



THE AMERICAN LEGION

Windjammer



Bi-Monthly Newsletter of Leon J. Wetzel Post No. 9

2026

Winona, Minnesota

Winona Area Veterans Center



Preamble to the Constitution of The American Legion

For God and Country,
we associate ourselves together for the following purposes:

- To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America;
- to maintain law and order;
- to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism;
- to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in all wars;
- to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation;
- to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses;
- to make right the master of might;
- to promote peace and good will on earth;
- to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy;
- to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.



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VETERANS DAY

November 11, 2026

HONORING ALL WHO SERVED





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I WANT YOU

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To Learn More, Contact:

AMERICAN LEGION POST 9

302 EAST SARNIA STREET

WINONA, MINNESOTA 55987

Eligibility Dates

World War I

April 6, 1917 – Nov. 11, 1918

World War II – Present

Dec. 7, 1941 – Present*

* if currently serving on active duty today, you are eligible.



THE AMERICAN LEGION POST 9 WINONA *WINDJAMMER*

**COMMANDER**

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507 312 0367

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507 429 5029



Rick Schell

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

**Windjammer
November/December 2026**

Hello, Legion Family!

A November–December edition of the Windjammer can only mean one thing — the holiday season is upon us! It's hard to believe another year is winding down, but what a great time to reflect on the friendships, traditions, and memories that make our Legion family so special.

First, a big thank-you to everyone who joined us for our Halloween party! We had a fantastic time, and it's always great to see our members and friends come together for a little fun and laughter.

Now, we turn our attention to one of my favorite and most meaningful days of the year — Veterans Day. November 11 is more than just a date on the calendar. It is a day to honor the brave men and women who have worn our nation's uniform and celebrate the freedoms we enjoy because of their service. There are plenty of opportunities throughout our community to celebrate Veterans Day, and I encourage everyone to get out and take part.

In fact, here's what a pretty perfect Veterans Day might look like!

Start your morning with breakfast at Hy-Vee. Join me for a cup of coffee, a good meal, and some great conversation with fellow veterans. One of my favorite things about this day is hearing the stories, sharing a few laughs, and personally thanking those who have served.

Next, make your way to Veterans Memorial Park for a moving ceremony that our entire community can be proud of. There is something incredibly powerful about standing alongside fellow veterans, families, and neighbors as we honor those who have served.

Then, head over to Post 9 for lunch! One of my all-time favorite meals will be on the menu — scalloped potatoes and ham! A huge thank-you to the wonderful ladies who prepare and serve this meal year after year. Your hard work and generosity never go unnoticed, and the meal is always a hit!

Article continued on next page.....



This year, we will also have the privilege of hosting a special dedication honoring Tom Slaggie, in appreciation for Tom's service to our country, our community, and American Legion Post 9. It is through the dedication of individuals like Tom that our organization has built such a proud and lasting legacy.

We will also gather in the hall for our Post Everlasting ceremony, where we honor and remember the members we have lost this past year. While they may no longer be with us, their service, friendship, and contributions to our Post will never be forgotten.

A Little Football, Food, and Friendly Rivalry!

Now, on to something a little less serious — football!

As I sit here writing this, our Minnesota Vikings are sitting at 6–0! What a start to the season. It's certainly been fun watching our team find ways to win.

If you're looking for a great place to watch the game, come join us at the Post! When the Vikings play at noon on Sundays, we invite everyone to bring a dish to share for our potluck, grab a beverage, and settle in for what always seems to be a nail-biting afternoon.. And yes, even Packers fans are welcome! We'll have their game on, too. After all, a little friendly rivalry makes Sundays that much more entertaining.

A Season of Gratitude

As Thanksgiving approaches, I encourage everyone to take a moment to reflect on the many blessings in our lives. We are fortunate to live in a country where freedom is something we experience every day. As veterans, we understand that freedom is never free. It has been protected by generations of men and women willing to put service above self.

Christmas Is Coming — Ready or Not!

It seems a little early to be talking about Christmas, unless you're my wife! By the time you read this, I'm fairly certain she will have slowly managed to sneak most of our Christmas decorations out of storage and into every corner of the house.

One of our family's favorite holiday traditions is the Annual Legion Children's Christmas Party. Be sure to watch for the sign-up sheets at the bar. Let's fill our hall with holiday cheer, a few boughs of holly, and lots of excited children!

As we close out another year, I want to leave you with one important thought: Our organization is only as strong as the people who make it what it is.

American Legion Post 9 isn't just a building or a place to gather. It is a community of veterans, families, friends, and supporters who believe in something bigger than themselves.

As we head into the holidays, I challenge each of us to continue looking out for one another. Reach out to a fellow veteran, invite someone new to visit our Post, and remember that sometimes the smallest gesture can have the greatest impact.

From my family to yours, I wish you a wonderful Thanksgiving, a very Merry Christmas, and a happy, healthy New Year.

Rick Schell Commander, American Legion Post 9



BAR REPORT
From your Post 9 Facilities Manager

AMERICAN LEGION POST 9 BAR REPORT

November/December 2026

Trisha Franzwa

Fall has arrived!!!!

We have been busy with events and food nights beginning. The banquet hall has a few open dates so if there is an event you are looking to host check with Trish and see what dates are available.

Football is also going strong! We will be having potlucks every noon Vikings game. Check for details at the bar as we have a few themed ones coming up!!!!

If you are looking for information regarding Medicare insurance, Gary with Blue Plus will be at the legion hosting meetings beginning November 4th at 12:30pm and is planning on being at the legion every Tuesday through the end of December with meetings beginning at 12:30pm. He will be set up in the classroom. That is the meeting room off the bar.

With Fall beginning, that means the holiday season will be too. A few dates to keep in mind; November 26th the bar will be closed for Thanksgiving. The bar will also be closing early December 24th at 4pm and closed for Christmas on the 25th.

The children's Christmas party is set for December 6th, please check in for the sign-up sheet and get those kiddos on the list so they don't miss out!

And a big thank you to the Bridges golf crew: Bob Schultz, Brad Turner, Mike Stinson, and Steve Craney for their donation of the backup popcorn maker. Thank you!!!!

Hope everyone has a wonderful end to 2026 and look forward to beginning 2027 with everyone at the club!!!! Save the date, January 1st for our New Years Day party!!!!!!!!!!!!





The American Legion Post 9
AUXILIARY NEWS



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Diane Cada
Auxiliary President

Auxiliary News and Events

November/December 2026

Greetings Ladies,

Hope everyone is enjoying our beautiful fall weather, so very colorful when you look at the hills, we are blessed to live in this area.

With this time of the year upon us the Auxiliary, is super busy and we look / count on our members to show support, as you always have in the past.

#1 Veterans Day Nov. 11th (check in the windjammer for the details) Thank our Veterans for our freedom.

#2 Auxiliary Bake Sale and Basket Raffle (also a fish fry night) Nov. 20th , Please have your baked goods there on Thurs. Nov. 19th

Or before 3:00 on Friday Nov. 20th, along with any baskets that are going to be donated. Helpers are needed for this event.

#3 Thanksgiving Day Nov. 26th , time with family and friends to give thanks for all we have.

#4 Veterans Sock Drive Nov. 20th --- Dec. 12th put in the box marked "Sock for Seniors" (Men & Women Socks) I deliver to the local nursing homes along with a personalized Christmas card and a \$10 gift from the auxiliary. This is where some of the money goes from our fundraisers. Without your support, we could not do it. Thank You, in advance for your kindness.

PLEASE mark these dates down as I need to collect and get them ready to take Dec. 19th.

Memberships were mailed out, check your card make sure that you have paid your dues, we need you.

Sam is putting some info in the windjammer about auxiliary benefits, take time to read it!!

Keep our Veterans and Active Troops in your prayers!

Happy Thanksgiving Merry Christmas Happy New Year

Hugs,
Diane



THE AMERICAN LEGION POST 9 *S.A.L. NEWS*



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Greg Lemmer

Hello Legion family,

Greetings from your local SAL, fall is upon us and the cold will soon be coming.

First and foremost on behalf of all our Squadron 9 members, Happy Veteran's Day to all our veterans and their families for their service and sacrifices they have given to your country.

Nov 11th, brings us Veteran's Day. This is a day to remember all Veterans. Please show your honor and gratitude to a veteran regardless if you know them personally or not. Watch for information on events being held that day. I know a handful of our SAL members will again be standing for the Veteran's Day Vigil.

Another important event we must remember is Dec 7th, National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.

Let us honor those who lost their lives at Pearl Harbor and remember their courage and sacrifice.

If you have never attended a Post Everlasting event at the Legion, I highly suggest you attend this next one. It is a very dignified event honoring those veterans what have passed away from Oct 1st 2025 and Oct 1st 2026. Letters were sent to twenty two Post 9 members families this year. It is held on Veteran's Day and starts at 1:15.

I also want to take a minute to congratulate Brian Tomashek for his recent recognition as Sons of the American Legion Member of the Year from the Detachment of MN. If anyone deserves such honors its Brian for all he does to support the veterans and the Legion family.

The holidays are coming up quickly. The SAL would like to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. The SAL is again proud to help sponsor the upcoming Children's Christmas Party.

We have firmed up the dates for the 2027 SAL Chicken-Qs. Our first 2027 Chicken-Q will be January 9th, followed by April 17th and September 18th. Be sure to save the dates and come enjoy some of that special SAL chicken.

The POST, Auxiliary, Legion Riders and SAL work hard to put on events and appreciate your support to make them a success. Watch the calendar for upcoming events held by these wonderful volunteers. We need you, your family and friends to attend these events, without attendance we can't continue to hold them.

Remember by patronizing your Legion you are also supporting the Veterans, the Legion, and the Legion Family Members. Your Legion is something to be proud of. Please know your local SAL, myself included, are very honored to help in whatever capacity we can to serve those who served. If there is something we can do to help please let us know. Your local SAL has again retired flags in October. Please, in honor of our veterans and the good old USA, fly that flag with honor and pride. However, please replace it when it's tattered, faded and worn. Turn them at the Post and we will take it from there.

Please take the time to thank a veteran or active military member. They deserve our Thank You each and every day.

Please remember you have your freedoms and right to vote because of them.

In closing I wish you all the best. God Bless our Troops past and present and God Bless America.

Respectfully Yours,

Greg Lemmer

SAL Squadron Commander

SAL News and Events November/December 2026



BURIAL DETAIL/COLOR GUARD REPORT

Color Guard Functions:

None



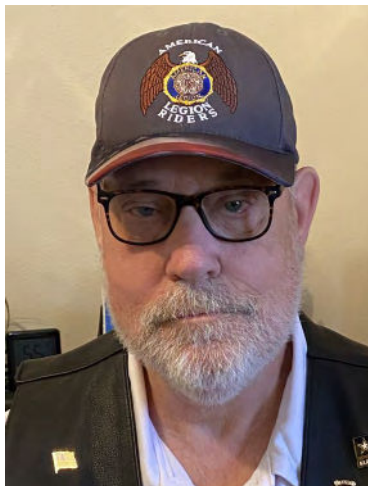
Funerals since 21 August 2026

Phillip R. Riley	25 August 2026
Daniel R. Sarna	25 August 2026
Donald L. Anderson	29 August 2026
LeRoy F. Kohner	13 September 2026
Ugene C. Olson	28 September 2026
Joseph S. Benusa	30 September 2026
David J. Knight	30 September 2026
Roger K. Buege	1 October 2026
Richard D. Todd	9 October 2026
Ralph H. Jobe	14 October 2026
Frank D. Baxter	17 October 2026



American Legion Riders
Post 9
Winona
November/December 2026

Legion Riders Newsletter



Brian Degnan

Welcome to the Holiday season Legion Riders.

By the time that you read this, most of will have put our bikes to sleep for the winter. That doesn't mean that there aren't lots of important things going on. First off, we are serving meals during Bingo on the 4th Wednesday of the month. Second, there is Wing Night on the 2nd Tuesday of the month. Come on out and have some tasty wings and fries. This year we will again be having "Toy's for Kids" collection on Black Friday. Stop in, bring a toy. We will have hot beverages and donuts available during the toy collection. The event will run from 7am until noon. Check the calendar for more information. We will also begin selling raffle tickets for cash prizes to be raffled off during the Chili Feed in February.

Anyone interested in becoming a Legion Rider, please reach out to any on the members, or contact my email bdegan55971@gmail.com, or the Membership Director mmohr.55987@gmail.com. A final note, please stop in and support your local American Legion Post, and all of the other activities. I would like to wish everyone a Happy and Blessed Holiday season.

This is a very nice opportunity from National Chemicals to see this outstanding movie. If any questions, contact me. Sam Sasser Adjutant American Legion Post 9



In honor of Veteran's Day, local veterans and our Founder, Lou Landman, National Chemicals, Inc (NCI) proudly presents a complimentary screening of the new Jimmy Stewart biography: *Jimmy*. The movie is an amazing look at his life and service as a pilot in WWII.

NCI has reserved tickets for local active military and veterans in the area. Tickets are "first come, first serve" directly at the theater.

EVENT DETAILS

What: The movie: *Jimmy* (Biographical story of Jimmy Stewart and his transition to being a pilot in WW2)

Where: Winona 7, Theater 5, 70 W. 2nd St., Winona, MN 55987

When: Wednesday, November 11

Time: 7 pm

Sign up deadline: Wednesday, Nov 4th

Our goal is to make attendance as easy as possible for all veterans and their guests who are interested in attending.

We like to obtain the list of attendees, the veterans and their guests, and have it at the theater. Veterans would check in at the ticket counter approx. 20 minutes before the showing and receive their tickets.

Please email the final sign-up sheet, by **Wednesday, Nov 4th** to allison@nationalchemicals.com. She can also be reached via phone at 800-533-0027 ext. 1047.

Thank you and enjoy the show!



BASKET NITE!

THE 1ST AND 3RD TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH

5:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M

MENU:

ADD: FF / RANCH OR PLAIN TATOR TOTS FOR \$2.00

ADD: BACON TO BURGER FOR 1.50

- | | | |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| A. | One Hamburger | \$7.00 |
| B. | Two Hamburgers | \$13.00 |
| C. | Chicken Tenders | \$8.00 |
| D. | Drummies/Paddlers (7 pieces) | \$12.00 |
| E. | Cheese Curds | \$7.00 |
| F. | Fish Sandwich | \$9.00 |
| G. | Golden Onion Rings | \$5.00 |
| H. | Hot Wings (7 pieces) | \$12.00 |
| P. | Breaded Pickle Spears | \$5.50 |
| S. | Side (Full Orders) | \$3.00 |
| | FF / Ranch or Plain Tator Tots | |



This picture is the presentation of Miller Ingenuity's Annual Giving Campaign for 2026-2027 to American Legion Post 9 Veteran's Relief Fund on October 14th 2026.

The Relief Fund receives \$9586.00. What an honor to receive this award. The Relief Fund goes a long way in helping Winona County Veterans that are in need of some help. Thank you to Miller Ingenuity and their employees!!! Sam Sasser Adjutant



AMERICAN LEGION POST 9 HOMETOWN HEROES PICTURES

- 1. We are announcing a new display of Veterans pictures who have a connection to our Post and our community. We would like to receive pictures of the Veteran in uniform (dress or working or field). Veteran does not have to be a member of Post 9. Veteran can be from any time period and can be living or deceased.**
- 2. Picture should be dropped off at American Legion Post 9. Please put the picture in an envelope and mark it to the attention of Sam Sasser. Please include the Veterans name, branch of service, hometown, and dates of service. Please indicate if the Veteran is deceased. We will return the original picture to you. Include your name, address, and phone number.**
- 3. Images can also be emailed to ssasser@luminet.net. Please send .jpg or .tif file. Please insure that all information from #2 above is included.**
- 4. These images will run continuously on a TV in the bar.**

**Thank you for your help with this project.
Let's see what we can do with this.**

**Sam Sasser Adjutant
American Legion Post 9**

Exciting News !!!

**Our American Legion Post 9
is now offering**

Turbo Bingo

with our Wednesday night bingo !!



**Come play Turbo Bingo (bingo on a tablet)
here at the Legion and have chances to win
\$\$\$!**

- Tablet plays the bingo for you. No bingo dobbling needed !
- 3 different Turbo Bingo Packages to choose from !
- Can play bingo on sheets with dobber and/or bingo on a tablet !
- Every Wednesday - Doors open at 6pm - Bingo begins at 7pm.

Leon J. Wetzel American Legion Post 9

Gambling License: 00075

Join the American Legion Post 9 Burial Detail.



**We are looking for new members to join us!
We provide Military Rites for Winona Area
Veterans. We take great pride in what we do.**

**Contact: Sam Sasser
Burial Detail Commander**

Standing
 Vern Smelser, Dr. Wm. Ohm*, Sid Silsbee, Edwin Swinson, Jack Case, Martin Bender Ed. Ham-
 erski*, Dr. Cliff Smelser.
 Sitting center row
 Burne McMillian*, Gene Bohks*, Howard W. Clark, Stan Streiber, Dr. Clarence Hilden*
 Front row
 Wm. Kaehler, Adolph Trester *
 * deceased

Can anyone give me a date of this picture?

Sam Sasser
 Adjutant





ALL SOLDIERS
can't be in the
INFANTRY-but

Soldiers in the United States, between the ages of 18 and 32, may apply for transfer to the Infantry. This privilege is provided by War Department Circulars 262 and 278, 1944. Ask your Commanding Officer.

THE MISSING MAN TABLE

HONOR ★ REMEMBER ★ RESPECT

This table is not “just a table.”

It is a place setting for our fallen, missing, and imprisoned military service members who cannot be with us. It reminds us of their sacrifice and the price of our freedom.



- 1 THE SMALL, ROUND TABLE**
Represents our everlasting concern for those who are missing.
- 2 THE SINGLE RED ROSE**
Symbolizes the love and sacrifice of the families and loved ones of our fallen and missing service members.
- 3 THE RED RIBBON**
Represents the unbreakable bond between those who are missing and their families, and our continued commitment to never forget.
- 4 THE LIT CANDLE**
Symbolizes the hope that they will one day return and our enduring remembrance of their sacrifice.
- 5 THE INVERTED GLASS**
Shows that they cannot join us for a toast.
- 6 THE SLICE OF LEMON**
Represents the bitterness of their fate.
- 7 THE SALT**
Symbolizes the tears shed by their families and friends.
- 8 THE EMPTY CHAIR**
Represents their absence and the fact that they are not here with us.

PLEASE SHOW RESPECT

This table is a sacred symbol of sacrifice and should not be moved, used, or disturbed. It is here to remind us to always honor those who gave so much for our freedom.

Thank you for your understanding and respect.


**AMERICAN
LEGION®**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
FREEDOM LIVES BECAUSE OF THEIR SACRIFICE

Member Benefits

As an American Legion Auxiliary member, you bring untold value to the organization and America's veterans through your service to our mission. To show our appreciation for your membership, the ALA has partnered with businesses that share our values to bring you exclusive discounts and savings!

DISASTER AND HARDSHIP ASSISTANCE

AUXILIARY EMERGENCY FUND

The Auxiliary Emergency Fund (AEF) is a national grant assistance program that provides disaster and hardship assistance to eligible members of the American Legion Auxiliary who have endured a significant financial setback as the result of a disaster or other qualifying incident.

RETAIL DISCOUNTS

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Enjoy discounts, rewards, and perks on 1,000s of brands including Hertz, Sam's Club, Walt Disney World, Toyota, Skechers, and more! Enter the exclusive ALA member referral code HZE7XG when creating your account.

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R. Riveter is an American company that offers everything from handbags and satchels to sweatshirts and accessories. Every R. Riveter bag is assembled in the USA by a workforce completely made up of military spouses. Shop using the exclusive ALA link to receive your 20% discount.

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Use your Prescription Savings Card for any prescriptions not covered by insurance or you may even find a lower price than your insurance copay.

LANDS' END BUSINESS

Lands' End Business is your one-stop shop for high quality clothing and merchandise that can be customized with the ALA logo. You can also get apparel and accessories with the ALA Foundation logo. Everything in the custom ALA/ALAF storefront is made to last and designed to keep you comfortable and looking your best all day long.

SHIPTHRIFTY

ShipThrifty is the easiest way to compare shipping prices and print shipping labels from home. Whether you ship to family members or friends, ship for your business, or want to host a military care package event, use ShipThrifty to save time, money, and hassles. Use the exclusive member code, "ALA" at sign-up.

STARS AND STRIPES

Stars and Stripes provides independent news and information to the U.S. military community, including active-duty servicemembers, DoD civilians, veterans, contractors, and their families. As a member of the American Legion Auxiliary, you get 50% off your annual digital subscription with discount code ALA50.



TRAVEL

ARMED FORCES VACATION CLUB

Armed Forces Vacation Club (AFVC) is built around the idea that the military deserves the best, and that's why they offer weeklong resort stays from just \$409. AFVC offers over 200,000 resort accommodations in over 100 countries in a wide range of sizes from studio to two or even three-bedroom units.

WYNDHAM HOTEL GROUP

American Legion Auxiliary members receive up to 20% off at over 9,000 participating hotels worldwide. Call 877-670-7088 to connect with a dedicated travel expert – be sure to mention you are an ALA member or tell them our organization code: 1000002807.

INSURANCE

LIBERTY MUTUAL

Liberty Mutual has partnered with the American Legion Auxiliary to offer members special savings on quality auto and home insurance. Liberty Mutual offers customized auto insurance so you only pay for what you need.

ALLEGIANCE ACCIDENT PROTECTION PLAN OFFERED BY THE HARTFORD

Allegiance Accident Protection Plan is a guaranteed issue plan that pays a policy holder when they have an accident. It will pay an amount per day spent in the hospital up to 365 days. Choose from three different plans to fit your budget.

LONG TERM CARE RESOURCES (LTCR)

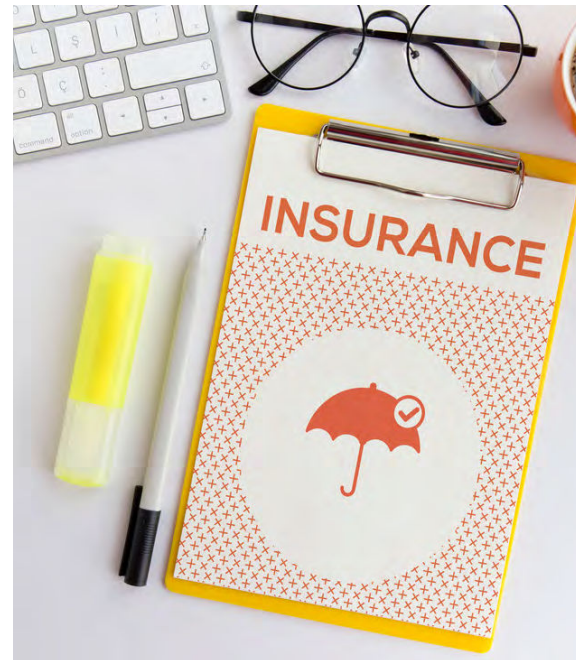
Did you know the average cost of a nursing home is over \$87,000 per year? Protect yourself with Long Term Care insurance. Members are able to obtain plans at discounted rates not available to the general public for a variety of services to meet health or personal care needs over an extended period of time.

DENTAL INSURANCE

DentalInsurance.com is the easiest way to compare and purchase individual dental insurance and discount dental plans.

VISION INSURANCE

Affordable vision plans from VSP and Ameritas for members of the American Legion Auxiliary are offered through top-rated carriers and provide regular exams and many other important benefits.



INSURANCE

GUARANTEED ACCEPTANCE SENIOR TERM LIFE INSURANCE

The American Legion Auxiliary Guaranteed Acceptance Senior Term Life Insurance Plan, underwritten by the Hartford Life and Accident Insurance Company, covers you for up to \$10,000 in benefits - without having to take a medical exam or answer questions about your health.

LIFE SELECT

Life Select can protect your loved ones and your hard-earned assets. Life Select can be up to 30% less expensive than traditional final expense policies and includes valuable advocacy and non-insurance services.

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TruHearing has been providing hearing care services for over 18 years, helping members get the best value and follow-up care possible. This plan is at no cost to members and includes coverage for all family members. The plan includes a free annual hearing screening, deep discounts on the purchase of hearing aids, and many other value-added services.

MEDICARE CONCIERGE

Boomers are aging into retirement at a rate of more than 10,000 per day and many are not prepared to make the proper retiree health benefits decisions they will face. Amwins' Voluntary Medicare Concierge program offers retirees a valuable resource, helping them understand Medicare and providing guidance to help them secure proper medical and prescription drug insurance. The Medicare Concierge program exclusively offers a private Medicare Exchange platform which provides access to individual Medicare Supplement, Medicare Part D and Medicare Advantage plans available throughout the country. Every retiree deserves to secure a plan that meets both their financial goals and health needs.

AMWINS™

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LTCR
LONG-TERM CARE RESOURCES

LANDS' END
BUSINESS

THE HARTFORD

WYNDHAM
HOTELS & RESORTS

The next 33 pages are scanned from a booklet from the 25th Infantry Division. The booklet, named “Tropic Lightning Thunder” is well written history of the war in Vietnam.

I will scan the rest of the booklet and use it for a future Windjammer.

I have had a lot of material from WWI and WW2 and Vietnam, but I would like to ask if anyone has material that I could use from Korea, or Persian Gulf War, or War in Afghanistan or the Iraq War. If you have material or stories that I can use, let me know. I would appreciate it.

**Sam Sasser
Adjutant
American Legion Post 9**

Vol. 1, No. 3

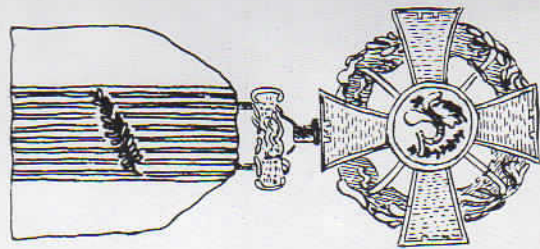
SPRING, 1969

TUNDRA!

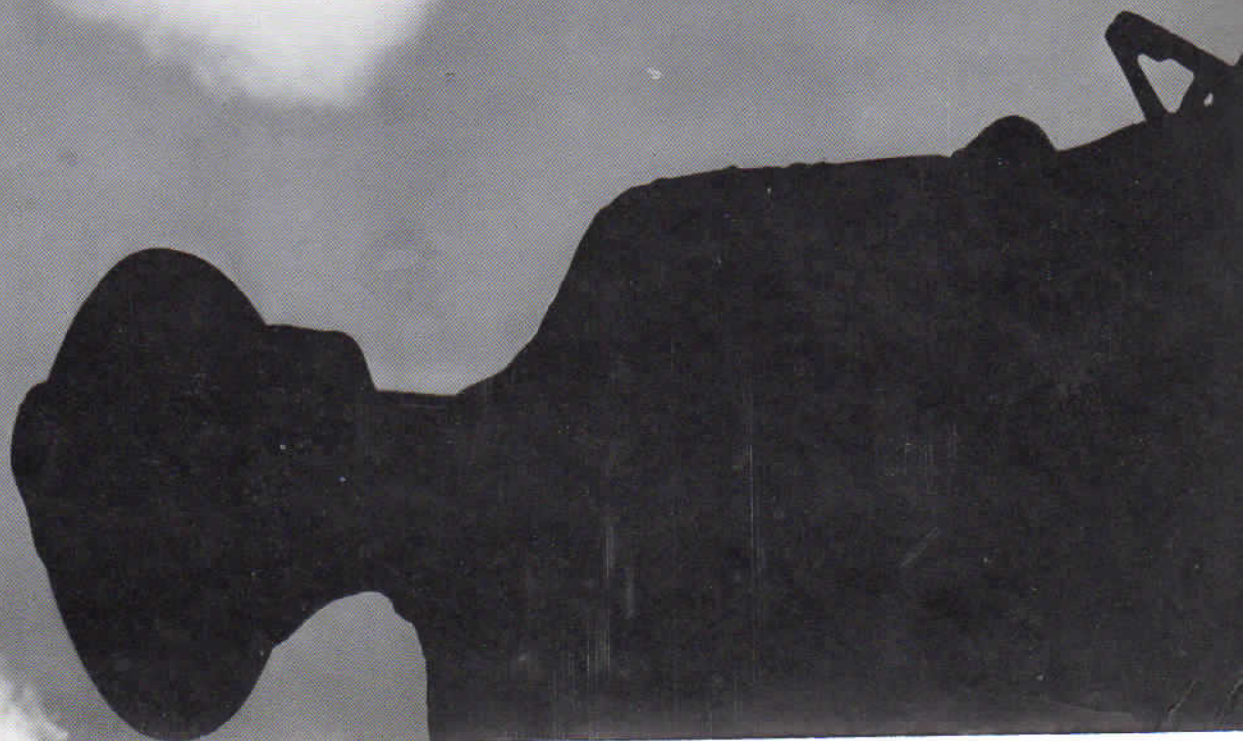


**Your sacrifices, your dedication
to duty
and your sense of responsibility
have helped safeguard freedom
and democracy
in this part of the world**

—LTC Đỗ Cao Trí



**Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Palm was presented to the
25th Infantry Division January 28, 1969, Cu Chi, RVN**



the Voice of Tropic Lightning THUNDER!

Vol. 1, No. 3 Spring, 1969

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The foot soldier, always at the heart of any army operation, pushes forth across the jungles and flatlands of South Vietnam, living up to Tropic Lightning's motto: Ready to Strike, Anywhere, Anytime.

Against the backdrop of a gold-orange sky, a Tropic Lightning Cobra gunship flies over a personnel carrier from the 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry heading back to Cu Chi base camp after a day of operations in the Filhol rubber plantation. Photo by First Lieutenant Randall S. Perry.

Front

Back

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Commanding General

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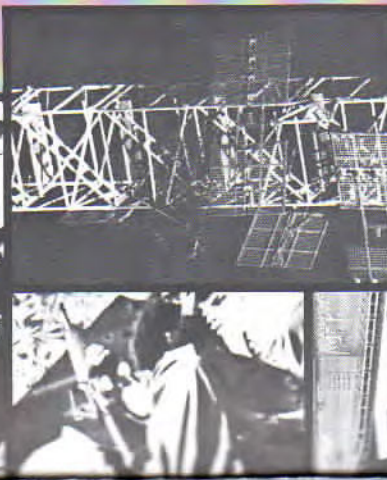
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THUNDER is an authorized publication of the 25th Infantry Division. It is published for the benefit of all members of the division serving in Vietnam. Views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of Army.



The Season of the Track!

By 1Lt Randall S. Perry



An M-48 sends a ball
an enemy target not
lending an eerie qual
of night.

A monsoon pools shrink from the tropic sun and the Vietnamese terrain becomes a arid, dust-covered mass, the men of the lightning patch know that the rainy time is over, and that this is the SEASON OF THE RACK.

freed from the monotony of continuous and clearing operations during the wet season, 25th Division's armor can roam freely out the dusty countryside. It strikes with liden impact, fast and hard, paralyzing the sive enemy.

Armored units provide heavy direct fire and ability needed to react against enemy ground vements.

A common lament of the armorman goes, nobody cares about armor when nothing's opening, but when the action starts every-ly's calling for it."

Indeed, tanks with their 90mm main guns machine guns have proven time and again at they can effectively dislodge the enemy on his most heavily fortified bunkers and ongest fighting positions.

When the enemy tried to ambush a Tropic Lightning convoy, tanks quickly stopped the my attack by showering his positions with caliber fire. Gaining fire superiority, the kes then moved off the road and strode ward the last of the fleeing foes.

Tropic Lightning's 2d Battalion, 34th Armor on tasks like these throughout Vietnam. ments of the battalion have been split up to port other units, and few others have as ch experience with Vietnam's terrain as the h Armor Dreadnaughts. Segments have ame toward of Cu Chi hiked everywhere a tank could go, from the to the black ta to the DMZ, working with nearly every for unit in-country.

THE CAVALRY

The cavalry's first use of armored personnel carriers in Vietnam was as reconnaissance scout carriers preceding the main force unit, which was also mounted on APC's. After the enemy had been engaged, the cavalrymen dismounted and used ground tactics while the rest of the armored force swept in from the other side. The heavy weapons of the tanks and APC's were used to reinforce and the recon scout vehicles used available cover.

Combat experience in Vietnam developed a more practical use for the APC. In its new role, the APC is armed not only with the M-85 and

Armor alone, however, cannot always strike before the enemy disappears. Its powerful masses of steel make it hard to travel unnoticed.

In order to eliminate the problem, tacticians have adapted cavalry techniques to the Vietnam war. By joining the firepower of tanks with the mobility and speed of mechanized infantry, they have developed a mighty new team for ground operations.

The infantrymen provide close security for the tanks and, in return, the tanks give heavy fire support to the infantry. The cavalry then becomes a self-sufficient fighting unit, combining the best of infantry and armor.

Tanks and Armored Personnel Carriers crest a hill northwest of Cu Chi. The heavy armor was supporting an infantry unit in the area.



Part

.50 caliber machine gun, but also with an added one or two M-60 machine guns behind armored shields. Ammunition is stored inside and the men ride on the top in order to use their small arms more effectively against a close-in enemy.

Now too, when a cavalry troop works on a search mission, the tanks and APC's keep a tight formation. They seldom stray from each other's sight.

One tactic has remained unchanged however—the night laager position. Just as did prairie schooners of pioneers moving west, a column of tracks circles into a defensive position. Each vehicle faces the outside. Foxholes are dug immediately as fighting positions between the tracks. Light machine guns are set up in the positions, each roofed with perforated steel

plate and sandbags, becoming protective bunkers against rockets, mortars or RPG rounds.

Guards are always at each bunker throughout the night. Prior to nightfall, the artillery forward observer has plotted and established defensive concentrations. He is also prepared to direct the troop's 4.2 inch mortar tracks to fire illumination, harassing, and interdicting or high explosive fire.

Usually an ambush patrol and at least one listening post are sent out during the night. At break of dawn, camp is broken. Sandbags are emptied and RPG screens rolled up. Foxholes are refilled and the machine guns remounted. Crews get a quick breakfast and a shave.

The tracks leave their night laager in a swirl of men and machines as their circular position

unwinds. The solid line then splits into cross-country traveling positions.

The deadly effectiveness of the armored cavalry and its tactics is illustrated by a recent day of fighting in the Boi Loi woods, 10 miles northwest of Cu Chi, in which the 3d Squadron 4th Cavalry killed 46 enemy and delivered a crushing blow to an estimated enemy battalion.

The tracks left their night laager positions and began to sweep toward an area covered with very heavy underbrush. The combined Alpha and Charlie troops hadn't gone a hundred meters into the brush when they began finding bunkers.

Troopers riding on the tracks dismounted and conducted a search of the bunkers, which turned out to be interconnecting tunnels.

Suddenly, the cavalymen found themselves in the middle of a large-scale enemy ambush. The tracks held their ground, firing back with everything they had as medics ran from track to track giving first aid to the wounded.

As RPG fire ripped into several tracks, the two troops regrouped and were joined by Bravo troop. The complete squadron then launched a massive attack on the entrenched enemy positions.

This time the Horsemen attacked an enemy's flank, using a dirt road that circled around to the left. As they proceeded up the road, the armored column came under intense fire again. The troopers expected the attack the time and responded with their firepower.

The bunkers were blown apart by the tank's 90mm main guns, as they fired as fast as the rounds could be loaded and extracted from the breech. Each tank's .50 caliber machine gun and the M-60s on each APC ripped into the enemy positions.

An M-48 from Tropic Lightning's 2d Battalion 34th Armor searches for Charlie.

Elliot





Fighting was so close that a hand grenade lobbed from an enemy bunker landed on the road between two tracks and exploded. Captain Melvyn Moss, Alpha Troop commander, was riding on one of the two tracks when the grenade blew.

He pulled the pin on one of his grenades and dropped it into the bunker from the track. The enemy soldiers in the bunker threw it back out and it exploded in the air. A piece of shrapnel cut into Moss's back, but he shook the pain off and continued to give commands to his troop.

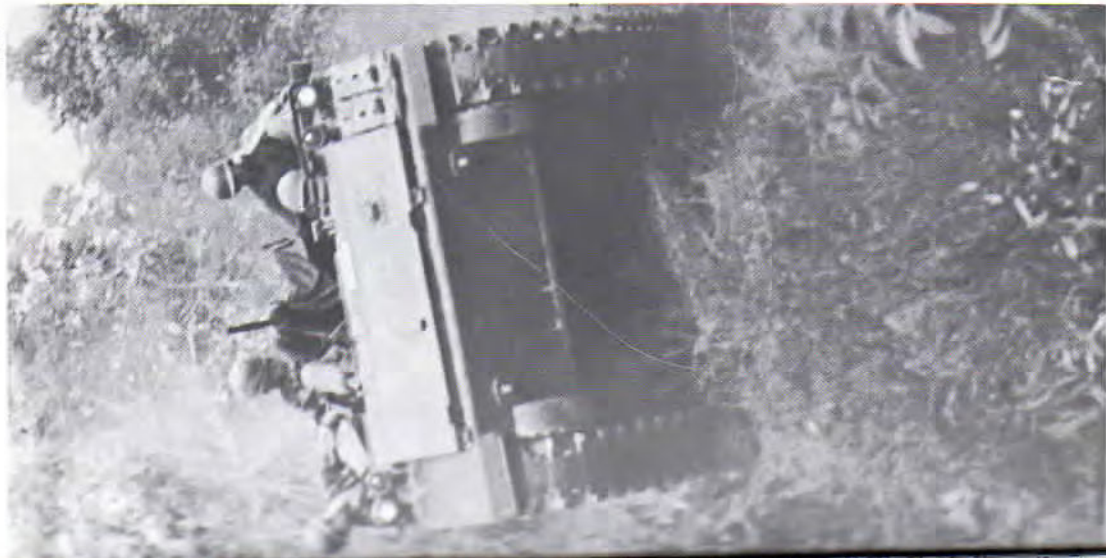
"Those guys on the tracks were the ones who really had to come through," explained First Lieutenant Jerome Klar, forward observer.

"The only way to bust up an ambush is to overpower the enemy with fire. The cavemen did just that."

The men of the 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry are proud of their unit. "We've got a great one. If anybody can put Chuck in a bind it's us. We have gunships, Cobras and acro-rifle teams that can be landed anywhere. Attached to us is F Company, 75th Infantry LRP's (Long Range Patrol). As a complete team I don't think anybody could beat us," one first sergeant maintains.

MECHANIZED INFANTRY

Armor principles have also been applied to conventional infantry with the mechanized



An APC from the 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23d Infantry (above) crashes through the jungles north of Tay Ninh. A tank machine gunner (above left) takes aim and fires.

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infantry battalion. The principle is neither new nor revolutionary. The Germans in World War II used the technique of moving troops in armored cars and half-tracks, the forerunners of today's APCs. As is the case with so many of the ideas developed under wartime pressure, the mechanized units have adapted new ideas to succeed in the unconventional war in Vietnam.

The 25th Infantry Division's firepower and mobility are greatly enhanced by its three mechanized infantry battalions; the 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry, 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry and the 4th Battalion, 23rd Infantry. The high mobility combined with added firepower of their .50 caliber track mounted machine guns gives these battalions a great shock effect in the assault and a decided edge over straight-leg infantry.

Cavalry soldiers mount their APC's after spending arduous hours searching for enemy soldiers in the Filhol Plantation outside of Cu Chi. Cav soldiers spend dusk hours erecting rocket screens and digging in in case of attack. The sun is setting. They wait through the night.



Perry



Ready to cut loose with machineguns. A Viet Cong or North Vietnamese soldier would feel very insecure observing a 3d Squadron, 4th Cavalry Armored Personnel Carrier from this position in the Filhol Rubber Plantation northwest of Cu Chi.

Mechanized infantrymen (right) are given heavy support from 2d Battalion, 34th Armor tanks as they advance toward a woodland. The distance becomes greater (below) for infantry-armor teams as they move to Charlie's seclusive hiding areas. A tank (far right) like a football player becomes fast and agile when facing its opponent.



Elliott



Elliott



The Voice of Battle

By SP4 Stephen Lochen

Ambush patrol. It's late, about 3 a.m. We've been out for seven hours now. The friends know we are here. Haven't seen or heard the enemy all night. Wish the sun would hurry up and get here. Nothing happening. In fact, it's so quiet, it's almost spooky.

Zero seven hundred hours. Time to pull out and go back. We pack up and move through the slop. Mud, grass, weeds and that lousy smelling water. Then we stop. The RTO is mumbling something over the horn.

The silence is shattered as the blasts of two hand flares echo up into the dawn. They're pretty. Multi-colored star clusters.

The bright dots fall on our perimeter. The RTO mumbles something on his PRC-25 and we are off again, back to chow, a shower and some sleep.

A simple but necessary maneuver, basic to operations in any combat zone, especially Vietnam. The patrol had signalled its intention to return through friendly lines.

The name of the game is communication, "signal" for short. From a simple group identification to the complexities of the airwaves and wire networks of country-wide verbal intercourse, the word "signal" means action in Army language.

Without it, there can be no action, intelligence, indirect fire support for ground troops or effective organization.

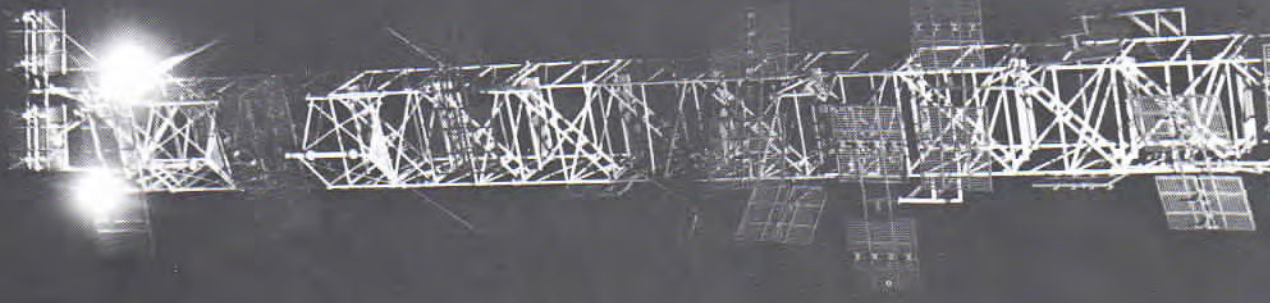
From the use of hand flares to the intricate workings of a radio network, the signal groups

attached to the 25th Infantry Division keep Lightning on the move.

Let's take signal in one of its simplest forms: smoke. A dustoff situation requires the coordinated use of smoke and radio. The signal not only tells the chopper where to land but identifies the unit in need.

The unit has a call sign that is automatically set on the dustoff frequency. As the chopper comes up to the general area, the unit on ground will pop a smoke grenade. It could be any color. The dustoff must identify the unit and receive confirmation from the ground.

A company commander has instant communication with his men by using the PRC-25.



125th Sig Photo

Division ke
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the smoke is a big help. It can be spotted from miles away. Dustoff ships have been known to get into the LZ (landing zone), pick up the patient and be on its way back to the hospital before the grenade stops smoking.

White smoke often marks the enemy. In jungle-canopied jungle, a pilot in an F-100 flying 500 miles per hour has a pretty rough time spotting enemy troops. The infantry, working with the forward air controller, take care of this. Without seeing the enemy, pin point bomb drops are put into troop concentrations, bunkers and fighting positions.

The smoke will determine the feasibility of initiating the support. Before the FAC fires its white smoke on the enemy target, friendly positions can be marked with various colored smoke. Confirmation of these signals determines if indirect fire support can be used or not. That signal as we know it is much more than fire and smoke. The RTO, FAC plane or forward observer are the ones who really get the ball rolling.

That one man with a PRC-25 on his back sets a chain reaction going which can reach some complexities, but can also be fed through channels for immediate action.

To initiate action we need, of all people, the enemy. Enemy contact, no matter how small, adds up indicated on a plot board in the Division Tactical Operations Center (DTOC). In order for it to get there, a radio message must

be deciphered all the way from the RTO to the DTOC.

To get at Charlie and annihilate him, the support elements must know exactly where to drop their ordnance. All the computers in the world are no good unless the man who sees the enemy, usually the forward observer (FO), can tell his fellow artillerymen where the enemy is located.

How does the F-100 finally get on station? How does the 155mm howitzer battery out in the middle of nowhere know exactly how much

125 Signal



125 Signal



A Wolfhound 4.2 inch mortar section leader (left) calls deflection to his men during a fire mission. Above, switchboard operators at Cu Chi base camp work to put thousands of calls through everyday.

elevation is needed, what charge to use, when to fire? The answer lies in the channeling of that original message radioed by the man in front of the enemy.

The scene could be anywhere in III Corps.

Point elements of a platoon are cautiously checking out a hedgerow near a suspected enemy concentration. Routine—it's done every day.

As they move through the hedgerow, snipers open up. The snipers are engaged, but soon there are more than just a few of them. Heavy automatic weapons and small arms fire are coming from the enemy positions.

The squad leader contacts the platoon leader. Artillery is needed. We took some

casualties right off the bat, and the enemy is hidden, dug in—an estimated company.

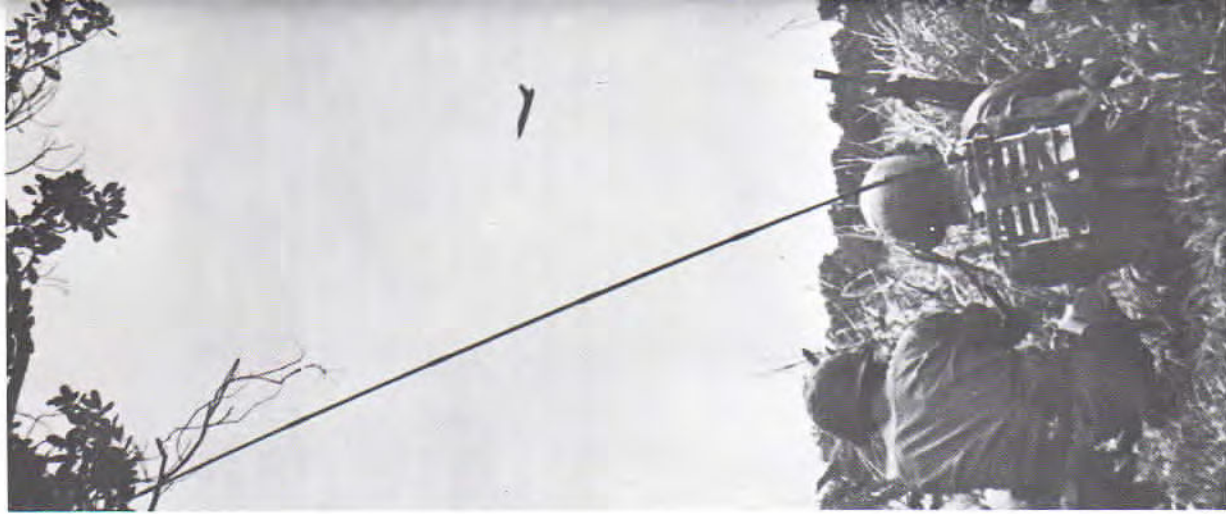
There is one problem. We know there are probably some friendlies in the area. Can we call indirect fire support?

The ultimate decision can be made by the Division Commanding General, working in co-operation with the Province Chief.

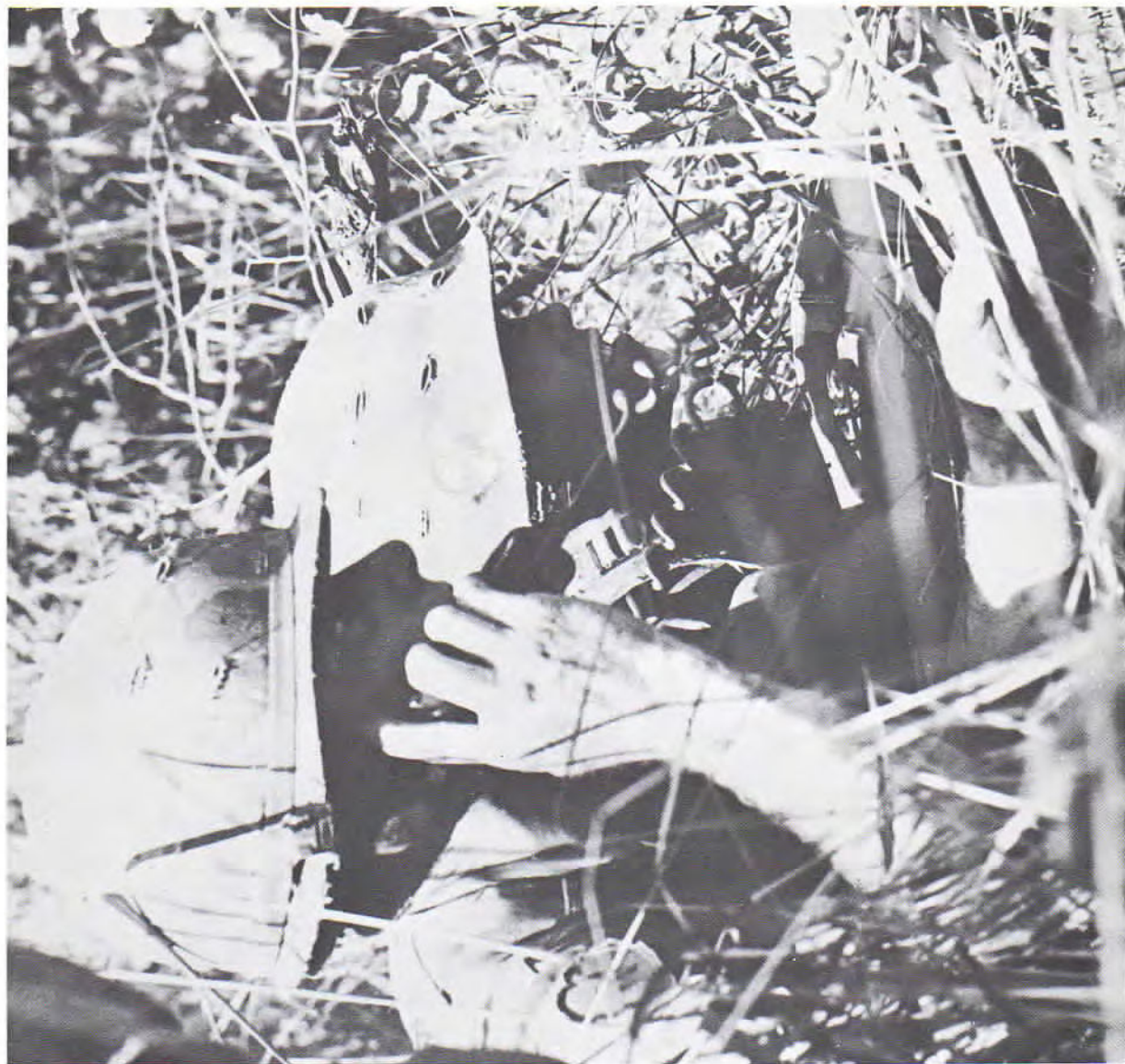
The platoon leader needs artillery. The company commander receives this information from the platoon's RTO. The request has been initiated. Artillery shells will, in a matter of minutes, be raining down on the enemy. Or, if clearances have been denied because of civilians in the area, blocking forces may have to be flown in.

A familiar sight in the field—the RTO's antenna extended high in the air (right) as a mission leader informs headquarters that air strikes in the vicinity were right on target. (Below), workers at a tactical operations center face a maze of telephones, radios and ammo equipment.

125 Signal



Novak



Welt

The company commander is now pressed for time. Ammo is running low and the enemy is getting heavier. Both the clearance and fire is needed.

The CO quickly calls his artillery forward however who is usually close by. He tells the CO of the platoon's plight and of the immediate need for indirect fire. Thanks to the trickle of signal, the process of getting artillery started.

The PO plots coordinates of the enemy position and "gets on the horn" to battalion's artillery liaison officer who, after a snap mental view of a battalion artillery requirements, determines this platoon's need is the greatest and radios the supporting artillery unit. He is the artillery unit that the platoon needs. More fire than their 105mm battery can provide. In the first six minutes since the contact began, there have been many decisions and a good deal of communication. But more decisions and more communication are required before artillery is fired.

DIVARTY and subsequently II Field Force artillery headquarters are contacted to arrange supporting artillery fires from a 175mm howitzer battery. The Division and Field Force artillerymen now stand ready to provide the much needed fire support.

But before a redleg can pull a single lanyard, more ammo must have taken place. Through

"Contact! We've made contact!" yells the platoon leader, and because of efficient ammo, artillery, airstrikes, dustoffs and eagle flights can be at their services within minutes.

battalion and brigade intelligence channels—and perhaps even through Division to Field Force—goes the request for clearance. How else can we be sure that friendly troops or civilians in the area will not be shelled along with the enemy?

Through the marvel of good communications, artillery fire support has now been arranged and clearance obtained. Now it is time for the forward observer to radio the actual fire mission to the supporting artillery battery.

"One five echo, this is Cupcake Mike. I have a fire mission for you, over."

"Roger Cupcake Mike, send your mission, over."

"Cupcake Mike... Mission is VC in bunkers. Coordinates four-two-six-one-seven-zero. We have aircraft that will adjust, over."

"One five echo... Understand VC in bunkers, coordinates four-two-six-one-seven-zero, air data follows, direction two-one-eight degrees, max range one two k's, max ord four-seven-zero-zero feet, over."

"Cupcake Mike. Roger. Call sign of aircraft that will adjust, Charliehorse three-four."

"One five echo Roger Charliehorse three-four. Will he be up on your push (frequency) soon?"

"Roger... about zero-one."

The first rounds are close, but not close enough. The air observer upstairs radios back new coordinates which are plotted and sent to the guns.

"Deflection three-two-six-niner. Quadrant three-four-five."

The round impacts.

"That looked real good! Real good!"

Only a few minutes after the RTO picked up his phone to tell his commander about the enemy force; the message had gone up through 14 different channels for clearance and execution of the mission.

The time, unit, location of the action, description of the enemy force, methods used to return fire and enemy and friendly casualties are all reported to DTOC and II Field Force.

From the squad leader to II Field Force and back again, the request by the platoon leader for artillery support was answered in a matter of minutes—a real blessing for the foot soldier.

Isolated contact? Hardly. Practically every major command section in the III Corps area knew about this engagement even before the artillery came in.

The thanks go to the signal system and the organization behind a simple phone call from the field. Communications, which is so vital and so often taken for granted, make the name "Lightning" a fit title for the 25th Division.

Fine communications are absolutely necessary for effective action against the elusive enemy. But internal elements of the Tropic Lightning Division must co-ordinate activities with each other.

The III Corps tactical area provides one unique geographical point that is ideal for relay of wireless communications. This station is located 3,200 feet up on Nui Ba Den Mountain.

The 125th Signal Battalion moved to the top of the mountain in March of 1967. There they operate VHF and FM radio facilities. In March

they had one radio and lived in a tent. Facilities now include an entire bank of relays and comfortable living accommodations.

There are two sections to the detachment operating the VHF and the other, the task of the VHF section is to operate and maintain the multichannel equipment relays transmissions.

On top of this, they are their own repairmen. They are responsible for the maintenance and repair of the generators that supply the electric power for both the radios and the billets.



The commo repairman that one little crossed wire that fouls up the whole op-

FM team operates the FM re-transmission. Their office is a converted conexe. They automatically relay FM radio communications for the division and all attached supporting units.

may be listening to your FM radio some and hear the music cut off and a GI relay call sign to some unknown position. It happens when a transmission falls on the frequency you have dialed on your

quality is enhanced because of the Mother Nature has provided the with possibly the most ideal setting for station in Vietnam.

Viet Cong are fully aware of the value mountain. Time and again mortar harassing fire- and sporadic ground at the camp's perimeter necessitate the of earphones and the grabbing of by the signalmen. It's a risky but vital

100th Signal Battalion has been at Cu January, 1967. We take the telephone for granted but they don't. They built scratch,

using the complex wiring systems that lightning Main switch are the battalion's responsibilities such as putting in phones maintenance on the switchboards, relay transmission equipment and more. When seven or zero, one of twelve operators an switch in Cu Chi will answer.

15th Infantry Division will never be communications instantly available. commo, our tactical superiority in would be in serious jeopardy.

number that the next time you pick up



Another important commo function is to get aircraft on and off the ground without mishap. Here, a tower radio operator gives a pilot his final landing instructions.



repairman's crossed wires the whole operation

Lightning's Striking Power

No other element of an army has the versatility of the infantryman. He is the driving force and the heartbeat of the 25th Infantry Division in Vietnam. Through marshes, rivers, rice paddies and rubber fields, he alone keeps the enemy constantly off guard. His confidence in his abilities and his sense of the individual's importance make him a powerful ally and an overwhelming foe.



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TOKYO R&R

BY SP4 ROBERT IMLER

is a most exasperating city to characterize for the short time visitor. Too many rules apply. It is at once yesterday and today, dirty and well swept, drab yet and cosmopolitan yet traditional.

At ten million people—one-tenth of the world live there. At any given moment half of them will be in your subway car or the dance floor of the tiny nightclub visiting at the time.

There is no trace of modern city planning in the street maps look like a singularly polished plate of spaghetti. Traffic doesn't

flow; it spurts when the light turns green and gradually slows to a trickle before coagulating at the next traffic light.

Yet Tokyo is one of the most fascinating cities in the world, more influential since the Japanese began building the best transistors than when they were building battleships.

R&R in Tokyo begins with orientation at Camp Zama's R&R center, formerly the Japanese West Point in more warlike times and now the headquarters of the United States Army in Japan. Those who ask nothing more of R&R than comfortable beds, quiet surroundings,

plenty of hot water and mega-cans of cold beer need go no farther.

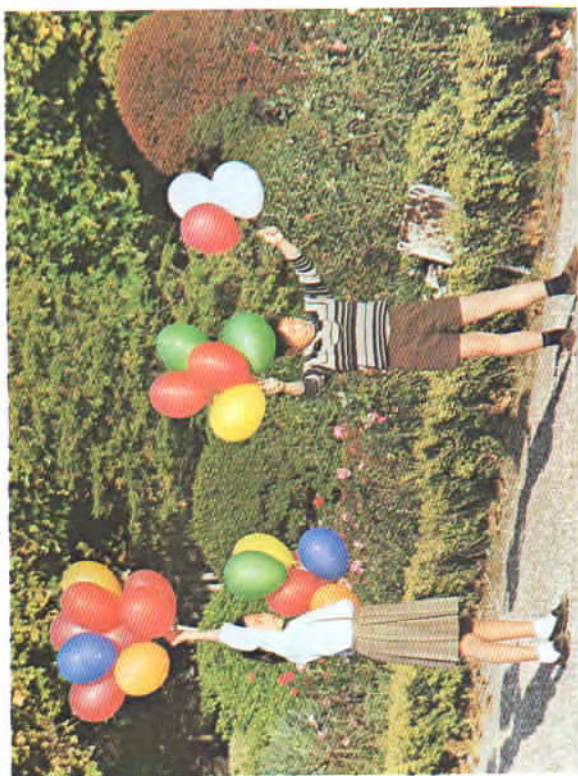
But with Tokyo glittering on the horizon, most are more demanding. The special bus from Camp Zama to Tokyo takes about 90 minutes and stops first at the Sanno Hotel, then the USO and then Stars and Stripes.

The Sanno Hotel is an officer's billeting facility, but all ranks may shop in its arcade, and the Stars and Stripes boasts an excellent NCO club where a \$1 charge allows you to buy 25-cent drinks and \$2 steaks all week while listening to diverse rock bands.



Fukunaga

Photos by SP5 William Berger





The USO, however, is the more important of the first stops. Here Japanese-speaking personnel will help locate and reserve hotel rooms at any of Tokyo's better western-style hotels. Far better, however, to let them direct you to the nearby Japan Travel Bureau or Tourist Information Service and secure a room in a Japanese-style inn. While you're hunting you can check your luggage at the USO.

In a Japanese inn or ryokan, you will find the mood quieter, the service better and probably a tiny, exquisite garden just outside your sliding-screen window.

After your effects have been put away (they can't be allowed to disturb the austere beauty of a Japanese room), it's time to wash out the last bit of Vietnam dust. Slip into the provided kimono and slippers and pad down to the bath.

Wash off before getting in (that's important), and then slip—cautiously—into the huge tub filled with water one or two degrees short of boiling. Once you get settled, don't move. You won't feel so uncomfortably hot, though you will emerge looking like a boiled lobster, and for much the same reason.

About the time you get settled to the temperature, the maid will bring in cold beer you had the foresight to order. Hot water, cold beer, lots of steam, relax. You are not far from Nirvana.

Thus rejuvenated, you can flip through the booklet you picked up in the USO. It's called 'Holiday in Japan' and is well worth reading for its guide to sights, shopping, entertainment and nightlife.

No doubt you've heard of the Ginza. If you've



Burns

Burns



heard that a drink in a posh nightclub can run up to \$50, your education on this area is complete. If you must see one or two of this type, the USO can sell you a tour ticket. You also know that the charge for having a drink and holding your hand can rapidly approach the cost of your education is complete.

Fortunately the most famous bar in Japan is comparatively inexpensive and a real experience. Try the Bar Albion in the basement of the Nachigeki Theater. Here you will settle you in a low, overstuffed chair, your boogaloo in front of your table while you your drink and compose Pindaric lyric odes in your head. In the generally atmosphere lights flash in time to the roll, a gift is delivered to your table for management, and you have only to pull a cigarette for a hostess to come running

to a light. The contrast to a rice paddy is
armons.

Taxis are very inexpensive in Tokyo, and the
very need not be tipped. The drivers, however,
are themselves as the world's next great
ing driver discovery and drive accordingly.
e next best way to get around is the subway.
er may run as much as 15 cents for a long
y, and in almost any traffic conditions,
ways are much faster than taxis. Pick up a
way schematic in Ginza station (it's in
club), compare it with the map in your USO
he book and meditate. You can now get
and in Tokyo.

thus confident, explore. Tokyo is a fascinating
of fascinating neighborhoods. Bargains
und. Camera equipment, oriental brassware,
ta and silk are offered below stateside prices.
y, coats, and shirts are other bargains worth
ving into.

you feel that so far you have neglected the
ure and art of Japan, you may congratulate
yourself upon your acuity. Back then, to the
y. They can tell you how to get to Nikko,
of the spiritual centers of Japan and a place
opassing beauty. It's about two hours from
heart of Tokyo, and a day spent at the
hoga shrine is as worthwhile as a day in the
ies of the Vatican or the Acropolis.

nd, at last, treat yourself to an evening meal
in Chinzan-so, a restaurant in a complex of
llings around Tokyo's sole remaining formal
n.

ually, as the shadows lengthen and fireflies
it to sparkle against the pines and flowers,
y a meal served by a kimono-clad waitress
apanese teahouse, savoring subtleties and
lences. Enjoy Japan.

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Theater. Host
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ne running to

Among the sights to see in Tokyo are
the National Stadium (lower left), scene
of the 1964 Summer Olympics, the
Emperor's tea house (upper left), and
the beautiful Meiji Shrine (below) seen
here from the eastern entrance.



Burns

Four-Footed Friends...

By Sp4 Stephen L.
Sp4 Richard P.

The two teams arrived late at the site. The infantry companies were ready to move out through terrain tangled with heavy growth. Early in the morning the infantry had undergone a rocket and mortar drill. Now they went over to the hunt.

"Paul, take Roddy up front," said Landers. The visual tracker and team, i.e., Specialist 5 Paul Louder and his tracker, Roddy, moved out to the east. The search and his handler, Specialist 4 Abromson, moved south. Both the tracker and search team soon found blood trails leading toward a 'V' shaped trench.

Kentucky alerted near some almost invisible footprints. After a quick scan of the area, let Kentucky pull him along, picking up the scent. He entered items of web gear as he went. The dog usually scatters when beaten back. It is an instinct to avoid detection.



Patterson

ed

to sweeping infantrymen on the flanks in rejoining by fire, keeping it up as they moved along. Roddy, the tracker dog, was sent into the lead and began following what he thought was a heavy scent. Three hundred yards from the start, the trail led to a hootch. Day was getting hot.

Suddenly an AK-47 somewhere to the front fired the tense silence with its high-pitched rattle. The bullets whined close overhead. By then they began moving again, through the brush, following a blood trail.

Meanwhile, Kentucky alerted on hastily loaded weapons and ammunition, including a booster and rounds and some recoilless rounds.

The infantrymen closed with the scout dog handler, bringing along a detainee. The handlers poured water for the dogs and lit up a cigarette.

The mission complete. This one, near Lap, five miles northwest of Cu Chi, with the 1st Battalion, (Mechanized), 5th Infantry Division, Roddy, his handler and team of Bobcats. Roddy, his handler and team of Bobcats. Roddy, his handler and team of Bobcats. Roddy, his handler and team of Bobcats.

The dog Kentucky and his handlers assigned to the 38th Scout Dog Platoon. As like Roddy and the teams of men they work with have one mission: Track the enemy. Dogs are so effective and well trained the depend upon them as much, if not more, as they do on each other.

One way the dogs operate is the most intuitive thing about the tracker business," Sergeant Michael P. Landers, tracker sergeant, "They are lightning fast, keenly sensitive, and downright smart. I put the faith in the world in them."



The use of dogs in Vietnam continues a practice of war as old as war itself. Dogs trotted beside the columns of Sargon's archers, escorted Darins' Ten Thousand Immortals into and out of action, kept watch at the picket fires of Caesar's Xth Legion, and carried dispatches at the Battle of the Marne.

Americans first used war dogs on a wide scale in World War I when they borrowed a limited number from the French and Belgian

armies for casualty, messenger and guard duty. In that war, the French Army used about 20,000 dogs and the German about 30,000.

When the United States entered World War II, a program called Dogs for Defense was established. During the course of the war the Army trained over 10,000 dogs. Some 595 were used for scout duties, and 9,289 were used as sentry dogs.

In Korea, scout dogs paved the way for more

Stephen Loch
Richard Patti

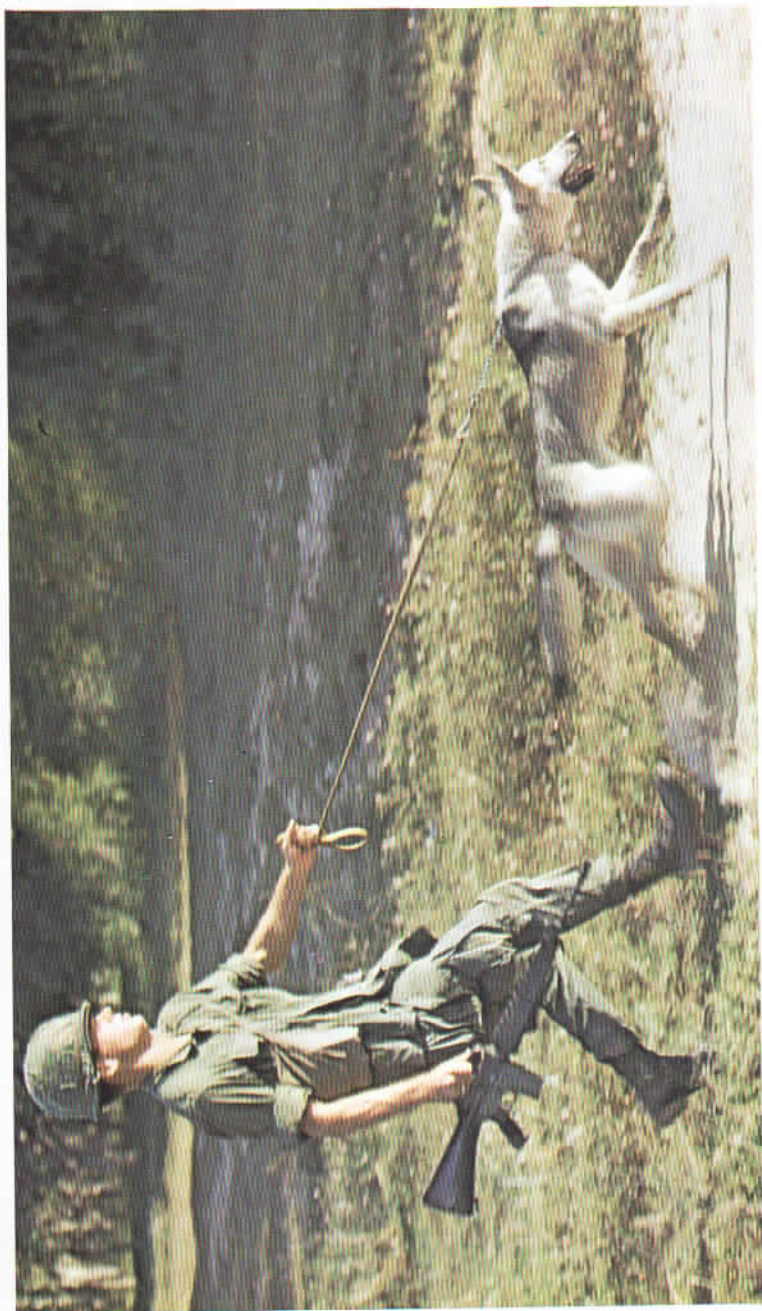
at the site. are ready to with heavy ing the infantry and mortar ba hunt. out," said Ser and team, includ his tracker and his team. The scout t 4 Abrom eker and scout ding toward

me almost in an of the area, ng, picking up e went. The back. It is an



25th Inf

Scout dogs pull their handlers growl ferociously at a suspected stand by patiently waiting, an infantrymen safely through rice. They mean more to men than friendship. They are constant companions and quite often life savers.



Patterson



25th Inf



Patterson

...ent use of dogs in wars to come. One dog, ... of the Tropic Lightning Division, led ... combat patrols and did not lose a man to ... fire. The commanding general was moved ... up a letter of achievement on York.

The Combat tracker team (CTT) employed ... team is the result of a need for a method ... with the ever-elusive Viet Cong. The ... is structured on knowledge gained from ... British, who used tracker teams effectively ... Borneo and Malaysian emergencies.

For much experimentation, the British ... ed on the Labrador Retriever as the best ... for tracking, and the United States Army ... their British trained Labradors for this ...

... tracker team combines the knowledge and ... of the visual tracker with the keen sense of ... of a dog. The first CTT used in Vietnam ... attached to the Tropic Lightning Division ... designated Combat Tracker Platoon (Pro- ... ed). The unit proved so highly effective in ... operations that combat tracker platoons ... ordered assigned to each division and ... ate brigade-sized units.

A team consists of a team leader, visual ... dog handler, tracker dog and cover ... plus a scout dog and handler.

A visual tracker is a modern Daniel Boone ... the same tricks that the pioneers and ... men of American history used. Visual ... specialist 4 Arthur Leyba says, "I look ... taken bushes or bark scraped off trees by ... of men and equipment."

He can tell the direction someone went by the way the grass is bent. "I try to read the signs left on a jungle trail; and on dead leaves, sticks rolled over revealing a dark side, or even a broken ant trail across the path," he said.

When the visual tracker cannot find the enemy, the dog is brought up. The dog's sense of smell enables the team to pick up the trail again. That's the team's mission—to regain contact with any enemy unit once it has been lost.

The purpose of a scout dog team is to provide silent early warning of the presence of the enemy. There are three scout dog platoons assigned to Tropic Lightning: the 38th, 44th, and 46th, located at Cu Chi, Dau Tieng and Tay Ninh respectively.

The scout dogs, all German Shepherds, are intensively trained for their jobs and are ideal for patrol defense. The big, beautiful animals can smell 40 times better than a human being.

One dog, Kurt, in a day's work alerted his



Always the pointman, the scout dog makes an ideal "early warning system" against enemy hiding forward of an advancing patrol.

Williams

... their handlers all ... a suspected en ... waiting, and ... through rice fi ... o men than si ... are constant ... often life savers

Four Footed Friends....

The proud eyes of an American are reflected by the stance of his dog.



Patterson

patrol to an enemy base camp. While the infantrymen were investigating, he alerted again to a hidden rice cache amounting to nine tons. As the patrol moved out, Kurt alerted to a sniper, and the area was reconnected by fire.

With the sniper out of business, the patrol began to move on, and Kurt alerted again. As Kurt and his handler moved to the rear, a VC rear guard opened up with three machine guns. Had the unit continued into the kill zone, the interlocking fire would have cut it to ribbons.

Scout dogs are often used at night with an ambush patrol, one of the most dangerous times for the infantryman. The dogs, however, can work more effectively in the cool night air.

Many of the dogs are sold to the Armed Forces by their owners in the United States. In such cases, the dog goes through a physical much like the one his handler takes upon entering the service. From there they go to scout or sentry dog school, and, after a 24-week training stint at Fort Benning, Ga., the dog is sent to Vietnam.

Handlers go through a 12 week training period. Once on the job, both are rotated in and out of the field. When in base camp, the handler runs his dog through an obstacle course to keep his stamina. The same course is used to break the dog into his new environment when he first arrives.

A scout dog's method of pointing out danger

varies with the dog. Tip, a large black Labrador, uses several different ones. For enemies he pricks up his ears and turns his head in the direction of the enemy.

When a trap is detected, Tip stops in front of his handler so he can see it farther.

The last category of dogs in Vietnam are sentry dogs. They are used to guard secure ammunition dumps, fuel fields and security installations, all of which would require a prohibitive amount of men and power to protect.

At the Tay Ninh base camp no dogs have been able to infiltrate the perimeter. The ammunition supply depot since the Military Police company began using dogs.

Sentry dogs are trained to give an early warning out of the ordinary is seen anything out of the ordinary. Their training smells while on patrol. Their training places special emphasis on toughness on patrol, the dogs are constantly alert for an attack. They distrust everyone except their handler.

A sentry dog will attack, if released by the handler, but they are not trained to guard a main function is to provide a psychological deterrent.

Labrador Retrievers and German Shepherds looking just like the ones at home.



In a feeding time, field expediency makes a tin dish an ideal food and water dish.

our best allies in Vietnam, and the relationship between the dog and his handler is a close one. The handler always carries an extra canteen for his dog. If on an extended mission, he will carry the dog's food as well. And he gets to know his four-footed friend as few men do.

One handler said of his dog, "His greatest pleasure is to work... he likes to go full speed; he knows what he's after. Swimmin' takes a close second, though."

When a handler rotates to CONUS, a new man is broken in. The outgoing handler will have nothing to do with the dog for two weeks.

It is a visible strain on the animal to be suddenly deserted by a man with whom he has worked, slept, eaten and been under fire. Then the new handler arrives and the two get to know each other.

Man's best friend has proven a worthy ally in war; scout tracker and sentry dogs have proved invaluable in fighting the enemy. As one handler said, "If we had a medal or a ribbon for every time one of our dogs saved a patrol from a dangerous situation, we'd have enough to cover the walls of the orderly room."

Patterson



The Year That Was

By Sp5 Bill B

A little help from our
friends in the sky.
An USAF F-100 S
jet makes a bombi



the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Army resolved 1968 to be their "Year of Victory." The 4th Infantry Division played a key role in breaking this New Year's resolution. The following is an account of the enemy's failure in the Tropic Lightning area of operation during past year.

Artillery and light are the words which best define the contact American troops had with the enemy near the end of December 1967. There was a truce during the American New Year holiday. Hours before its termination, a Support Base Burt, near Soui Cut, 90 kilometers northwest of Saigon, encountered intense enemy attack.

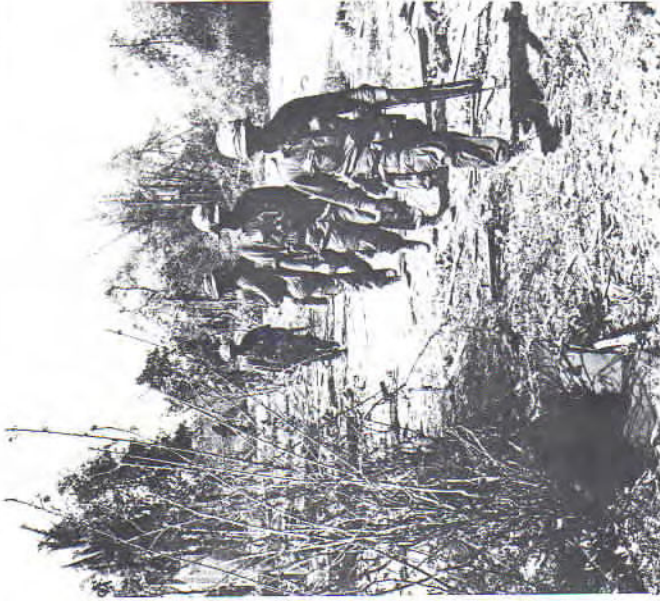
The three-day-old camp was hit from all directions by a heavy barrage of mortar and rocket grenade fire. This tactic was followed by repeated human wave attacks launched from Burt's perimeter.

Massacre



A machine gunner searches for the location of sniper fire near a hamlet.

Mossagu



Bobcat infantrymen go straight leg during a sweep near Dau Tieng.

During two such operations, enormous quantities of food and ammunition were captured. Ninety kilometers north of Saigon, 231 tons of rice were discovered by 2nd Brigade units. About 30 kilometers northwest of Saigon, over 271 RPG-2 rounds and other ammunition were located. The loss of these caches put a good-sized dent in the enemy's logistical supply line.

Nevertheless it was during the enemy's self-declared Tet truce that well organized VC and NVA forces attacked Tan Son Nhut on January 31.

The reactionary forces of Tropic Lightning moved into action and aided immeasurably in decimating the general onslaught. The 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry comprised part of the

Infantrymen take to motor boats on the Song Vam Co Dong River.



25th 1412

Dawn brought the enemy retreat and indications of the fierceness of the battle—the surrounding woodland was almost leveled. The final body count placed the Americans at a 16.5 to one kill ratio; the enemy had lost 382 men. They were of the same enemy regiments that lost 631 men to a 4th Infantry Division Battalion in one of the largest one-day battles of the war, which occurred in March of 1967.

During mid-January, a definite lull occurred. Although there was continuous light contact, no major battles were recorded. But during that lull American soldiers would, as usual, conduct sweep operations.

The Year That Was

air base's defense force during the initial assaults. Soon after the fighting began, the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 27th Infantry Wolfhounds were airlifted into the capital area.

The 4th Battalion (Mechanized), 23rd Infantry left their clearing operations in the Ho Bo Woods to fortify Cu Chi along with the

3rd Battalion, 22nd Infantry and 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry.

The enemy failed to reduce American forces around Saigon, failed to secure a route of through the area to Cambodia and in so lost 115 men. The withdrawing enemy incurred heavy casualties.

Mid-February was disastrous for the near Cu Chi. Entrenched enemy troops estimated VC battalion, were discovered miles west of the division base camp. American forces fought for six days before breaking enemy's defenses. The VC lost 98 men fleeing.

Then elements of the 3rd Brigade fought first battles against the enemy forces in Ninh City for over a year. Four infantry companies surrounded an estimated 400 in Hiep Hanh hamlet, south of the Cao Temple in Tay Ninh East.

The Golden Dragons of the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry were heliborne into the area while the 2nd Battalion (Mechanized), 1st Infantry conducted a road march to the south.

The village had been evacuated by its inhabitants when the VC force moved in. After assaulting the enemy positions, the forces pulled back and called in air strike artillery. When the VC broke contact, they left 182 of their comrades dead on the battlefield.

Again in Tay Ninh, the Golden Dragons moved to the Oriental River. The Deuce was also there as a blocking force.

Cavalry troopers ride their APC's through dusty bush country near Cu Chi. Everyone wears a protective vest (flak jacket).

Elliott





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This form is work in progress. Contact me for questions or concerns. Sam Sasser Adjutant American Legion Post 9

AMERICAN LEGION POST 9 VETERAN'S RELIEF FUND

The American Legion Post 9 Veterans Relief Fund was formed back in August of 2016. The American Legion Post 9 was involved in a Gospel/Patriotic Concert that was presented at the Central Lutheran Church. This concert was presented in four consecutive days. The concert was the work of about 30-40 very dedicated individuals who practiced once every week for about a year. The concert was a great success and was so much fun just to listen to. The concert was no charge to those attending. At the end of each performance the American Legion Burial Detail asked for donations. We raised \$12900.00 in donations after those four performances. We were amazed at how appreciative the audience was. And the amount of donations we received. These funds were to be used to help veterans. Thus the formation of the American Legion Post 9 Veterans Relief Fund. All requests for donations are done through the Winona County Veterans Service office. Tom and Dusty, our Winona County Veterans Service Officers, first qualify the person as a Veteran. And Tom and Dusty then ascertain that the request is a valid request.

The fund has provided assistance for electric, water and gas bills, water heaters, heating and cooling equipment, rent, car repairs, property tax, phone bills, lodging, medical bills, mobility products, food cards, and even assistance with funerals.

Once the requests are approved by the County Veterans Service Officers, the checks are written and sent directly to the vendor. This fund is the most direct help to Veterans in the County.

This fund has gone a long way in providing assistance to Winona County Veterans in their time of need. These funds are available to all Winona County Veterans and Veterans do not have to be a member of the American Legion to receive assistance. Over the years we have provided about \$71,578.22 in assistance to 200 plus veterans. We are, always asking for assistance in keeping this fund going. Donations to the fund can be made by writing your check to the American Legion Post 9 Veterans Relief Fund. I would like to add that the fund has no administration costs. 100% of funds donated go to help Winona County Veterans.

Your donation will be greatly appreciated by American Legion Post 9, and the Veterans we serve.

Thank you for your consideration of our Veterans Relief Fund.

Respectfully presented.

Sam Sasser

American Legion Post 9 Adjutant

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Before Memorial Day
Before Veterans Day

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November 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Daylight Savings Holistic Fair in Hall 10am-5p	2 -8 Meeting 5:30pm	3 Election Day Basket Nite 5-7pm Coast Guard 7pm Noon Lions 6pm	4 Rotary 12 noon Bingo 7pm Medicare BCBS 12:30 to 4:30	5 Winona Volunteer Services Luncheon 11:15am Hiawatha Marines 7pm SE Patriot 7pm	6	7 Party in bar 2-5pm
8	9 SAL Meeting 6:30pm	10 Marine Corps Birthday Dinner 5p Exec/Post Mtg 5pm 40&8 following Medicare Mtg 12:30 to 4:30 Wing Nite!!! 5:30-7pm	11 Rotary 12 noon NO Bingo Post Everlasting 1:15 pm	12 Broasted Chicken 5:00-6:30pm Kwik Trip 8a	13 Party in hall 4-11pm	14 Health & Fitness Mtg In hall 8am
15	16 Life Line Screening 8:30am-5:30p DAR Mtg 6:30	17 Red Cross in hall 12-6pm Medicare Mtg 12:30 - 4:30pm Basket Nite 5-7pm Noon Lions 6pm	18 Rotary 12 noon Bingo 7pm	19 SE Patriot Mtg 7pm	20 Fish Fry 4:30-7:00pm Music by Bruce & Virgil 6-9pm	21 Local Lodge 1030 at 6:30p
22 DAC Belgium Waffles!!! 8am-11am	23	24 Medicare Mtg 12:30-4:30p Local 49 Union Mtg 7p	25 Rotary 12 noon NO Bingo	26 Thanksgiving Day!!! Bar is closed No Taco Night!	27 ALR Black Friday Event!! 7am til Noon	28
29	30					



December 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Boy Scout Breakfast 8:00 am Medicare Mtg 12:30-4:30pm Basket Nite 5-7pm Coast Guard 7pm Noon Lions 6pm	2 Rotary 12 noon Bingo 7pm	3 WСУ Retirees Winter Social 2pm Hiawatha Marines 7pm SE Patriot 7pm	4	5 Ducks Unlimited 12noon – 10pm
6 Legion Post 9 Children's Christmas Party 11:30 to 1:00pm	7 ALR Meeting 5:30pm	8 Medicare Meeting 12:30-4:30pm Exec/Post Mtg 5pm 40&8 Mtg following Wing Nite!!!! 5:30-7:00pm	9 Rotary 12 noon Bingo 7pm	10 Broasted Chicken 5:00pm-6:30pm	11	12 Party in hall 1:00-6:00pm
13 Baby Shower in Hall 11:00am-2:00pm	14 SAL Meeting 6:30PM	15 Medicare Meeting 12:30-4:30p Basket Nite 5:00-7:00pm Noon Lions 6pm	16 Rotary 12 noon Bingo 7pm	17 Red Cross in Hall 12-6pm	18 Fish Fry 4:30pm-7:00pm Music by Mudcat 6:00pm-9:00pm	19 Local Lodge 1030 Mtg 6:30pm TDI Christmas Party in Hall 5:00pm-9:00pm
20	21	22 Medicare Meeting 12:30-4:30p Local Lodge 1030 Meeting 6:30pm	23 NO BINGO!!!	24 Christmas Eve!! Bar will close at 4:00pm NO Taco Night!!	25 Christmas Day Bar is closed	26
27	28	29	30 NO BINGO!!!	31 New Year's Eve!!	1 New Year's Day Party!!!!	



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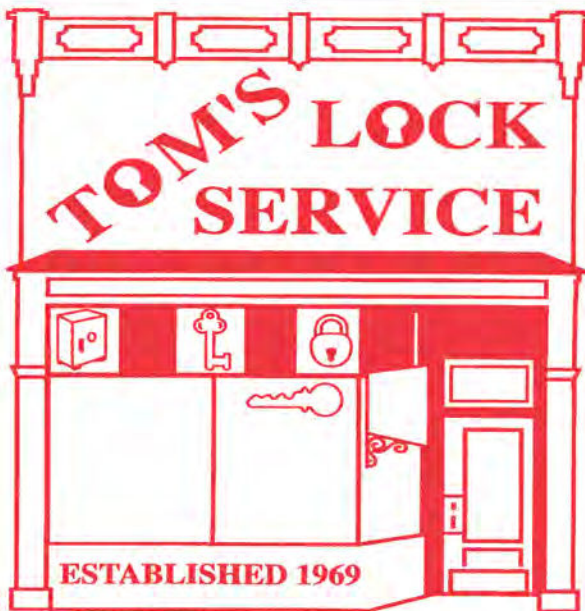
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