

2/16 MOVE BRIGADE TRAINS 'IVY'

By SP4 Bob Johnson

The 2d Battalion, 16th Infantry recently moved from Camp Martin Cox to the new 2d Brigade base camp 15 miles northwest of Saigon. Lengthy convoys poured in and out of the new area three times a day for over three days.

"I know every hill and turn in the road from Di An to Camp Cox," said Specialist 4 Steve Moran, 21, of Spokane, Washington, a member of 2/16's Reconnaissance Scout Section which provided security for the convoys.

Sergeant Herman Watkins, 25, of Saginaw, Michigan, described the new area: "I think it's a good area—except for the rain, mud and bamboo. With all these trucks moving around here like they were in a marathon race, the place is one big madhouse. Once it dries up, it will be really nice!"

The 'Rangers' all agree on one point: the 1st Infantry Division base camp at Di An is well worth being near because of its recreational facilities and the USO.

"Di An is almost like an R&R center," said Specialist 5 Isidor Jackson, 23, of Brooklyn, New York. "Our area reminds me of the World's Fair, with every body putting up tents and building things. What amazes me is that a few days ago this place was just bamboo and wide open space, now the entire 2d Brigade is here. The engineers have really been working hard."

Specialist 4 Tim M. Dowell, 20, of Company B, 1st Engineer Battalion, from Norwood, Massachusetts, agreed. "I drive a tractor in 2/16's area. The only problem I run into is mud and bamboo. The bamboo is fairly easy to get rid of, but that mud is really (Continued on Page 5)

The 2d Brigade Training School held a special session recently at their former base camp, Camp Martin Cox. Instead of the usual class of replacements, the trainees were key personnel from the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division.

The 'Ivy' soldiers, newly-arrived from the United States, took over Camp Martin Cox as their base camp on their arrival in Vietnam. It was the task of the 'Big Red One' infantrymen, drawing on over a year and a half of combat experience, to prepare the 'Ivy' troops for combat in the jungles and swamps of South Vietnam. Staff Sergeant J. W. Chalkey, of Oark, Alabama, an instructor in the brigade school, taught the 4th Division soldiers. "We gave the usual classes in day reconnaissance and night ambush patrols," he said, as well as a class in mines and booby traps. They picked it up quickly. Most of them had been working on these subjects as teens in the States, so they worked together here a lot easier than the usual replacements."

In addition to training individual 4th Division men the 2d Brigade gave other aid to the newly arrived units. "We gave them as much help as possible," explained Sergeant Major Manuel P. Moses of Providence, Rhode Island, 2d Brigade operations sergeant. "Besides briefing them thoroughly on Camp Cox's Tactical Area of Responsibility (TAOR), we supplied some operational materials which they hadn't brought with them—all things they would not know they needed until they got here."

Major Thomas P. Kehoe of Columbus, Georgia, operations officer, also worked closely with the 4th Division on operations and defense. "The primary area," he said, was the complexity of operating—it's so different from what they're used to. For example, the concept of a TAOR was un-

derstandable. Replacements have difficulty realizing the channels they have to go through in just normal operations."

The 4th Division staff also received a thorough intelligence briefing from Captain Michael H. McCormick of Eugene, Oregon, the assistant intelligence officer. "They were briefed on all the II Field Force Vietnam area," Captain McCormick said, "as well as the local area."

The 2d Brigade also gave the 'Ivy' infantrymen concrete support in the areas of logistics and supply. Major Edward G. Sedberry of Mt. Pleasant, Texas, brigade supply officer, insured that the 4th Division personnel had tents and bunks to sleep in, as well as vehicles to transport their men from the port at Vung Tau. Mess hall facilities and cooks from the 2d Brigade mess halls fed the men until their own mess halls became operative. Master Sergeant Melvin V. Hale of Killeen, Texas, aided the newcomers with supplies. "We supported them on all levels until they established their own channels" through II Field Force," he said.

The 2d Brigade and the 1st Infantry Division Military Police provided security for the 'Ivy' move down Highway 15 to Camp Martin Cox. Specialist 4 Robert F. Stone of Wilmington, Ohio, drove the convoy commander, Major Charles R. Bamford III of Portland, Oregon. Major Bamford and Stone (Continued on page 6)

'IVY' CONT.

spent six days shuttling long convoys of men and equipment from Yang Tau to Camp Cox.

The 2d Brigade aided the 4th Division in more ways than training and supplying their needs. Sergeant Thomas M. Kennedy of Manchester, New Hampshire, Post Exchange Sergeant found himself faced by would-be 4th Division PX personnel who had never run a Post Exchange.

"I showed them where to get their stock in Saigon," Kennedy said. "More important, I told them how to deal with the Vietnamese workers we use here for the PX. We left them four of our trained Vietnamese clerks." The 4th Division men, Kennedy said, were surprised at how far they had to drive to pick up the workers.

The 2d Brigade Aviation section also provided help. According to Sergeant Jerry H. Reynolds of Baker, Calif., supervisor, "We flew them down to Tan Son Nhut air base so they'd know where to go there. The 2d Brigade also left the PX (and) supply point at Camp Cox until the 4th Division Aviation got their own set-up!"

In addition to the aid—both in advice and actual supplies—provided them by the 2d Brigade, the 4th Division's 3rd Brigade was able to move into Camp Martin Cox with many permanent buildings already up and with concrete pads for all tents. Specialist 4 Michael L. Kingsbury of Vancouver, Washington, who has changed base camps 3 times during his tour with the "Big Red One," said "It's annoying and irritating to have to tear down and build up all the time. Each time, though, the base camps get a little bigger and a little better, so I guess we're doing pretty well."



2nd Battalion 16th Infantry Rangers

Since that memorable Saturday morning of 22 May 1965 when Lt Col Lloyd L. "Scooter" Burke told his assembled battalion, "Men this battalion will be departing for USARPAC shortly", excitement and adventure have been the keywords.

As the sun rose through the overcast on the morning of 14 July, the USNS Gordon quietly glided to a stop off the beautiful beaches of Vung Tau. For the first time since the Philippine Insurrection of 1899, the men of the Rangers were setting foot on Asian soil. Following a brief ride in a C-130 to the Bien Hoa Air Base, a hurried truck ride through the unfamiliar Vietnamese villages, across Highway 1-A, and to a former rifle range, we arrived at what was to be our base camp for the next eight months.

That first Sunday night the Rangers experienced one of the worst rainstorms that many had seen. The following morning all set out in earnest to build a base camp that would be hard to equal. The rest of July and most of August the 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry had the mission of "Palace Guard" for Bien Hoa Air Base while

the 173rd was up in the highlands. All took advantage of this period and busily set to work. The "infamous" construction firm of M&M (Medics and Maintenance) was formed and from their endeavors came the first permanently constructed chapel and post exchange of any army combat unit in Vietnam. At the same time, the Mortar Platoon was building what were later described by many general officers as the best mortar positions they had seen.

On 22 July the helicopter that was carrying our battalion commander was hit by a Viet Cong grenade. The prompt administration of first-aid by Sergeant Major Caldwell saved Lt Col Burke's life. Our new battalion commander, Lt Col Y. Y. Phillips Jr., came to us from Headquarters, MACV.

While the construction work was going on in the base camp, platoon sized operations were taking place to the southeast. Staff Sergeant Frank M. Semens was leading his squad when they surprised a small group of VC in a clearing. In the brief firefight that ensued, one VC was killed. This was the first confirmed VC killed

for the 2nd Brigade and the 1st Infantry Division in Vietnam.

During the last week in August the Rangers started a series of operations which never seemed to end. The initial phase took place just across the river from the Bien Hoa Air Base. The area was full of bunkers, booby traps, and tunnels. The VC in one of these bunkers put up exceptionally tough resistance. Company A had the mission and Sp4 Wayne Beck of Rolla, Missouri, did the job. He charged the bunker aperture and pulled the trigger of his flamethrower. For this act of valor and courage he received the first Silver Star awarded to a "Big Red One" soldier since their arrival in Vietnam. The presentation of the award was made by the Commanding General to Specialist Beck on the eve of his departure back to the states.

The battalion continued to work up the road to Phouc Vinh during Operation HOPSCOTCH. Our primary mission was to secure the area for the arrival of the 1st Brigade. Though there was limited contact we did capture a lot of supplies. Company C led the rest of the battalion, capturing over 100 tons of rice and an arms factory—including grenades and mines. Company B, not to be left behind, captured its fair share of rice. At the close of the operation we returned to our base camp, "Camp Ranger," which most of the troops started calling "Camp Stranger" because they spent very little time there.

Most of November and December were spent in securing the new 1st Infantry Division base and the 173rd Airborne area at Bien Hoa Air Base. During the month of December the command spent one night at "Camp Stranger"—December 13th.

Operation Bob Hope was the most remembered event of December. Christmas Day was a bright sunny 95°, but the signs of Christmas could be found everywhere. All of the company field messes were brightly decorated with a small Christmas tree, streamers, and lights. While the Christmas turkey baked to golden goodness the companies moved out to 81mm mortar range to secure the division base while "All those darn rear echelon types" watched Bob Hope, Carroll Baker, Joey Heatherton, Anita Bryant, Joey Heatherton, Kay Stevens, Joey Heatherton, Miss U.S.A., and Joey Heatherton. Incidentally, there were a few other men in the show.

Shortly after noon all headed for the waiting

trucks and the ride behind wailing sirens of the Military Police jeeps from Di An, through the gnarled traffic and serpentine streets of Bien Hoa to the Air Base. Here we joined a sea of Air Force and Army personnel standing in the boiling sun waiting for a show that was two hours late in starting. After the show the general consensus of opinion was that the wait was worth it. Following the ride back all sat down to a well deserved seven course Christmas turkey dinner.

New Year's Eve still found us securing the division area, but now we were next to the artillery at Phu Loi. The bringing in of the New Year will not be soon forgotten. Every piece of artillery in the camp barked out a volley shuddering the ground and sending forth a resounding bang that left no doubt in one's mind that 1966 had started.

For the rest of January local security of the Bien Hoa area was the basic mission. Limited operations were run to the southeast of Bien Hoa. Late in January we moved out with the brigade on Operation MALLET. Company A landed in a helicopter assault and was immediately engaged in a firefight lasting almost 24 hours. The effectiveness of the air and artillery was attested to by a later search of the area by ARVN elements which uncovered 90 VC bodies. The star of the operation was the Reconnaissance Platoon under the leadership of Lt Aubrey E. "Pete" Harris. Traveling up and down the roads in stark defiance of the local VC, they were involved in more firefights and accounted for more confirmed VC kills during the initial phases of the operation than the rest of the brigade. When Recon's vehicles returned to the base camp they looked more like swiss cheese than jeeps.

Operations MASTIFF and HATTIESBURG followed in the Michelin plantation area. On these operations there was limited contact, however, tons of enemy food stores and equipment were found and destroyed.

Operation HATTIESBURG was the last campaign for Lt Col Phillips before returning to the United States. On 17 February Major General Jonathan O. Seaman, Commanding General of the 1st Infantry Division, passed the Battalion Colors and the command of the Rangers to Lt Col William S. Hathaway. Lt Colonel Hathaway came to us from the Pentagon via the Armed Forces Staff College.

When we returned to Bien Hoa, word was

received to move our base camp to Bearcat, near Long Thanh. All set to work striking tents, picking up floors, and tearing down the few buildings we had constructed. A typical scene was a truck backing up to a tent, the troops loading everything from tooth brushes to tent poles, and convoys of four to five vehicles forming up for the 12 mile trip. Thirty minutes later the truck was unloading in our new area which soon earned a well deserved name "The Dust Bowl." The sound of hammers and nails soon filled the area and the 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry (Construction) was back in business. Every spare moment was filled with laying concrete pads, building mess halls, and hauling laterite. After a month, we solved the dust problem as the monsoon season started—now it was mud.

Company A, having moved three weeks in advance of the rest of the battalion, were the logical ones to go on a company size patrol. Moving on foot they didn't announce their arrival by landing in helicopters. The second night their efforts paid off for the men laying in

three ambushes along a road. About 8:00 PM a jeep did not reply to the challenge and was immediately engaged when it failed to halt. The following morning one of the bodies was identified as that of the VC District Chief.

The battalion participated in Operation ABILENE during the first part of April. In the closing days of the operation, Company C was engaged in a fierce firefight with a VC battalion. Standing firm they fought in some cases hand to hand with the Viet Cong. After five hours of intense fighting the VC broke contact. Three days later Major General William E. DePuy, the new commanding general of the 1st Infantry Division, visited the company and the wounded Rangers in the hospitals. He congratulated the men for their determination and fighting spirit and awarded medals for valor.

While those who came to Vietnam with the Battalion Colors look forward to going home in a matter of days, the new members of the unit are well prepared to carry out the missions of the battalion in the days to come.

