

Dozen Hits —All Miss

CHU LAI, Vietnam (Special) — An Americal Div. soldier was hit by 12 AK47 rounds recently — and walked away without a scratch.

Sgt. Facundo Ramos, Rio Piedras of Puerto Rico, was on a sweep with his platoon from the 11th Inf. Brigade near Landing Zone San Juan Hill, west of Duc Pho.

Suddenly the element ran into three NVA soldiers coming down the trail. There was a flash of rifles followed by the ripping staccato of M16s and AK47s.

Then, as suddenly as they came, the NVA were gone. The platoon checked for casualties.

Ramos felt around and discovered he had been "hit" 12 times where bullets had either pierced or cut into his clothing and gear.

One round put holes in the side and back of his helmet. Another sliced the bayonet off his belt; several smashed into his ammo pouch, ripping the ammo out.

New Life for the Montagnards

4th Inf. Div. Troopers Aid in Escape From VC

By SPEC. 5 JOHN ROWE

CAMP ENARI, Vietnam (Special) — Five years of Viet Cong harassment behind them, 97 Montagnard villagers now hope to start life anew with assistance from the 4th Inf. Div.

The Montagnards recently struck up their friendship with the 4th Div. under somewhat unusual circumstances. A patrol from the division's C Co. 3rd Bn., 12th inf., was making a routine sweep of an area 35 miles southwest of An Khe in the Central Highlands when they received sporadic small arms fire.

Reacting to the small arms fire, the patrol moved through the densely vegetated area. What they found at the other end was something they probably least expected.

A group of Montagnard tribesmen were situated in an open

area facing the oncoming Americans. The Montagnards seemed surprised, but happy when the infantrymen approached them. Convinced the Americans meant them no harm, the tribesmen motioned for their women and children to come forward and the number of Montagnards swelled to 84.

The Montagnards were transported to An Khe and then on to Camp Enari, headquarters, of the 4th Div. It was at Camp Enari that the dramatic story of the Bahnar tribesmen was revealed.

Originally members of the villages of Plei Brang Brul 1, 2, and 3, the Montagnards were approached by a group of Viet Cong who entered the villages in June of 1964. The VC told the Montagnards that they were in dire need of food, and that the

villagers would have to grow rice, corn and potatoes for the Viet Cong or else they would be killed.

Under the threat of death, the villagers grew the foodstuffs with the VC making monthly visits to gather the rice, corn and potatoes.

Then in late 1966 the Viet Cong told the villagers they would have to supply rice carriers. Again fearing for their lives, the villagers did as they were told.

No longer willing to comply with the Viet Cong's demands, the villagers decided in May of 1967 that the only way to avoid any further harassment was to relocate themselves. Moving in a southeasterly direction, a majority of the Montagnards relocated in an area near the Dak Pihao River. The few villagers who did not join the movement

left their villages in scattered direction in hope of finding another place to live on their own.

The Montagnards cited several reasons for their decision to move. The villagers didn't have enough foodstuffs for themselves after supplying the Viet Cong; the villagers' lives were endangered by the firefights between Viet Cong and U.S. forces which had resulted since the VC entered the area; the villagers never received any favors or benefits from the Viet Cong for their services; and the only way possible to avoid further undue harassment was to move.

The Montagnards also said the Viet Cong, upon first meeting the villagers, told them they couldn't have a village chief, and since then the villagers haven't had any leaders.

For several months the relocated Montagnards lived in relative peace. However, a different group of Viet Cong crossed paths with the Bahnars and again under the cover of the death threat told the villagers to grow rice for them.

In the past several months the Montagnards were also forced to construct punji stakes and then plant them at designated areas.

Two Viet Cong were giving the Montagnards a propaganda speech when the U.S. patrol moved into the area. The VC fired shots at the patrol and then fled into the adjacent jungle.

Several days later 13 more Montagnards, also believed to be former residents of the Plei Brang Brul villages, were spotted by a patrol and taken to Camp Enari for a reunion with their fellow villagers.

Asked if they would like to relocate in another area, the Montagnards responded with a resounding yes. The 4th Div.'s Civil Affairs (CA) program has since relocated them in Cheo Reo, a resettlement area south of Camp Enari.

A significant aspect of the villagers' willingness to relocate was that they had never had any direct contact with Americans until the patrol reacted to the small arms fire.

"This attests to the fact that once there is credible evidence that we want to help them, the Montagnards will react," said Maj. Donald L. Scott, of Hunneymwell, Mo., 4th Div. physiological operations officer.

Scott praised the Montagnards for trying to get away from the Viet Cong on several occasions. "Because of the treatment they have received from us they will never believe anything the Viet Cong tell them now," said Scott.

Army Reassigns Viet Generals

WASHINGTON (S&S) — New assignments for two senior Army officers now in Vietnam, Maj. Gen. Walter B. Richardson, and Brig. Gen. Burnside E. Huffman Jr., were announced recently by the Army.

Richardson, CG of the Capital Military Assistance Command, is being transferred to Sixth Army Headquarters at the Presidio of San Francisco, Calif., in late November, and Huffman, chief of staff of the II Field Force, is being reassigned to the Defense Department late next month.

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Zapping the Sappers at Cam Ranh

Navy's Watchdogs for 17,000 Ships

By JO2 ROY NEEL

CAM RANH BAY, Vietnam (Special) — The Cam Ranh Bay Peninsula is surrounded by miles of coastline, presenting a constant threat to shipping in Cam Ranh Bay from enemy "sappers."

To combat the threat to Cam Ranh Bay, Nha Trang, Qui Nhon, and Vung Tau, the Inshore Undersea Warfare Group One, WestPac Detachment, was established in Nov., 1966.

"Operation Stable Door" is the code name of the mission, which protects over 17,000 ships each year from sabotage in the Cam Ranh area alone.

The headquarters of IUWBG-1 is located at the Naval Support Facility, Cam Ranh Bay. The mission of harbor defense in Vietnam is part of the job of the task force of Commander, Coastal Surveillance Force, Captain J. J. Shanahan, whose headquarters is also located at NSF.

Unit Two of IUWG, which is based at Cam Ranh, is located atop the highest point on the peninsula, several miles south of the Naval Air Facility.

A small, highly qualified group of U.S. Navymen compose this unit which has made Cam Ranh harbor one of the safest in Vietnam.

"We have approximately 35 square miles of water to patrol, not an easy task for a few small craft," said the Officer in Charge of Unit Two, Lt. Cmdr. James Cooper. "but the absence of swimmer-sapper mining attacks are certainly an indication of their success."

In addition to the command post on the hill, the unit operates the Boat Division, the workhorse of harbor defense. With the modern picket boats, landing craft, and light skimmers at their command, the crews maintain a constant vigilance of the harbor.

Thousands of sampans and other Vietnamese vessels are checked each month in the unit's effort to control smuggling of contraband and enemy forces into the Cam Ranh area. Each U.S. Navy crew is accompanied by an RVN government official, who acts as interpreter and checks civilian credentials.

The history of the "Hill," which Unit Two calls home, is one of conflict and tradition. Originally used as a French harbor defense post in the 1930's many vestiges of its past can be found around the newer U.S.



Nguyen Quy an interpreter aboard a picket fisherman on one of thousands of sampans checked each month by IUWG-1. (USN)

Navy structures. Two large 6-inch gun mounts flank the command tower, and a French-built house foundation with one corner still intact, stands on the hillside facing the harbor entrance.

The hill was held by the French, the Japanese during WWII, the Viet Minh forces after the War, and then the Republic of Vietnam prior to the U.S. Navy arriving in-country to assist RVN Naval units.

All the men of Unit Two live underground in former ammunition store rooms built by the French and converted into living quarters by the resourceful U.S. sailors. Now the entire complex, connected by the original walkways, is fully air-conditioned and provides a comfortable living area for its occupants.

ROKs Kill 14 Reds

SAIGON (S&S) — Korean troops operating near Tuy Hoa, 240 miles northeast of Saigon, killed 14 enemy soldiers Monday and seized five weapons, ROK military spokesmen said.

Wafs Set for Tours At Thailand Air Bases

HQ. PACAF, Hawaii (Special) — Beginning in December, enlisted women in the Air Force (Wafs) will be assigned to Thailand — another step in the Air Force's expanding program for greater use of WAF skills.

Royal Thai Air Force bases at Korat and Takhli have been selected as pilot bases for WAF assignments. Availability of suitable housing was the determining factor in choosing these two locations. No additional housing construction is needed.

The first group of six Wafs is to arrive at Korat RTAFB in December, with 21 more to follow in January. Fourteen Wafs will be assigned to Takhli in January.

Altogether, 70 enlisted Wafs are slated for the two bases by the end of March 1970 — 40 to Korat and 30 to Takhli.

The women will replace male

counterparts on a one-for-one basis by Air Force Specialty Code, grade and number in the administrative, personnel, inventory management, air passenger, medical and dental specialties.

All Wafs going to Thailand are volunteers. Most of them are being selected from Continental United States resources.

Gibson Has New Post

SAIGON (S&S) — Col. Harold B. Gibson has taken command of the United States Support Command, Saigon, from departing Brig. Gen. Arthur Hurow.

Gibson, with 26 years in the service, had commanded the 29th General Support Group in Vietnam before his new command.

Hurow was presented the Distinguished Service Medal by Lt. Gen. Frank T. Mildren.