

(Forwarded from 3/21st veteran Gary Jenkins August 2004.)

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

"AHEAD OF THE REST"

Vol 2, No. 5

CHARGER

JUNE 1, 1970

C O L K E N N E D Y
T A K E S O V E R 1 9 6 T H

1LT Michael Simmons

LZ Hawk Hill**Colonel Edwin Kennedy (Gulfport, Miss.) recently assumed command of the 196th Infantry Brigade on May 1, 1970. He is a graduate of West Point, a veteran of three wars and has received numerous decorations during his career.

COL Kennedy served in the United States Navy during World War II as an enlisted man prior to attending the United States Military Academy.

He served with Company C, 15th Infantry Regiment, in Korea as a platoon leader and with Company I as Executive Officer. COL Kennedy returned to the U.S. in 1951 and served with the 8th Infantry Division at Fort Jackson, S.C., in such varied capacities as Assistant Operations Officer, Headquarters, 8th Inf. Div., Assistant Secretary of General Staff and Aide-de-Camp.

From 1953 - 55 COL Kennedy served with U.S. personnel in Turkey and upon return to the U.S. with the 4th Regimental Combat Team at Ft. Devens, Mass. He later became Detachment Commander of the U.S. Army Garrison at Ft. Devens.

In 1958 he returned to West Point as an Instructor in Infantry tactics. He left his assignment in 1961 to attend Command and General Staff College. Upon graduation he again served in Korea.

COL Kennedy participated in the officer exchange program, attending the Joint Services Staff College in England in 1966 and later went to Berlin where he was commanding officer, 2nd Battalion 6th Infantry.

(CONT. ON PAGE 10) (PAGE 10) NEW CO

In 1969 he came to Vietnam and served as Executive Officer of the 196th Inf. Bde. until November, when he became Operations Officer, AMERICAL Division.

COL Kennedy's decorations include: Silver Star with Oak Leaf Cluster; Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster; Combat Infantryman's Badge; 1st and 2nd Awards; Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster; Army Commendation Medal; Purple Heart; Korean Service Medal; U.N. Service Medal; World War II Victory Medal; and Parachutist's Badge.

For the second time I am very proud to be a member of the 196th Infantry Brigade. I look forward to my association with each member of this fine unit. I have every confidence that this brigade will continue to carry out its mission in the same outstanding manner that it has in the past. I anticipate with a great deal of pleasure the work that we will do here together.

-- COL Edwin L. Kennedy

A P R I M A R Y R I G H T

BAD OFFICIALS ARE ELECTED BY GOOD CITIZENS WHO DO NOT VOTE.

George Jean Nathan

This spring and summer each state has scheduled primary elections to determine which candidates will be in general elections Nov. 5.

Most states permit members of the armed forces and their spouses to vote in primary elections by absentee ballot.

Unfortunately, far too many people ignore the primaries and vote only in the general elections. This is especially true in the military where servicemen must take a little extra time to obtain an absentee ballot, thus facing problems not encountered by civilians at home.

Also a serviceman often does not have easy access to information about a candidate, issues and election dates.

But, military men and women can keep abreast, if they make the effort.

Every base, every ship, whether overseas or in the United States, has a voting officer who can supply voting rules for your home state, and that all-important Federal Postal Application Card (FPCA) to obtain an absentee ballot. The folks at home can send you a newspaper that spells out the local and state issues to be decided upon.

Sure, it takes a little extra time, But it is part of your responsibility as a member of the armed forces and an American citizen.

It is a small price to pay for a right that people have died to protect. Use it! (AFPS)

V O T E

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 Services and Armed Forces News Bureau material is sometimes 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, HHC, 196th Infantry Brigade, APO San Francisco 96256. The Information Officer reserves the right to edit all material.

COL Edwin L. Kennedy...Bde Commander
 1LT David H. Coffman.....Bde IO
 1LT Michael M. Simmons.Press Officer
 SGT G. Rice.....Editor
 Sp5 R. Merritt.....Bde Reporter
 SGT R. Nordyke...Bde Reporter

SSGT D. McKeon.....3/21 Reporter
 SGT J. Tannesen.....3/21 Reporter
 PFC R. Campbell......2/1 Reporter
 SP4 L. Granfield.....1/46 Reporter
 Sp4 R. Carrigan.....1/46 Reporter
 Sp4 G. Lamb.....4/31 Reporter

Artwork: Drawing of a soldier reading a ballot. Caption, "ABSENTEE VOTING" "YOUR VOTE COUNTS .. ONLY IF YOU CAST IT!"

T H E
L U C K Y L R R P S

Sp5 Richardd Merritt

LZ HAWK HILL**An NVA base camp 32 miles northwest of Tam Ky is no place to be.

A Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (LRRP) unit with the Americal Division, Team Arkansas of Company G, 75th Ranger, didn't exactly plan it that way but when they went out the right-or-wrong-place.

"We knew we might run into an enemy force," SSGT Richard Keller of Eureka, California. Our primary mission is to bring in an intelligence report on what we see. You just never know what you might find, though." SSGT Keller is a team leader.

Working in the 196th AO, the small team was dropped seven miles north of LZ Siberia, the westernmost fire base in the Division.

The first LZ proved hazardous.

"When we got down low enough, I saw several bunkers." Keller shook his head. "A little lower and we could see NVA walking around. I shouted at the pilot to get us out of there. Neither one of us fired. I guess we were both too stunned.

The Huey helicopter moved about a mile north and set down with the LRRP team.

The men soon found a trail marked with footprints and walked parallel to it for about a half mile. Then they heard voices.

"We didn't see who it was right then," said SGT Edward Henderson (Bethan, Ala.), RTO.

At the time they thought it was farmers or someone traveling on the footpath.

The team moved to high ground (CONT. ON PAGE 9) (PAGE 9 LRRPS) and set up an observation post (OP), left the radioman there, and continued back down the trail toward the voices.

The NVA saw the infantrymen almost as soon as the Americans spied them.

A volley of fire killed five NVA and wounded two. The rangers said later there were 17 enemy in the small clearing. The NVA hid and blazed back with AK-47 and SKS rifles.

"A big unit came up behind us," said Keller. "Sergeant Henderson came slipping through the brush from the OP and I told him to get on the radio."

The other men kept up a fierce raking fire. A small observation aircraft was the first to come to their aid. It flew low over the trees sniping at the enemy force, which was now very large, until gunships arrived.

"We were lucky to get out of there," said Keller. "Well we definitely found out what Division wanted to know." He looked down, then shrugged and scratched his head. "There is one hell of a base camp out there."

CHARLIE'S TOP 40

SGT Bob Nordyke

LZ HAWK HILL** A voice crackled through the late night quiet. Sp4 John Letta (Rochester, N.Y.) was roused from his nervous sleep. "Who's playing a radio at this time of night?"

It wasn't the Top 40 program from Chu Lai that woke Letta that night but a Viet Cong "Psyops" team broadcasting just outside the perimeter of Alpha, 2-1, 20 miles north of Tam Ky.

Sp4 Steve Friede (Chinook, Mont.) was on guard when the Viet Cong propaganda barrage opened up. "At first I thought it was the PSYOPS team that was working with us," said Friede. "Then the honcho of the ARVN Rangers who was pulling guard next to me came over and said it was VC telling lies - "number 10!."

The first reaction to the broadcast was a light anti-tank weapon (LAW) fired into the woodline 600 meters away where the sound was coming from. The initial fire was quickly followed by an artillery mission.

However, as soon as the 105 barrage had quieted, the enemy voice resumed, again directed to the ARVN Rangers. "The Americans are destroying our culture, South Vietnamese do not want to fight any longer, lay down your weapons and come with me," repeated the voice long into the night.

Early the following day, second platoon of Alpha and the ARVN Rangers went on patrol.

Contact was made shortly. Small arms fire came from the woodline, and the Rangers assaulted the enemy position through the heavy fire.

The results were 11 VC killed the light machine guns, three SKS rifles, seven NVA claymore-type mines, and a B-40 rocket and launcher captured.

A Platoon Leader commented, "I'd say that was a good answer to last night's broadcast."

Letters FROM Kalamazoo

Sp5 Richard Merritt

LZ HAWK HILL**Hi, My name is Glenda. I live with my mom and Dad and I do not have any sisters or brothers...."

The letters came in a large brown envelope, some mis-spelled and almost illegible, but everyone a special message for a brigade of infantry soldiers.

Last February the city of Kalamazoo, Michigan (pop. 95,000) adopted the 196th Infantry Brigade with the help of the 196th's American Red Cross Representative James Stowell. Kalamazoo sent soap, they sent books, they sent pens and paper, and one little school girl tried to slip a six-pack of Budweiser in with gifts.

The fifth grade class at Westwood School in eastern Kalamazoo, accompanied their gifts with the packet of letters, sent directly to Stowell by the teacher.

"I wish every man in the brigade could read them," sighed Stowell.

The children sent two packages of goods and Stowell expects eight more from the school. An ex-major in the Army, Stowell is a stocky, genial man who visits field companies often bringing packages from Veterans organizations, Red Cross chapters and people who care a lot--like 11-year-old Amy Jagodnik who wanted to send beer to the infantrymen but her "groovy" teacher wouldn't let her. Amy included a picture-- a smiling blond little girl in a green dress--and her address.

The letters were like notes from a little girl to her big GI brother--sober and unpretentious and just a little curious. Only two were from boys.

"Dear Soldier. How are you? I am fine. I'm going to tell you about myself and my family." Miss Patricia Ann Dean was emphatic and precise. "I'm about 4 feet 8 inches tall. I have a cat that looks like a tiger. My mom is a housewife. My dad draws transmissions. My brother has the chicken pox. P.S. Please write back."

"These letters are priceless," wrote Brigade Commander James M. Lee, Wilmington, N.C. "Make sure some of the soldiers write back."

Mr. Stowell is sending 500 copies of the childrens' addresses to Brigade troops. "I think they'll generate a lot of letters, said Stowell. "Don't you?"

--

old timers like 2-1

SGT Jim Tannesen

LZ HAWK HILL**Although he had participated in numerous award ceremonies and his function was crystal clear, the commander of 2-1 absolutely declined to pin a Bronze Star on a worthy recipient the other day.

LTC F.A. Nerone presented the awards for "outstanding performance of duty" to SFC James L. Fink (Mason City, Ill.) and Major, 90-pound scout dog, retired. Both have served with the brigade since 1966.

"Major was here a few months before me," admitted SFC Fink. "He came over on a ship. We got acquainted in Vietnam."

"I remember watching a movie--we saw them out-of-doors then--and eating a sandwich." Fink smiles. "A furry head snaked under my arm and made off with the sandwich. Major is too big to argue with."

Neither veteran has any plans for reassignment. Recently while in Japan, Fink was offered a position at Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, D.C. He chose to return to RVN and the battalion. "My first impression of the battalion has been a lasting one," said Fink. "I think this is why I wanted to stay."

Major? Well he hasn't found too much to growl about. He's been around, seen a lot of action, and plans to tell some hair-raising tales to his grandchildren. He has the medal to back them up.

MAN FROM MARS

Sp5 Richard Merritt

LZ HAWK HILL**"With 27 megacycles and an inverted 'V' on a 10-meter band I can transmit clear around the world." said SGT Dean Brendal proudly. He snapped a black button and the lineal amplifier buzzed.

SGT Brendal is a slim, talkative young man from Minneapolis who spouts radio technology as if he were born with a receiver in one hand and a transmitter in the other.

Presently operating the Military Affiliated Radio System (MARS) at LZ Hawk Hill, Brendal is a former 196 infantryman.

MARS operators work for all servicemen in the Brigade, making it possible for them to reach by direct voice communication their loved ones in the United States. Priorities in a situation like this can be as ticklish as assigning box seats at a major league baseball game.

"Only generals get VIP treatment," stated Brendal. "But depending upon time schedules, emergency situation and other considerations, we can break into the line from some. Otherwise, it's first come-first served."

A typical caller, an infantryman, notifies the battalion switchboard that he wants to make a call home. The battalion operator makes a daily listing of these requests and calls it in to the MARS station here. The Hawk Hill operator calls a MARS station in the United States and relays the name and phone number of the person the soldier wishes to call.

The stateside MARS operator calls a civilian operator and passes on the information." These operators handle MARS calls regularly, so they know what to do," said Brendal. Then the real work of securing a phone patch across 10,000 miles begins.

"A lot of men don't understand why we can't maintain contact with the states 24 hours a day. They don't realize that when the sun begins to play ping-pong with our radio waves, we're completely out of luck," he grunted. "It is called ionization, and it really messes things up."

Communication with the Untied States usually is achieved early in the morning, beginning on the New England coast. As the day progresses, messages trail across the United States. By 9 o'clock in the evening, a serviceman can call his parents on the coast of California, waking them at 6:00 a.m. for a three minute chat.

MERRY MAILMEN

LZ HAWK HILL**The APO at this firebase is one huge "in-and-out" box. 1,500 pounds of mail are distributed from here daily to the 196th Infantry Brigade, composed of some 5,000 servicemen.

SGT Russell Ring (South Portland, Me.) heads the operation. He used to work at the Americal APO in Chu Lai, but switched to Hawk Hill.

The post office here is, in one way, an extension of the Division APO. Like a rookie attorney just hanging out his shingle, it gets by with the bones of the postal guidebooks—the Army's postal manual (AR 65-1) and the International Manual.

"I painted the building red white and blue," explained SGT Ring, "so no one has to ask where the post office is." Ring built stalls inside the APO for separation of boxes and a sectioned-off area in one corner labeled "Feik's Cage," where Sp4 Tom Feik (New Boston, Ill.) can secure registered mail. (CONT. ON PAGE 9) MAIL (PAGE 9)

"All in all it's one of the services taken for granted by GI's" admitted Ring. "Not just because it's a place to mail packages but also bring them news from home."

The Hawk Hill APO is also for Kit Carson Scouts (ex-NVA/VC now working with American units), and interpreters who live on Hawk Hill while in the ARVN.

There are five men, including Ring, in the APO. Two were postal clerks as civilians, two were trained at the Army's postal service school at Ft. Benjamin Harrison, Ind. The other clerk has "a profile against lifting and standing—the only two things we do here."

On May 1, the post officer began sorting mail from servicemen according to state to speed delivery when it arrives in San Francisco.

By SP5 Richard Merritt

3-21 KILLS ENEMY CO

By SGT Dave McKeon

LZ CENTER**An NVA battalion commander and 12 of his men died in a futile attempt to over run a 196th company's night defensive position near Hiep Duc, 23 miles northwest of Tam Ky recently.

Withstanding an all night mortar, rocket and ground attack, Alpha Company, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry, greeted the early morning dawn with smiles of success.

The action began when elements of the 1st NVA Main Force Regiment moved into Hiep Duc CFZ intent on overrunning the village of Hiep Duc.

Alpha Company, under the operational control of 4-31, was airlifted from their home base, LZ Center, to a point southwest of Hiep Duc to reinforce the Recon Platoon of 4-31, which has been in heavy contact for five hours.

After linking with the beleaguered unit, the Americans moved towards Hiep Duc, tightening the circle of American and RVN forces surrounding the NVA.

"We were looking for a day laager position on high ground to set up as a blocking force northwest of the village," said SSGT Dale Sievert (El Cajon, Calif.).

While in the process, the lead element received a burst of automatic weapons fire. The soldiers saw two NVA in spider holes and cut them down with small arms fire and captured one AK-47.

An artillery fire mission was processed into the area. Alpha Company swept the area, killing another enemy soldier.

The Americans then moved into their blocking position and began to prepare night laagers.

Then, according to 1LT Michael DeCoudres (Sandy Lake, Pa.), "We received last minute instructions to move further northeast towards D Company, 4-31 who was in contact. We were all packed up with our claymores and trip flares in and ready to move at 1900 hours when we received six rounds of 60mm mortar fire inside the perimeter."

As darkness approached the first of two enemy ground attacks began, a barrage of incoming fire and chicom grenades.

"Just at dusk I saw several enemy stand up—their figures silhouetted against the sky—and threw their grenades," said SSGT Sievert.

The remainder of the night was spent in uneasy calm, interrupted by an occasional mortar round or chicom grenade, and by two enemy probes.

Overhead, flareships provided the needed illumination the remainder of the night. Blue Ghost and Firebird gunships expended their ordnance and were able to keep the enemy pinned down and unable to launch more attacks.

Two hours before dawn the next morning, the now acting company commander, 1LT DeCoudres ordered his men to be on 100% alert. Thirty minutes later, according to Sp4 Dennis Dunn (Seal Beach, Calif.), "they hit us again with chicoms and small arms fire. The attack lasted until dawn."

By then the enemy had been driven off once again. "Our air and artillery support," said 1LT Willis Clements (Ft. Worth, Tex.) "was the deciding factor."

With the coming of daylight, the weary but victorious soldiers of Alpha surveyed the scene of the battle. Nineteen enemy soldiers were dead—one of them carrying identification indicating he was an NVA battalion commander. Eight weapons were found: five AK-47's one SKS, and two 9mm pistols, and a flare gun.

The remainder of the day, the company remained in its blocking position. Late in the afternoon they moved to a position just north of the battle torn village of Hiep Duc where they linked up with a battalion of RVN forces.

VC RALLY TO TAPES

SGT Bob Nordyke

LZ HAWK HILL**A lone, local VC huddles in a concealed hooch near his village, a few ounces of rice cooking—his dinner. Above him a Light Observation Helicopter circles. He listens from the helicopter he hears his name.

The rest of the broadcast—"Nguyen, your fighting is futile, you are being used by the North Vietnamese—lackeys of Red China. Voluntarily give yourself up, and the Government of South Vietnam promises to give you food and a place to live."

The voice is familiar—one of his comrades who rallied to the GVN only a few days before.

The broadcast is an example of the type of tapes now being produced by the Psychological Operations Office of the 196th Infantry Brigade. The office's library of tapes is being stocked to cover a wide range of situations to more effectively convince enemy soldiers to rally to the GVN.

"Now we have a stock of more than 20 tapes," explained 1LT Don Bernard (Itasca, Ill.). Twelve are targeted specifically for known VC and NVA units in our AO. the remainder are directed to known VC and local populaces."

The tape scripts, most of which are written by 1LT Bernard, are usually recorded by an ARVN interpreter working for the PSYOPS officer. Whenever possible Bernard uses Hoi Chanhs to record the messages to their ex-comrades, increasing the creditibility of the broadcast and thus its effectiveness.

"Our main objective now," said Bernard, "is to concentrate on isolating the VC from the populace, to decrease their ability to operate rather anonymously in the villages."

The pitch to the NVA emphasizes the futility in fighting in the south, citing the fact that their equipment is inferior and the people in the south do not welcome them. The NVA are promised, as voluntary POW's, comfortable living until the end of the war when they will be allowed to return home.

The specialized tapes have been very effective. In April, 1 Hoi Chanh on Barrier Island, 15 miles north of Tam Ky, turned out to be a local VC leader. The rallier taped a broadcast, included names of his men. Several of them became Hoi Chanhs in the next few days.

VC CLASS CLOSED

SGT Jim Tanneson

LZ HAWK HILL** There is a Viet Cong Training class that will not make passing scores this quarter. All members have been recycled pending reconstruction of a new training center.

The soldiers of Delta, 2-1, had been sweeping through the rice paddies and islands, 8 miles northwest of Tam Ky, but made no finds. A final sweep through a thick woodline was to be the final maneuver of the day. It paid off.

"We broke into a clearing and just walked into a Viet Cong base camp," said Sp4 Terry Tagarook (Wainwright, Alaska). "They must have heard us coming and headed out the other direction, because the camp had been used within the past few hours."

The signs of recent use included warm ashes from cooking fires and the footprints of a large number of people.

"We are pretty sure it was used as an enemy training camp because one of the hooches had a blackboard and benches," said Tagarook. "The hooches were exceptionally large, the camp was built for about 100 people."

A complex of reinforced bunkers and an interconnecting tunnel complex encircled the Viet cong position.

The Legionnaires destroyed the fortifications, making sure that the VC trainees would have instruction elsewhere.

Charger Combat

Artwork. Drawing of C.I.B.

FREDERICK HILL TOTALS MARCH 18, 1969 - MAY 28, 1970	
	OPERATION TOTALS
VC KILLED	2,626
NVA KILLED	2,794
IND. WEAPONS CAPT.	926
CREW-SERVED	159
TONS OF RICE CAPT.	153.825 (T)

COL OPENS DAYROOM

PFC Richard Campbell

LZ HAWK HILL**In a brief ribbon cutting ceremony attended by the 196th Brigade's commanding officer COL Edwin Kennedy, a new day room was dedicated for the men of 2-1.

The day room, a remodeled section of an old mess hall, was dedicated to Sp4 Donald P. Sloat, a Legionnaire who lost his life while serving with Delta, 2-1, in January of this year. Sloat's name has been submitted for the Medal of Honor.

Following the presentation of the dedication plaque by LTC Alton Coleman, 2-1 commanding officer, COL Kennedy stepped forward to cut the ribbon.

"I would like to congratulate all those here who have helped in the building of such a fine day room," commented COL Kennedy. "I sincerely hope that every man in the battalion can have an opportunity to enjoy it."

Free beer and soda were given out during the entire opening day.

In addition to the bar, the day room has tables, chairs, a small library and a television set. To be added are a movie projector, a stereo, a ping pong table and a pool table.

Two Red Cross girls from Chu Lai who also attended the opening day were particularly happy about it.

"It was always a problem to visit the men of 2-1," commented Peggy Greene (Buffalo). "Because there was no good place here on Hawk Hill for them to get together."

"Now, We'll be able to get up here on a regular basis," she added.

3-21 PACIFICATION

By SGT Dave McKeon

LZ CENTER**Pacification is not a meaningless cliché to the village of Nui Lac Son. At that remote hamlet 16 miles northwest of Tam Ky, pacification is an active program insuring safety and progress for its 8,000 people.

The village is situated just to the northwest of 3-21's fire base, LZ Center. Vietnamese civilians, Popular Force units and U.S. military personnel work together to keep the fertile fields and plains surrounding Nui Loc Son free of infiltration.

"The major thrust of our work in pacifying the area has been to earn the trust and respect of the Vietnamese civilians, and to establish a working relationship with them in protecting themselves and their homes," said 1LT Douglas Lyddon (Downer Grove, Ill.).

As civil affairs Officer of 3-21, Lt Lyddon heads a six man team responsible for establishing and maintaining good relations with the ingenuous civilian population.

"Our liaison team lives in the village and coordinates American educational and medical aid to the civilian population, SSGT Waymon Young (Buffalo) said.

Educational aid includes building materials for schools and General Walt Scholarships to sponsor young children by paying for texts and supplies.

The liaison team coordinates medical attention for the villagers with 3-21. Three times each week a medical team visits Nui Lac Son to treat any ailments free of cost. Medical evacuation by helicopter is also arranged.

The American liaison team and the Vietnamese military personnel also work together in keeping the area secured. U.S. personnel accompany Vietnamese patrols as advisors and provide the necessary link to coordinate American artillery.

The efforts of Americans and Vietnamese working together has paid off. The controlled fire zone has recently been expanded, to include another village. And the surrounding area, once heavily booby trapped and often harassed by VC is now clear.

The cooperation, trust and mutual friendship between Vietnamese and Americans in the Nui Loc Son CFZ is an unbeatable combination in thwarting VC harassment and terrorism.

FREE
RVN

