

(Copy from C 4/31st Inf. Bn. veteran James B. Simms with the assistance of Mike Crutcher a veteran of E & HHC, 1/5 Cav, 1969-70 1<sup>st</sup> Cav Div. May 2014.)

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The "CHARGER" (Snoopy cartoon character dressed as WWI fighter pilot)

"AHEAD OF THE REST"

Vol 1, No. 7

CHARGER

December 1, 1969

"To the officers and men of the 196th Brigade.

It is a great honor for me to take command of this brigade that you have made famous.

Your accomplishments are well known. America is behind you and is proud of you. Continue to be proud of yourselves and more great achievements lie ahead.

I ask and know I will get the full support of each of you in the months to come. "-COL Lee

## COL. LEE

### New Bde Co.

1Lt Kenneth S. Mikulski

LZ HAWK HILL\*\* Colonel James M. Lee recently assumed the command of the 196th Infantry Brigade. The Wilmington, North Carolina, native is a 1950 graduate of West Point, a veteran of three wars and has received numerous decorations during his career.

COL. Lee fought in World War II as an enlisted man prior to attending the United States Military Academy.

He served with the 5th Regimental Combat Team in Korea as a platoon leader, company commander and later as the assistant S-3 (operations officer). After graduating from the Career Officers Advanced Course at Fort Benning, Georgia, in 1956, he was assigned to the 14th Infantry Regiment in Hawaii, where he served as company commander and battle group S-3.

In 1950, COL. Lee graduated from the Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base Alabama. For the following three years he worked as Congressional liaison Officer in the office of the Secretary of the Army. He worked as the Assistant Chief of Personnel Actions.

COL Lee graduated from the Armed Forces Staff College in 1964. He spent the following year in the Republic of Vietnam as a senior adviser with MACV. Upon returning to CONUS, COL Lee became battalion commander of the 5th Battalion, 3rd Basic Training Regiment, at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri.

In 1967, he graduated from the U.S. Army War College at ~~the~~ Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. His next assignment was with the War Plans Division in the Pentagon. He worked as Assistant Director of the Plans Directorate in the office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations.

On November 10, 1969, COL Lee assumed the command of the 196th Infantry Brigade.

COL Lee's awards and decorations include: the Silver Star,

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Editorial

**drugs will kill you!!**

The plane is loaded with paratroopers at the airfield. The plan calls for the pilot to fly several miles out to sea, turn back toward land at the right place and time, come in at a given attack angle and make a low drop over the assigned area. Suddenly, the pilot sticks his head from the cockpit area and says, "This is going to be a great trip gang. We're really going to fly today." His eyes are glassy, bloodshot. He's as high as a kite. Would you trust this man with your life?

The Army sergeant is giving a demonstration in a crowded classroom on the intricacies of disarming live ammo. He throws a hand grenade into the air and miraculously, catches it. The pupils of his eyes are as big as saucers. "Man, this little gadget could end this whole dream," he says listlessly. He continues his demonstration. Would you trust this man with your life?

The fort is still 100 miles away. It's 5 a.m. Their reporting time for the five men in the car is 8 a.m.—sharp. They have been home on a three day pass and haven't slept much during the spree. The car is hitting 85-miles-per-hour.

The guy at the wheel keeps popping little round pills into his mouth to help stay awake. He has one hand on the wheel while he happily taps out a tune with the other. Would you trust this man with your life?

The medic is going to give you a shot the doctor ordered. He goes to the refrigerator for the vaccine. He laughs quietly. His movements are erratic. He barely has the energy to fill the syringe. He didn't even bother to read the label on the bottle. Would you trust your life with this man?

The answer to all these figurative examples would be an emphatic, "HELL NO!" Drug hazards are such that they are not only dangerous to the mean who uses them, but the make him extremely dangerous to you. Pot, grass, acid, LSD, pep pill, hashish, morphine, heroin, marijuana—whatever the name or drug—each is extremely dangerous.

DON'T BE A FOOL! Your life is the only one you'll ever have. Don't shorten it by using any form of drugs—or let anyone else do it for you.

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## CROSSFIRE

By PFC Gerald Lamb

LZ HAWK HILL\*\*SP4 Robert "Prune" Jeans froze against the forest floor as the .30 caliber tracers laced the air above him. He was in a miniature "no man's land", pinned down by friendly as well as hostile fire.

Prune was point man for Alfa 4/31. during the recent battles in Hiep Duc Valley against the 2nd NVA Division, he found himself directly in front of an enemy bunker, protected from fierce exchanges of fire by only a three-foot depression beneath the thick jungle undergrowth.

The adventure began when the Kenilworthy, New Jersey rifleman led Alfa into weeds to prevent exposure in an open rice paddy. Jeans inadvertently piloted his unit directly into the flank of an enemy ambush.

Before he could exit, the aroused NVA blasted Company A with rifle and machinegun fire, "I found a dead space and flattened," said Jeans. "I knew that it was better than getting caught in the open rice paddy."

SSGT Al Holtzman (Brentwood, N.Y.), squad leader of the element was sizing up the fight.

"At first I thought our own men were opening up," he remarked. "Then the rounds came zipping over."

Enemy and hostile rounds tore the ground near where Prune lay. He was unable to rejoin his unit. "I called to Al to tell him I was O.K., but couldn't move from my position," related Jeans.

The rest of the Company established a hasty defense and blasted the enemy with machinegun fire and LAW's.

"By this time I thought the rest of the company had left," said Jeans. "Their fire was coming so near, I thought it was the NVA trying to hit me."

The sun went down during the heated crossfire, and Alfa threw up a night defensive perimeter.

Taking advantage of the darkness, Jeans slipped out of the cover and maneuvered toward the area of his company's location. Still not certain whether the men he saw were Americans or NVA, he heard the men talking English and called out to the astonished sentries.

Weary but happy after 12 hours of trapped solitude, he scrambled through the defenses and to hot chow and the welcoming shouts of his fellow infantrymen.

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## Battle of

### the VC laundry

By PFC James Tanneson

LZ HAWK HILL\*\*It began with two freshly laundered Viet Cong uniforms flapping lazily in the breeze.

A UH-1D Blue Ghost helicopter gunship was speeding along the skies 10 miles east of Tam Ky when the pilot spotted two khaki uniforms. The Blue Ghost applied its 'air brakes' and drifted back toward the area in which the uniforms were drying.

The crew of the gunship, working in support of the 196th LIB, decided it to put the enemy laundry out of business then and there. The impact of the gunships'M-60 machine gun roused the two VC who ran into the opening. The VC were cut down as they fired a burst at the chopper.

"The battle of the VC Laundry" presaged another small engagement. Bravo 2/1 conducted a sweep of the area and killed two more VC near a woodline.

**Merry Christmas  
From  
The Charger**

2-1 and Ville form**friendship council**

By PFC James Tannenen

LZ HAWK HILL\*\* Most first lieutenants talk about night ambushes but not 1LT Spencer M. Baba (Bethesda, Maryland). He talks instead of the unemployment problem, school construction, and bridge building.

He is not a government economist or a country engineer, but a jack-of-all-trades who represents the 2nd of the 1st on the Vietnamese "Friendship Council" in the village of Binh An, eight miles to the northwest of Tam Ky.

**Work Together**

The Friendship Council was established in August of 1969 to improve the communications between the Vietnamese and American people. It meets in a high ceiled wooden structure decorated with ornate wood carvings. Let us look in on one of their meetings.

As 1LT Baba and his interpreters, SGT Cau, enter the building, they are greeted with warm handshakes from villagers who have found that the representative is a man to be trusted.

The meeting is informal and friendly. The village chief sits at a bare mahogany desk. The rest squeeze in close to insure that they will be easily heard.

**A. F. C. Meeting**

"We still have a problem with unemployed people," begins the village chief. "Can you provide any jobs on the base?"

There is a pause as the interpreter reports in English what was said. Yes, something can be done. "Make a list of the people who need work." says Baba. "We will get them a security clearance, and if you get them to the gate, there should be no problem."

The village chief nods. He appears satisfied.

An observation post is being built by the PF's to provide protection from Viet Cong terrorists for a nearby hamlet. Barbed wire, metal stakes, and sand bags are needed.

"We have 50 rolls of wire for you," says LT Baba. "We will try to get the metal stakes."

The tone of the meeting is cooperation, the 2nd of the 1st needs an access route for its tracks across village land, so they can reach the sands of the coast. The villagers need materials to build a new school. United States troops need a safe area to test fire weapons. Medical aid is requested by the Binh An inhabitants.

It is not a one-sided meeting. Both the Army and the villagers have problems which must be worked out.

The village chief invites LT Baba to visit two pacification hamlets east of Highway One. The offer is graciously accepted, and the meeting comes to an end.

Friendship Councils have been formed in many villages in the 196th's AO. Are the councils working?

**Does It Work?**

"People are beginning to realize that we are sincere about the program," maintains Baba. "They say their piece when they have something to say. They may be quiet at first, but they warm up and voice their problems."

LT Baba concluded, "To be as enthusiastic as they are, they have to believe it will do some good. IT DOES."

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## PROSERVCO Power

By SP4 Charles Hancock

LZ HAWK HILL\*\*Cooks and clerks defending LZ Professional? And doing it well? This is the mission of the 'Professional Reserve company! (PROSERVCO), a unit composed of men with 'non-combat' MOS's. The unit is under the control of the 196th's 1st of the 46th.

Not long ago the men of PROSERVCO were airlifted from their rear area in Chu Lai to LZ Professional on a typical training exercise. The men relieved the line company securing the perimeter and settled down to a tense night. The men were understandably nervous. "I knew people were awake and on guard," said PFC Dennis Baum (Chicago), "I knew nothing could maneuver through the shower of M-79's."

The following morning the members of PROSERVCO were relieved by a line company. They returned to Chu Lai with a better understanding of how to accomplish their mission. CPT William A. Woodford (Marcellas, N.Y.), commanding officer of PROSERVCO, summed up his unit's progress: "Almost every man with a non-combat MOS has now had the experience of being in the field."

The men in the field realize the importance of PROSERVCO.

"With PROSERVCO manning the bunkers, all the line companies are free to work the area outside the LZ," says PFC Joseph Stanfield (Oklahoma City), M-60 gunner for Alfa 1/46. "If the battalion is ever in a desperate situation, PROSERVCO will pay off."

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## COL LEE

Purple Heart, Legion of Merit (1st OLC), World War II Victory Medal, American campaign Medal, United Nations Service Medal, combat Infantryman Badge (2nd award), Korean Service Medal, Parachute badge, Air Medal (2 OLC), Army Commendation Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Device '60'. and two Vietnamese awards—Gallantry Cross with Gold Star and Gallantry Cross with Palm.

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## Live Mortar (graphic art drawing of a mortar round.)

By Carl Ekengren

LZ Hawk Hill\*\*A group of artillerymen learned recently that it pays to watch one's step. "I was walking by my bunker when I noticed something peeping through the mud;" said Sp5 Jack Burris (Morrie, Minn.), survey specialist with the 3/82 artillery. The 'something' turned out to be a live 60mm mortar round.

"Evidently the rains had washed away the soil that was covering it," said Burris.

Four artillerymen built a ring of sandbags around the shell warning other men of its presence. In the circle, the men placed a big pipe pointing upward to act as a marker. Demolition experts took care of the rest.

Still, the men in that area could not avoid uneasy thoughts of what might have been. As Burris put it, "Who knows how long the round had been there."

Graphic Art: Drawing titled "The Enemy".

Caption: "CHIEU HOI"

Vietnamese depicted wearing a Mets baseball cap; listening to a transistor radio; carrying a Playboy magazine under his arm.

## ARTY and 3-21 Zap NvA

By SP4 Carl Ekengren

LZ HAWK HILL\*\*Infantrymen and artillerymen worked hand in hand in defeating NVA forces in recent actions in the 196th AO. Batteries of 3/83rd [sic 3/82nd] Artillery fired in support of companies from 3/21 with impressive results.

Together, the 196th unit broke up an ambush, crushed a bunker complex, and demolished a base camp.

Bravo Battery found itself busy as it fired in support of two infantry companies working near Hiep Duc.

When Delta Company ran into a well-concealed enemy ambush, the battery responded instantly to their call for aid. The battle was, never-the-less a close thing. "The call for artillery support came just in time," said PFC Jim Weisbecker (Ventnor, N.J.). "The enemy was starting to advance." The results of there combined action were two NVA dead.

Later, Alfa Company received fire from an NVA bunker complex. Again Bravo Battery responded. Twenty-three M-105 rounds [**Historian Note. M-105? These were probably 105mm rounds fired by an M-102 howitzer**] ripped through heavy underbrush with shattering speed and accuracy.

"The rounds were right on target," noted PFC John Millar (Falls Church, VA.). "I don't think these NVA knew what hit them, it happened so fast." He added, "There wasn't much left of the three bunkers."

Two NVA were killed and three more wounded.

The same day Bravo company spotted something interesting. "It seems that a group of NVA regulars had set up a small base camp," said PFC Patrick Sullivan (Greenville, Miss.), describing the event. This time Alfa Battery answered the call. The enemy retreated, leaving one dead. The artillery totally demolished the camp.

"It looked like a heap of rubble," said Sullivan.

## Pros Trip up VC Tricksters

By SP4 Charles Hancock

LZ HAWK HILL\*\*A Vietnamese interpreter recently helped 196th's soldiers stop a group of Viet Cong who had been setting booby traps near LZ Professional. The soldiers, members of the Charlie Company "Defenders, 1st of the 46th, killed four VC and detained another.

The 'Defenders' had just moved into a day laager. "SP4 Vern R. Whiting (Kearns, Utah) and SGT Kenneth Niemiec (Woodbridge, N.J.) were talking with their Vietnamese interpreter, SSGT Huynh Xaun. Then SSGT Xaun heard movement outside the perimeter.

"Suddenly he had a strange look on his face," said Sp4 Whiting. "We grabbed our weapons and moved out." SGT Niemiec brought along a M-72 LAW that was lying nearby.

It was not long before they found their antagonists. "Xuan stopped," said Whiting. "There were five VC about 15 meters away."

Whiting and Niemiec opened up, catching the enemy by surprise. "A couple fell," said Whiting. "We had the other three pinned down where they couldn't get away." More men from Charlie arrived. Niemiec saw something move in the bushes. He fired his LAW and another Viet Cong lay dead. The remaining two VC tried to break away. Both were cut down by M-16 fire, but one still lived.

A search of the area was revealing. Among the items found were batteries, trip wire, and blasting caps. "We knew they were part of the group, that had been setting booby traps in our area, said SGT Niemiec.

The wounded Viet Cong was given medical care. He later admitted that setting booby traps had been the primary mission of his squad.

The men were pleased with their success—and rightly so. "The battalion has been running into booby traps recently," said SGT Niemiec. It was good to catch some of the enemy who were responsible for this."

**Charger Combat**

Artwork. Drawing of C.I.B.

FREDERICK HILL TOTALS MARCH 18, 1969 - SEPTEMBER 28, 1969	
	OPERATION TOTALS
VC KILLED	1,394
NVA KILLED	1,9108
IND. WEAPONS CAPT.	512
CREW-SERVED	103
TONS OF RICE CAPT.	95.587 (T)

## PF's pack power

By 1LT David H. Coffman

LZ HAWK HILL\*\*The Gimlets have some potent allies in the area of Nui Lac Son. "They're experts at reading a map," says SGT Jack Arent (St. Louis).

It's uncanny how they can spot a VC, "exclaims SP4 Chuck Jones (Fresno, Calif.).

"They're some of the most courageous fighters we have," said SGT Waymen Young (Buffalo).

Arent, Jones and Young are all members of the 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry. The objects of their praises are the South Vietnamese Popular Force—better known as PF's'.

PF's are local militia. They operate primarily in and around their own hamlets. Their reason for fighting is a fundamental one.

"They know that if they don't get Charlie one day," said SGT Arent, "He's liable to come back and kill their families the same night."

Given such motivation, the PFs have emerged as a dedicated group of fighters. Recently they learned that the VC were using a trail east of Nui Lac Son rather frequently. They decided to correct the situation.

That afternoon five of them concealed themselves and their weapons in some brush just off the trail. Hours passed. Night came. Finally they heard movement. A squad of VC came into view, followed by another.

When the enemy was within the kill zone PF's cut loose with a devastating burst of fire. The five ambushers then quickly withdrew down a concealed route.

Next morning refugees reported seeing 20 bodies at the ambush site.

The PF's frequently go on combined operations with 3/21. The aggressiveness of these Vietnamese is known and appreciated throughout the battalion.

"When they spot the enemy, the PF's go right after them," says Sp4 Jones. "Sometimes they don't even wait for artillery."

The Gimlets have been quick to perceive the ability of their allies at Nui Lac Son. Not only have they accompanied PF's in many operations, but they have also established a liaison team to work full-time with the locals.

The battalion knows that when it comes to fighting the PF's at Nui Lac Son are "number one".

## Cav. Vs Sniper

By Sp4 Richard Merritt

LZ HAWK HILL\*\*In fast-paced action in Que Son Valley, 21 miles northwest of Tam Ky, ground units of F Troop, 8th Cavalry, killed one Viet Cong sniper as circling 'Blue Ghost' gunships blasted two other enemy.

The CA by the Chu Lai-based unit met the fast-shooting sniper as the infantrymen up a deeply rutted trail. Viet Cong tunnel entrances and Ho Chi Minh sandal tracks were everywhere along the bamboo-shrouded foot path. The site of the brief contact was near where NVA mortar and machine gun emplacements were situated during the August offensive aimed at the 196th.

Artillery form B Battery 3/82 at LZ Center was called in on the site of the encounter.

XMAS

package

mailing

deadline

dec. 10