

## rice-reds barren

Harvesting and capturing more than 3,000,000 pounds of rice from enemy controlled areas, the 196th Infantry Brigade has forced the starving VC/NVA on a strict diet that has dealt a serious blow to effective enemy missions in the "Charger's" area of operations.

Spearheading the rice denial program was 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., commanded by LTC Robert "Buck" Nelson in a program called "Golden Fleece." Operating in rice-rich Que Son valley, 2/1 working in close conjunction with Vietnamese Popular Forces (PF), Regional Forces (RF), and refugee harvesters, accounted for 1,914,551 pounds of rice harvested, 256,050 pounds captured from the enemy and 28,000 pounds destroyed.

One of the most significant factors in the success of "Golden Fleece" centered around the refugees—the people who actually did the harvesting.

"The refugees were given an opportunity in this operation to make a direct and meaningful contribution to their own support," said LTC Nelson. "They responded very well."

The refugees of Que Son contributed 450 male and female harvesters of all ages to the project. The program was so well accepted by the Vietnamese that every morning during the month long operation hundreds of enthusiastic small children and village elders – bent with age – were turned away from the Chinooks that carried the rice cutters to fields in fertile Que Son Valley.

Village leaders levied a personnel quota to each family and a daily rice quota for the entire harvesting force. Improved daily rice yields reflected the increasing civilian enthusiasm throughout the harvest.

Each morning three "Legionnaire" rifle platoons and three RF platoons established an outer perimeter of protection 500 to 800 meters beyond the harvest area.

An inner perimeter consisting of three PF platoons was employed at the edge of the rice paddy areas. A colorful panorama unfolds inside the wall of protection as hundreds of workers fan out through the golden-yellow fields cutting, bundling, and carrying the grain to control loading zones throughout the harvest area.

Chinook pilots of the 132nd and ~~174th~~ [sic-178th] Aviation Company flew dozens of missions daily, transporting thousands of pounds of rice from the outlying rice areas of the valley to a huge soccer field in the middle of Que Son.

The chinooks carried two external

(See RICE on Back Page)

## chargers climb high

### for mountain victory

LZ WEST- The fierce seven day battle against a lofty NVA stronghold on the steep 924 meter-high Nui Chom Mountain provided a battalion of the 196th Infantry Brigade with some of the most intense and vicious fighting in recent months in the "Charger" area of operation.

Steep slopes and triple canopy jungle combined with an estimated enemy force of 1,000 NVA to make operations extremely rugged on the cloud-shrouded mountain 26 miles northwest of Tam Ky.

The week long battle cost the NVA 65 dead and netted the 4th Bn., 31st Inf., 25 AK-47's, one Chicom machine gun, 29-82mm mortar rounds, two 82mm mortar sights and 20 NVA packs.

"It was one of the hardest battles I've seen over here," said LTC Robert Wetzels, 4/31 battalion commander.

"My men had to virtually crawl hand over hand up parts of the mountain. These mountains are some of the steepest in Vietnam," he said. "Day by day they pushed back the NVA and forced them from

(See CHARGERS on back Page)

EDITORIAL

## a Serviceman's gift

Christmas is quite often a different sort of holiday for those of us in the Armed Forces. For those of us fortunate enough to be assigned in an area where we can be with our families during the holiday season, the difference is not too apparent. But for those serving alone in distant overseas assignment or even in remote areas of the U.S., the holiday takes on a certain aspect of loneliness, perhaps even sadness.

To be sure, there is evidence of the joyous holiday season to be found in every military unit. Mail call brings Christmas closer to us, with the mail sacks overflowing with Christmas wishes and gifts from those we love.

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Then, on Christmas day, there will be the gigantic holiday feasts that had become traditional in even the smallest military mess hall.

For some, there will be a gala holiday USO show, performed by tireless entertainers who also have given up being with their families so that we might have a little more joy in our holiday.

But with all the special festive activities of Christmas, it still won't quite be the same for those of us serving in the steaming host of Vietnam or on a cold, gray warship on the high seas.

We'll miss the snow, holly, mistletoe and gaily-decorated trees.

But there is perhaps one more thing we can do to help fill any empty feeling we may have at Christmas.

### FAMILY BACK HOME

Think about the family gathering back home on Christmas Day. One of the things they're enjoying most is the feeling of "Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Man." Of course, peace does not reign throughout the world and good will toward man is often forgotten.

But citizens of the United States are closer to that ideal than most people in the world.

Those of us in the military are the vanguard of our nation, protecting that feeling of "Peace on Earth" and insuring that our families will continue to enjoy it in Christmases to come.

If the true joy of Christmas is in the giving rather than in the receiving, we can count ourselves among the happiest people in the world. Our "gift"—the peace our countrymen enjoy is one of the greatest that can be given. (AFPS)

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The Charger is an authorized periodic publication of the 196th Infantry Brigade Information office, for all Units of the brigade, Army News Features, Armed Forces Press Service and Armed Forces News Bureau material are used. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army. Contributions are encouraged and may be sent to the Brigade Information Office, Hqs 196th Infantry Brigade, APO San Francisco 96256. The Information Officer reserves the right to edit all material.

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1LT F.E. Longwell.....IO  
SFC F. Prestwood.....NCOIC  
SP4 N. Waters.....Brigade Reporter  
PFC F. Reinwald.....Brigade Reporter  
SP4 I. Martinez.....3/21 Reporter  
SP4 G. Hawkins.....4/31 Reporter  
PFC J. Bruce.....2/1 Reporter  
SP4 T. Amick.....Illustrator

### WEAPONS CHECK

1. Never point a weapon at anyone unless you intend to use it. Be muzzle conscious.
2. Always carry our weapon on "Safe". Check it periodically.
3. DO NOT chamber a round, unless use of the weapon is imminent.
4. Keep the barrel free from all obstructions.
5. When not in the field or on guard duty, DO NOT insert a magazine or clip in the weapon. Carry them in ammo pouches.
6. Clear your weapon before entering a building, and before cleaning it. Use a clearing barrel, or point the muzzle in the air.
7. Use common sense and caution when handling firearms and ammunition. Avoid horseplay with weapons. Treat them with respect and care.

Graphic Art Cartoon by T.J.A (Amick). Like a scene from a well-known episode of the outer limits... Two soldiers are peering out from a bunker. One soldier says, "I tell ya, there's somethin out there eatin sand bags off the bunker" The other soldier is rolling his eyes in his head. The drawing depicts a monster eating sandbags.

## preventative

### maintenance tips.

Your equipment is the best in the world, but it will not work correctly unless it is taken care of. And if it does not function correctly, and you are depending on it, you are in trouble. It can mean that you will fail to accomplish your mission, or it can mean that you and your buddies will lose your lives. Is there anything more important to you than these things?

#### VEHICLES

Drivers, the element in your engine cleaner is important. It must be clean to obtain best performance from the engine. If the element is dirty, clean it by blowing it out with compressed air or gently beat the cartridge on a flat metal surface to remove the dirt. Never clean the element in gas or solvent, for they will dissolve the plastic cartridge and seals.

For your multi-fuel vehicle drivers—here's the way to avoid crippling engine heat shock. After a long, hot run, always let your engine idle for at least five minutes. This gives it a chance cool down slowly. If it doesn't, excessive heat from the engine block will turn the water in the water jacket to steam, and might result in warping or cracking the head or ruining the head gasket. On a diesel engine, the excessive heat can cause the fuel injection nozzles to plug up.

When you start your multifuel vehicle, don't overdo it with the manifold flame heater. Use of the heater on a warm engine will cause over-fueling. It's better to load the engine during warm-up for that will heat faster; but never load to the point where the engine labors.

#### WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION

The old steel-type magazines for the M-16 rifle frequently caused bolt lock failure and failure to feed. The steel-type magazines should be turned in and replaced by the new aluminum magazines. Both types have the same FSN (1005-056-023), but the steel magazine had ribs arranged in a grid pattern while the aluminum magazine has only three vertical ribs.

Tips on the M-16: Remember never to close the upper and lower receivers while the selector is in the AUTO position. Jamming the receivers closed will force the automatic sear down, damaging the bottom of the bolt carrier. Remember also—don't dismantle the lower receiver for maintenance in the field; that's a higher echelon task. And finally, always keep a light coat of oil on the lower receiver, and remember to clean the gas port in the bolt carrier every day.

On the M-14 rifle, the gas cylinder mechanism is one of the most sensitive and critical parts. Never use sharp tools or abrasive material to clean it; the only things you should use are bore cleaner and a soft cloth. Always check for oil inside the base cylinder, because it will cause carbon buildup and really make it difficult to clean next time.

Here's a tip on the M-79 grenade launcher; be careful when using the wrench that comes with your M-79 to install the firing pin retainer or to attach the receiver group to the stock. If you use too much pressure, you'll break off one or both of the tips on the wrench, and chances are that they'll get lodged in the retainer, which means that you'll have to call on higher echelon maintenance to dig them out.

#### GENERATORS

It's amazing how many guys forget that generators have to breathe in order to stay in operation. When you emplace a generator with protective sandbags, make sure you leave enough air space around it so that a good supply of clean air gets to it. And be sure that the cover whether it's temporary or permanent, leaves enough space for heat to dissipate.

Where do you spot your generator? The common sense way is to get the generator close its biggest user. This will save on cable. And speaking of cables be sure that you mark the location of all underground cables to avoid accidental damage from digging in the area. (USARD FS)

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Holiday Greetings from  
The CHARGER Staff.  
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## On the way up

### HHC 196th INF BDE

#### SERGEANT

Michael Ryan

#### SPECIALIST 4

Gary Bradford  
Joseph Burns  
Jerry Bussey  
David Cantrell  
Josephus Craft  
John Dixon  
John Franklin  
Darrell Hasting  
William Howe  
Bill Huffaker  
Kenneth Ives  
Joseph Jergens  
Hugh Johnson  
Gerald Kinnaird  
James Lidia  
James Locklear  
Arnold Pagan  
Billy Pato  
Robert Saul  
Vernon Seaborn  
Gary Schulte  
James Smith  
Robert Vail  
Bruce Warrick  
Thomas White  
Harold Zachary

#### PRIVATE FIRST CLASS

Richard Williams

### 3/82 ARTY

#### STAFF SERGEANT

William Bray

#### SERGEANT

Richard Anderson  
Robert Arthur  
Everett Emory  
David Galliher  
Mike Garcia  
Jimmy Huggitt  
George Jackson  
Richard Kolash  
Roy Lockard  
Billy Lundy  
Charles May  
Gary Norris  
Adalberto Pinerio-Rodrigues  
Norman Strador  
Bruce Thrasher  
Tommy Tipton  
Russell White  
Richard Whuk  
Roy Woody

#### SPECIALIST 5

Jorge Guadalupe-Ortiz  
Roman Ramos-Quinones

William Blackwood  
George Blahodatny  
Michael Carmody  
Ronald Cattaani  
Larry Combs  
Jerry Crawford  
Robert Dickran  
William Berrington  
John Fletcher  
Herman Florence  
Frank Guerra  
Roger Harris  
Kenneth Harwell  
James Holm  
Harold Meek  
Douglas Voss  
Frank Williams  
David Abbey  
Gregory Adams

#### CORPORAL

Gary Bright  
Calvin Houk  
Roger McClain  
Hollis Raulerson  
Jose Sosa  
George Syder  
John Tryba  
Joe White  
Alvis Zachary

#### SPECIALIST 4

Marvin Allen  
Floyd Beard  
Arlis Blanton  
Robert Burton  
Leonard Davidson  
Norman Dorsey  
James Duncan  
Steven Fitzgerald  
Randolph Gearheart  
Davis Hall  
Ronald Hargrove  
Turner Harrison  
Lester Heintz  
Michael Hollrud  
Alforia Holt  
James Kennedy  
James Panagokos  
David Richbourg  
Jesse Sanchez  
Martin Sandell  
Stanley Satcher  
Paul Shedlosky  
John Todd  
Kenneth Varner  
Arthur Weisser  
Gary Zoebarth

### 2nd BN, 1st INF

#### SPECIALIST 4

John Barrett  
Charles Lea??er  
Donald Mar??ley  
Keith Myars  
Clyde Savy  
Charles Trunkhill

### F Troop/17 CAV

#### SERGEANT

Lacy Nichols

#### SPECIALIST 4

Edward ???p?a  
Fu?wl, Babcock  
John ?????ter  
Allen Gaslcs  
R???? H??  
Arthur Brooks  
Joseph ?????nna  
Larry Se??  
Ronald A??n  
James Campbell  
Daniel ??????y  
Ha??? ?????on  
Ster???? Fairley  
C????????? Few  
Robert ???reski  
James F????lton  
Clarence Harmon  
Edgar L?????  
Michael Holmes  
Thomas Holt  
Carl Jones  
Ro???? J????lain  
Robert J?rca  
Ronald Killebrew  
Lewis Leatherwood  
Virgil Lusk  
D????? Murray  
Charles Barker  
Larry ???rco  
Je??? ?????er  
Gary ?????ll  
Da?? ???gen  
Howard ?????nburg  
D????? ???gen  
Harvey C??ton  
R?????l Shaffer  
Carl Smith  
Melvin Watkins  
Edward Woods  
Gary Yamamoto  
Theodore Zeller

### IT PAYS TO STAY

#### REENLIST ARMY

*[Historian comment: The middle and right column were especially difficult to transcribe. Many of the names in column 2&3 are difficult best guesses.]*

## AWARDS

### HHC 196th INF BDE

#### SILVER STAR

SGT Charles Desmond

### DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

SP4 Ronald Cain

#### BRONZE STAR

1LT Frank Yodar

### ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL

MSG Harrison Summerfield

SP5 Thomas Gebbie

SP5 James Hunt

SP4 Kent Serviss

### 3/82 ARTILLERY

#### BRONZE STAR

MAJ Carl Clark

CPT Robert White

1LT Steven Jakatt

1LT John Oliver

1LT Christopher Pelkey

SFC David Carpenter

SFC Robert Flemming

SSG Roger Dufham

SSG Lonie Hartly

SSG Russell Kern

SSG Peter Polivka

SSG Luther Ramey

SSG Mose Simmons

SSG Charles Sutherland

SSG John Thomas

SSG Joseph Young

SGT Charles Bovia

SGT Charles Brown

SGT George Clemments

SGT Miguel Hinojosa

SGT Tommy Jones

SGT Richard Kolash

SGT John Willett

CPL William Wright

SP4 Wayne Hamilton

SP4 Edward Piccard

SP4 John Polseno

### AIR MEDAL

CPT Gary Brown

SFC David Carpenter

### ARMY COMMENDATION

SGT Dale Driskill

SGT Clarence Kleinberg

SGT James Smith

SGT Harold Shahl

SP5 Edwin Kaiser

CPL Jose Andino-Maldonado

CPL William Daugherty

CPL Danny Davis

CPL Rudy Hernandez

CPL Ulrich Lopez

CPL Charles Maldeney

CPL Jack Parker

CPL Steven Storr

CPL Tommy Tipton

CPL Floyd Washington

CPL Roy Woody

CPL Ricky Wooten

SP4 David Abbey

SP4 Johnny Banks

SP4 Gary Beaty

SP4 Bobby Bovill

SP4 Leonard Boyd

SP4 William Burnard

SP4 Charles Chappell

SP4 Larry Combs

SP4 Jerry Crawford

SP4 Everett Emory

SP4 Jerry Pike

SP4 Herman Florence

SP4 Mike Garcia

SP4 Jessie Gordon

SP4 Kenneth Harwell

SP4 James Helm

SP4 George Jackson

SP4 Frank Robinson

SP4 Theo Rogers

SP4 Bruce Thrasher

SP4 Junior Timmons

SP4 Alan Van Kyke

SP4 Douglas Voss

SP4 Tyrone Whiddon

SP4 Clavin White

SP4 Jimmy Williams

SP4 William Wisemann

SP4 Richard Wofford

SP4 Joseph Zimmerman

PFC Jerry Bailey

PFC John Burney

PFC George Canales

PFC Henry Clark

PFC Terrance Crowley

PFC Nelson Reesm illa

PFC David Fox

PFC Michael Grill

PFC Calvin Houk

PFC Willie Johnson

PFC Jack Jones

PFC Robert Kincaid

PFC Leon Koernor

PFC Roy Kraject

PFC Dallas Miller

PFC Paul Cverko

PFC David Richbourg

PFC Escaban Roche-Santos

PFC William Rogers

PFC Danny Willis

SP4 Michael Jegodka

SP4 John Lail

SP4 Robert Larson

SP4 Roy Lockard

SP4 Billy Lundy

SP4 Robert Mercier

SP4 John Miranda

SP4 Gary Norris

SP4 Jamie Novoa

SP4 Michael O'Conner

SP4 Gary Paeseney

SP4 Dennis Plows

SP4 Jeffery Rark

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The Nations Second high-  
est award for valor is  
the DISTINGUISHED SERVICE  
CROSS. It was first awarded  
during the Mexican War as  
the Certificate of Merit.  
The man who won it, pursued  
five Mexican cavalrymen and  
captured one. This set the  
standard which has been  
followed over since. The  
name of the award was  
changed in 1918 by Congress  
to the DSC.

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*[Historian comment: These names were moderately difficult to transcribe. A number of the names were difficult best guesses.]*

## CHARGER....

### POTLUCK

LZ WEST-If it hadn't been for a little "pot luck" one heroic lieutenant probably would have been scalped while moving west (from LZ West).

The scene unfolded when a "Charger" company from the 196th Infantry Brigade came into heavy contact with a large enemy force of NVA soldiers on Nui Chom Mountain in the Hiep Duc Valley.

After the initial contact, 1LT Stephen Rice (Ames, Iowa) of Alpha Company, 4th Bn., 31st Inf., ran to the front of his platoon to assist and direct his men during the fire fight.

Rice administered aid to two of his wounded men until his platoon medic arrived at his location. He then directed M-60 machine gun fire on an enemy bunker where a heavy volume of .30 caliber machine gun fire was coming from.

Maneuvering close to the enemy bunker, Rice fired his M-16 and threw several hand grenades until the NVA weapon was silenced.

His platoon moved in to search the bunker while Rice paused during an unexpected dizzy spell and rested for a minute.

"My RTO told me a bullet had creased my helmet," said Rice, "and when I removed my steel pot I found out a .30 caliber bullet had gone completely through it, and creased my scalp along the way."

"I really started to sweat when I looked at my steel pot and saw those holes in it," said Rice.

In the search of the NVA bunker Alpha found six dead NVA soldiers and captured four AK-47's and of course the scalper, (.30 caliber machine gun).

When medics bandaged Rice's wound later on they had to shave part of his head to clean the wound. Rice felt fortunate the bullet hadn't done a final job of scalping.

### CHAPEL DEDICATED

LZ ROSS- Religious services at LZ Ross are being conducted in a new interdenominational chapel instead of on the black-topped helicopter pad.

The chapel, a wood-burned pine panel structure, was dedicated on Thanksgiving Day.

Colonel Frederick J. Kroesen Jr., (Arlington, Va.) the 196th Infantry Brigade Commander but the ribbon that formally opened the 2d Bn., 1st In., chapel.

Captain Robert R. Siebert (Inglewood, Calif.) the battalion chaplain, gave the benediction. Captain Robert ~~Garters~~ (Leminsters, Mass.) assistant brigade chaplain gave the blessing and Major Donald Bartley (Rock Bridge Baths, Va.) the brigade chaplain read the scriptural passages.

On the arched doorway are the star of David and Christian cross motifs formed by two stained glass windows (pressed plastic). Inside a solid pine altar stands before a tall backlighted Latin Cross which stretches from the floor to the topmost roofbeam.

A steeple is being planned for the chapel and the parents of Battalion Surgeon, Captain Kirk L. Hilliard Jr. (Pleasantville, N.J.) are sending a bell "that's already in the mail."

The chapel will be used for more than religious services. It has already been used for a weekly mobile PX and movies will be shown in the afternoons and evenings.

### TIGERS BELIEVE IN SANTA

LZ Center-Supplying units in Vietnam is supposed to be a problem, however, a company of "Chargers" from the 196th Infantry Brigade has solved that problem.

They can chain smoke and never burn through their supply of cigarettes. They can feast for hours and never consume their vast store of canned food. They can average a book a day per man and never dent their vast library.

Of course all this reservoir of supplies comes in handy only when Company C, 3rd Bn., 21st Inf., (Charlie Tigers), are not conducting operations in the field against "Charlie".

The supplies started pouring in when "Charlie Tiger's" first sergeant Maurice Kilpatrick (New Orleans, LA.) wrote his two former mayors from New Orleans and West New York requesting reading material.

The result was fantastic. Not only did the "Charlie Tigers" receive supplies, but became honorary citizens of both cities.

Mayor Victor Schiro (New Orleans) has been sending boxes of magazines and books along with various canned food products periodically to his adopted fighting unit.

Mayor John R. Armellino, himself a hero of World War II, personally sent a box containing 300 packages of cigarettes to Kilpatrick and his men.

## Rounds and sounds

### ??????ES TRACK SEASON

LZ CENTER - A marathon race that included a two-day running gun battle between "chargers" of the 196th Infantry Brigade and the VC soldiers ended with 18 enemy not around at the finish line.

The track meet began before sunrise on an early morning patrol by Co. A, 3rd Bn., 21st Inf., in the flatlands two miles southeast of Que Son Valley.

Alpha was searching a suspected enemy area, when 1LT John ~~Bagtas~~ Jr., (Detroit, Mich.) sported several weapons carrying VC in front of him. They engaged the VC with small arms fire and began a footrace that would have done justice to an olympic marathon.

Alpha pursued the enemy nearly four hours and engaged them several times along the way. The meet was discontinued when the VC ran out of breath and ammunition.

The scoreboard showed nine VC dead and four weapons captured. On the following day two "Gimlet" patrols were sent to the same area.

The first patrol passed through the area and found nothing. two hours later the second patrol encountered heavy enemy resistance.

Between 15 and 20 VC took off running, apparently forgetting the final results of the race the previous day. Four VC were killed during the ensuring scamper.

The chase ended when five were killed while cornered in a river. The meet was a big success for the "Charger" company. For 18 VC, it was a breathtaking finale.

### JACK-OF-ALL-TRADES

LZ ROSS-The infantryman in Vietnam, by necessity must be able to assume different positions of responsibility at a moments notice.

SGT Earnest P. Phelps (Chicago, ILL.) however, thinks the situation may have gotten a little out of hand.

Phelps was a squad leader for Charlie Company from 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., of the 196th Infantry Brigade. He was squad leader that is until his platoon sergeant went on R&R.

Phelps was called upon to be the new platoon sergeant. The next day in his new role of platoon sergeant, he watched the platoon leader get medevaced out because of illness.

Who was the logical choice to take his place?-Phelps of course. He lasted as platoon leader less than 48 hours. A transferred staff sergeant came on the scene. Phelps didn't even care to be told. He figured he could handle the responsibility of squad leader without any problems after his myriad of roles with his 196th Inf., Bde., unit.

### ZAPPER SQUAD

LZ WEST-Most of the combat operations in the Americal Division are conducted during the hours of daylight and generally involve many men, but a company of "Chargers" from the 196th Infantry Brigade has come up with one of the Brigade's most unconventional and surprisingly effective combat units.

The Zapper Squad" or "Z-Squad" of Charlie company from the 4th Bn., 31st Inf., consists of seven men. They generally operate at night and rely on three combat tactics: speed, stealth and surprise.

Z-Squad walks point for a platoon from the company. When they spot a heavily worn trail the squad drops their heavy gear and runs at break-neck speed until they either run into "Charlie" or a complex of huts. When "Z" Squad enters a hut, frequently they'll hear or see "Charlie bolting out of the nearest exit.

Charlie's fast exits are usually slowed down by a burst from one of the Zapper's M-16s's.

Staff Sergeant Ernan Gutierrez (Kingsville, Texas) came up with the idea of working with a small number of men at night. After getting approval from the company commander, he asked for volunteers and recruited six men.

Most of the "Zapper" operations occur after the company completes search and clear missions during the day.

"We usually have our best success on night operations when 'Charlie' comes down from the hills to eat and rest," said SSGT Guttierrez.

"One night recently, we ran into a village and caught on NVA and four VC sitting down to a meal of rice and tea. The VC told us the NVA soldier was teaching them classes in booby traps, explosives and infiltration.

"The only really bad night we had was when we heard loud movement in a hedgerow near a hootch. We charged into the bushes and a water buffalo charged us right back out again," said Gutierrez.

"The Z-Squad has killed 13 enemy and captured 13 in less than a month. That's a lot of zapping.

## Change of command

LTC Sinclair L. Melner (Reno, Nev.) a veteran of 19 years in the Army, assumed command of 2nd Bn., 1st Inf., recently in ceremonies at LZ Ross. Melner replaced LTC Robert "Buck" Nelson (Columbus, Ga.) after being brigade executive officer for three months before becoming commander of the "Legionnaires."

He was a student at the National War College at Ft. McNair in Washington D.C. before arriving for his first tour in Vietnam. Melner received his MA degree in International Affairs at the George Washington University while in the nation's capitol.

Prior to War College assignment, Melner spent three years with NATO forces in Germany. He served 15 months with US Army Europe as Chief of Maneuvers Branch in Heidelberg. Later he moved up to battalion commander of the 1st Bn., 30th Mech. Inf., in Scheinfurst for 21 months.

His wife, Roma, and three children Kathy, 17, Jean, 6 and Mike, 16, live in Reno, Nevada where Melner was born and raised.

### FOOTBALL POOL

The Public Information Office has listed below some of the owl games soon to be played. Circle your choice or TIE and send it to PIO not later than 27 Dec. 1968.

The next issue of THE CHARGER will print the names of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place entries.

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Dec. 27      Tangerine Bowl
Richmond ----- Ohio University -----Tie|
Dec. 28      Gator Bowl
Missouri -----Alabama-----Tie|
Dec. 28      Sun Bowl
Auburn-----Arizona-----Tie|
Dec. 28      East-West Shrine Game
East-----West-----Tie|
Dec. 30      Peach Bowl
Florida State - Louisiana State -----Tie|
Dec. 30      Blue-Grey Game
Blue-----Grey-----Tie|
Dec. 31      Bluebonnet Bowl
Oklahoma-----Southern Methodist--Tie|
Jan. 1      Orange Bowl
Kansas-----Penn State-----Tie|
Jan. 1      Sugar Bowl
Georgia-----Arkansas-----Tie|
Jan. 1      Cotton Bowl
Tennessee-----Texas-----Tie|
Jan. 1      Rose Bowl
Ohio State___Southern California--Tie|
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NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
UNIT: \_\_\_\_\_

### UNIFORM FOR VIETNAM FLIGHTS TO CHANGE

WASHINGTON (ANF)—Soldiers flying to and from Vietnam on military flights soon will be able to wear their tropical combat uniforms instead of dress uniforms for both trips.

Department of the Army Message 885941 states that the combat tropical uniform will be worn on military and Military Airlift Command (MAC) charter flights. Sergeants major, Warrant officers and officers may wear this uniform if they desire.

After reaching the processing center in the United States, men returning from Vietnam will wear either the Army Green uniform issued at the center or the Army Khaki uniform in their possession for travel within

The message points out that the plan is designed to improve in-flight comfort and does not include wear of the tropical combat uniform during individual travel within the continental United States. The date for beginning the new policy has not yet been set.

According to Americal Division officials, the implementation date will be announced as soon as it is received from DA.

Until that time the uniform for personnel departing RVN to CONUS remains as prescribed in Appendix I, USARV Regulation 670-5.

**Graphic Art cartoon by Amick:** Two soldiers on patrol are nervous. There are holes filled with one eyed monsters around them. This is the caption: "If it hits the fan watch which hole you jump into."



**We are here to stay** (Graphic Art: left side American Flag, Right side the flag of the republic of South Vietnam.

The South Vietnamese flag is flying again, high over Phu Tho--this time to stay.

Three years ago the people and chief of this small village, located 20 miles west of Tam Ky, were overrun by VC and forced to flee. They fled north and south from enemy terrorism to the Vietnamese government security areas of Moc Bai and Que Son.

Now with the assistance of a battalion of "Chargers" from the 196th Infantry Brigade, Phu Tho will again be a thriving community consisting of more than 1,200 people located in three large hamlets. The village is presently the focus of a new and intensive pacification effort by "Legionnaires" of the 2nd Bn., 1st Inf.

"We have been working toward this phase for the past five months," said MAJ Jerry E. Rowe (Quincy, Calif.).

"During the rice denial program, rice was purposely left in that area for the people to harvest."

"Most of all we back this move because we feel the people are ready," said Rowe. "There is a strong desire to go back."

The Phu Tho refugees have done a great deal themselves to make their dream come true. A group of former residents with a strong desire to return to their old home have formed a PF platoon which is responsible for the security in conjunction with the village relocation.

-----Graphic of helmet and Vietnamese hat side by side-----

The platoon runs periodic patrols through the area, accompanied by a "Legionnaire" rifle squad to insure communications and artillery support. Their first objective is to root out the VC infrastructure among the people who remained behind when the enemy gained control of the village.

"The Phu Tho group is the best PF platoon we have ever operated with," said LTC Sinclair L. Melner (Reno, Nev.) 2/1 battalion commander. "It must be the desire to go back. They have rooted out more VC infrastructure from their area of responsibility than we have ever gotten anywhere else." Since early November, 23 Viet Cong have been killed or captured by the platoon.

In the past three months a 12-man village committee composed of the village chief, his assistant and ten hamlet chiefs have regularly visited the old and new village sites working with the people and explaining the program.

The Que Son District is contributing additional PF-RF security elements. A U.S. mortar team and MAT advisers will also be assigned to the village.

In late November, the second of two coordinated operations was conducted among the villagers. A cordon and search by two "Legionnaire" rifle platoons, three PF platoons and the Phu Tho group disclosed three VC suspects.

-----Graphic of helmet and Vietnamese hat side by side-----

Then the village committee, Psyops team and a combined Que Son/U.S. medcap team went to work among the assembled people explaining the program, hearing grievances and aiding the sick. More than 250 received medical treatment and 180 children were bathed. Large quantities of soap, candy and food stuffs were distributed to the villagers.

Construction of the village site has already begun. An area has been cleared and a foundation laid for a bunkered compound and fortified village headquarters. This defensible core around which the village can reconstitute itself is essential if the people are to maintain their security against the threat of VC reprisals.

"Once we build a village headquarters and perimeter, we can say that at least part of the village is GVN controlled because we physically occupy the ground and we can give people some protection," said CPT George E. Hamm (Daniels Road, W.Va.) the 2/1 civic affairs officer.

Perhaps the strongest factor motivating the Phu Tho people's struggle to return to their old homes is their 52-year old village chief Ngo Thuong, a short leathery brown man with an infectious grin and a persistent determination.

Thuong is mindful of the dangers involved. He has become a prime target for VC retaliation, but it doesn't matter to him. "We have returned," he said, "we are here to stay--both ourselves and the South Vietnamese flag."

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**Rice.....**

nets each holding 6,000 pounds of rice. In Que Son the rice was thrashed by small manually operated machines and one large water buffalo who crushed the rice kernel from stalk by walking on a large mound of rice in the middle of the thrashing area.

Exactly half the weight of the rice is edible rice kernel".

"The basic purpose of this operation was to prevent rice grown outside GVN controlled areas from being harvested and consumed by enemy forces," said LTC Nelson. The original goal of the "Legionnaires" was to harvest or capture 1,000,000 pounds of rice.

One day in the middle of November, a small green sand bag was dropped from a helicopter by parachute near the 196th Brigade BTOC. On this bag was marked in big red letters, "Buck 2,000,000th". Buck Nelson and his battalion wanted COL Frederick J. Kroesen Jr., brigade commander to know they had doubled their goal.

In support of the rice denial program, Gimlets from 3rd Bn., 21st Inf., accounted for 526,000 pounds during a two week operation in November. Refugees from Nui Loc Son harvested the rice which was distributed to the refugees of Tam Ky.

"Most of the rice would have gone to 'Charlie'," said CPT Steven Gendobry (Walting, Conn.), Civil Affairs Officer. "The sniper and mortar fire we took during the operation proved he wasn't happy about losing his lifeline----rice."

During the operation, 250 Vietnamese relocated at their request and 20,000 pounds of rice held in reserve for them at Nui Loc Son.

A four-day operation starting in late October netted "Polar Bears" from 4th Bn., 31st Inf., with over a quarter million pounds of rice for refugees at Nui Loc Son.

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MAIL ME HOME

| STAMP

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(Continued from Page 1)

**chargers. ....**

pushed back the NVA and forced them from well-entrenched bunkers."

The initial contact with the enemy was made when Delta company discovered an enemy base camp on the mountain.

After four hours of fighting the enemy broke contact. Delta later found five dead NVA while searching the area. That night two more line companies moved in to search and clear Nui Chom Mountain.

The following morning Alpha company moved through the base camp area. Tactical airstrikes were called in on enemy positions high on the mountain and were followed by Blue Ghost gunships from F Troop, 8th Cavalry.

As night approached, Alpha and Charlie companies pulled back to night defensive positions.

On the third day of fighting observation helicopters and Helix airplanes had reported observing an estimated 50 bunkers encircling a command post on the mountain.

They also reported spotting company-size NVA elements in the base camp area. Tactical air strikes were again called in and the fighter bombers dropped 250 500-pound bombs on the NVA positions.

The following morning the three infantry companies began to close on the NVA base camp from three sides. The three infantry companies met strong resistance from the enemy bunker positions.

Charlie Company destroyed 10 bunkers and killed 30 NVA as they slowly gained ground and penetrated the enemy perimeter.

Charlie Company also captured a well supplied NVA medical aid station and seized an enemy doctor and two female nurses.

The NVA doctor said that during the first two days of contact he treated more than 50 wounded NVA soldiers.

During the second night he got word from his high command to hide his medical supplies and equipment and move north.

He explained that he and his nurses were preparing to leave when Charlie Company captured them.

During the battle for Nui Chom Mountain, 32 tactical air strikes were flown and over 4,000 rounds of 105mm and 155mm artillery rounds were fired in support of the infantry.

The NVA moved north and left their high-peaked fortress in the clouds to a tired and weary bunch of "Chargers". All the NVA moved north-except 65 and that's not including the countless number of enemy who disappeared in the fiery wake of air strikes and artillery attacks.