

SSgt. Connor Posthumously Awarded Medal of Honor

WASHINGTON — A Marine platoon sergeant, who chose to sacrifice his own life by covering a grenade in order to protect the lives of his men, is to become the Marine Corps' fifth Medal of Honor recipient from the Vietnam war.

On Tuesday, May 2, the President of the United States presented the Medal of Honor, in White House ceremonies, to

SSgt. Peter S. Connor's widow, Mrs. Eleanor M. Connor, of Oceanside, California.

At the time of his gallant sacrifice, Sergeant Connor was platoon sergeant of the Third Platoon, Co. "F", 2d Bn., Third Marines, 1st Marine Division (Reinforced). His platoon was taking part in a search and destroy operation in Quang Ngai Province on February 25, 1966,

in an area of extensive caves and tunnel complexes.

The citation accompanying his award reads in part:

"Exhibiting particular alertness and keen observation, he spotted an enemy spider hole emplacement approximately fifteen meters to his front . . . Upon pulling the pin of a grenade he realized that the firing mechanism was faulty, and that

even as he held the safety device firmly in place, the fuze charge was already activated . . . he further realized that he could not cover the distance to the small opening of the spider hole in sufficient time . . . to safely throw the grenade. Manifesting extraordinary gallantry and with utter disregard for his personal safety, he chose to hold the grenade

against his own body in order to absorb the terrific explosion and spare his comrades . . . His act of extreme valor and selflessness in the face of virtually certain death, although leaving him mortally wounded, spared many of his fellow Marines from death or injury. His gallant action in giving his life in the cause of freedom reflects the highest
(Continued on Back Page)



SEA TIGER



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ASSAULT—Marines of "G" Co., 2d Bn., Third Marines, assault Hill 881 N. during battle near Khe Sanh. (Photo by SSgt. R. E. Wilson)

Assault Against Khe Sanh Tops April Marine Action

By: GySgt. Ron Harwood

DA NANG—Until the last six days of the month, April had few significant ground contacts between Marines in I Corps and enemy forces.

From the 24th on, however, the action was furious as elements of the Third and Ninth Marine Regiments foiled the North Vietnamese Army's planned assault and take-over of the Khe Sanh area.

In the action at Khe Sanh, the artillerymen and jet pilots were a prime factor in dislodging the North Vietnamese from their bunkers on Hills 861, 881 N. and 881 S. The guns hurled more than 11,000 rounds at the enemy positions while Marine air was dropping more than 1,000 tons of ordnance in five days.

Other enemy attempts in the northern-most province of South Vietnam to silence Marine and Army artillery came almost nightly as they poured mortar shells and rockets into Gia Linh and other points south of the demilitarized zone. Their efforts failed, however, and the big guns continued their accurate support of ground units throughout the month.

Enemy mortars and rockets also struck at Chu Lai, Dong Ha, Phu Bai and Khe Sanh during the month. Little damage was caused by any of the attacks.

In all, the Marine air-ground team killed 1,649 enemy soldiers during April. Also, 248 individual and 11 crew-served weapons were captured by Leathernecks.

To the south, Task Force Oregon, a multi-brigade U. S. Army force commanded by MajGen. William B. Rosson, started operating in Quang Ngai and Quang Tin province.

Four days later, Chu Lai-based Task Force X-Ray, 1st Marine Division, was dissolved, and its operating elements moved northward to bolster other Marine units in the northern three provinces of South Vietnam.

In significant small unit action, a company of the 1st Marine Regiment made contact with a large enemy force 20 miles south of Da Nang on April 22. Two other companies of the First Marines were lifted in to help as were elements of the Fifth Marine Regiment. With the arrival of reinforcements, the enemy broke contact.

In the air, Marine jet pilots flew 369 missions north of the DMZ and 6,860 sorties in South Vietnam. There were 38,348 helicopter sorties flown by Marine aircraft. Leatherneck C-130s
(Continued on Back Page)

Enemy Fought Real Hard

KHE SANH—"The enemy fought real hard, was well coordinated, well armed and a pro," LtCol. W. J. Masterpool (Solvay, N.Y.), operations officer for Marine operations west of here, said as he summed up the capabilities of North Vietnamese troops in the area. He compared the enemy's fighting qualities with those of the NVA that Marines opposed on Operation Hastings.

In 10 days of action Marines killed a total of 551 North Vietnamese near here.

"The enemy used every weapon available," said LtCol. E. R. DeLong, commander of the 2nd Bn., Third Marine Regiment, following the assault against 881 North.

Capt. R. W. Swigart, company commander of "M" Co., 3rd Bn., Ninth Marines, who took part in the assault on 881 South, described the enemy as "hard, hard core."

"They had staying power that was unbelievable. They were good."

Maj. W. E. Fogo, operations officer at Khe Sanh, said aerial observers had spotted well-fortified bunkers on almost every ridge line in the area.

NVA Lose 199

Early Morning Attack Stopped By Marines

CON THIEN—A company-sized Marine unit drove off a heavy attack by possibly two battalions of the 812th North Vietnamese Regiment on Con Thien special forces camp early May 8 following simultaneous mortar and rocket attacks by the enemy on Con Thien, Gio Linh, Camp J. J. Carroll and Dong Ha.

At 2 p.m. units of the Fourth Marine Regiment were chasing the enemy force north-eastward into a blocking force of other Marines from the regiment, who were heli-lifted into an area at first light to cut off the withdrawing enemy force.

Earlier 179 of the enemy were confirmed dead in the Con Thien vicinity.

First reports indicate the initial close contact came when the enemy force hit Con Thien, from the northeast at 3:05 a.m. this morning.

In addition to the 179 enemy killed, the Marines reported taking ten prisoners, capturing more than 100 weapons including 37 AK47's, three flame throwers and 12 rocket-propelling guns.

A member of LtGen. Lewis W. Walt's staff was wounded in a mortar attack around noon while visiting the battle scene

at Con Thien with the III Marine Amphibious Force commander.

In addition to the attack at Con Thien, Gio Linh received 150 rounds of mortar fire causing slight damage to some of the artillery; Camp J.J. Garroll received an estimated 20 rounds of 100mm fin-type rockets; and Dong Ha took 23 rounds of 140-mm rocket fire causing slight damage to equipment.

The mortar and rocket attacks all came following sighting of a green flare from the Dong Ha perimeter at 2:55 a.m.

Counter-mortar and artillery fire was delivered during the attacks and in support of the marines chasing the enemy from Con Thien.

By nightfall, NVA casualties had risen to 199 killed.

Contact Continues In Operation Union

By: SSgt Don Summerford

DA NANG—Marines fighting in Operation Union continue to maintain contact with enemy forces as they sweep through the rugged Hiep Duc-Que Son-Phuoc Chau valley, south of Da Nang.

The multi-battalion operation was launched Apr. 26 into the Viet Cong stronghold that has been communist controlled for the past 18 months.

Operation Union, headed by the Fifth Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, has accounted for 297 confirmed enemy killed in action.

Earlier reports that hard core North Vietnamese troops were concentrated in the area northwest of Tam Ky, 30 miles south of Da Nang, have proven true. More than 100 North Vietnamese Army (NVA) kills have been confirmed.

Forty-six have been detained. Early May 3, some 20 enemy 82mm mortar rounds were fired into the Fifth Marine Regiment command post and nearby friendly positions at Tam Ky.
(Continued on Back Page)



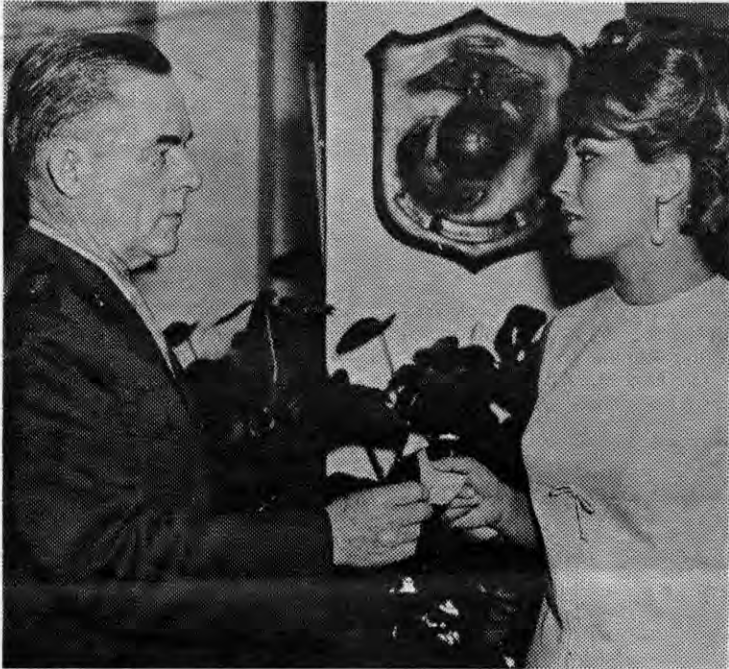
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MEMORIAL FUND—Mrs. James J. Carroll of Cleveland, Ohio, presents a check for \$2500 to General Wallace M. Greene Jr., Commandant of the Marine Corps, as part of the "J. J. Carroll Memorial Fund" honoring the late Capt. J. J. Carroll who was killed in action in Vietnam.

J. J. Carroll Fund Started for Vietnamese

WASHINGTON — With the aid of friends and neighbors in her hometown, the widow of a heroic Marine officer will keep alive the memory of her husband by helping children in the land where he died.

Mrs. James J. Carroll, of Cleveland, Ohio, recently presented a check for \$2500 to General Wallace M. Greene, Jr., Commandant of the Marine Corps. The money, representing initial contributions to the "J.J. Carroll Memorial Fund," will be used exclusively to provide support for Vietnamese orphanages located near where Captain Carroll was killed in action last October.

Carroll earned the Navy Cross for heroism during Operation Prairie from September 27 to October 5, 1966, while serving as the Commanding Officer, "K" Co., 3d Bn., Fourth Marines, 3d Marine Division, while in action against North Vietnamese forces.

The citation accompanying the medal reads in part: "... On 27 September as Company "K" moved through a thick jungle canopy toward Hill 400, the point platoon was hit hard by enemy automatic weapons fire, electrically detonated mines and

booby traps, and the other platoons of the company came under an intense mortar attack. Carroll quickly seized a piece of high ground, and utilizing it for a temporary landing zone was able to evacuate his wounded quickly and establish a company defensive position from which he could attack the determined and well-fortified enemy that defended Hill 400.

"On 28 September, he called in close air support to within fifty meters of his front lines in an attempt to destroy the enemy positions which had halted the battalion for two days. Utilizing the shock action of the air strikes, Carroll and seven of his Marines crawled to within handgrenade range of the enemy. Aggressively and decisively launching the final assault and gaining a quick foothold on the Hill, he employed the rest of his company to aid in securing the objective then under heavy counterattack from three sides. Despite a painful wound from an enemy mortar round, Carroll continued to direct his men in the securing of Hill 400 . . ."

He was mortally wounded on October 5, when hit by a shell fragment. After his death, his men named the ridge on Hill 400 in his memory calling it "J" "J" Ridge.

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Armed Forces Day Message

President Lyndon B. Johnson has issued the following message for Armed Forces Day, May 20, 1967:

"America's rise to world leadership will be remembered down through history as an inspiring example of what men can achieve in the cause of freedom.

"Freedom was the goal that sparked our independence—and only the love of freedom has sustained it.

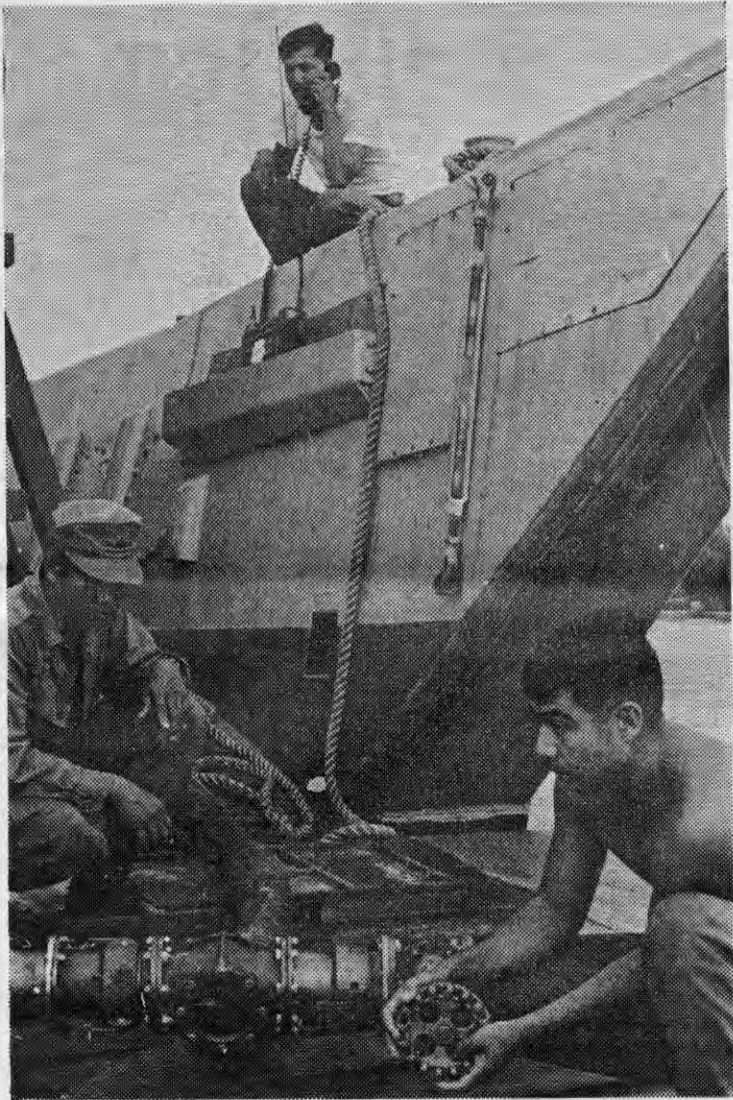
"Nowhere is this dedication reflected more vividly than in the Armed Forces of the United States.

"Our modern military establishment is the mightiest arsenal of all time. But it would give us neither peace nor security without the devotion to duty, the courage and sacrifice of the men and women who wear our country's uniform.

"As Commander-in-Chief, I invite every American to participate in the 1967 observance of Armed Forces Day, which honors those who guard our heritage.

"In Vietnam—and around the world—they perpetuate the ideals which made and preserve us as a nation.

"Let our thoughts be with them on this day. And let our prayers attend them, always, as they unflinchingly defend our legacy and our lives."



REFUELING "MIKE" BOAT—LCpl. Leon Thomas of Colton, Calif., (right) opens up the fuel line to the 10,000 gallon tank on a Navy "mike" boat. The boat runs from Col Co ramp to the Hue ramp. Tow boats, supplied by the 2d Plt., Seventh Separate Bulk Fuel Co., carry up to 60,000 gallons of fuel daily for distribution to military units in the Phu Bai area. LCpl. Ted K. Matsunga of Lomita, Calif., keeps in contact with the fuel personnel ashore while Sgt. Felix Camero of Honolulu, Hawaii, operations chief, supervises the refueling.

(Photo by: Sgt. A. M. Keller)

Bulk Fuel Harvested By Marine 'Farmers'

PHU BAI — On an island off the coast of Phu Bai, one can see a strange sight — a group of American farmers.

They are not the ordinary type of farmers, but United States Marines. Their crop is fuel.

Last month over 1½ million

gallons of fuel was distributed from Col Co ramp to various military units in the Phu Bai area.

Some 40 Marines of the 2d Plt., Seventh Separate Bulk Fuel Co., under the cognizance of the Force Logistic Command, supply all types of fuel to every military unit in the Phu Bai area.

Beginning April, 1966, with a skeleton crew headed by Sgt. Felix Camero of Honolulu, Hawaii, and only one fuel farm supplying combat operations in the area, the unit has mushroomed into eight farms.

Latest innovation is fuel transportation by helicopter. Whenever a combat operation is taking place in the area, helicopters carry fuel to the combat zone.

Transport ships, anchored off the coast of Col Co ramp, supply the farm at least once a week, pumping gas through rubber pipelines extended from ship to shore.

Navy "mike" boats, carrying 10,000 gallons of fuel, make trips from the island to the Hue River ramp where their fuel is pumped into trucks and transported to the Phu Bai area. A single round trip takes over three hours to complete. With two boats making runs, 60,000 gallons of fuel is transported daily.

Once a summer resort area, the entire island is populated by nearly 20,000 Vietnamese fishermen.

"This Kid Was Fantastic"

Seven Man Recon Patrol Fights Off NVA Company

By: Cpl. Ray Wilkinson

KHE SANH—A seven-man Marine reconnaissance patrol aided by an armada of gunships, fixed-wing fighter bombers, and heavy artillery fought off an estimated North Vietnamese Army reinforced company for 12 hours in the heavy jungle west of here.

The NVA, operating from well-concealed bunkers, at times within two feet of the marines, were constantly driven back by the ring of fire.

After three unsuccessful attempts the beleaguered patrol was lifted out by a Huey helicopter.

Four members of the patrol were killed, and three seriously wounded. A CH-46 pilot tried to extract the team and was also killed. Several crew members of other helicopters were wounded.

Although wounded four times, first time at the beginning of the fire fight, 18-year-old Pfc. Steve P. Lopez, of Silver Springs, Md., maintained unbroken radio contact with his parent unit of the 3rd Force Reconnaissance Bn., and also directed air and artillery strikes.

"This kid was fantastic," said the company commander, Capt. A.B. Crosby of Annapolis, Md.

"He was the coolest individual I have ever seen. He kept calling in artillery closer and closer to his position. Back here they were actually scared to drop them closer. But he kept repeating, 'drop it closer, drop it closer.'"

"Throughout the fire fight Lopez never once mentioned that he had been hit. He kept saying, 'I'm alright.'"

"The first thing he said when he arrived back here was, 'check my camera I took some good flicks out there, and want to get them developed.' It was amazing."

Lt. C.A. Mumford, Francesville, Ind., pilot of the Huey gunship who patrolled the skies over the besieged Marines constantly for 12 hours, except for refueling, said, "Lopez was unbelievable. For 12 hours he was cool, calm, and never got excited. He told us where to shoot and passed on valuable information. The whole mission would have been impossible without him. He was the only one who

could fight down there for several hours.

"He kept telling us he was alright and wouldn't admit he'd been hit in the head. He coordinated the whole mission."

The patrol was inserted about 4:50 p.m. on May 9, eight miles from Khe Sanh, to check out trails in the area. The Marines found several NVC bunkers, then returned to a nearby hill to look for the enemy. The patrol came under heavy small arms fire for the first time around midnight.

At first they estimated the enemy strength at 30 to 50, but later increased their estimate to a reinforced company. Lopez, on his fifth patrol, said he was hit in the head as soon as the action began.

"I then received wounds in the chest, leg and head again," he said. "The enemy was about two feet from us at times. There was at least a company out there. They walked right up to us."

"I shot the first NVA and the last one. One of the ones I shot looked very young, like in his teens. He walked right up to me. I looked at him and knew if I didn't shoot him he would shoot me."

"I was laying down on the ground and he didn't see me until he was right on top of me."

"They were all over the place. I saw at least 15 dead NVA in front of our position. A lot of credit goes to my M-16, it worked fine and never jammed once," he said.

Crosby said at one time Lopez thought all his buddies were

dead, but checked and found four of them still breathing.

For several hours Lopez was the only member of the patrol able to fire his rifle. At about 2:30 a.m. the patrol ran out of ammunition. Gunships had to drop bandoliers of ammo to the fighting Marines.

The first gunship to arrive over the area was piloted by Mumford who pounded the hill with machinegun and rocket fire. At 2:45 a.m., a CH-46 made an unsuccessful attempt to recover the trapped Marines.

"But the ship took a tremendous battering," according to Mumford. "Several crew members received shrapnel wounds. Every time we stopped firing, the enemy would start moving up on the Marines."

"When we opened up again they would retreat back to their bunkers. They were underground all over that hill. All they had to do was retreat into those bunkers. We couldn't kill anyone there."

Several hours after the first rescue attempt, a second CH-46 tried to pick up the Marines. It was waved off, but still took numerous rounds flying away, and the pilot was killed. The two crew members were wounded, but the co-pilot managed to bring the crippled chopper back to Khe Sanh.

When daylight came, fixed wing fighters were called in and they plastered the hill with ordnance.

At midday, as several Huey gunships continued to hit the hill with rockets and machinegun fire, another Huey landed beside the Marines and extracted them.



HELPING HAND—Marines and Air Force personnel helped Navy hospital corpsmen evacuate wounded Marines at the Khe Sanh airstrip. The wounded were medevaced to rear area hospitals during the battle for Hills 881 South and 812 North.

Khe Sanh Marines Supplied; Support Group Doubles Effort

By: GySgt. T. Donaldson

PHU BAI—Since the intense enemy action began against Marine forces in the Khe Sanh area April 24, a Logistic Support Unit has been supporting the "in action" Leathernecks with over 60,000 pounds of supplies daily.

The Khe Sanh LSU, an extension of Force Logistic Support Group "Alpha" at Phu Bai, has been doubling their supply efforts to effectively support the battalions in addition to artillery batteries.

Originally established in December, 1966, and designed to support one battalion, the LSU specialists, some 60 Marines, are meeting the needs of the Marines engaging the enemy forces in the northwest section of I Corps.

"The Marines were never out of anything," said Major John Weeks of Willard, Ohio, and officer in charge of the LSU, "and they were probably better supplied than any other previous operation," he added.

The initial supply and resupply operations to some 3,000 Marines in the field, was completely airlifted by Marine helicopter units operating from the Khe Sanh airstrip.

In addition to supplying the troops in the field, the LSU provides enough class "A" food to feed over a thousand people housed at the Khe Sanh compound.

Most of the supplies received at the airstrip staging area were flown into Khe Sanh on a "round the clock" schedule by Marine and Air Force transport aircraft. The major portion of

cargo came from the Force Logistic Command units at Da Nang.

"This single mode of resupply by helicopter was the first time an operation was not provided additional means of resupply transportation," stated Major Weeks, "since the action was some 5,000 meters from our supply staging area, no vehicle convoys or surface ships could gain access to the troops in the field," he added.

"We could fully load a helicopter with "C" rations, water, individual equipment and ammunition and get it out to the action sites within 15 to 25 minutes," said Lt. Robert E. Johnson of Northfield, Minn., assistant officer in charge of the LSU.

"When the operation began, we had some problems trying to make stable LZ's (landing zones) for cargo deliveries," Johnson said. "The troops were moving at such a rapid pace the LZ's were changing constantly, stretching the supply

route and requiring immediate supply needs as they moved ahead."

"We frequently had to pace our resupply runs in between artillery firing missions and helicopter medevac flights," stated Johnson, "but we managed to meet all the demands from the field."

Capt. James Ross of Seattle, Wash., an artillery battery commander for the Twelfth Marines, is a firm believer in the supply efforts made by the LSU Marines.

"My artillery battery has been firing an average of 1,500 rounds a day and there seems to be an endless stockpile of ammo," he said. "It's a damn good feeling."

Although the primary mission of the LSU was resupplying the troops in the field, another task equally important was the repair and maintenance of battle-damaged equipment.

Increased combat activity dictated the increased need for rapid repair of weapons, communication equipment and disposing of captured enemy ordnance.

Contact teams, consisting of explosive ordnance disposal specialists were brought into the area from Phu Bai and Dong Ha.

Other teams trained in the repair of artillery tubes burned out from constant use, arrived to "beef-up" the LSU's increasing commitments. After the equipment was repaired, it was immediately airlifted to the action sites.

"Nobody working with the LSU, counts the hours or even the days," said SSgt. Louis Hernandez of Bronx, N.Y. "We keep the gear moving as long as our guys on the hills need the stuff. If we can't get it done in 24 hours, we'll do it in 25."

at a time," between readying the jets for their next mission.

The effort paid off.

Throughout the period of the battle for Hill 861 and the twin peaks of 881, aviation and artillery units were credited with 75% of the enemy confirmed killed from April 24 to May 5.

In all Marine jets from the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing squadrons flew more than 790 sorties and expended more than 1,150 tons of ordnance in the 12 days.

Battle Pressures Felt By Flight Line Crews

By: Sgt. Bob Pitner

DA NANG—The action was miles north, but ordnance and flight line crews of Marine All-Weather Fighter Squadrons 232 and 235 felt the pressure along with the infantrymen battling North Vietnamese near Khe Sanh, just south of the demilitarized zone.

As the infantry units called for more and more close air support by F-8E Crusader jets of the two 1st Marine Aircraft Wing squadrons, the demand on ground crews who arm, refuel, and check each plane before it can return to action increased.

Sorties flown by VMF(AW)-232 on May 1, rose from an average of 24 per day to 38, while tonnage of bombs dropped on the enemy almost doubled.

The battle "up north" gave the aviation Marines the "busiest day we have had since we got to Vietnam," according to GySgt. J. H. Howard, Middleburg, Fla., and VMF(AW)-232 ordnance chief.

It was the kind of day when LCpl. Kenneth L. Heist, of Deland, Fla., "only had time to smoke a quarter of a cigarette

Relay Station

PHU BAI—The Fourth Marine Regiment needed communications between its headquarters and infantry units operating deep in the mountains during search and destroy operations 25 miles northwest of Phu Bai.

To solve the problem, a radio relay station was put atop the tallest hill in the area.

The station has 12 radio circuits. Each is capable of receiving and relaying radio waves automatically.

4 SEA TIGER



Heavy Passenger Traffic

Combat-equipped Marines wait for a helicopter lift into Operation Shawnee, a Marine Corps action in the hills west of the city of Hue. (Photo by: 2ndLt. Bob Carpenter)

Barking Dog Puts Bite on Viet Cong

By: Sgt. W. L. Christofferson
DA NANG — A barking dog was given credit for assisting Marines in the discovery of a huge cache of Viet Cong supplies, including some 8,000 uniforms May 5.

A squad-size patrol from "D" Co., 1st Bn., Fifth Marine Regiment, stumbled onto the cache after the dog attracted their attention, according to Cpl. W. C. Adams (Junction City, Kan.), patrol leader.

Hidden in a hut and nearby cave, in addition to the uniforms, were 33 five-gallon cans filled with medical supplies.

The medical supplies included plasma, three complete surgical sets, penicillin and liquid vita-

mins, indicating the Viet Cong may be operating a hospital nearby.

Other items captured included: 200 flashlights, two flame throwers, 60 pair of shoes, 66 dishpans, 90 bundles of waterproof material, and a number of rolls of cloth.

In addition, smaller quantities of such items as packs, knives, candles, canteens, shotgun shells, and lanterns were uncovered.

Some 200 maps and two communist flags were confiscated.

Searching caves in Hiep Duc valley, 40 miles south of Da Nang, "D" Co. also captured 17 confirmed Viet Cong during the day.



TERRACED TERRAIN—Leathernecks of the Fifth Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division move down terraced rice paddies on Operation Union. The operation, a multi-

battalion search and destroy mission, began April 21 near Hiep Duc, 40 miles south of Da Nang. (Photo by: LCpl. W. A. Porter)



CONG CORNERED — A Viet Cong is flushed from a hedgerow by a Leatherneck of "E" Co., 2nd Bn., First Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division.
(Photo by: LCpl. M. J. Smedley)

Marine at Chu Lai Has Unusual Hobby

CHU LAI—Of all the hobbies Marines in the Chu Lai area pursue on their off duty hours, the carving of tiki gods must be one of the most unusual.

Pfc. Robert G. Carson, of the Marine Air Base Squadron-12 guard section, is the handy man with cabinet maker's tools.

He began carving tikis one summer while working at a lake resort in the Berkeley Hills. At first he carved small heads for the younger children to wear.

As he improved he began making tikis. Presently the Long Beach, Calif. resident can carve one as small as a few inches or as large as 15 feet.

Any type of wood can be used, but soft Palm is preferred. The wood should, when possible, be free of faults and knots. Until two years ago Carson carved only from finished hard wood he bought at a lumber yard.

While working as a hair dresser in Riverside, Calif., he met a man who carved tikis for business establishments. This man taught Carson the technique of carving Palm.

Palm is preferred because, besides being easier to carve, it presents a better looking finished product, with its softer lines and angles.

Since his Dec. 9 arrival in Vietnam, the 20-year-old Marine had completed a five-ft. tiki and several of two-ft. height.

Using scrap wood, it takes

Caught With Pants Down

DA NANG—A combat patrol of "B" Co., 1st Bn., Fifth Marine Regiment foiled a would-be quick-change artist May 3.

While searching a hut approximately 40 miles south of Da Nang, the 1st Division patrol discovered a Viet Cong hiding in the hut's attic.

The Marines surprised the guerrilla by capturing him with his pants down.

He was caught changing from a green uniform into peasant attire.

him from two to five days to carve one, depending on its size.

He pencils in the figure's outline on the wood before roughing it out with a mallet and chisel. A pen knife is used to finish hard wood, while a draw knife is used on Palm. Sandpaper is not used as it will spoil the desired rustic appearance, the final touch is supplied either by burning or staining the wood.

Since the wood is not top quality, he is giving the small tikis to his friends and plans to donate the five-ft. carving to the Chu Lai branch of the USO.

Lightning Bolt Strikes Seven

DONG HA—Call it electrifying, shocking, or even stunning—but for seven Camp Carroll Marines, their experience with a bolt of lightning soured them on any type of "discharge of atmospheric electricity."

The seven—six K Co., Ninth Regiment, Marines and one scout sniper from the Third Regiment—were eating C-rations under a huge engineer crane while an afternoon rain-squall passed.

Suddenly, recalled LCpl. Karl N. Niski of Miami, Fla., they found themselves on the ground. Most were dazed and temporarily paralyzed by the powerful electric shock and couldn't speak for several minutes.

"I looked around and everyone was rolling around on the ground, trying to speak and get up," said Niski. "Before long there was a crowd of guys around us, helping us get up."

The dazed men were taken by helicopter to D Medical Co. dispensary here where they were treated for shock and minor burns.

Navy doctors said they would all be able to return to duty in a day or so, but that the seven had narrowly escaped death from the powerful bolt of lightning.

Former Viet Cong Guerrilla Wins Respect of Marines

By: Sgt. I. R. Taylor

CHU LAI—A "Chieu Hoi" rallier working with Vietnamese interpreters and the intelligence section of the 3rd Bn., Fifth Marines, 1st Marine Division, has proven the value of the program while winning the respect and praise of the Marines of the battalion.

The 17-year-old rallier, Nguyen Thu, has named several Viet Cong guerrillas during Operation Union, his first operation while working with the allies.

Union is currently being conducted by the Fifth Marine Regiment northwest of

Tam Ky and covers the area where Thu once lived and operated as a Viet Cong guerrilla.

Thu was taken captive by the VC when he was 14.

He was tired of running and hiding from American artillery, planes and helicopters, and was homesick. He missed his family and could not visit them for fear of being captured by the Americans or Vietnamese Army.

The VC leaders told him if he was captured or turned himself in, the Vietnamese government would interrogate him and later kill him, Thu said.

But, Thu turned himself in at the Tien Phuoc Special Forces Camp northwest of Tam Ky, in March. He brought with him a Thompson sub-machine gun, magazines and ammunition.

"Thu has been working very hard out here on the operation and he's doing an outstanding job," said 1stLt. Steven E. Lindbloom (Davenport, Iowa).

"He's been particularly valuable to us because this is the area he stayed in as Viet Cong," Lindbloom said.

"The Vietnamese people in all the small villages and hamlets we go through are beginning to realize that the VC lie and steal from them and they are turning against the Viet Cong. They believe what the Americans and the South Vietnamese government tell them and are convinced that we will win," SSgt. Le Van Tan, interpreter for the battalion continued.

"Without the help or support of the civilian population, the local guerrilla will not be able to live in the area and may be forced to rally government," he added.

Infantrymen Praise Jet Support on 861

By: LCpl. Woody Price

DA NANG — "When you're pinned down by heavy enemy fire, with wounded Marines who need medical help, there's nothing in this world that looks as good as a couple of Marine jets screaming out of the sun to tear up the enemy," says Cpl. Arnett Lewis, Jr.

The 23-year-old from Lexington, Miss., was on Hill 861 near the demilitarized zone when F-4B Phantom jets arrived to pro-

vide close air support for the besieged Marines.

"We were sent up the hill to reinforce a unit that had suffered casualties and were pinned down by enemy fire," said Lewis, a fire team leader with the 3rd Bn., Ninth Marine Regiment.

"We got part of the wounded out during the night, but when daylight came we still had a long way to go and the enemy was making it hot for us. We had wounded Marines who really needed help, but we couldn't get down the hill.

"Then we heard a helluva roar and looked up to see jets swooping down toward the hill-top," said Lewis. "Once they started on that hill they didn't stop until it was just a mass of rubble.

"We got out okay, and for nearly two days Marine jets just kept coming in to pound that hill. When they were finished it looked entirely different than when we first went up.

"When we went back up the hill, the top was practically bare and the enemy was gone. I guess we owe our lives to those jets," Lewis said.

"Since I've been in Vietnam I've heard a lot of guys say the same thing," said Lewis. "When you're pinned down those jets are a beautiful sight, and when you're wounded a helicopter looks like an angel."

Twins Pose Name Problem for Marine

KHE SANH — Marine Cpl. Daniel A. Wisley (Northfield, Mass.) has a problem.

When he left the states he asked his wife to name their expected child after him—she had twins.

Wisley had just been evacuated, after being wounded in the savage fighting on Hill 881, when he found out.

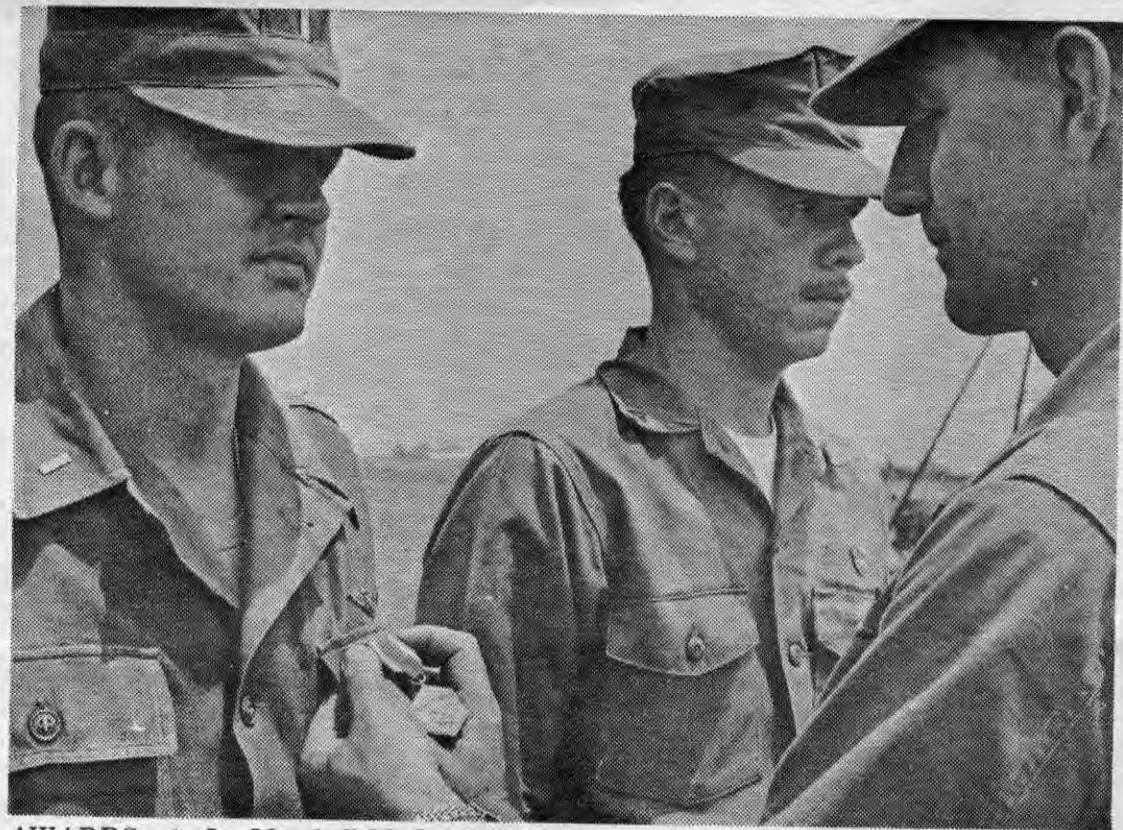
A squad leader in the Third Marine Regiment was waiting for a med evac helicopter when a Marine from his unit broke the news.

"Your wife just gave birth to twins and she is doing fine," the Marine said.

"How about that," said Wisley. "I'm a daddy. I have been expecting news like this but . . . two boys . . . twins!"



STOOP TO CONQUER — A Vietnamese child holds a mirror for a Marine, enjoying a rare morning shave in the field during Operation Union, May 2. The operation, a multi-battalion search and destroy mission through the Hiep Duc valley, 40 miles south of Da Nang, has already accounted for 220 Viet Cong and 104 North Vietnamese soldiers killed since it began, Apr. 21.



AWARDS—1st Lt. Marshall M. Calef II (left) and LCpl. Theodore P. Linski receive Navy Commendation Medals from LtCol. Earl W. Traut, commanding officer of Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-361 during ceremonies at Marine Aircraft Group-16. The two Leathernecks were commended for their roles in saving the lives of six wounded men during a single night's duty as medevac crewmen from HMM-361.

(Photo by: 2nd Lt. Bob Carpenter)

Decorations and Awards

DA NANG—Marine Capt. Jesse J. Richardson, 28, of Livermore, Calif., a UH1E pilot with Marine Observation Squadron 2, received a gold star in lieu of a second Distinguished Flying Cross for his actions in recovering a downed helicopter crew Jan. 1 while serving with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 363.

An Army helicopter, acting as escort for a Marine helicopter resupplying the Republic of Vietnam Red Hat Airborne Brigade near Tuy Hoa, was shot down and surrounded by a large force of Viet Cong.

Richardson, leading a two aircraft flight, arrived at the scene of the crash and saw that the downed crew had been pinned down by automatic weapons fire.

While the second helo fired on the Viet Cong located on a nearby hill, Richardson's gunners fired on hostile positions closer to the Army crew.

He hovered his UH34 inches above a rice paddy between the Americans and the VC to provide protection for the survivors.

The downed crew made their way to his helicopter and climbed aboard. As he lifted out of the zone he saw that his crew chief was still on the ground.

His citation lauds Richardson for his "complete disregard for personal safety as he returned to the zone for the second time.

"He positioned his aircraft between the crew chief and the intense automatic weapons fire. Water spouts were shooting up around the aircraft from the VC fire as he waited for the crew chief to get aboard," the citation reads.

Weaving and turning to avoid enemy fire, the Marine pilot lifted his chopper from the zone. The aircraft had not been hit during either trip into the "hot zone."

The citation also commended Richardson for his "heroic efforts and extraordinary aeronautical skill, which undoubtedly saved the lives of the downed Army crew and his own crew chief."

Richardson was awarded his first DFC in November 1966, when he flew into a zone receiving enemy mortar and automatic weapons fire, to evacuate a wounded Republic of Korea Marine.

SILVER STAR

DA NANG—LanceCpl. Charles P. Mugler, 20, (Richmond, Va.), a machine gunner with "C" Co., 1st Bn., Twenty-Sixth Marine Regiment, was presented the Silver Star Medal May 2 for

heroic actions last September.

Mugler sprung a one man ambush against 10 Viet Cong headed for wounded Leathernecks lying in the open.

As the VC approached the Marines, he stepped out and fired at point-blank range, killing all the enemy.

The medal was presented by MajGen. H. Nickerson Jr., commanding general, 1st Marine Division.

BRONZE STAR

DA NANG—Combined enemy rifle and automatic small arms fire and falling mortars did not stop Navy Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Robert N. Lathrop, 21 (Whittier, Calif.) from rushing to the aid of four wounded Marines laying exposed to enemy fire.

For his actions and devotion to duty, Lathrop was presented the Bronze Star Medal by MajGen. H. Nickerson Jr., commanding general, 1st Marine Division.

As "C" Co., 1st Bn., First Marine Regiment left the helicopters on a raid on a Viet Cong stronghold south of Da Nang, concentrated fire came from the enemy position, wounding many Marines.

Rushing between the Viet Cong and the return fire of the Marines, "Doc" Lathrop, already wounded himself by grenade fragments, administered to the wounded Marines while the fighting raged around him.

In disregard for his own wound and safety, Lathrop refused treatment and evacuation until the more seriously wounded could be taken care of.

BRONZE STAR

DA NANG—By killing two Viet Cong guerrillas attempting to throw grenades, a Marine insured the safe passage of a platoon headquarters section of "C" Co., 1st Bn., Twenty-Sixth Marine Regiment.

LanceCpl. Thomas Cotto, 20 (Chicago) was presented the Bronze Star Medal May 2, for

the action by MajGen. H. Nickerson Jr., commanding general, 1st Marine Division.

An automatic rifleman, Cotto was engaged in a search and clear operation near Da Nang. A force of 20 Viet Cong was sighted trying to cross the Ai Nghia river.

The Leathernecks engaged them in an hour-long firefight before the VC broke contact and ran.

During the following search, two guerrillas come out of hiding places and attempted to hurl grenades at the headquarters section.

Cotto rushed forward and killed the Viet Cong.

DFC

CHU LAI—The Distinguished Flying Cross was presented Major Henry L. Searle, 32, of Yokima, Wash., an A4-E Skyhawk pilot with Marine Attack Squadron 211, April 24 at Marine Aircraft Group 12 headquarters.

Searle was decorated for air action against Viet Cong on Dec. 6, 1966. He led a two plane flight of Skyhawks to destroy enemy positions that were preventing the rescue of a downed Marine helicopter crew, 10 miles south of Da Nang.

The Viet Cong had the helicopter crew pinned down from different positions with automatic weapons fire.

"It was getting dark and the cloud ceiling was too low for that type of mission," recalls Searle. "We made our runs almost flat with the ground. Also because of poor visibility, we couldn't get long enough runs, which slowed us over the target."

The VC returned fire at the Skyhawks. It was on the fourth run that they succeeded in putting a round in the intake of Searle's plane.

After being hit, he directed his wingman to continue the attack and flew clear of the area to check the extent of damage. Although his aircraft was damaged, he returned to continue the attack.

Combat Photographer Gets Chance to Fight

By: SSgt. G. F. Selby

DA NANG—The job of a Marine Corps combat photographer is to shoot pictures of Marines in combat.

LCpl. Michael J. Smedley, of Bloomington, Ill., 1st Marine Division photographer, had cause to do other "shooting" last month.

Units of the 1st and 2nd Bns., First Marine Regiment, were pursuing a group of Viet Cong believed to be remnants of an enemy force that had engaged two companies of the First Marine Regiment two days earlier.

As the Marines opened fire on Viet Cong running across the front, a heavy firefight broke out on the Leathernecks' left flank.

To get his photos, Smedley quickly moved into the midst of the left flank unit, cocking his cameras as he ran. The shooting ceased within five minutes, but Smedley had his pictures.

However, the fight with the enemy was far from finished.

As the Marines continued their advance, three Viet Cong snipers opened fire from concealed positions to the front and left.

Smedley found himself pinned down. With nothing but scrubby bushes for concealment, any movement by the Marines gave the enemy snipers a target.

"I felt kind of helpless out there," said Smedley, "with only my pistol, because the snipers were too far away (250-300 yards) for it to do me any good."

Trapped Marines Saved by SSgt.

DA NANG—Exposing himself to intense enemy fire, a Marine staff sergeant rushed to the aid of Leathernecks trapped in a burning helicopter shot down minutes earlier by the Viet Cong.

SSgt. Del E. Pettrie (Indianapolis, Ind.), a platoon sergeant with the Seventh Marine Regiment, had a unit guarding a landing zone for recovery of a reconnaissance squad.

During the loading the VC began firing and the helo began an emergency lift-off.

When the aircraft was 10 to 15 feet up a Marine fell. Pettrie moved to break his fall.

Seconds later, a rotor blade was shot off the helicopter, and it crashed and burst into flames.

Petrie dashed to the downed 'copter and assisted the remaining Marines in getting out.

"I was scared at first," he said, "but I felt more secure after I got a rifle from one of the wounded Marines near me."

The Marines were able to get out of the enemy's sights under cover of a steady artillery barrage on the suspected sniper positions.

Smedley joined the Division's photo section April 6 and was on his first combat operation.

"I thought there would be more fighting and less walking," explained Smedley, "but the Viet Cong snipers have me convinced there is a war going on around here!"

Corpsman Runs Through Fire Aiding Marines

DA NANG — Running out of medical supplies, a Navy corpsman serving with "M" Co., 3rd Bn., Seventh Marine Regiment, ran through intense enemy fire to retrieve a first aid kit from a fallen comrade and remained in the open administering aid to seriously wounded Marines.

HM3 Charles F. Brown (Fairbury, Nebr.) was taking part in a sweep and destroy operation south of Chu Lai when Viet Cong guerrillas sprang an ambush.

As the lead elements of the sweep moved towards a treeline, an estimated company of Viet Cong opened up from fortified positions.

Brown began treating wounded Marines as they were carried to a stone house.

Out of medical supplies, he moved into the battle zone to retrieve the other first aid kit. Remaining in the open, Brown treated the more seriously wounded Leathernecks before returning to aid ones that had been brought to the house.

Brown made five trips across the battlefield to aid wounded.



FLAG CAPTURED—(L to R) Sgt. Michael T. Murray (Portland, Ore.), GySgt. Alvin S. Merrill (East Jordan, Utah) and LtCol. Hillmer F. DeAtley (Wood River, Ill.), display a communist flag that was discovered in a Viet Cong cave. The flag was captured during Operation Humbolt, six miles south of Da Nang by the 3rd Bn., First Marine Regiment. (Photo by: Sgt. S. D. Sullivan)

Volunteers Lead Truck Convoys to Dong Ha

Pass Over 110 Miles Of Danger

By GySgt. Jim Northrop

PHU BAI—Marine truck drivers of the 3d Division's 3d Motor Transport Bn., stationed here, face possible death so that needed supplies may be trucked to fighting Marines south of the demilitarized zone.

The mission, on which only volunteer Marines are accepted, is that of driving the mine truck at the head of armed truck convoys hauling supplies from the huge Marine supply depot at Da Nang to Dong Ha, south of the DMZ.

To meet the problem of mines placed by the Viet Cong over the 110 miles of Highway 1, the longest convoy route in Vietnam, the solution is a simple one—sandbag the floorboards, fenders and the rear bed of a 2½-ton truck and start driving to clear the way for the rest of the convoy.

The lead driver is trained to detect suspicious looking mounds of dirt on the potmarked blacktop, freshly filled chuck holes, wires across the road blocks. In addition, he is alert for snipers and possible ambush by the Viet Cong.

Viet Cong troops have passed out leaflets to villages and hamlets along Highway 1, warning civilians to stay off the road, saying they were going to mine the highway to destroy American truck convoys.

When told of this development just before starting on a trip, PFC Robert L. Franklin, driver of the mine truck, stated, "This is a job that has to be done and I am ready."

With that statement Franklin started his truck and launched a convoy of more than 80 trucks.

Convoy commander, 1st Lt. William E. Thompson, checked his radio and gave the signal to start the trucks rolling.

Following the mine truck in a jeep, the convoy commander led a U.S. Army 2½-ton truck carrying bed-mounted quad .50 cal. machineguns, crew-served



STAGING—A Marine convoy of 3rd Motor Transport trucks forms before departing on one of the longest convoy runs in South Vietnam. U.S. Army quad .50 machineguns are included in the protective force that accompanies the trucks.

(Photo by: GySgt. Jim Northrop)

by U.S. Army troops, one of several in the convoy.

Scattered on trucks throughout the convoy were Marine riflemen, on the alert in case of Viet Cong ambush, snipers or any other trouble enroute.

Once on the road, the mine truck sets the pace for the convoy.

At designated points along the route, radio checks were made with Marine headquarters, giving progress reports on the convoy. Overhead, Marine helicopters and observation planes kept a look-out along both sides of the route for Viet Cong.

The light aircraft also serve as spotters for Marine artillery batteries, standing by in case of attack. In addition, U.S. Navy ships are standing off shore, their guns ready, to assist the Marine truck unit. Huey gunships buzz overhead, giving assurance that quick, devastating fire power is also available as the trucks enter "VC Country."

Another village and another

check point; this time U.S. Marines are at the check point. The Marines are members of one of the combined action companies, CAC, that serve with Popular Forces troops (PF's) throughout I Corps, guarding strategic hamlets, villages and points along the highway.

Franklin has been in Vietnam for four months and said this was his first time to drive a mine truck on a convoy. He has been in motor transport since arriving in Vietnam and is interested in his job. At home he worked on cars and has a "souped up" '50 Chevy for drag racing.

The convoy cautiously approached the village of Phou Loc, one of the danger areas. Just the day before, an ARVN truck was mined and a bridge was blown by the Viet Cong. Marine engineers were there to repair the bridge and they lost a truck that hit a mine which wounded three Marines.

The Viet Cong have started to plant plastic mines that escape detection from the hand-carried mine detectors. Marine engineers made a sweep of the bypass around the blown bridge and said the way was clear.

The trucks drove through with no incidents. Franklin, commenting on the hazards of driving in wartime, said, "I feel motor transport plays a very important part in supplying troops in the 3rd Division. I like the job of driving and feel I am contributing something to the war effort in Vietnam."

He expertly drove his truck around two mine craters in the road, evidence that other mines had been detonated within the last couple days either by civilians or military vehicles.

Further along Franklin shifted down for the long hard climb up through Hai Van pass. The road narrowed, the curves were sharper as the long line of trucks made their way up the 3,500-foot elevation.

Keeping in radio communication at all times, the lead truck made the summit and pulled over to stop. The ARVN interpreter checked with Vietnamese and Marine security forces to see if the road was clear of traffic coming up the other side. Loads were checked, ropes tightened and tires checked be-



SANDBAGGER—Marine Pfc Robert L. Franklin, (Woodbury, N.J.), stacks sandbags on the lead truck before starting on a Marine convoy. Franklin is a volunteer mine truck driver with Marine 3rd Motor Transport Bn. The mine truck is sandbagged heavily to ward off injuries in the event a mine is detonated on the convoy route.

(Photo by: GySgt. Jim Northrop)

fore the downward leg of the journey.

One-way traffic now, descending the high mountain. The South China Sea comes in sight. Drivers were busy now, shifting down and braking their trucks going down the steep mountain road until at last the flatlands are in sight.

A representative of the supply depot met the lead truck to guide the convoy into the huge depot.

At Da Nang the trucks are unloaded, serviced and checked prior to being loaded with critically needed supplies. More trucks are added until the convoy totals more than 100 for the return trip to Dong Ha.

The drivers grab a hot meal and a few hours sleep and are ready for an early morning start on their "Beans, Bullets and Bandages" run.

SEA TIGER 7



EASY DOES IT—Marine engineers probe for Viet Cong mines on Highway 1, the longest convoy route in Vietnam.

Bombing and Strafing

Attack Pilots Blast Enemy

CHU LAI—"We commenced at the north end of main street and went right down the middle of town delivering our wares every 50 meters," said the veteran 1st Marine Aircraft Wing jet attack pilot after returning from a bombing and strafing mission near Phu Bai.

The "wares" Maj. Fred P. Anthony, of Newport News, Va., mentioned were 250 lb. bombs and 20mm cannon ammunition that he and his wingman, 1stLt. Pete Davis of Plymouth, Mass., fired on a fortified Viet Cong village.

Anthony, executive officer of Marine Attack Squadron (VMA)-121, and Davis sped the 80 miles from Chu Lai to the target in their A4E Skyhawk jets.

An observation plane had the target "well marked and wasted little time telling how he wanted Pete and I to make our runs," recalled Anthony. "The village was long and narrow with a large road running down its center," he added.

"It was a perfect setup as it allowed us to zero right in on the road as we made our runs. I went in for two bombing runs, dropping four bombs each run, then followed with two strafing runs. Pete followed with the same pattern," Anthony said.

The mission was over in 20 minutes.

According to the spotter, the Marine Aircraft Group 12 pilots had killed two VC, destroyed seven structures, damaged another, and wrecked 50 meters of trenchline.

Anthony has flown more than 70 combat missions since coming to Vietnam in February.

Davis has 100 combat missions with VMA-121.

TWO PAIRS

DA NANG—Two pairs of F-4E Crusaders from Marine All-Weather Fighter Squadron-235, returning from separate missions, have dealt consecutive blows to a Viet Cong force south of Da Nang.

The first flight led by Major Donald E. Dilley of New Orleans, La., was returning to Da Nang after escorting helicopters, when they were contacted by an airborne Army tactical air controller. He requested an air strike in support of a Marine ground unit pinned down by enemy fire.

Dilley and his wingman, Capt. John C. Shaw of Idlewild Park, Ore., answered the call although they were low on fuel. As soon as they were on station the spotter rocket detonated, a group of 35-40 Viet Cong attempted to escape.

The jets made three firing runs each over the communist positions, dropping 250-lb. bombs and firing rockets.

Marine ground forces moving into the area after the strike credited the Crusaders with 19 enemy killed.

Less than an hour later, remnants of the enemy force were trapped in a nearby cluster of trees and structures by the ground troops.

Maj. Robert Plant of San Diego, Calif., and 1stLt. George D. Cummings of Los Altos, Calif., also returning from a helo escort mission were asked to assist.

They made seven runs each, hitting the enemy with bombs, rockets and cannon fire. The score for the mission was 10 structures destroyed and six enemy confirmed killed.

10 MINUTES

DA NANG—It took less than 10 minutes for two 1st Marine Aircraft Wing Crusader jets to turn a Viet Cong ammunition cache into a smoking cavern.

Cpts. Donald A. Brigham of Bakersfield, Calif., and Harold J. Hellbach of New Orleans, La., and Marine All-Weather Fighter Squadron 232 were cred-

ited with setting off nine secondary explosions while attacking an enemy tunnel complex 15 miles south of Chu Lai.

The two F8E Crusaders were directed by an airborne tactical air controller flying an O1C observation plane.

"The caves were plainly visible where the water had undercut a river bank. We came in first with bombs and followed with rockets and cannon fire," Brigham said. "We got secondary explosions from each kind of ordnance we used," he added.

Brigham estimates he and his wingman spent seven to nine minutes over the target.

SEVEN KILLS

DA NANG—Two F-8E Crusader jets of Marine All-Weather Fighter Squadron-235 killed seven enemy troops west of Phu Bai.

Maj. Colin J. Ruthven of Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, and 1stLt. James L. Lucas of Camas, Wash. had been on an emergency helicopter escort mission and were enroute back to Da Nang. They were diverted north where a Marine ground unit was engaged with a large Viet Cong force.

An Army tactical air controller (airborne) pointed out enemy positions to the Marine pilots. The VC were entrenched around a group of structures partially concealed in a tree line at the base of a mountain range, 18 miles west of Phu Bai.

After the Army pilot marked the target with spotter rockets, the Crusaders made strafing runs with their 20 millimeter cannon and followed up with volleys of 2.75 inch rockets. They made four firing passes each, expending a total of 76 rockets and 800 rounds of cannon fire.

In addition to the seven confirmed enemy dead, the controller credited the Marine jets with two structures destroyed and a large secondary fire.

ALERT PILOT

CHU LAI—An alert pilot from Marine Attack Squadron-121 cut short a Viet Cong artillery attack on Dong Ha April 27.

Capt. George Romano of Lakewood, Fla., was flying his A-4E Skyhawk on a night bombing mission when he spotted muzzle flashes north of Dong Ha.

"The muzzle flashes were in groups of four, coming from the same area," he said.

Radioing Dong Ha, he asked if they had any artillery operating in the area. The reply was "no."

"Dong Ha had just answered, when I saw the impacts below me, starting the attack," said Romano.

Armed with six 500-lb. bombs and 20mm cannon, he started his run.

"As I rolled-in for a second run, I could see the VC were really pouring it on Dong Ha," Romano said.

"It was so easy because the VC gun positions were all in line. Once I got a good sighting on the muzzle flashes, I couldn't miss," he added.

The VC began firing at the plane with machineguns. He rolled into a strafing dive and covered the area with 20mm fire.

On the next run there was no answering fire.

TWO PLANE RUN

CHU LAI—Leatherneck jet pilots of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron-323 killed 20 Viet Cong during an air strike 20 miles northwest of Phu Bai.

Scheduled for another mission, the two-plane flight was diverted by an Air Force airborne controller who had spotted Viet Cong movement in a tree line along a river.

Piloting the F-4B Phantom jets from Marine Aircraft Group-13 were Cpts. G. Thomas Schmidt of Annandale, Va., and Bill Leigh of Houston, Tex. Their radar intercept officers were Cpts. James Hare of Yonkers, N.Y., and Don Reynolds of Laurel Bay, S.C.

"When we arrived on the scene, we couldn't spot any VC movement, but the controller directed us through the strike," said Schmidt.

The controller marked the target with white smoke and the Phantoms, carrying 500-lb. bombs, made their runs. A body count later credited the flight with 20 enemy killed.

PHANTOM STRIKES

CHU LAI—An F4B Phantom jet pilot killed 35 Viet Cong during an air strike 10 miles south of Chu Lai.

2ndLt. Joe Conlon of Little Falls, N.J. and Radar Intercept Officer, Capt. Hank Hudson of New York City, from Marine Fighter Attack Squadron-323, made the kill.

The Viet Cong had gathered a large force near a market place on the north side of the Quang Ngai River. Air Force jets caused them to flee across the river by sampan to a tree line and trench paralleling the river.

"We were taking fire and the situation was tense," states Hudson. "The controller made it easy. He got us right on target the first time. We rolled in from 8,000 feet and leveled at about 3,000. We were carrying 250 pound bombs and let 'em all fall at once into the tree line."

There was a wall of black smoke. "Beautiful shot!" radioed the controller, who confirmed the VC killed.



MUSIC FOR DREAMING—Hospital Corpsman First Class H. L. House (Compton, Calif.) catches a few winks during a two-day county fair conducted by the 1st Marine Division, near Da Nang. A portable radio serves as both an eyeshade and soothing lullaby source. (Photo by: Sgt. G. D. Sullivan)

New Post Exchange For Third Division

By: Sgt. Vince Hagel

PHU BAI—MajGen. Bruno A. Hochmuth, commanding general, 3rd Marine Division, opened a new Division Exchange at ribbon cutting ceremonies here recently.

The Phu Bai exchange increased its sales from \$30,000 monthly, a year ago, to \$60,000 in November of last year. That month, the exchange moved to a new Butler building, and monthly sales immediately jumped to \$80,000, and by January, \$240,000.

The need for a new exchange was obvious and construction on two new buildings began in March.

In addition to ordering and stocking for the new PX, twice the size of its predecessor, 1stLt. R.T. Warren (Laguna Hills, Cal.) recognized the need for more Vietnamese employees. Division Civil Affairs and the

Industrial Relations office arranged for the hiring of more civilians. Now Lt. Warren employs 18 Vietnamese.

SSgt. L. Campbell (Oceanside, Cal.) manages retail sales in the new PX. He must insure that everything from cigarettes to diamonds is properly looked after. Campbell expects exchange sales to jump to half a million dollars a month in a very short time.

Sgt. Richard Jackson (Fredonia, N.Y.) acts as courier for the exchange. He travels between Dong Ha, Phu Bai and Da Nang, carrying money orders for the 3rd Division exchange system. He receives orders for PX's at Khe Sanh, Camp Carroll, the field PX at Ko Bi Tan Tanh and the PX truck that drives to Marine field units.

All things considered, the 3rd Division exchange system is a big business.



AIR SUPPORT—An A-4E Skyhawk attack jet drops its ordnance on a North Vietnamese Army position near Khe Sanh. First Marine Aircraft Wing fighter and attack jets and supporting artillery accounted for 75 per cent of the nearly 600 confirmed enemy kills during recent action of Hills 861, and 881 North and South. (Photo by: Sgt. Rich Groscoft)

An Hoa Industrial Complex Protected by Marine Units

By: Sgt. Russell R. Hurley

DA NANG—South Vietnam's industrial power, although small, has taken great strides in the last year towards building a stronger nation.

To feed its new and old factories and power plants, fuel is needed. Fuel such as coal.

The only coal mine in the Republic of South Vietnam is located 37 miles southwest of Da Nang in what is predominantly Viet Cong country.

Vitalness of this natural resource is evident to the South Vietnamese and the VC.

Its protection from Communist terrorism is the job of the 2nd Bn., Fifth Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division headquartered at the An Hoa civilian industrial complex, 26 miles southwest of Da Nang.

A company of Marines occupying the Nong Son Outpost, overlook the coal mine which is boarded on three sides by towering jungle matted mountains.

Day and night harassment of the enemy by the Marines' big

guns atop Nong Son has kept the VC from making any attempt to disturb the mining operation.

Patrolling the lush green jungle and rich rice paddy farm land surrounding the mine has also discouraged the enemy from interfering as long as the Marines are around.

Transportation poses the biggest problem for the mine which limits the amount of coal being taken from its open pits.

Until recently the only means of transporting coal from the mine was by barge on the Thu Bon river to the An Hoa complex.

Known to be a major VC supply route the slow moving gray river proved to be a long painstaking highway.

Early in March the 2nd Battalion opened a 10½ mile extension to Liberty Road from An Hoa to the Nong Son river crossing greatly increasing the amount of coal being shipped.

Bridges on the road are occasionally destroyed by the Viet Cong and Marine engineer sweep teams continue to find mines.

The road opening marked the first time vehicles were able to travel it after being closed by the communists for two and one half years.

Coal is often transported to Da Nang by Marine trucks upon their return trip after resupplying the An Hoa combat base.

Employing 1,000 workers the mine in actuality supports 6,000 Vietnamese when families are included.

Most of these are refugees who left communist controlled areas during Marine operations.

Future plans for the mine are limitless. The industrial complex alone will consume over 300,000 tons of coal a year when fully operational.

Other plants and factories throughout South Vietnam will require the valuable fuel which in turn will provide more jobs for Vietnamese at the Nong Son coal mine.

Husband and Wife Both Lieutenants

DA NANG — Marine 1stLt. Bruce Gillaspie isn't a communications officer, but he spends a lot of time using the phone.

Six switchboards, a little patience, and a little shouting can usually connect him with a pretty Army nurse at Qui Nhon.

Sound like a good way to spend an idle evening? Both the lieutenant and the nurse think

so.

They are husband and wife. The lieutenant, a helicopter pilot with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-361, seldom has the chance to visit his wife Margaret, also a first lieutenant. But he admits he's "... getting pretty handy with telephone connections."

The Gillaspies both began their overseas tours in January and hope to return to the U.S. together. Margaret has more time in Vietnam than her husband who stayed on Okinawa two months with his squadron.

Gillaspie has only had one chance to visit her at the Qui Nhon Army hospital. But she recently visited him at the Marble Mountain Air Facility near Da Nang.

The two have a regular system for communicating. Most of their calls are placed in the early hours of the morning when telephone traffic is lightest.

"I go through six switchboards usually," says the lieutenant. "Some of the operators know my voice and it usually isn't too hard."

Married slightly less than one year, the Gillaspies met while he was undergoing flight training in Florida. At that time Margaret was a student at nursing school in Mobile, Ala.

After entering the Army, Mrs. Gillaspie requested duty in Vietnam in hopes that they could see each other from time-to-time.

Tri-Service Sea Rescue Saves Two

DA NANG — A tri-service rescue at sea was successfully completed last month, pulling both a Marine pilot and his radar operator from the South China Sea.

LtCol. G.H. Keller and Capt. H.L. Julian were rescued in separate attempts, southeast of Da Nang.

The downed jet from Marine Aircraft Group-13, piloted by Keller, commanding officer of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron-323, was flying at 24,000 ft. when mechanical difficulties forced the two to eject near the island of Cu Lao Cham.

Shortly after, Air Force rescue aircraft from the Da Nang Air Base were launched. They located the pilot of the Marine jet, and lifted Keller aboard, but could not locate his RIO because of darkness.

A search and rescue team from Marine Aircraft Group-16 continued the search.

At approximately 9 p.m., Major Thomas S. Dunlap of Miami, Fla., and Capt. Paul M. Nick of Orange, Calif., flying two CH-46 Sea Knights from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-265 spotted a blinking strobe light in the sea near the island.

"I requested assistance from a flare ship," Dunlap said. "After the flare ship arrived on station I made several attempts to rescue the crewman. On the second go around, out of nowhere there appeared a Vietnamese swiftboat. I was waved off," he said, "and the swift boat lifted the radar operator out of the water."

Nick was taken to the nearby island, where he was picked-up by a UH-34 helicopter from Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-361, and taken to the Naval Hospital at Da Nang.



HAPPINESS IS—1stLt. Margaret Gillaspie, an Army nurse stationed at Qui Nhon, sits in a Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron-361 helo during a visit to the Marble Mountain Air Facility to see her husband, Marine 1st Lt. Bruce Gillaspie, a pilot with the squadron.

(Photo by: Sgt. Rich Groscoast)



Heli-lift

DA NANG — A battalion of Marines was heli-lifted into combat by UH-34's of Marine Aircraft Group-16.

The battalion of the Twenty-Sixth Marine Regiment, was part of a larger force kicking off an operation about 20 miles south of Marble Mountain near Da Nang.

A fleet of 24 helicopters transported the troops into three landing zones under protection of armed UH-1E Huey helicopters and jet attack aircraft.

Prior to the lift, the area had been hit by artillery, naval gunfire and air strikes.

Light sporadic contact was reported in one of the three landing zones. Troops poured from helicopters unopposed in the other two.

Another battalion of U.S. Marines made an amphibious assault across sandy beaches to the north of the helicopter landing zones, while two battalions of Vietnamese Army rangers moved east from inland positions to box in the area.

The operation is aimed against a known Viet Cong stronghold.

Last January, a company-size Marine raid near the area resulted in more than 60 VC kills in less than six hours.

Fuel System

PHU BAI—The flexibility and strength of the Fourth Marine Regiment command post has been increased by the addition of a tactical air fuel dispensing system.

The fuel complex has a capacity of 40,000 gallons of aviation gasoline and jet petroleum and allows all type of Marine helicopters to refuel on the spot.

Previously, helicopters flying in support of ground operations in the Co Bi Tan Thahn area 25 miles northwest of Phu Bai had to refuel at another aviation base.

The installation, at its current capacity, can refuel six CH-46's at one time or four H34's. In an emergency, helicopters could be refueled within three minutes.

The Marine dispensing unit arrived in the field and became operational in one day. Fuel used at the installation is flown to the site in 500 gallon containers.

VC Ambush

DA NANG—"K" Co., 3rd Bn., First Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division had just set in for the night when a Viet Cong anxiously gave himself up "to lead the Marines to water" April 29.

After already chopping through several hundred leech-infested meters on a multi-battalion search and destroy mission 33 miles south of Da Nang, squad leader Cpl. Thompson Flute Jr., (Apache, Okla.) wasn't in the mood to take chances.

"There was one stream rippling right near our feet, and I suspected an ambush," said Flute.

He was right. The detainee was overly cau-

tious, just before they reached the ambush, the VC jerked quickly toward Flute and hit the deck.

Flute opened fire, silencing the awaiting VC, then ran back for reinforcements, but the detainee escaped.

Returning, with a 10-man squad, Flute checked out the ambush site to find several seemingly deserted caves.

Preparing the area with small arms, Flute threw a smoke grenade in one of the holes. Three Viet Cong charged out and were apprehended, one was the original detainee.

Another tried to escape and was killed.

A thorough search of the area uncovered a M-2 carbine, thirty 30 cal. rounds, three magazines, three M-26 grenades, one cartridge belt, a first aid pouch and notes, medical books, clothing and a cloth stretcher.

Ferry Service

DA NANG—A Marine infantryman opened a ferry service to shuttle a company across a rain-swollen river during a recent search and destroy operation near Chu Lai.

When "D" Co., 1st Bn., Twenty-Sixth Marines encountered the river, LCpl. John C. Hines, (Albany, N.Y.) volunteered to check the depth and current.

Finding places 10 feet deep, Hines located a small boat and began the ferry service.

Viet Cong snipers opened fire before the entire company could cross.

Hines ignored the fire and completed the movement.

Booby Trap

DA NANG—There are several suggested methods for locating mines—stepping on the detonator is not one.

But it worked for Cpl. Michael P. Rodrigue, 21, (Lynn, Mass.) of the 1st Force Reconnaissance Co.

Rodrigue became one of the few men to hear the deadly click of a detonator and escape unhurt while on patrol April 24 south of Da Nang.

He felt his left foot hit something solid.

Then he heard the click. Looking down, he could see the tell-tale three metal prongs of a pressure-type device. It obviously was connected to a mine or booby trap.

Keeping his weight on his right foot, Rodrigue informed his patrol leader of the location of the mine.

Then he jumped back. Nothing happened.

"From the looks of the detonator," said SSgt. D. L. Arnold, 25, (Lovilia, Ia.), the patrol leader, "it had been in place for some time, maybe a year.

"It was rusty. The rust, and the fact that Rodrigue hadn't fully stepped down, kept it from going off."

The patrol destroyed the booby-trapped fragmentation grenade with explosive.

The crater caused by that explosion revealed another mine underneath the first. It, too, was destroyed.

New Lieutenant Plays Major Role in the Battle for Hill 861

By: Sgt. Roger Ynostroza

KHE SANH—2ndLt. James D. Carter, Jr., arrived in South Vietnam, April 21 and assumed duties as platoon commander with a company of the Ninth Marine Regiment April 23.

In the next four days, Lt. Carter was to play a major role in the battle for Hill 861, fast becoming the heaviest enemy contact to date in this far northwestern corner of South Vietnam.

Carter received his baptism of fire April 24, his first full day with his 57-man unit.

"We were part of a two platoon sweep of a North Vietnamese Army (NVA) cave complex about 1,500 yards from Hill 861," said the lieutenant. "Enroute there, we spotted about five NVA in Khakis. We opened fire and they ran from us, so we called in 81mm mortars and hit them with our own 60mm tubes."

"My squad leader took a fire team around to try to block the NVA escape, but he was hit with a white phosphorous grenade and killed, and the smoke covered the enemy escape," said Lt. Carter. "We rigged up a stretcher and started for Hill 700, where our command group was located."

Enroute, the unit was hit by fierce enemy fire and was pinned down.

"My men reacted quickly — an M-79 man killed several with his accurate shots, and another man hand-held a 60mm mortar tube and put rounds on the enemy," said Lt. Carter.

An OE-1 spotter plane circling overhead marked the enemy positions for fix-wing air strikes. High explosives battered the NVA positions while the Marines found better defensive positions.

"They must have really been dug-in because the air strikes passed and they began firing at us again," said Lt. Carter.

The platoon moved to a landing zone and were able to evacuate four wounded before the helicopters were driven off by heavy enemy fire. The unit moved to a new LZ and another chopper evacuated more wounded before it, too, was driven off.

"We had no entrenching tools with us, so we dug in as best we could for the night, using canteen cups and whatever to dig holes," said Lt. Carter. "Surprisingly we weren't assaulted that night. Air strikes and artillery pounded the areas around us and on 861 for most of the night."

Shortly after midnight, the platoon observed NVA mortar tube and rocket flashes. Effective artillery fire was called in from "F" Btry., Twelfth Marines, based here.

"We set out the next morning on NVA trails toward 861 again and made sound contact with the other company," said Lt. Carter. "But when we moved toward their position, we received heavy barrages of enemy 60mm mortar and automatic weapons fire from the top of 861. That's when I was hit by shrapnel in the left arm."

He said, "Thirteen of us were

separated from the rest of the unit. We tried to get four more wounded out of the impact area but we couldn't reach them. They were later recovered safely by the rest of the unit. Meanwhile, we finally linked up with the rest of the platoon. While gunships pounded 861, we called for med-evac choppers."

A CH-46 chopper came in but was driven off by ground fire be-

fore it could take on wounded. One wounded Marine gained evacuation by hanging onto a strut of the chopper as it hovered over the LZ.

Then, NVA mortar fire began taking the Marine LZ. The Marines left the LZ, crossing fields of elephant grass which afforded little cover from enemy machinegun and automatic weapons fire.

Helicopter Retrieved In Spite of Enemy

PHU BAI—Enemy forces who attempted to prevent the recovery of a Marine helicopter downed north of Hue have a variety of excuses for their failure—all would have to include helicopters.

In retrieving a UH-34, downed while flying medical evacuation missions in support of Marine ground forces, Leatherneck pilots flew three different types of 'copters to effect the recovery.

Shortly after the medevac aircraft went down, a security force was inserted into the area by CH-46 Sea Knights. They surrounded the '34 and prevented the enemy from getting to it. The Viet Cong forces could do little more than look on as another CH-46 brought in a maintenance team the next day.

As the team prepared the

stricken bird for an external airlift out of the zone they received sporadic sniper fire. When a CH-53 Sea Stallion, the Marine Corps' largest helicopter, appeared on the scene to lift the UH-34 the enemy opened up with automatic weapons.

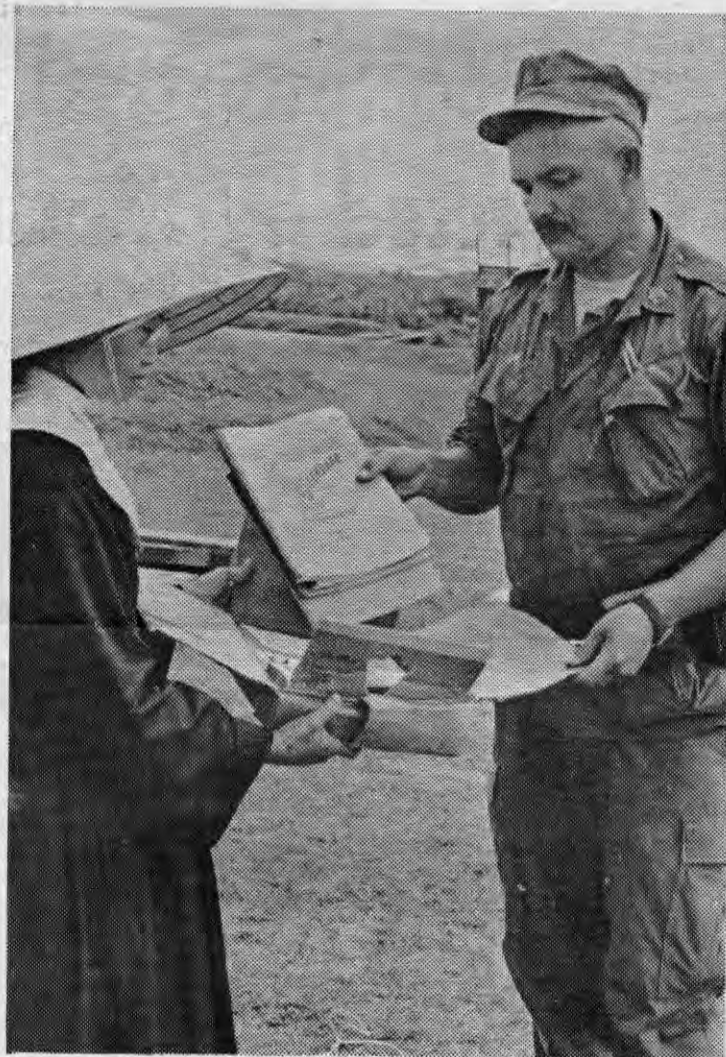
Despite several hits, the CH-53 successfully lifted the damaged helicopter from the zone.

A few minutes later the Marine UH-1E Huey gunships made their appearance firing on the VC positions along a river bed and tree line with machinegun fire and rockets. Four Sea Knights entered the area and safely retracted the security force and recovery team.

Shortly after the friendly forces cleared the area Marine jet aircraft blasted the VC positions with rockets and bombs.



TEAM EFFORT—A CH-53 Sea Stallion from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron-463 prepares to lift a downed UH-34 from a landing zone. The lift was successful despite enemy fire directed at the CH-53 and Cpl. Claude H. Anderson, 19, (Atlanta, Ga.) of the recovery team, waiting to make the hook up. (Photo by: Sgt. Rich Groscoft)



HELPING HAND — School supplies are presented to Sister Mary Perchmans by Marine SSgt. Ronald K. Ryden (Solon Springs, Wis.). Sister Perchmans received the supplies from Ryden, to be used in the Trung Gio hamlet school, as part of Project Helping Hand in Solon Springs.

'Project Helping Hand' Successfully Concluded

By: Sgt. Roger Ynostroza

DONG HA—"Project Helping Hand" has ended successfully at Trung Gio refugee hamlet 10 miles west of here, half a world from where the people-to-people project began two months ago at Solon Springs, Wis.

SSgt. Roland K. Ryden started the project when he saw the critical need of the students for supplies in their schoolwork after his arrival here in January. He wrote letters home mentioning the need for supplies.

In answer, officials launched Project Helping Hand at St. Croix District schools in Solon Springs. Each schoolroom was given the opportunity to provide five-pound packages of supplies to be sent to Ryden for distribution.

Supplies included: pocket pencil-sharpeners, lined tablets, pens, pencils, rulers, pads of drawing paper, chalk, scissors, crayons, colored paper, magic-erase slates and notebook paper.

Also, donations were collected for postage for the packages.

"In all, I received about 50 packages in the mail," said Ryden. "Trung Gio has about 85 families now, most of them came from up north by the demilitarized zone. There are about 200 school children here now, but we estimate 500 students will eventually benefit from these supplies."

Villagers came from Trung Lung and Gio Linh villages, thus the name Trung Gio. The refugee hamlet is located just outside Cam Lo.

Catholic sisters operate both a school and a dispensary at the hamlet, which is made up of both Catholic and Buddhist refugees. Sister Mary Perchmans, a Vietnamese nun, accepted the supplies on behalf of her school.

"My son, Robert, attends second grade in Solon Springs, so I have a close attachment to grade-school students," said Ryden. "I understand this project is a city-wide effort, with

everyone offering to take part and contribute something."

"There are plans for Project Helping Hand II toward the end of the summer, when there will be more students returning to classes here," said Ryden.

Citizens of Bennett, a community near Solon Springs, are also contributing to the Helping Hand program.

First Division To Celebrate 20th Reunion

WASHINGTON—The 1st Marine Division Association will commemorate the 25th anniversary of the landing on Guadalcanal during its two 20th annual reunions this summer, according to Brigadier General Charles L. Cogswell (Retired), Association President.

The Association will hold reunions on both East and West coasts. The East coast reunion will be July 27-30 at the Deauville Hotel in Miami Beach. West coast veterans of the 1st Marine Division will meet July 21-22 at the Marines' Memorial Club in San Francisco.

Further information may be obtained by writing to: Executive Secretary, 1st Marine Division Association, Inc., Box 84, Alexandria, Virginia 22313.

Memorial Club

Marines returning to the U.S. from Vietnam are invited to make use of the facilities of the Marines Memorial Club in San Francisco.

For room rates and reservations write to: Marines Memorial Club, 609 Sutter Street, San Francisco, California, 94102.

1st Div. Troops Battle Heat, VC in Union

By: SSgt. Don Summerford

DA NANG—Enemy contact continued as Marines entered their tenth day of fighting May 5 in Operation Union, northwest of Tam Ky.

Defying rugged terrain and 100-degree-plus temperatures, major movements were made May 4 by Leatherneck units, attempting to trap what was reported as a large enemy concentration of hard-core troops.

Heaviest fighting of the multi-battalion operation, headed by the Fifth Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, is now centered near Hiep Duc, 40 miles south of Da Nang.

Operation Union, launched April 26, has accounted for 322 confirmed enemy killed in action. Marines have detained 54 Viet Cong.

Fifth-five Marines have been killed and 244 wounded.

Union is the first major Marine Corps movement in the Hiep Duc valley since Operation Colo-

rado in early August, 1966 which was also conducted by the Fifth Marines.

Operation Union is the initial step in breaking the stronghold held by the Viet Cong.

Additional pressure is now being applied to enemy forces near Hiep Duc as another Marine battalion entered Union May 4.

Although only platoon size and smaller enemy units have elected to clash with the Marines, heavy casualties have been inflicted by the 1st Marine Division Leathernecks.

Pilot Rescued Within Minutes After Ejecting

By: Sgt. Bob Pitner

DA NANG—A Marine pilot forced to eject from his burning jet southwest of Phu Bai was rescued in less than 45 minutes, May 4.

Maj. Edward F. Townley, Jr., of Prairie Village, Kan., and Marine All-Weather Fighter Squadron-232, was flying an aerial reconnaissance mission when his F-8E Crusader jet was hit by enemy ground fire.

His fire warning light flashed on as he passed near the deserted French airstrip of Tabat in As Hau Valley. He saw the fire under his right wing and radioed his wingman, Capt. Richard J. Pederson, Central Valley, Calif., that he was heading to sea.

Moments later, handling difficulties forced Townley to eject. His parachute became entangled in the 150-ft. high jungle trees and he was forced to slide down a tree trunk the remaining 75 ft. to the ground.

Unhurt, he planned to evade any enemy forces in the area as he went down the steep, vine-covered slope.

Meanwhile, Pederson had notified rescue authorities and a triservice rescue operation was launched.

Two Crusaders from VMF (AW)-232 were orbiting overhead as four Army helos skimmed above the treetops.

Townley signaled the choppers with flares and his survival radio. They circled protectively, but could not extract the downed Marine pilot because of the thick jungle growth.

Approximately 40 min. after Townley was on the ground, an

Air Force rescue helicopter arrived with a special rescue hoist. A medic descended through the jungle canopy and he and Townley rode the hoist out together.

"I am very grateful to everyone for their rescue efforts," Townley said. "It was a hell of a lonely feeling riding down that parachute and knowing there were no friendlies around, and it was a rewarding thing to arrive back in Da Nang one hour later," he said.

Medal of Honor . . .

(Continued From Page 1) credit upon the Marine Corps and the Armed Forces of the United States."

Sergeant Connor was born September 4, 1932 in Orange, New Jersey, and graduated from South Orange High School in 1950. He enlisted in the Marine Corps on February 5, 1952 and saw action during the Korean conflict while serving as a fire team leader, Co "B", 1st Bn., Fifth Marines, 1st Marine Division.

Determination and Hope Win 20-Hour Battle Against NVA

By: SSgt. G. F. Selby

DA NANG—"I figure it was because of our sheer determination not to die and the hope of getting out of there that kept us alive until the next morning."

Hospital Corpsman Charles E. Chrismen Jr., (Brighton, Colo.) told of the 20-hour battle between his unit of the First Marine Regiment and a North Vietnamese Army unit.

Chrismen was on a supposedly routine sweep with his company 30 miles south of Da Nang April 21 when contact was made.

They initially pushed the NVA back. While the enemy center withdrew, his flanks moved forward to catch the advancing Marines in a "V" shaped trap.

"They were throwing everything at us," said Cpl. Ronald H. Stith (Covington, Ky.). "They hit us with rifle, automatic weapon, mortar and rocket fire," he said.

The Marines were pinned down in open rice paddies facing the enemy-held tree lines. Artillery barrages and air strikes were called for.

"The enemy was well dug-in and had some well-prepared holes," said LanceCpl. Craig M. Harden (Las Vegas, Nev.).

"I saw one hole receive three direct hits during one of the airstrikes. As soon as the planes finished their runs they got right up out of it and started shooting at us again," Harden said.

Marine reinforcements were flown in during the afternoon. However, they were engaged by

another enemy force and could not reach the besieged company.

"Doc" Chrismen, although already wounded himself, continued treating the wounded Marines.

"I'd crawl from one position to another, sometimes nearly 50 meters apart, to see what I could do," said Chrismen. "There were some Marines I just couldn't do anything for."

A wounded Marine rolled over to muffle his moans on a rice paddy dike after the sounds seemed to attract mortar fire.

The Marines tried to use the low dikes for cover. The NVA began using rockets and automatic weapons to literally blow the dikes away.

Unable to pull back and knowing they needed to escape the open paddies to avert being picked off, the Marines rallied and fought their way to the forward treeline.

"I was the sixth man from the left flank when the assault began," said Harden, "but when we got to the treeline there was no one to my left."

Harden returned to aid the five wounded Marines on his left. The enemy fire kept him pinned down, along with the wounded until darkness.

"It looked like the 4th of July," said Harden, "the way red, white and green tracers whipped the sky. Especially when a helicopter was landing to drop off Marines or supplies and take out wounded."

The contact ended at 2 a.m.

April Wrapup...

(Continued From Page 1)

transported 27,448 passengers and hauled 3,823 short tons of cargo.

Five operations — Beacon Hill, DeSoto, Chinook II, Boone and Canyon — were terminated during the month. DeSoto, conducted south of Chu Lai by Task Force X-Ray units, accounted for 383 enemy dead. Fourth Marine Regiment units killed 334 enemy soldiers near Con Thien on Beacon Hill.

Operation Prairie, south of the DMZ, continued and moved from phase II to IV.

Chief Scout

DA NANG—Nineteen-year-old Cpl. James L. O'Neal (St. Mary's, Ohio) is chief scout in the intelligence section, 3d Bn., Fifth Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division.

During a five-day operation just concluded, "it seemed like every time I sat down someone wanted me someplace else," O'Neal said.

On the first day the Vietnamese Army interpreter for the battalion was wounded and O'Neal, who attended Vietnamese Language School at Coronado, Calif., for more than five months, took over as battalion interpreter.

"Knowing and speaking the language really helps in my job as chief scout," O'Neal continued. "Usually we send a scout and an interpreter out together, but I can do both jobs and we can use our interpreter in another company," he added.

O'Neal, who is a basic infantryman, worked with a combined action company near Da Nang during the first nine months of his tour in Vietnam. He has been with the 3rd Bn. for three months.

"Not all of my time was taken up with interrogation and intelligence work," he said. "Twice on the operation we made gratuitous payments to Vietnamese families where we spent the night or set up a camp in the daytime. In situations like this I interpret what the battalion commander says in thanking the people for their cooperation and information."

This was the first time the Marine unit had encountered such a large force of North Vietnamese regulars, although the company mans an outpost not far from the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

"This was certainly a different enemy," said Pfc. Ronald Lundy (Philadelphia, Pa.) "from the Viet Cong guerrillas we normally run into."

"The guerrilla usually likes to just snipe at us or use hit and run tactics, but those regulars didn't seem about to run from anybody," he said.

H&I Fire Keeps VC On Toes

PHU BAI—"That's just H&I fire," is a frequent answer to many questions asked by newcomers to Vietnam.

To "old timers" in Vietnam, the nearby firing of artillery is commonplace. To the uninitiated, the sounds range from startling to frightening.

The next question asked is, "What is H&I?"

H&I is the abbreviation for "harassing and interdiction" fire. The harassment means just that. Artillery fire in a changing pattern is directed against areas where Viet Cong presence is known or suspected. Its purpose is to keep the enemy on his toes, on the move and out of the immediate area.

Interdiction fire has the purpose of depriving the enemy the use of a particular area. It forces the enemy to use, at considerable physical risk, specific avenues of approach and supply routes if still determined to move.

H&I often sounds haphazard. In reality it requires much planning.

The weapons used in H&I fire range from heavy machineguns to the huge 175mm long range cannon.

Marines may spend some sleepless nights because of H&I fire but all agree it is well worth it. The Viet Cong and NVA forces, who do most of their traveling at night, are constantly being harassed.

Operation Union

(Continued From Page 1) The attack caused minor damage.

Friendly forces engaged the enemy after the pre-dawn mortar attack, killing five and capturing one officer, who admitted being a platoon leader with NVA forces operating in Quang Ngai Province.

"Although we know there are larger VC units in the Operation Union area, our troops have only clashed with platoon-size or smaller units," said Maj. Richard J. Alger, (New York, N. Y.) Fifth Marines operations officer.

As they continue to push deep into enemy territory, Marines also continue to capture numerous weapons and stores of ammunition.

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