAN ME THUOT — A short range patrol from the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry killed one NVA and captured his weapon north of here.

The patrol, led by Sergeant Blain L. Shafer of Elkview, W.Va., was checking out the area immediately around their position when they heard the enemy soldier. The Americans took cover and waited for him to approach.

After determining the NVA was not part of a large enemy force, the five-man team opened fire.

"When the shooting was over, I instructed them to check out the man, being careful of an ambush," said Charlie Company Commander, Captain William R. McCall of Bristol, Tenn.

One SKS rifle and four clips of ammunition were recovered after the action.

## **IVY LEAF**

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### ***'It Was Like Seeing Daylight Again'***

### ***'Cacti Green' Patrol Recalls 20-Hour Ordeal***

**By SP4. Craig MacGowan**

OASIS—"It was the hairiest experience of my life." Those were the words of First Lieutenant Thomas Hahn of Riverside, Calif., as he summed up the feelings of the five men and two Kit Carson Scouts of Company D, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry, who were separated from their company during a night combat assault.

During their 20-hour ordeal the Famous 4th Division soldiers were responsible for killing five NVA and resourcefully implementing their own rescue.

The men were part of a Delta Company mission to reinforce an element of the 7th Squadron, 17th Cavalry in heavy contact near a downed gunship.

After realizing they were separated from their unit, the men made an attempt to get back with their company. Platoon Sergeant Ralph H. Bales of Danville, Ill., made the first move when he began signaling SOS to some of the remaining choppers flying away from the area, without success.

The Ivymen also realized that they could not move forward because the enemy was between them and their unit. The other avenue of escape was to the rear by crossing the river. But NVA were also stationed across the river.

So they decided to stay. The seven Ivymen remained in a tight defensive perimeter for approximately 15 minutes when helicopter gunships started dropping parachute flares and the first cracking of small arms fire was heard some 500 meters away.

WE KNEW immediately we couldn't stay out there and be exposed," recalled Lieutenant Hahn.

A tense dark night lay ahead for the seven men. So, with the aid of the Carson Scouts, they selected a well camouflaged position.

"Everybody had M16s, a few grenades, and I had a Claymore," said Specialist 4 Edward Byrd of Pocahontas, Va. "That was our main defense."

Throughout the night they could hear the sporadic exchange of small arms and grenade fire between the enemy force and the rest of the company.

Then at approximately six o'clock the following morning the men got their first glimpse of the enemy as six NVA passed near their position carrying one of their dead.

The men did not panic.

"We could have ambushed them," explained Lieutenant Hahn, "but we did not want to give away our position."

Soon after the first sighting of the enemy, Sergeant Bales started toward what had been the original landing zone the night before to "pop" a smoke signal in hopes that a chopper would spot it and look for them.

He had just started to move out when two more NVA came down a nearby trail.

"Then the shooting started," recalled Specialist 4 James P. Rogers of Belding, Mich. . "One ran across in front of me and I shot him. Sergeant Bales shot the other one."

SUDDENLY, their first concern was for survival. The men changed their defense tactics. An ambush was set up along the trail being used by the enemy. The men stationed themselves so that if the first man didn't get the enemy as he came down the trail, the others would.

"They didn't know we were there," said Lieutenant Hahn. "They had no idea of our ambush setup."

As each enemy soldier fell, the men carefully removed the body from the trail, concealing it in the bushes, making certain to get the AK47 or SKS, ammo and Chicom grenades.

Periodically members of the ambush would leave and try to flag down a helicopter.

This ambush process went on throughout the day until the men killed their fourth and fifth NVA shortly before 2 p.m.

For six hours, the men of the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry, waved towels, T-shirts and ace bandages fastened to make-shift staffs to attract the attention of helicopter pilots, but to no avail.

Pressure mounted, but the Ivymen were cautious not to reveal their position, even though they knew they couldn't remain in that location another night. It was evident that they would have to try for the river and look for their company.

"Then Sergeant Bales started waving his towel faster when a Cobra gunship made a low pass," said Specialist 4 Andrew Scott Jr. of Besemer, Ala. "And I told Specialist Byrd. I thought Sergeant Bales got us one,"

The ship returned, making two banking passes. Help was on the way. Five minutes later, a Huey helicopter came in and picked them up.

SPECIALIST Rogers remarked of their extraction, "I didn't think a chopper could come in so close after us because there was so much action in the area."

The 20-hour-ordeal was over. The gallant men of Company D, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry were on their way back to safety.

At the 3rd Brigade's forward base camp headquarters, the Ivy men had time to grasp fully what had just happened.

"It's hard to explain how you keep your mind in control. You're going to try to survive, but you never know what it's going to be like," commented Lieutenant Hahn.

It was like "seeing, day light again" for Specialist Scott. "It seemed like everything was dark until that chopper picked me up—then things just seemed right. Everybody was smiling and happy," he added.

Sergeant Bales commented, "These men fought like veterans. It was the first time two of them had ever been in contact. I'm proud of them"

The Ivy platoon sergeant also had praise for the Kit Carson Scouts working with the unit.

For their actions in the face of the enemy, Lieutenant Hahn and Sergeant Bales were awarded the Bronze Star with "V" and Specialists Byrd, Rogers and Scott received the Army Commendation Medal with "V". device.

The impact awards were presented to the men by the Famous Fourth's Commanding General, Major General Donn R. Pepke, during ceremonies at Firebase Tango.

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### ***Ration Postcards***

**BAN ME THUOT** — Running out of writing paper is a perennial problem for 4th Division troops in the field.

However, Specialist 4 Spencer J. Kreiser of Lorain, Ohio, a radio telephone operator for Company A, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry, has, come up with a field expedient for the problem.

He makes postcards from the tops of individual C ration cartons.

"I just tear off the top, draw a line down the middle, put the address on one end and the message on the other. Instead of a picture, whoever I send it to gets a description of the meal I just had," he smiled.

## **IVY LEAF**

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### **Plei Djereng Flares Up**

#### ***Firefights Badger NVA Troops***

**CAMP ENARI — Combat activity increased measurably this week throughout the Famous 4th's wide ranging area of operation as Ivymen were credited with 25 enemy kills.**

**Attention remained focused, however, on an area 28 kilometers north of Plei Djereng, where two companies of the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry initiated and remained in contact with the enemy for most of the week.**

**On Jan. 18 Company D, penetrated a hastily evacuated enemy base camp in the thickly jungled area north of Plei Djereng. It was estimated that the camp quartered at least a platoon-sized unit. Twenty-five fortified sleeping positions and a hut were destroyed and 20 60mm mortar rounds were evacuated.**

**The following day Company A, exhumed one NVA body in the area, while nearby Company C, following a blood trail, discovered a large cave complex housing numerous documents, 31 field packs, 50 NVA uniforms, an undisclosed amount of machine gun ammo, two NVA pistols, over a ton of 'ice and several photos.**

**On Jan. 21, Company D reported itself engaged in a heavy, day-long contact with an enemy of unknown size. NVA small arms and mortar fire was countered by US gunships and artillery throughout the day.**

**On Jan. 22, Company A linked with Company D in an effort to crush the enemy. Fighting continued through Jan. 23 as two companies expended a withering volume of fire against an apparently well-entrenched enemy force.**

**Two incidents were reported approximately 25 kilometers northwest of Kontum on Jan. 18. In the early morning hours, Company C, 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry's perimeter was probed by a VC force of undermined size. Two platoons reacted immediately, killing one VC on the wire and destroying one B40 rocket launcher.**

**Later that morning Company B, conducting a sweep in the same general area, discovered an enemy medical aid station. The sweep yielded a find of six large huts, each structured with a large, winding tunnel complex beneath, assorted medical supplies including needles and bandage, and an NVA gas mask.**

**One hundred meters to the west, spider holes for a company-sized unit were also found, and destroyed.**

**During the afternoon of Jan. 19, about 15 kilometers north of Plei Djereng, elements of the 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry, unearthed graves containing bodies of five NVA soldiers. Nearby, Company C found a quantity of NVA propaganda leaflets.**

Seven kilometers northeast of Pleiku, guards at the 62nd Motor Transport complex spotted two enemy soldiers moving through the perimeter wire on the night of Jan. 19. Employing jeep headlights for illumination, the guards killed the intruders.

On Jan. 23, 35 kilometers east of Camp Enari, elements of the 2nd Battalion (Mechanized), 8th Infantry discovered two caves, one 30' x 50' and the other 29' x 30'.

A more extensive search revealed another natural cave 50' x 60' x 30' containing five large huts capable of sleeping two companies of troops. It was estimated that the cave had been used about four hours prior to its detection.

Famous 4th Division LRPs also remained active throughout the week, playing havoc with small enemy units.

On Jan. 20, 23 kilometers northeast of Kontum, a LRP employed a Claymore mine to kill one of the two enemy soldiers spotted. A pack containing two grenades and documents, along with an SKS were captured. The following day the patrol made contact with 14 Viet Montagnard Cong (VMC). Small arms fire was exchanged, and when contact was finally broken, the LRPs counted four dead VMC.

On Jan. 23, north of Kontum, five enemy soldiers fell victims to another alert LRP patrol which engaged them with a heavy volume of small arms fire and grenades.

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**16 Feb 1969**

### ***Friendly Villager Points Out Mine***

**BAN ME THUOT** — Information from a friendly Montagnard villager led troops of the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry to an antitank mine in a road near Landing Zone Steadfast north of here.

The villager told a Kit Carson Scout attached to Delta Company about the mine. The 1st Platoon was dispatched with the Montagnard to find the device.

On the road linking LZ Steadfast with the battalion water-point, the platoon found a plastic antitank mine 10 inches in diameter and three inches thick with a pressure detonating device.

The Montagnard was rewarded for his part in the safe removal of the mine.

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***'Cacti Blue' Bags Huge Rice Store***

**By SP4 Michael Tousey**

**BAN ME THUOT — An abandoned Montagnard village northeast of here turned out to be a major enemy supply center and yielded 56 1/4 tons of rice to men of the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry.**

**The second platoon of Delta Company, led by 1st Lieutenant Melvin J. Grevstad of Roosevelt, N.Y., cordoned off the village of Buon Trang, and search teams found the huge cache in bins and sacks throughout the village.**

**"We thought the village was occupied and just went over to check it out. The rice wasn't hidden or anything," said Captain Vaughn D. Brauer of Twin Falls, Idaho, company commander of Delta.**

**"The village chief was brought out. It seems the VC were giving the villagers a rough time so they abandoned the village about four months ago," continued Captain Brauer.**

**Ambushes were set out on approaches to the village the evening after the discovery of rice, but there was no contact with the enemy.**

**The following morning the rice was removed and turned over to the Darlac Province Chief to be distributed to the refugees in the area.**

**Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Sulenski of Chicago stated that this rice was stored by the Viet Cong. "One village could not consume that much rice, and the villagers left before the rice harvest. This was a way station for the VC."**

**IVY LEAF**

**16 Feb 1969**

***Chaplain Recalls Visiting Montagnard Missionaries***

**BAN ME THUOT — The chaplain of the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry, Captain Alan Tyson of Forest City, Ark., and his assistant, Specialist 4 Jerry W. Mullins of Kettering, Ohio, received a vivid illustration of the methods used by Viet Cong to harass the people of South Vietnam.**

**Chaplain Tyson and Specialist Mullins spent two days visiting with a group of Christian Montagnards in the Drung Valley north of Dalat.**

**"These people have been forced to pick up and move everything they own about four or five times in the last eight or nine years strictly because of VC harassment. The VC have kidnapped them and killed their people," said Chaplain Tyson.**

The chaplain and Specialist Mullins were guests of Mr. and Mrs. George Irwin, who are missionaries from the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church working with the villagers. Specialist Mullins and the Irwins' adopted children are old friends.

"Their parents were also missionaries and were killed during Tet," said Specialist Muffins. During Tet, all the missionaries were forced to leave the area.

"It was a warm Christian atmosphere," said Chaplain Tyson of his visit with the villagers. "I regret that there was not time to lead a service.

"Mr. Sau, one of the tribes-people, is the main character in the book about the mission and these people, 'The Bamboo Cross' by Homer E. Dowdy.' He was one of the first Christians here. Both he and his brother are now ministers. We spent a day with them and had dinner in their hootch."

"Unlike most missions," explains Specialist Mullins, "these people have taken over the load and carried on the ministry themselves. Because of Tet and the missionaries leaving them, they have definitely got going on their own. They have four churches in a village of 1,200, supporting themselves.

In addition to building churches, the people in the area also have started a school. Both men reported that visiting the third grade class which sang "How Great Thou Art" in their tribal language was a moving experience.

Chaplain Tyson related his experience to many of the men in the battalion. "I thought they would be as interested in these people and their struggle as I was," said the chaplain.

#### **IVY LEAF**

**16 Feb 1969**

### ***Bisons Extract Troops Despite Jungle***

**'The tall trees and heavy loads complicated things... but the pilots did a beautiful job.'**

RUGGED TERRAIN and triple-canopied jungle prevented slicks from extracting Ivymen of the 1st Battalion, 35<sup>th</sup> Infantry, during heavy fighting northeast of Plei Djereng.

In the time of distress, the "Shamrocks" of Delta Troop, 1st Squadron, 10th Cavalry, who normally fly reconnaissance patrols in the Light Observation Helicopter (LOH), responded to the emergency with lightning precision.

"It was hazardous terrain, to say the least," recalled First Lieutenant Ronald E. Squires of Santa Clara, Calif., a Shamrock pilot describing the area near Chu Pa Mountain.

#### **Enlarge Bomb Crater**

Through the use of a chain saw which had been lowered to them, the ground forces were able to enlarge a bomb crater large enough for one LOH to land at a time.

Five more LOH's were rounded-up and one at a time, they descended through the 200-foot-thick jungle foliage.

### Speedy Extraction

The LOH's could only extract two Ivy-men at a time, but the speed and accuracy with which they worked proved to be enough aid.

"The tall trees and heavy loads complicated things," said Specialist 4 Clifford

R. Toye of Camden, N.J., a LOH crew chief, "but the pilots did a beautiful job."

For their actions, Lieutenant Colonel R.D. Renick, battalion commander, and 11 other members of Delta Troop received the Army Commendation Medal from Major General Donn R. Pepke, 4th Division commander, at a special impact awards ceremony.

Other Ivymen honored -were Captains Augustine Vendetti, Robert D. King, First

Lieutenants Thomas P. Smith, Ronald E. Squires, Misters Robert F. Freese, Paul L. Harp, Specialist 5 Gordon D. Haines, Jr., Specialists 4 Mike Huwe, Edmond D. Nugent, Allan R. Struss and Clifford R. Yoye.

### IVY LEAF

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### *Pilots Add 2 Cents To Chaplain's Mass*

BAN ME THUOT— To Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) Peter Van Dyke of Green Bay, Wis., a typical Sunday means going to the field to hold mass.

He has learned to live with the numerous distractions there—outgoing artillery shells, small arms fire and even 750-pound bombs exploding nearby.

But he wasn't quite ready for what happened to him at Firebase Saber in the Central Highlands, then home of the 2nd Brigade's 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry.

Father Van Dyke of I Field Force Victor, was offering an early mass to the 4th Division soldiers, when suddenly, two Air Force F-100 Super Sabres came screaming overhead only a few hundred feet off the ground.

### Service Halted

The service was momentarily halted while the noise abated. Then Father Van Dyke asked someone to contact the jets.

"Tell them not to fly over so low again," he smiled. "They're disturbing my service."

The message was radioed to Captain Bradley Van Sant of Davis, Calif., 21st Tactical Air Support Squadron, who was winging overhead in a FAC (Forward Air Control) plane.

"We had just put in an air strike on a suspected enemy bunker complex southwest of the Duc Lap Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG)," Captain Van Sant said.

"The F-100 pilot told me they still had fuel and they like to give the ground forces an opportunity to see what their air support looks like, So in they came.

"I relayed the chaplain's message to the pilots," he continued. "They apologized for disturbing the mass, but said to me: 'Please remind the chaplain that all good things come from above.'"

### **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**

**23 Feb 1969**

#### ***Fast PFC Outdraws Slow NVA***

BAN ME THUOT — Searching a thick jungle north of here, elements of the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry, killed two enemy soldiers.

The enemy element, which had been sighted in groups of three to five men, had avoided contact with the "Cacti Blue" whenever possible.' Several times the enemy managed to disappear into the jungle after a quick exchange of shots at a distance.

A member of Alpha Company on patrol along a jungle trail was credited with killing one NVA.

"I was walking point along the trail and we came face to face as I rounded a bend," said Private First Class Walter O. Lambert of Brilliant, Ala. "I imagine he was as scared as I was, but I shot first."

"It was a case of who was fastest on the draw, our point man or the NVA," said Captain Walter L. Corey of Concord, N.H., Alpha Company commander. "PFC Lambert won."

Returning to an area where it had previously ambushed an NVA soldier a week earlier, Charlie Company repeated the performance and captured one SKS and two packs.

The First Platoon was stationed along a road in pairs at 200 meter intervals.

"At-about nine in the morning, two enemy came upon our position, one in front of the other," said Private First Class Larry A. Pryor of Wanatah, Ind. "When the lead man was about 30 meters from us, we opened up and killed him and the other went down, too."

"We threw tear agent at the second one hoping to smoke him out, but he slipped away," said the second member of the ambush team, Private First Class Brooks E. Short of Hagerstown, Md.

With the aid of a tracker dog, the platoon pursued the second enemy soldier. Although he escaped, he abandoned his weapon and pack during his flight.

## **IVY LEAF**

### ***Cacti Blue Seize Tax Collector***

**BAN ME THUOT — Detention of one Viet Cong suspect after contact with the enemy gave the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry a valuable look at Viet Cong activities in the area north of here.**

On a sweep, Charlie Company received automatic weapons fire and engaged three individuals.

The enemy broke contact and the 2nd Platoon recovered two M2 carbines, three packs, documents and 45 pounds of rice.

At the same time, the 3rd Platoon, maneuvering into position to block the enemy retreat, sighted one individual who was engaged and detained. The detainee, who was carrying a number of documents and notebooks, stated he had been traveling with 10 other men when the contact occurred.

According to Captain John P. Fox of Fall River, Mass., battalion S-2, the suspect was a Viet Cong rice and tax collector.

"While most of the information was not of immediate tactical value, it did turn out to be interesting," said Captain Fox. "It should help the Province authorities in combating the Viet Cong".