



Defending the 'Tubes'

Exploding flares and shells light a parapet of A Btry., 2nd (Abn), 320th Arty. The redleg paratroopers repelled an NVA attack recently during Operation Wheeler.

(Photo by Spec. 4 Dan Stroebe)

Artillerymen Fight Off NVA

By SP4 James Parker

CHU LAI — Using a siren to signal the beginning of an attack on a 101st Airborne artillery position 18 miles west of here recently, the NVA lost one of the most savage battles of Operation Wheeler.

Paratroopers of A Btry., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 320th Arty., were puzzled when they heard the sound of a faint siren drifting through the fog shrouded night. Seconds later mortar shells rained on their position. In the light of the exploding shells, artillerymen could see the attacking enemy.

Spec. 1 John H. Wallace, Tulsa, Okla., was sitting in the Fire Direction Center (FDC) bunker, drinking a cup of hot chocolate and monitoring the radio net when the attack began.

"All of a sudden an explosion tore out the bunker wall and destroyed the radio," Wallace recalled. "I grabbed my rifle and started running for the 3rd Section parapets. Outside the whole area was lit up like day and NVA appeared to be everywhere."

Spec. 5 Willie S. Pruitt, Millington, Tenn., remained in the FDC. An enemy attempted to lift the blackout curtain covering the bunker door. Pruitt blasted him with a burst from his M-16 rifle. The insurgent's grenade exploded in the doorway wounding Pruitt slightly.

FDC HM

The bunker which served as living quarters for FDC per-

sonnel took a direct hit from an incoming mortar round. One artilleryman was killed; two were wounded. Spec. 4 Richard W. Oyas, San Diego, crawled out of the bunker and dashed for the battery command post (CP). Oyas yelled: "The NVA are all around."

Battery commander, Capt. Craig H. Mandeville, Chickasha, Okla., fired a hand flare which clearly illuminated the battery position. First Sgt. Henry J. Zangrilli, Fayetteville, N.C.,

XO, CO Rally Men

CHU LAI—Ka-who-o-o-m! Lt. Wayne P. Kabasko bolted upright from his sleep in the bunker located on a mountain top west of here.

Ka-who-o-o-m!
It was 3:30 a.m.
"Here we go," thought the executive officer of A Btry.

Kabasko dashed from his bunker and saw paratrooper artillerymen leaping to their howitzers.

"It was like day," he said. "Flares filled the sky. I could see our men running to their positions and NVA running through the area throwing grenades."

Kabasko ran to the forward gun section, organized the men and began placing direct fire on the attacking enemy. Leaving the crew in action, the officer made his way to the 5th section and found the crew wounded.

heaved two grenades in succession into the advancing enemy and spoiled their attack.

Suddenly an explosion rocked the back side of the command post bunker. Mandeville yelled: "Range correct! Let's get the hell out of here."

The captain and his small group began fighting their way to the firing battery parapets. "Grenades were popping like the 4th of July," said Mandeville.

While the attack continued on

Kabasko directed others to the section, organized their fires and aided in treating the wounded.

Battery commander Capt. Craig Mandeville ran to the 6th section where he found the howitzer jammed. All the men of the section had been wounded by grenades and mortars.

Mandeville cleared and placed direct fire on the enemy in spite of wounds he suffered.

While Mandeville rallied the wounded, Kabasko ran to aid the 1st section. As he dodged and darted across the hill he sustained fragmentation wounds. He picked up a wounded trooper and carried him to the aid station.

Racing back to the section, Kabasko was knocked to the ground repeatedly by grenade and mortar explosions, yet he continued to rally the men.

the FDC and CP, the ammunition section crews were fighting for their lives. An NVA carrying a satchel charge ran toward the huge ammunition storage area. A paratrooper cut him down.

Rallyes Troops

At the 1st Section parapet, Staff Sgt. Webster Anderson, Winnsboro, S.C., rallied the crew and guided them thru a hail of grenades. Two mortar rounds exploded at Anderson's feet. He crawled to the protective cover of the parapets. Then, an enemy grenade fell near one of Anderson's wounded men. The sergeant grabbed the grenade and attempted to throw it out. The grenade exploded in his hand. Anderson shook his head, shrugged off the wound and continued to rally his forces.

Lt. Wayne P. Kabasko, battery executive officer from Missoula, Mont., dashed to the forward gun section and began placing direct fire on the enemy. Other crews manned their weapons and succeeded in driving off the attackers.

For two hours, the artillerymen of A Btry. engaged the enemy with every available weapon—howitzers, rifles, pistols, grenades—and sometimes hand-to-hand.

The siren which triggered the attack sounded again and the battered enemy withdrew. His attempt to destroy the battery and its ammunition dump failed.

As dawn broke, seven NVA bodies were sprawled on the artillery hill and blood trails, like red spokes, marked the enemy's withdrawal.

Wheeler Climbs To 902

CHU LAI — Operation Wheeler claimed 902 enemy dead in eight weeks of fighting 18 miles west of here as the Screaming Eagles maintained the momentum of their attack into areas controlled by the Viet Cong and NVA since 1954. Elements of the 2nd NVA Division have been pressed continually by the brigade since the first combat assault Sept. 11.

Seventeen enemy were killed in contact Nov. 6 to push enemy losses over the 900 mark. Three paratroopers sustained minor wounds in the day's action.

Five of the 17 kills were scored by B Co., 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf., commanded by Capt. Edgar F. Burch, Boulder, Colo.

Paratroopers of A Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf., added four kills and the Hawk Platoon, led by Lt. John McKnight, Toccoa, Ga., accounted for two more as his reconnaissance element surprised the pair bathing in a stream.

Operation Wheeler, the brigade's sixth sweep in I Corps, became the largest combat action for the Screaming Eagles since arriving in Vietnam July 29, 1965.

Previously, Operation Hawthorne with 531 enemy dead was the largest 101st action.

The largest single action of the operation occurred Oct. 8 when paratroopers of A Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf., killed 69 NVA in a pitched battle fought during a driving monsoon storm.

Wheeler not only inflicted heavy losses on the enemy in battle, but also denied him large stores of food. Thirty-two tons of polished rice and five tons of salt were extracted during a four day period. Translated into significance to the enemy, the loss was enough rice to feed a regiment for one month and enough salt to sustain that regiment for a year.

In addition to destroying the enemy on the battlefield, the Screaming Eagles conducted an intensified civic action program which included medical treatment for 3,497 persons during the eight week record period.

Slug Hits Rucksack

CHU LAI—Paratroopers of the 101st Airborne generally agree 50-pounds of equipment and supplies on their backs is a pain. Pfc. Joseph Hauser, Whitney, Pa., says life sometimes is a fully-loaded rucksack.

Hauser's platoon from A Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 322nd Inf., was conducting search and destroy through a village west of here when a burst of sniper fire sent everyone diving for cover.

"A round hit my rucksack," said Hauser. "It felt like someone slugged me in the back with a sledge hammer."

A combat medic, Spec. 3 Lee C. Pugh, Haines City, Fla., crawled to Hauser's side. "Where are you hit?" Pugh asked, examining the torn rucksack.

Pugh removed the pack and searched for the wound. He couldn't find a scratch.

The sniper's bullet had passed through an M-16 magazine, shattered a can of fruit and lodged between two belts of machine gun ammunition Hauser carried.

Hauser shook his head: "Why did it have to hit my fruit? Why couldn't it have been ham and lima beans?"

Why Not Talk to the Folks at Home?

ANYPLACE. Vietnam — Screaming Eagles may have little time, but they can make a telephone call home from the forward area. With the Military Affiliate Radio System (MARS) station that's always with the forward elements, calls can be made to the United States.

"Our primary purpose is to enhance morale," explains Lt. John L. Wilson, Washington, Iowa, officer-in-charge of the MARS station. Two operators handle all Stateside calls: Specs. 4 Richard D. Smith, Sarver, Pa., and Mark N. Nicolette, Rio Vista, Calif.

"We welcome requests for phone calls to the States," said Smith. "That's what the MARS station is for."

Let's assume you want to call home. First, call STRIKE 40 and tell the operator you wish to make a MARS call. Give the operator the name of the person with whom you wish to speak, the area code, city and

state. The operator will book your call with Smith and Nicolette. When your call gets through, you will be notified when to come to the MARS station.

"All phone calls are collect," said Smith. "Our calls can go through MARS stations in Alaska and Hawaii but 80 per cent go through California. The person being called pays the toll from California, Alaska or Hawaii—not from Vietnam."

"When a person gets his party he is permitted to talk for three minutes," added Nicolette. "Emergency calls may last longer."

With Christmas not far away, Smith and Nicolette welcome troopers to book their calls now.

Priority to Troops

"We try to give special priority to the line troops," said Smith. "They don't often get in from the field. When they do, we try to expedite their calls home."

Sometimes troopers place their calls and wait at the

MARS station. Nicolette says this is a good idea if the trooper has the time to wait. "We can probably get his call through in



Spec. 4 Smith (seated) helps Spec. 4 Daryl H. Grabow, Twin Brook, S.D., place a MARS call.

a couple of hours," he said.

When a MARS call is made, the parties use radio procedure by saying 'over' when they have finished and expect a response from the other person. A typical phone call goes something like this:

"Hello folks, this is Tom. I want you to know I'm thinking about you on your anniversary. Over."

"Hi Tommy. This is Dad. We appreciate your calling. We look forward to your letters. You should write more often. Over."

"Sometimes the parties forget to say 'over' and there are moments of silence in the call, but they catch on quick," says Smith.

"If a person wants to call on a certain day, like a birthday, we would like to know about it a couple of days in advance so we can be sure and get the call through," Nicolette said.

Hawaii R&R

"The MARS call is a tremendous help for the troops to co-

ordinate their Hawaii R&R with their wives," added Smith. "And, although there is no privacy in the MARS call because it is radio relay, it does give the trooper a chance to hear the voices of his family."

Screaming Eagles are asked to hold their calls to twice a month. MARS calls can be placed to Okinawa as well as the States. Smith and Nicolette operate the station 18 hours a day.

"We hope to get new equipment so we can operate longer and handle more calls," said Wilson. "With another set we could take twice as many calls."

There are times when the MARS station is idle because it doesn't have a request for a phone call to the States. Smith and Nicolette would like to keep busy and help the morale of the men.

As the saying goes: A phone call is the next best thing to being there and MARS is ready to serve you.

Beans to Bulldozers

This Team Moves 'Mountains'

CHU LAI — Imagine a flight of 108 fully-loaded C-123 airplanes and you have an idea of the supplies used by paratroopers of the 101st Airborne during seven weeks of Operation Wheeler fighting. What is more astounding is that a handful of men who work under the title of Movement Control have handled every ton.

Everything the brigade gets from mail to mosquito repellent is lifted, loaded and unloaded by the support battalion's Movement Control Team.

Lt. Joseph Arlauskas, New York City, is officer-in-charge of movement operations in the brigade's forward area—wherever that happens to be. He and a five man staff wait, watch and worry over everything from beans to bullets.

"We work closely with the Army Traffic Management Agency and the Air Force aerial support squadrons," said Arlauskas. "Once the goods reach the runway we mark the priorities and the Air Force takes it from there. Air Force cooperation with the 101st is outstanding."

Four members of Movement Control are riggers. They're the familiar "red caps" of the brigade, members of the Aerial Equipment Support Plat. They perform the myriad tasks of preparing men and material for movement by air.

At the airport here, they transfer combat essential equipment from C-123 and C-130 aircraft to helipads where riggers prepare sling loads and ready the cargo for Chinook helicopter transport to the Forward Supply Point (FSP) at Tien Phuoc.

Maximum Support

"During the monsoon storm caused by Typhoon Carla, we spent a day and night rigging loads," recalled Sgt. William E. Matthews, Jr., Richmond, Va. "The combat troops were in a tight situation and needed ammunition. They got it. Our mission is maximum support."

The section also moves supplies by land and sea. According to Arlauskas, sea transportation

is less timely. "If the entire ship is filled with materials destined for the 101st, there is no problem," he said. "Partial loads, however, can mean long delays in loading and unloading. Also weather and tides can delay a shipment."

Vehicle convoys are the carriers of overland shipping. "It's slower than air freight and subject to ambush, but it allows more room for air movement of combat essentials," Arlauskas said. "Why fly a truck when you can fill it with equipment

and drive it," he said.

Weather is a big concern of Movement Control. Monsoon storms, typhoon wind and floods can really hurt a unit that continually moves like ours does," said Arlauskas.

Weather and work do not dampen the enthusiasm of the men who keep men and munitions moving.

"Keeping the cargo moving to the troops is a good feeling," said Matthews. "We know its importance."



Pinup

Pfc. George H. Tucker, Tifton, Ga., catches up on the news by reading the Stars & Stripes during a lull in Operation Wheeler fighting. Tucker, a member of Hqs. Co.'s Security Plat., seems to be finding the news in fine shape. (Photo by Spec. 4 Ben Croxton)

The Screaming Eagle



The Screaming Eagle is an authorized Army newspaper published weekly by the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, RVN, for military personnel. Views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army. Reproduction of all material other than copyrighted items is authorized. Address all communications to: Editor, Screaming Eagle, 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, APO San Francisco 96347. Printed in Tokyo, Japan, by Pacific Stars and Stripes.

Circulation 6,000

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Preparing Another Load

Riggers and movement control personnel work to keep men and materials moving and the 'Nomads of Vietnam' supplied with combat essentials. (Photo by Spec. 4 William P. Singley)



Checking Source of Sniper Fire

Paratroopers of A Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 502nd Inf., drop to the ground as enemy snipers open fire during Operation Wheeler. After eight weeks of fighting, Wheeler had resulted in more than 900 enemy killed. (Photo by Pfc. Robert Mosey)

Combined Arms Effort Kills 13 Enemy

By Pfc. Robert Mosey

CHU LAI—The combined firepower of infantry, artillery and gunships scored 13 enemy kills and destroyed a VC bastion west of here during Operation Wheeler.

The action began with Pfc. William Saldana, Yuma, Ariz., moving as pointman for a platoon of paratroopers from A Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 502nd Inf., through heavy fog which shrouded the muddy valley floor.

Cautiously Saldana felt and probed his way along a trail which followed a high bamboo fence surrounding a small hamlet still in slumber.

Saldana stopped. "Pass the word back I've come to a gap

in the fence," he whispered to the man behind him. "There's a rice paddy on the other side."

Lt. Roderick Tillman, Mobile, Ala., received the message and checked his map. "Cross it," he ordered. "Let's hope we make it to the other side before the fog lifts."

Saldana slipped through the opening and strained to see through the fog as he searched for a paddy dike that would lead them across.

"I finally found one," he said. "But I couldn't see where it led because the fog was so thick."

The platoon followed Saldana in close file to avoid becoming separated in the mist.

Sun Breaks Through

Less than half way across the wide paddy, the sun rose and

burned off the fog, exposing the column of paratroopers as they reached a small stream.

Automatic weapons fire shattered the stillness and the paratroopers dived for protection behind a rice paddy dike.

"The fire came from a small hut complex to our front," said Pfc. Charlie Jones, Chesapeake, Va. "A moment later they opened up with everything they had."

Three men from the 4th Plat. were wounded in the initial burst of enemy fire.

Tillman called for gunships and moments later the "Musketts" of the 176th Aviation Co. radioed for smoke to mark the forward and rear elements of the paratrooper force.

Rockets 'swooshed' into the enemy position and angry red tracers from the flying arsenal

laced the hostile area. Enemy occupied huts exploded in balls of fire as the rockets found their mark.

A gunship pilot radioed Spec. 4 Dean Beaupre, Fremont, Calif. "The enemy has fortified bunkers facing the paddy. Recommend your elements attack from the rear."

Redlegs Provide Cover

Beaupre notified Tillman who requested artillery smoke to conceal the platoon's move. Moments later the howitzers of C Btry., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 320th Arty. blanketed the enemy position with a curtain of smoke.

The enemy continued to fire as the paratroopers advanced to a treeline on the right flank. "Charlie" knew we were somewhere," said Beaupre. "The smoke kept him guessing."

Once in the treeline, Beaupre

radioed the artillery battery to cease fire. The helicopter gunships orbited the area and waited as the smoke cleared.

Tillman attacked. "We took them by surprise," he said.

The enemy firing stopped and paratroopers combed the area for enemy and weapons. One VC was crouched in his hole—dead. Bullet riddled bodies of enemy snipers were discovered hanging in the branches of tall trees around the bunkers, their weapons scattered on the ground below.

The gunships had done a good job.

An engineer destroyed the bunkers with explosives. Then the paratroopers of Tillman's platoon picked up six enemy weapons and disappeared into the jungle.

Excitement Finds 'Bored' Sergeant

CHU LAI — What began as an afternoon of boredom turned into a nightmare of death and danger for a 101st Airborne paratrooper during Operation Wheeler west of here.

Plat. Sgt. Robert E. Jones, Colorado Springs, Colo., transferred recently from B Co. of the 2nd Bn. (Abn), 502nd Inf., to become battalion operations sergeant.

"One afternoon I was sitting around doing nothing," he said. "To be honest, I was bored. The battalion commander asked if I wanted to accompany him on his command chopper to B Co. and watch their re-supply. Since B Co. was my old outfit, I jumped at the chance."

While the chopper was en route, B Co. began receiving sporadic sniper fire. No one gave much attention to the harassment and the command helicopter landed.

"I walked over to Lt. Orvold (Ted Orvold, Atlanta), and started getting caught up on the news in my old platoon," Jones continued. "Suddenly, two mortar rounds fell outside our perimeter. A second later a third round fell inside our perimeter and struck a trooper

on the head not ten feet away from me."

The mortar shell killed the paratrooper instantly and fatally wounded another. Jones was unscathed.

Ammunition carried by the trooper who received the full impact of the shell began to explode from the fire of his burning clothes and equipment.

Jones leaped to the fallen trooper's body and began clawing at the ammunition as it exploded.

"I tried to throw it away as fast as I could," he said. "Seven men were wounded by the exploding ammo."

Jones sustained burns of the hands and minor fragmentation wounds of the back as he stripped the bandolier and belted munitions from the burning clothing.

He then joined others in aiding the wounded while waiting for the medevac chopper.

"When the 'Dust-Off' arrived, sniper fire was so heavy they couldn't land," said Jones. "Finally, a 'bird' got in and took the wounded out."

Reflecting on the afternoon, the veteran soldier said: "I'll never complain about being bored again."



Treatment in the Field

The face of Capt. Bradford Mutchler, Paducah, Ky., (center) mirrors the tension of paratroopers as they comfort an injured helicopter pilot. Mutchler, who recently completed his tour in Vietnam, was the surgeon for the 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Art Campbell)



Water Run

Pfc. Robert Nixon, Greenspring, W. Va., leads the way as he and Pfc. Carlton Moore, Pittsfield, Mass., carry canteens of water to their platoon of A Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 502nd Inf.

(Photo by Pfc. Robert Masey)

New to Platoon

Two Troopers Show Courage During NVA Mortar Barrage

CHU LAI—An NVA mortar barrage provided a baptism of fire for two paratroopers new to the 101st Airborne near here recently and they came through like hardened veterans.

Lt. Thomas J. Lowrie, Sturgeon Bay, Wis., and Pfc. Roger Benson, Parrish, Ala., joined A Co. of the 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf., during Operation Wheeler.

A few days after their arrival, they were moving with the 2nd Plat. when the men approached a hut complex. Two NVA ran across an open paddy to a woodline. Lowrie's platoon decided they were decoys, ignored them and continued to move toward the huts.

Sniper fire forced the Americans to drop their packs so they could move faster.

"We were really moving out," said squad leader Sgt. Leon Hicks, Houston. "Benson was right behind me."

"As we hustled toward the huts, something popped 200 yards ahead," recalled Lowrie. "I didn't know what it was until I heard the explosion. The enemy had a mortar inside a

hut and were shelling the men behind us."

Want Mortar

Lowrie radioed Capt. Peter Mitchell, Levittown, N.Y., the company commander, that he was pushing on, hoping to capture the mortar.

Hicks' squad attacked, but the men were too late to get the weapon. They captured the ammunition, destroyed it and moved out to rejoin the company.

As the squad moved through a Vietnamese cemetery they were attacked by enemy mortars.

"We took the best cover we could," said the officer. He and radio operator Pfc. Carlos L. Garcia, Caquas, P.R., radioed for artillery support. The rest of the squad were ordered to run for a tree line.

When Benson leaped to his feet, he caught a glimpse of two enemy in spider holes to the right of Lowrie and Garcia.

"I'll get 'em," said the new trooper, charging across the cemetery toward the hiding enemy. Spec. 4 Jimmy L. Wilson, Jeffersonville, Ga., followed him.

Benson Scores

"I told him to get down," said Wilson. "Benson didn't flinch. He blasted the first one as he raised up and both of us nailed the second."

The two men picked up two enemy weapons and started back to their squad. Benson was trying to take the bayonet off the enemy rifle when a mortar exploded nearby.

Benson fell. Wilson cared for him until the squad arrived and carried the wounded trooper to the company's position.

"He was really excited about his first battle," said Lowrie. "He didn't ask for anything though he lay under a poncho all night waiting for the weather to clear."

As Benson was evacuated, Wilson handed him the captured bayonet. Pfc. Ray C. Ward, Chicago, commented: "Benson had the right attitude from the beginning. He wanted to learn and he wasn't scared. He took it in stride."

The squad had high praise for their new platoon leader, too. "He was right there," said one. "He was leading all the way," added another.

Tunnel Found Below Ambush

CHU LAI — An ambush manned by paratroopers of the 101st Airborne failed near here recently because the Americans were perched on top of the enemy.

A Co. of the 2nd Bn. (Abn), 227th Inf., set up an ambush along a well-worn trail leading up the side of a hill. A security element was checking the am-

bush position for vulnerable spots when Pfc. Michael A. Gerdine, Omaha, discovered a tunnel.

"I crawled in with a flashlight in one hand and pistol in the other," he said. "The tunnel appeared empty, but tracks on the floor indicated recent use."

Gerdine searched the tunnel floor and discovered what appeared to be a trap-door. "I looked through the crack around the door and saw a pair of knees," said Gerdine.

Plat. Sgt. Nichie G. Alonzo, Columbus, Ga., joined Gerdine and lifted the door. A VC nurse cowered in the small opening. Under questioning by the ARVN interpreter accompanying the paratroopers, she said four Viet Cong were hiding in the tunnel.

Spec. 4 Robert W. Ferguson, Wagoner, Okla., joined the search. "I no sooner entered when I looked to my left and saw the VC," said Ferguson. "One of them reached for his pistol belt. I fired three quick shots and withdrew."

Alonzo heaved in a grenade, killing two. The remaining enemy seemed to have disappeared.

Ferguson found another entrance to the complex and was fired on.

Pfc. Richard A. Luttrell, Springfield, Ill., entered the tunnel and worked his way toward the stubborn enemy. "I spotted the VC and motioned them to follow me out," said Luttrell. "They started to go the opposite direction. My pistol changed their mind and they came out."

Further interrogation of the nurse and two wounded males revealed one of the enemy dead was the Viet Cong Province secretary.

Life Saved By Rations

CHU LAI — Pfc. Richard Biggs, Vallejo, Calif., never will complain about C-rations. They saved his life during Operation Wheeler west of here.

Biggs, a radio telephone operator (RTO) with A Co. of the 2nd Bn. (Abn), 502nd Inf., was directing gunships as they provided cover for resupply helicopters.

"We were being resupplied and receiving sniper fire at the same time," said Staff Sgt. John Jurinsky, Worcester, Mass. "Biggs didn't realize he was standing in the path of one of the resupply choppers. He had his back to it."

Jurinsky yelled, but the warning was drowned in the roar of the helicopters.

"I knew I'd never reach him in time," the acting platoon sergeant said.

Quickly, he grabbed a case of C-rations and hurled it 15 feet, knocking Biggs down as the helicopter's tall rotor blade cut the air where the young paratrooper once stood.



'Go To It, Sarge!'

An old basket hoop was too much temptation for Staff Sgt. Jesse W. Taylor, Fort Meyers, Fla. As the picture shows—the squad leader with C Co. of the 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf., still knew how to twirl the hala hoop. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Art Campbell)

Babies Popular in Any War

CHU LAI—The gurgle of an infant sounds the same in any language and touched the hearts of paratroopers in the 101st Airborne during Operation Wheeler west of here.

Staff Sgt. Arthur Jones, Wilmington, N.C., was leading elements of C Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf., toward a cluster of huts adjacent to a jungle clearing when he heard the sound.

"I knew it was a baby right away," said Jones. "I've got six kids of my own."

Realizing it could be a VC trap, Jones moved his forces with caution. Reaching the hut they found a mother and five children, one of them a chubby,

gurgling boy of about six months.

"We radioed back the report and were told to set up a perimeter and spend the night," Jones recalled.

The paratroopers set up their defensive positions, insuring the mother and her children protection also.

"Several of the boys decided they wanted to share their food with the family, especially the baby boy," said Jones. "Then someone asked what could a baby eat from a box of C-rations?"

"How about beefsteak with juices?" asked Spec. 4 Dave Gray, Richmond, Calif.

"Babies don't eat stuff like

that," answered another. "They eat mushy food like chicken and noodles." Jones solved the problem by deciding the mother would feed the infant.

The paratroopers didn't get much sleep that night. "I kept hearing movement in the brush," said Pfc. Randel B. Mundel, Los Angeles. "Every time I'd check out the sounds I'd find some guy with a can of C-rations trying to convince the mother to let him feed the baby."

At daybreak, Jones moved his paratroopers out, but not before they stopped in to take another look at the drowsy, Vietnamese baby.