

Unusual Happenings: U.S. Army Unit Finds Enemy Arms Cache

By Sp4 WILLIAM L. MCGOWN
FIRE SUPPORT BASE BLASTER, CAMBODIA — Just as it is unusual for the tackle on a football team to score a touchdown, it's also unusual when an artillery unit scores by finding an arms cache. Yet, that's what an element of the 25th Infantry Division's Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 8th Field Artillery did in Cambodia recently.

The opportunity presented itself when a Cambodian villager came to First Lt. Thomas L. Bush, of Jacksonville, Fla., and said he'd lead them to an enemy arms cache. Since this was unusual for an artillery unit, Bush was hesitant at first and consulted the Battalion Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Richard A. Manion.

"The villager explained to me that he wanted to do this because of our many services to his people during MEDCAPS (Medical Civic Action Programs), Manion, from Leavenworth, Kan., said, "Since coming to Cambodia we've conducted almost one MEDCAP each day."

"Besides," added Bush, "we feared that if we didn't follow up on it ourselves, the villager might refuse to guide people he didn't know to the cache."

Together with an element from Company C, 2d Battalion (Mechanized), 47th Infantry, eleven men from 1st Battalion followed their guide into the heavy underbrush. "I thought the guide said the cache was 200 meters off the road," commented Specialist Four

Gary W. Watson, of Granite Falls, N. C., "but it seemed like more than 500 meters. By the time we got to the cache site, I was almost too tired to dig."
"Everybody took their time digging," said Command Sergeant Major August A. Myska, of Columbus, Ga. "It took us about two hours to dig it all up, but it was worth it."

The cache yielded 50 enemy bunkers, one messhall, 72 122mm rockets, ten 75mm recoilless rifle rounds with one base plate for the same weapon, 30,000 .51 caliber machinegun rounds and a large amount of communications equipment. All the munitions were loaded into the trucks and removed to Thiem Ngon.

The following morning, the "Automatic Eighth" MEDCAP team went out again, and in the early afternoon, Lt. Bush reported that the same informant knew where some mortar tubes were located, not far from the first cache site.

By mid-afternoon, the "Auto Eighters" were again on the 2-47th tracks crashing through the dense underbrush. Again they had to dismount and continue into the thick growth on foot.

As they approached an apparently deserted village, tension mounted. When several men cautiously stopped to check out the area, the villager stepped out and kept on going. Soon, everyone was aware he was missing. Fear of being led into an ambush seized some, while others welcomed the

chance to rest. About 15 minutes passed before a whistle and a shout—"This way!"
As they twisted through the jungle they caught up with the guide who was pointing down at the ground.

"It looked just like everything else we had been stumbling over, and not even a clearing," commented one artilleryman.

But a few probes with a shovel soon revealed that this was the site. There, under sheets of tin, were two 82mm mortars complete with base plate and two sites, 30 82mm mortar rounds, various fuses and propellant for the mortars, one M-1 carbine and 50 pounds of TNT.

"Since it was getting late in the afternoon we decided to carry what we could and blow the rest in place," said Major Bobby L. Rice, of Knoxville, Tenn.

"Each of us had to trudge back to the tracks with mortar rounds in our side pockets, along with the other equipment," said Specialist Five Paul S. Gaffney, from Kings Mountain, N. C.

Laden with their heavy booty, the men tried to take a shortcut and meet the tracks in a clearing reportedly due west of the cache site. But the high grass and darkening sky confused them, and they were soon lost. Fortunately, a 25th Infantry Division-Artillery Light observation helicopter (LOH) pilot was able to identify their signal smoke and direct them to the clearing.

"Those tracks sure were a welcome sight," said Watson.

M/Sgt. Reynolds Earns Unit Award

U. S. AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. — Master Sergeant Richard D. Reynolds, son of Mrs. Evelyn Reynolds of 608 Gantt St., Kings Mountain, N. C. has been recognized for helping his unit earn the U. S. Air Force Outstanding Unit Award.

Sergeant Reynolds is a food

services supervisor at the U. S. Air Force Academy and will wear a distinctive service ribbon as a permanent decoration.

The academy was cited for exceptionally meritorious service from Jan. 1, 1968 to Dec. 31, 1969 for the high degree of professionalism and devotion to duty consistently demonstrated by assigned personnel.

Among the significant accom-

plishments noted in the award were those of the Air Force Academy cadets who served to establish the academy as a national institution of recognized stature through military leadership, athletics and academics.

The sergeant is a 1957 graduate of Kings Mountain High School. His wife is the former Ginette O. Quizemann.

An American dentist and his Honduran counterpart-in-training saw 143 patients and did 659 extractions during a 9-hour visit to an isolated village in Honduras. The dentist is on a hospital post stationed in the town of Santa Rosa by MEDICO, a service of CARE.

Doctors, nurses, medical technicians and physiotherapists teach and treat on CARE-MEDICO hospital teams in medically-poor countries. For information should write to: Personnel, MEDICO, a service of CARE, New York 10016.

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The Veterans Corner

THE VETS CORNER
EDITOR'S NOTE: Below are authoritative answers by the Veterans Administration to some of the many current questions from former servicemen and their families. Further information on veterans benefits may be obtained at any VA office.

Q—I am 62 years old and have a National Service Life Insurance policy. After my 60th birthday, I became totally disabled, and have been told that I can now qualify for waiver of premiums. Is this true?

A—Yes. Check with your nearest VA office, or write to the office where you pay your insurance premiums.

Q—I am a remarried widow of a veteran, and have never applied for pension because I believe I am not eligible. However, the veteran's son, who is in my care, may be eligible. Should I apply for a pension for him?

A—You are right in assuming you are not eligible for pension because of your remarriage, but your remarriage does not affect the eligibility of the veteran's son. It is suggested that you request forms and assistance from your nearest VA office, so you can apply for a pension for him without further delay.

Q—My ex-husband's National Service Life Insurance, of which I am the beneficiary, is still in force. He does not wish to continue paying the premiums, so I am paying them. I have been told that he can change the beneficiary without consulting me. Is this correct?

A—Yes. The insured is the only person who can change beneficiaries, and he does not have to consult you if he wishes to change his beneficiary.

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