

The

# Screaming



# Eagle

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1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division

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## Col. Collins Commands 1st Brigade

### LRRP's Capture Rocket

**PHAN RANG** — The dense jungle loomed menacingly on each side of the trail. The men of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division's Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol (LRRP) were alert for enemy ambush positions. Quietly, they moved down the narrow path.

Suddenly the point man, Staff Sgt. Lester E. Hite, St. Louis, dropped to his hands and knees. The rest of the column repeated his movement. Where once a string of men had stretched down the trail, no one could be seen. Camouflaged fatigues blended into the dark green foliage.

The late afternoon sun filtered through the heavy jungle. Barely audible, footsteps could be heard from the trail ahead.

Hite removed his rucksack. Inching his way forward, he saw the point element of the enemy squad.

Sgt. Ray Martinez, Los Angeles, crawled forward with the M-60 machine gun. The Viet Cong point man noticed the movement and shouldered his rifle. Quickly Hite fired a burst from his M-16. Martinez immediately raked the area with machine gun fire.

As the volume of fire increased, Hite saw an insurgent aim a rocket launcher.

"That was a pretty nervous moment for me," said Hite. "We started firing with everything we had. We couldn't allow them to fire that thing."

Spec 4 Jack McGill, Los Angeles, moved even with Martinez and Hite.

"We started crawling forward to throw grenades," said McGill. "But that bamboo made the going slow."

The paratroopers were tossing grenades into the enemy positions. In return, the VC tossed a grenade toward Hite, Martinez and McGill.

"Grenade!" yelled Hite. The explosion shattered the staccato beat of the automatic weapons. Shrapnel ripped through the area. Hite felt hot metal slam into his back.

"It knocked me completely over, but I didn't have time to think about it," he said.

The VC abandoned the heavy rocket launcher and fled behind cover fire. The LRRP's moved into the enemy positions, found the rocket launcher, two rockets and 20 pounds of rice.

"We didn't find any bodies, but that rocket launcher won't be used to hit any of our companies," said Hite. "It's a valuable commodity to the VC."



### Screaming Eagle Leaders

Col. John W. Collins III, (left) outlines plans for the change-of-command ceremonies held at the forward base camp of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division to Maj. Gen. O.M. Barsanti, division commander, (center) and Brig. Gen. S.H. Matheson. Collins took command of the brigade from Matheson, who moved to III Marine Amphibious Force (III MAF) as chief Army adviser.

(Photo by Spec. 4 Ben Croxson)

### Matheson Speaks to Troops

**PHAN RANG** — The distant hum of a helicopter and chase ship could be heard. The color guard and flags of each unit of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division were at attention. Brig. Gen. S.H. Matheson, Los Angeles, and Col. John W. Collins III, Demopolis, Ala., awaited the arrival of Maj. Gen. O.M. Barsanti, commander of the 101st Airborne Division.

Matheson was relinquishing command of the 1st Brigade. He was moving to III Marine Amphibious Force in DaNang as Army adviser to Lieutenant General Robert Cushman, III MAF commander. He would return to Fort Monroe, Va., a month or two later as Chief of Individual Training for the Continental Army Command (CONARC). He already had 13 months as commander of the 1st Brigade.

Collins would be the new commander.

Saying goodbye was difficult for Matheson, but Collins stepping into command made the departure easier. They had worked closely together for six months when Collins was his deputy.

After the colors of the 1st Brigade changed hands, Matheson spoke to the troops:

"I'm sorry to be leaving the

troopers of this brigade," he said. "But I'm turning it over to an old pro— Rip' Collins.

"I've seen us fight in three of the four corps areas in Vietnam this year. We've fought the enemy and won. This brigade has the finest troopers of any unit, in any army, at any time.

"Now we just forget our role as a separate brigade and join

our sister brigades of the division. The 101st again is united.

"I wish you all luck. Keep up the proud history of the brigade."

Collins spoke briefly, citing the outstanding job Matheson had done with the brigade and thanking Barsanti for giving him command of the unit.

Then the ceremony was over.

A silence fell over the mob, as the former brigade commander walked through the ranks, shaking hands with the officers and men assembled.

"Take care now," he said to one trooper.

"Keep up the good work," he told another.

Hard paratroopers would miss the man they called "The soldier's general."

The general said a few more hasty goodbyes and boarded his waiting helicopter. Then he was circling the base camp. Helicopter pilots, Capt. Thomas Church-well, Daleville, Ala., and WO1 Michael Jacob, Martinsburg, Mo., had equipped the aircraft's skids with yellow and red smoke streamers. As the ship circled the area three times, it left colorful trails in its wake.

As the helicopter zoomed at low level overhead, troopers waved goodbye.



Matheson

**PHAN RANG** — Col. John W. Collins III, Demopolis, Ala., former deputy commander of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, took command of the "Always First" brigade recently in a change of command ceremony at the forward base camp.

Brig. Gen. S.H. Matheson, former brigade commander, moved to III Marine Amphibious Force in I Corps as the Army adviser to Lieutenant General Robert Cushman, III MAF commander.

Collins has served as Matheson's deputy for six months. Prior to his assignment to the 1st Brigade, he served with the U.S. European Command.

Dubbed "Rip" by friends, Collins is a 1948 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point and holds a Master's degree in Business Administration from the University of Tennessee. He is a graduate of the Command and General Staff College and the Army Warfare College.

The 47-year-old commander served in the Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace and Central Europe during World War II, and in China, Japan and Korea in the following decade. He arrived in Vietnam July 8, 1967.

His decorations include the World War II Victory Medal, the American Campaign Medal, the National Defense Medal (with oak leaf cluster), the Purple Heart, the Bronze Star Medal (second oak leaf cluster) and the Korean Service Medal.

He and his wife Virginia have two daughters — Judy 21 and Beverly 15.

### CO Honors Sgt. Lee

**PHAN RANG** — Sgt. Irving A. Lee, a paratrooper of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division received the Bronze Star for Heroism and was named "Warrior of the Week" by Col. John W. Collins III, brigade commander.

Lee, a native of Anniston, Ala., is a squad leader with the reconnaissance platoon of the 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf.

While conducting Operation Wheeler near Chu Lai, an element of the battalion came under intense enemy fire. Lee led his squad in relief of the pinned down element, resulting in three Viet Cong killed and three weapons—an M-16 and two AK-47 rifles—captured.

During the action, Lee consistently was the target of heavy enemy fire as he directed his maneuver element. He placed effective suppressive fire on the enemy positions, resulting in two additional Viet Cong killed.



## Prayer . . .

Maj. (Chaplain) James J. Murphy, Montgomery, Ala., conducts mass for paratroopers of the 3rd Bn. (Abn), 506th Infantry. Father Murphy and his team of four other chaplains visit troopers in the field for church services and personal counseling.

(Photo by Pfc. Jerry Berry)

## Editorial on Saving

# Put Extra Money to Work

The December pay envelope was swollen by the addition of the pay raise given U.S. men and women in uniform under the Uniformed Services Pay Act of 1967, made more welcome by the fact the pay boost was retroactive to October 1, 1967. By now, the "Christmas bonus" has been spent and the holidays were that much brighter because of the added income.

All of us welcome extra funds, however, not just at Christmas but at anytime during the year. The only way most of us can have the extra money we would like for something special is simply by saving it — by putting aside some money now for our future needs.

Regardless of how it is described, i.e. frugality, thrift or good management of money, saving a portion of your monthly income is plain good sense.

The U.S. government has some very valid, sensible reasons for wanting Armed Forces members to save while they serve in Vietnam. Chief among these are helping to curb the flow of gold from America and helping to curb inflation of the Vietnamese economy.

But saving by an individual is really a personal thing. There are countless reasons why anyone can and should put aside some cash on a regular basis. A long vacation, going to college, buying a new car, getting married and buying a home are just a few personal reasons. The problem is not finding reasons to save but rather one of finding the determination to save. That is a personal thing also.

Those who serve in Vietnam are provided a number of ways to save their income, income which is greater than when stationed in the U.S. because of hazardous duty pay, foreign duty pay and the income tax exemption. U.S. Savings Bonds, the servicemen Savings Deposit program, commercial banking facilities and several pay options available through military finance offices are part of the over-all scheme.

None of these are of any value unless those who serve in Vietnam avail themselves of the services offered. This means the soldier, sailor, Marine or airman has to make up his mind to avoid unnecessary expenses and prevent waste of his money. Common sense? Certainly! Your pay is earned the hard way and make no mistake about it. You would not walk up to a stranger on the street in the United States and hand

him a \$20 bill without making sure you were getting something for the value of your money. Why do it in Vietnam? Why not hold on to your extra cash. The money you do not need to meet immediate expenses by saving it until you can spend it back in the U.S. where you can be certain of getting value for the cash you hand out?

What is the best way to save? By regular monthly deductions. Determine what your expenses are. And no one expects you to scrimp by. Be generous to yourself but buy only what is needed and that for which you get value in proportion to cost. Then put the rest into Savings Bonds or an allotment to a bank or some similar plan. Once this is done, live on what you keep. It gets to be a habit and habit is really the key to savings. You might say, you can give yourself a bonus for the future — by adopting the savings habit.

# Viet Cong Lose 57 Base Camps

PHAN RANG — Operation Klamath Falls, a brief search and destroy sweep conducted by the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division west of Bao Loc in December, showed the Viet Cong were on the run in II Corps.

Fifty-seven base camps were destroyed, 156 enemy killed and 77 weapons captured.

"The enemy base camps comprised a complete system for escape and evasion," said Capt. Gerald Wright, Decatur, Ga., assistant intelligence officer for the brigade. "We found 13 battalion-sized, 21 company-sized, 21 platoon-sized and two squad-sized base camps. "About 80 per cent of all bunkers in these camps had overhead cover," added Wright. "This indicates their need for protection against tactical air strikes and artillery."

The paratroopers found most of the base camps deserted, but many showed signs of having been occupied 24 hours previously.

"They had a good warning system," said Maj. E. P. Geesey, Altoona, Pa., intelligence officer for the brigade. "We found hot coals in hastily-extinguished fires, wet clothing drying in the sun and food ready for preparation."

Food caches also were found. Usually they were set away from bunker complexes deeper in the jungle to avoid discovery. Paratroopers found a total of 101 tons of rice, three tons of salt, 70 pounds of fish and 516 pounds of tea during the operation.

"Usually the base camps had few supplies in them," said Wright. "This implies two situations: the enemy is poorly supplied in this area, or, priority for resupply is going to enemy units in other areas of Vietnam."

The terrain was some of the toughest paratroopers of the 1st Brigade have seen during their two and a half years in Vietnam. The heavy jungle helped camouflage the enemy base camps.

"It was double and triple canopy jungle," said Capt. John Miller, Springfield, Mo., commander of B Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf.

On December 3, he and his men fought their way through dense jungle and discovered a large camp consisting of 16 huts with firing positions and bunkers.

"They were set deep into the jungle off a trail," said Miller. "That undergrowth is fine camouflage."

A highlight of the operation was the discovery of a hospital complex by A Co. of the 3rd Bn. (Abn), 506th Inf. Capt. Thomas F. Gaffney, Swainsboro, Ga., and his paratroopers found 1,000 pounds of penicillin and also unearthed a cache of nine weapons.

Also found in the complex were documents verifying the operation of the 186th Viet Cong Battalion in the area. Indications were that the enemy unit had broken into small groups and sought to evade the Screaming Eagles.

Other important base camps were found during the operation.

On December 3, Capt. Lyndol L. Cook, Marina, Calif., and A Co. of the 2nd Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf., found an enemy village complex containing 35 huts, three military classrooms and 28 heavily-fortified bunkers.

On December 21, Capt. Robert McGurk, Manlius, N.Y., and the paratroopers of A Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 502nd Inf., found a complex with enough huts and bunkers for 100 persons. Two kitchens and three military classrooms were also in the complex.

On December 21, Capt. Joseph A. Westbrook, Decatur, Ga., and C Co., 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf., found 39 fortified bunkers and 12 camouflaged huts.

With the discovery of these base camps, the Viet Cong no longer can operate safely in the area.

"We contacted the 186th, killed 156 local VC and captured 77 weapons," said Wright. "We also destroyed the many base camps and familiarized ourselves with the trails underneath that jungle canopy."

"The enemy had the advantage because he knew the jungle in the area," Wright added. "He knew the trails and the location of his base camps."



## . . . And Communion

Maj. (Chaplain) James J. Murphy, Montgomery, Ala., gives communion to paratroopers in the field. The men are members of the 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf.

(Photo by Staff Sgt. Al Wilson)



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Commanding Officer  
Information Officer  
Officer-in-Charge  
Editor  
Photo Chief

Col. John W. Collins III  
MAJ Billy E. Spangler  
1LT Barry C. Hana  
SP4 Dan Stroebel  
SSG Arthur W. Campbell



## Helping Hand for a Buddy

Cpl. Norris N. Dahl, Concord, Calif., pulls Pfc. James A. McDonagh, Coquitland, British Columbia, up a small waterfall during a recent search and destroy sweep. Both paratroopers are members of the 1st Platoon, B Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn.), 502nd Inf. (Photo by Spec. 5 Richard McLaughlin)

# Screaming Eagle Briefings

## Scratch a VC

The sun was a ball of fire. Despite the smoldering heat, the paratroopers of the 1st Brigade were alert. Perspiration plastered their clothes to their bodies and vines and thorns tore at arms and faces.

Pfc. William J. Mercier, Pontiac, Mich., was walking third in the column. Suddenly a Viet Cong appeared to his left, firing a burst from his AK-47 rifle.

"I got off a burst and he went down," said Mercier, a member of C Co., 1st Bn. (Abn.), 327th Inf.

The paratroopers moved in the direction of the enemy and discovered a bunker complex.

"We tossed grenades in the bunkers hoping to find the VC," said Sgt. John Scott, Philadelphia. "Men we spotted him in one."

Spec. 4 Gary Jones, Shawnee, Okla., watched as Scott tossed a grenade in the bunker. Then, with pistol in hand, Jones disappeared inside. Soon he came out, carrying the dead insurgent.

## Convoy Escort

Paratroopers of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne's A Troop, 2nd Sqn., 17th Cav., traveled more than 1,400 miles in three weeks of convoy escort between here and the brigade forward base camp at Bao Loc.

"We have escorted vehicles of

all sizes carrying everything from ammunition to ice cream," said Lt. William K. Bergman, Ft. Monroe, Va., a cavalry platoon leader.

The cavalry troop protects its convoys with vehicular mounted machine guns and recoilless rifles. Tactical air and helicopter gunships reinforce their organic firepower when needed.

**'Rat' Finds Bombs**  
A tunnel rat of the 1st Brigade encountered something new in a spider hole recently—two bombs hidden by the Viet Cong.

The pointman of an element of the 3rd Bn. (Abn.), 506th Inf., Pfc. Coalle Brandon, spotted the hole and passed word back to Staff Sgt. Udo Taring, the squad leader from Milford, Conn.

Taring summoned Pvt. William Young, New York. The tunnel rat had a job to do.

Taring tossed a grenade into the hole. Nothing happened. With flashlight and pistol, Young lowered himself into the tunnel.

"About 20 feet down the walls became narrow," said Young. "Then I found the bomb."

Climbing back out, Young informed Taring of the find. Two combat engineers of A Co., 326th Engineer Bn. (Abn.) lowered themselves into the tunnel.

Pfc. Ernest Carpenter, Wildwood, Fla., and Spec. 4 Allen Blair, Brooklyn, confirmed the find and found a 20-pound bomb

further into the tunnel.

Placing explosive charges around the bombs, the engineers crawled out. With the paratroopers a safe distance away, the engineers destroyed the bombs in the tunnel.

## Ambush Kills 3

A patrol of the 1st Brigade killed three Viet Cong from ambush positions near a creek during a recent search and destroy operation southwest of here.

The patrol of the 3rd Bn. (Abn.) 506th Inf. had been searching for a water source, knowing the VC in the area were in need of water. They settled into position and waited.

Night fell.

Pfc. William Schrayner, Akron, Ohio, first spotted the VC coming down a trail to the water hole.

"They were carrying weapons, supplies and field packs," said Schrayner. "There were at least half a dozen."

The paratroopers waited. The VC rounded a bend in the trail, approaching the Screaming Eagles.

Pfc. John Burkett, Boston, raised his M-79 grenade launcher and fired at the first man in the column, killing him.

The other paratroopers opened up and the VC turned and fled.

Pfc. Leon Davis, Toledo, Ohio, and the other paratroopers advanced to check the trail. Three dead enemy were found.

# Hawks Search, Contact Enemy

By Lt. Charles Lovedahl

PHAN RANG—The morning dawned with its usual slow, hazy heat. It was the dry season in Vietnam. Dust was everywhere. The paddies were void of rice plants, the roads were powder, the water was putrid and scarce. The heat was stifling.

To the members of the Hawks, the reconnaissance platoon of the 2nd Bn. (Abn.), 327th Inf., it was another day. Another chance for the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division unit to hunt the enemy. Today they would eat breakfast and move out. A Viet Cong company was somewhere in the nearby jungle. Finding it was the mission.

Sgt. James M. Dean, Newbern, N.C. and his point element moved through the barbed-wire fortifications and into the jungle. Two other teams and the command section followed.

Dry rice paddies were crossed and the mountain loomed ahead. It was steep, bamboo grew almost to the top. The enemy were on the other side, beneath the jungle canopy which hid activity from aerial observers. The Hawks moved along a trail. To each man, a turned leaf or broken twig meant someone had passed there recently.

## Set Up for Night

They traveled all day through the dense jungle. That night, camp was made on a high, rocky shelf. A spot completely surrounded by dead bamboo was chosen. No silent enemy could sneak into the camp without being heard. Silently the perimeter was established and sectors of fire assigned. The night guard was set up while others heated water and food. The night would be spent in rest.

The next day, the search continued. Across the mountain top and into enemy territory. The area around the mountain had been a lush valley of orange and tea plantations. Unkempt orchards looked like another forest. It was hard to imagine the area as a place where French planters once laughed. It was even harder to imagine the mountain as the favorite stag and tiger hunting ground it once had been.

## Discover Trail

At noon, Staff Sgt. Ivan D. Donaldson, Commerce City, Colo., now leading the point element, discovered a high-speed trail. It had been used recently. Debris was scattered—signs the VC weren't concerned about being discovered. The Hawks moved on. Caution was essential. Walk a few feet. Stop. Listen. Walk a few more. Check a small side trail.

Maps and compasses were checked. When contact with the enemy was made, immediate reports would have to be radioed to higher headquarters. The reports had to be accurate. Every ridge, gully and open area had to be plotted.

Nerves were tense, muscles taut. Grenades were loosened on harnesses for quick access. Every turn in the trail was a suspected ambush site. Each had to be flanked and checked.

At 2:30 p.m. Donaldson halted the column and reported to the platoon leader. A complex of trails had been found, each running down the mountain in a different direction. Donaldson's element took one trail, while the others waited.

Donaldson returned. The trail had ended abruptly with no signs of the enemy.

## Enemy Ahead

The Hawks moved down the trail once again. Suddenly a movement was heard. It could be an animal—it could be the enemy. The Hawks moved off the trail in ambush. The movement was heard again. A human form in a grey uniform appeared. Then another and another. Three North Vietnamese soldiers came into full view, each with an AK-47 automatic rifle. They were 50 meters away.

The trail was steep and the NVA had their heads down, laboring with the tough climb. Slowly they climbed closer and closer. Forty meters. Then 30. Then 20. All Hawks were ready. Just a little bit closer, each man thought to himself.

Now the enemy was 15 meters away, but the second two were partially hidden by a slight rise in the ridge line. The lead enemy soldier looked up. A Hawk weapon bucked four times, killing the enemy. The other two fled.

Quickly and carefully a search was made of the dead enemy and an element followed the other two down the trail.

## Call in Artillery

As the Hawks moved down the trail, it became slicker and wider—signs large forces had been using it. The enemy base camp lay just ahead and the Hawks retraced their steps back to the ambush site. A hundred NVA were too many for the smaller reconnaissance force. The Hawks moved back 350 meters and called in artillery.

The first rounds exploded on target. The Hawks could hear the shells screaming overhead.

## Receive Enemy Fire

The paratroopers began to move out when two enemy automatic weapons opened up from a tree line. Five more enemy weapons began firing and green tracer rounds wildly filled the air. The Hawks returned the fire. A single shot could no longer be heard. Just one loud noise.

The order to pull back was given. The Hawks couldn't allow themselves to be boxed in by the larger enemy force.

The point element led the way, killing two more enemy as they cleared a path through the jungle. Another element covered the rear, placing a wall of M-16 fire behind them.

For 400 meters they moved. Dusk was approaching and the Hawks had to reach a defensive position by nightfall. They reached the area where they had camped the night before. Then they called artillery fire on the site of their last contact with the enemy.

A report was radioed to higher headquarters. Orders for the next day were to link up with Company A and search the same area—this time with more fighting strength. The reconnaissance mission was over.

# A Paratrooper's Eye Reflects...



## ... Children

PHAN RANG—These are the faces of Vietnam . . . groups of children . . . a sister and brother . . . a boy becoming a man.

Paratroopers of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division take time to stop. They look. They ponder. They recall other mothers and children . . . sisters and brothers . . . boys becoming men.

The present and past are different.

They recall mothers and children living peacefully . . . sisters and brothers playing safely . . . boys—pausing before becoming men.

The paratroopers smile . . . walk on . . . their promise renewed for a world where a boy can stop time for a moment . . . before becoming a man.

(Photos by Spec. 4 Ben Croxton and Pfc. Jerry Berry)

## ... Sister and Brother



## ... a Boy ... a Man