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Battle Without Bullets

The 41st Civil Affairs
Company in Vietnam -
Part 1: 1965-1967

by Troy J. Sacquety

"A Peace Corps with rifles. That is one of the nicer names for the hog raisers, school marms, latrine builders, well diggers, medicinemen, and soldiers who constitute the 41st Civil Affairs Company."¹

The 41st was one of only three Civil Affairs (CA) companies to serve in the Republic of Vietnam (RVN) [the others were the 2nd and 29th], and did so from 1965 to 1970. Its mission was to bolster faith in the RVN government by helping to "win the hearts and minds" of the rural population by assisting with construction, agricultural, medical, economic, and educational programs to improve standards of living. It is beyond the scope of a single article to present all 41st CA Company activities because each of the far-flung Teams has its own story. This two-part article will introduce the 41st to today's ARSOF soldiers by providing the company's mission, force structure, general history, and having some of the CA soldiers explain their work. Part I spans the Company's arrival in Vietnam in 1965 through 1967. Part II will describe operations from the 1968 Tet Offensive until the 41st deactivation in Vietnam in 1970. The important message is that the 41st Civil Affairs Company persevered in the face of innumerable obstacles and made a difference. As ARSOF is challenged today to win non-violent victories worldwide, it is important to remember what the 41st CA Company accomplished forty years ago in an equally challenging environment.

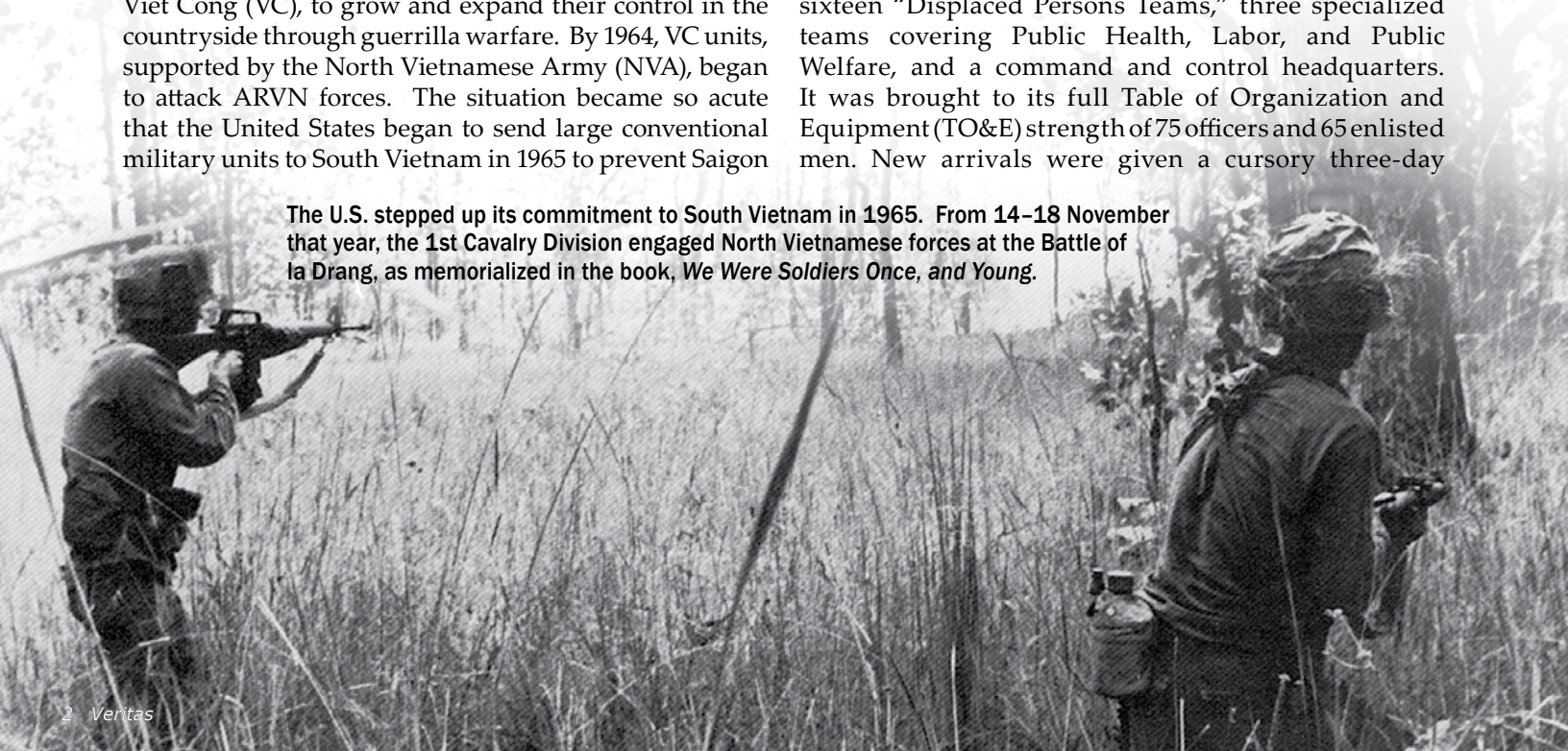
The war in Vietnam was escalating in the early 1960s. Created to fight a conventional war and mirrored after the conventional U.S. Army, the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) was plagued by corruption and weak leadership. These factors encouraged the loosely-organized South Vietnamese Communist movement, the Viet Cong (VC), to grow and expand their control in the countryside through guerrilla warfare. By 1964, VC units, supported by the North Vietnamese Army (NVA), began to attack ARVN forces. The situation became so acute that the United States began to send large conventional military units to South Vietnam in 1965 to prevent Saigon

from falling. That year, the U.S. Army fought its first large-scale battles in Vietnam. But in reality, there were two wars ongoing in Vietnam: a conventional war against NVA-trained VC Main Force battalions; and a counter-insurgency war against the VC guerrilla units country-wide.² U.S. Army Special Forces had been engaged in South Vietnam since 1960, but early Civil Affairs efforts were only cursory.

Individual officer advisors and Mobile Training Teams (MTTs) constituted the initial U.S. Army CA commitment to South Vietnam. Some of these MTTs recommended a larger CA role.³ Though two-man CA Teams were an integral part of Special Forces "B" detachments in country, they were only making a token effort at civil assistance.⁴ It was 1965 before the U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), the unified command for all U.S. forces in Vietnam, requested a permanent American CA presence. The civilian U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) was in charge of the major civilian assistance programs. This changed with the MACV request.

On 27 August 1965, the 41st CA Company, 95th Civil Affairs Group at Fort Gordon, Georgia, was alerted for deployment.⁵ Its only previous operational experience had come earlier that year when small elements were attached to the 42nd Civil Affairs Company in the Dominican Republic. However, the lessons learned in Santa Domingo had little application for Vietnam. To satisfy MACV guidance, the 41st reorganized into sixteen "Displaced Persons Teams," three specialized teams covering Public Health, Labor, and Public Welfare, and a command and control headquarters. It was brought to its full Table of Organization and Equipment (TO&E) strength of 75 officers and 65 enlisted men. New arrivals were given a cursory three-day

The U.S. stepped up its commitment to South Vietnam in 1965. From 14–18 November that year, the 1st Cavalry Division engaged North Vietnamese forces at the Battle of Ia Drang, as memorialized in the book, *We Were Soldiers Once, and Young*.





An idealized view of Civil Affairs.



Unofficial pocket patch of the 41st Civil Affairs Company.

course at the U.S. Army Civil Affairs School.⁶ Second Lieutenant (2LT) Lawrence A. Castagneto recalled that the training they received before deployment was based on WWII Military Government models that were not very applicable to Vietnam. Unit members were told that they “were going to be part of MACV . . . but the intent was to support the infantry and work with the civilians,” recalled 2LT Castagneto.⁷

The 41st CA main body sailed for Vietnam on 1 December 1965 aboard the USNS *General Leroy El Tinge*. It was a “one stack [WWII] Liberty ship. . . it was rock and roll the whole time . . . we were getting about an eight-foot swell in from the port side and that thing rolled from San Diego to Guam, which was about 20 days,” recalled 2LT Castagneto. The unit arrived at Nha Trang in late December to establish their home in the large tent city.⁹ Individual teams soon left for their assignments elsewhere.

Teams from the 41st CA Company were deployed within three of Vietnam’s four Corps areas. They were often parceled out and “attached for operational control, administration and logistics,” to American combat units or MACV Advisory Teams.¹⁰ The 2nd, 7th, and 14th CA Teams were sent to the 1st Infantry Division in III Corps. Four Teams (3, 5, 10, 16) were provided to the III Marine Amphibious Force in I Corps.¹¹ The remaining nine CA Teams supported First Field Force, Vietnam (I FFV) units in II Corps.¹² Spread all over South Vietnam, Company administration of the units was chaotic.

For example, at various times in 1966, the CA Teams in II Corps were attached to the 101st Airborne Division (Teams 9, 15), 4th Infantry Division (Teams 8, 9), 1st Cavalry Division (Teams 4, 6, 11, and 12), 25th Infantry Division (Team 1), and the 5th Special Forces Group (Teams 12, 13). The Company headquarters and Public Health, Labor, and Public Welfare Teams remained at Camp John F. McDermott in Nha Trang.¹³ Because the CA ‘Generalist’ Teams were so dispersed, the 41st headquarters was only able to administer its units in II Corps. The Teams in the other Corps areas got short-

Civil Affairs Curriculum School Course

The CA curriculum school course changed little in the early years of Vietnam. Military Intelligence officer 1LT Lee Livingston, (1966-1967), said that the “CA school focused on the WWII military government examples on one end of the spectrum and on self-help village health/food/transportation issues at the other end of the spectrum . . . We discussed in some detail the British lessons in Malaya.” Livingston added, “I don’t recall during my year in Vietnam where I said, ‘Oh yeah, I remember that from CA school’ . . . there was no Civil Affairs instruction manual, no chart, no list of things to see or do . . . It was all OJT [On-The Job Training] after I got there.” But, Livingston said, “The self-help message stuck. Let them do it, just help.”⁸



Left: 1LT Lee Livingston was a Military Intelligence officer assigned to the 41st.

Below: Students learned what a typical village should look like with this table model at the Civil Affairs School.



Relocation



Newly-relocated Montagnards faced a future that was far different from their traditional ways.



In 1965-66, villagers were relocated from their homes into "Strategic Hamlets." The intent was to cut the civilians off from the VC and allow "free fire zones" in the countryside.

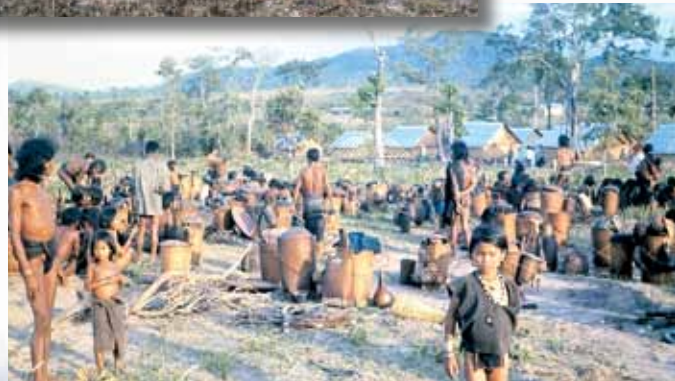


The crossbow was a traditional hunting instrument among the Montagnards.



Relocation camps often lacked even basic necessities. The 41st did what it could to provide rudimentary washing facilities.

Villagers newly-arrived at a relocation camp were often confused and had only what they could carry with them.



Newly-relocated civilians lived in primitive housing (as evidenced by the tarps). One mission of the 41st CA was to help provide better housing.





The headquarters of the 41st Civil Affairs Company at Nha Trang in 1966. The unit's unofficial patch is on the left, while the SSI for U.S. Army Vietnam, (USARV) is on the right. USARV was a component command of Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), and controlled all the Army's logistics and service units.

changed. The CA Teams faced other dilemmas apart from a lack of administrative support.

Throughout the war, few leaders in the American or Vietnamese military understood CA.¹⁴ Multiple government and non-government organizations from both countries were involved in "Civic Action" pacification programs to improve the image of the South Vietnamese regime among the people and reduce the VC influence.¹⁵ Unfortunately, none of them were coordinated let alone integrated. While Civic Action was a long-term program, the 41st Civil Affairs Company's role in the "restoration process" was tactical; to get the locals immediate assistance and to encourage them to help themselves.¹⁶ The military understanding at the time was that Civic Action did not mean "Westernizing, it meant improving social standards, environment and health."¹⁷ The goal was to encourage the people to rely upon themselves and the South Vietnamese government until the 41st "worked themselves out of a job."¹⁸ To accomplish this mission, the unit was to provide direct support to the major U.S. tactical units and province advisory teams.¹⁹ This was easier said than done.

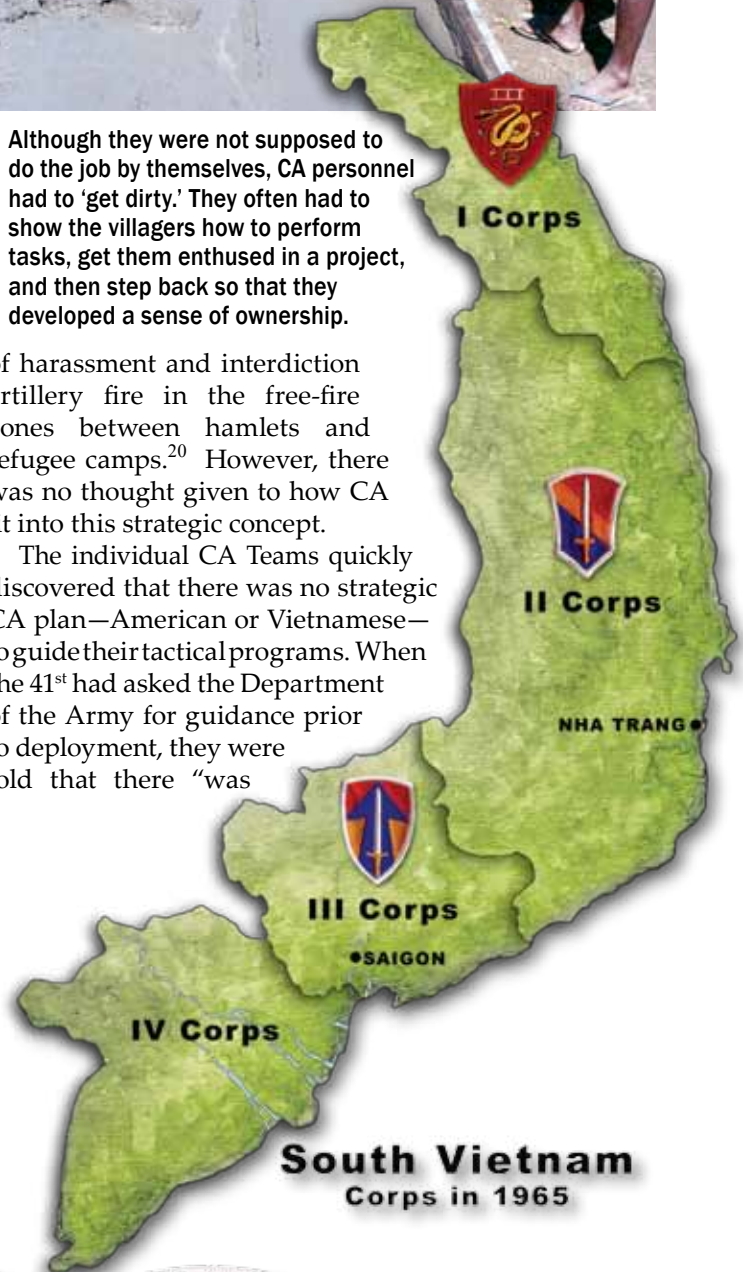
When the Company arrived in Vietnam, refugee relocation and assistance supported the "Strategic Hamlet" program. This entailed resettling ethnic Montagnards from remote areas in the countryside to centrally-located camps/hamlets. Saigon touted relocation as a means to reduce VC support. It also facilitated the employment



Although they were not supposed to do the job by themselves, CA personnel had to 'get dirty.' They often had to show the villagers how to perform tasks, get them enthused in a project, and then step back so that they developed a sense of ownership.

of harassment and interdiction artillery fire in the free-fire zones between hamlets and refugee camps.²⁰ However, there was no thought given to how CA fit into this strategic concept.

The individual CA Teams quickly discovered that there was no strategic CA plan—American or Vietnamese—to guide their tactical programs. When the 41st had asked the Department of the Army for guidance prior to deployment, they were told that there "was



Military Assistance Command, Vietnam SSI



United States Army, Vietnam SSI



I Field Force, Vietnam SSI



II Field Force, Vietnam SSI



III Marine Amphibious Force SSI

41ST CA COMPANY LOCATIONS

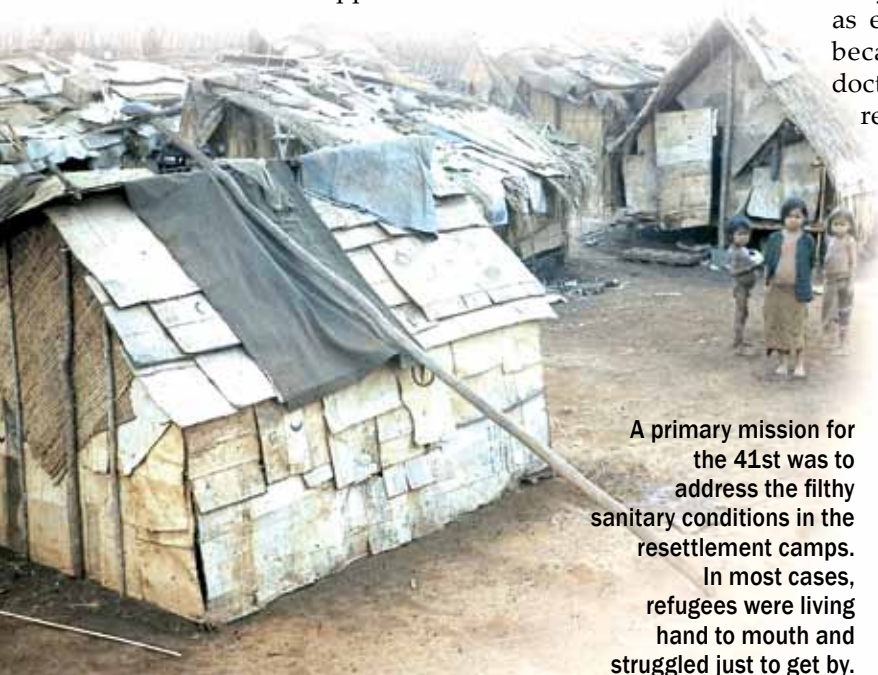
CORPS	TEAM	ATTACHED TO	LOCATION	YEAR
I Corps	3	III Marine Amphibious Force	Quang Tri/Gio Linh	1 9 6 6
	5	III Marine Amphibious Force	Quang Ngai (Mo Duc)	
	10	III Marine Amphibious Force	Tam Ky	
	16	III Marine Amphibious Force	Da Nang	
II Corps	9	1 st Bde 101 Abn (then MACV Sector advisory Team #39)	Phan Rang (then 4 ID)	
	15	101 st Abn (Brigade HQ)	Tuy Hoa	
	4	1 st Cav	An SOC (Phan Thiet)	
	6, 11	1 st Cav		
	12	1 st Cav (5 th SFG)		
	1	3 rd Bde, 25 th ID	Pleiku Province	
	8	MACV Advisory Group (SF DET 221) (4 th ID)	Phu Yen (Cung Son)	
	13	MACV Advisory Group (DET B-24 5 th SFG)	Binh Dinh (Kontum)	
	9	4 th ID		
	12	5 th SFG, DET B-22 (DET B-23)	Binh Dinh (Ban Me Thuot)	
III Corps	2, 7, 14	1 st ID		

no mission statement available.”²¹ 2LT Castagneto said “We never got any specific instructions” when his Team reported to their combat unit, two or three weeks after arriving in Vietnam.²² Team leaders often developed programs based on local needs and conditions and the expertise available to them. The individual CA Teams learned to be very resourceful. Wheedling supplies from salvage yards was a constant. The 41st was a low-priority unit charged with a multitude of non-warfighting tasks and normal supply channels were not prepared to support unusual requests.

Captain (CPT) Michael D. Sparago, a medical officer on Team 1 with 2LT Castagneto (supporting the 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division) revealed his frustrations: “We would hold a sick call, treat a few people and then go back [return to base]. It was exactly the wrong way to do it . . . there was no follow-up . . . it was a useless effort simply because of the lack of continuity . . . Any good will was gone in 5 seconds when the VC came in and confiscated all the medical supplies we left.”²³

The 1966 end of year unit report reflected the 41st's predicament: “That the Company acquitted itself in the face of loosely defined objectives and that many of its teams displayed remarkable talent for productive support of the overall mission did not lessen the need for a comprehensive mission statement and program.”²⁴ It was faint praise in a veiled comment. Not being part of a strategic plan had other drawbacks.

One negative impact was that without a specified mission they had no priority for support in MACV nor did the Company have any of the 16 authorized interpreters. This greatly reduced their ability to obtain more assistance from the local civilians and made it impossible to passively gather intelligence, a core function. CPT Sparago said that “we would communicate by gesture because nobody thought to put an interpreter with us . . . I could not elicit any [patient] history . . . 70-80% of the time your patient is telling you what is wrong with them. We had no way to do that.”²⁵ In a matter-of-fact report, the Company relayed; “In the CA function, interpreter personnel are as essential as rifles are to the infantryman.”²⁶ And, because of their “unsatisfactory utilization,” the 16 doctors assigned to the 41st Civil Affairs Company were reassigned to other units in June 1966. CPT Sparago was



A primary mission for the 41st was to address the filthy sanitary conditions in the resettlement camps. In most cases, refugees were living hand to mouth and struggled just to get by.



Soldiers of the 1st Cavalry Division search a village in October 1966 during Operation IRVING. The 41st often conducted MEDCAPS in villages once they had been cleared by conventional forces.



Like soldiers everywhere, the 41st Teams drew kids like a magnet. Building rapport with the locals often began here.



1LT Andrew Lattu observed that one way to break the ice was to offer rides into town when possible.



CA Team leaders had to meet with the village elders on their terms, as does 1LT Wilber Stewart of Team 14.



In order to gain trust, CA personnel had to engage in the customs of the people. Among the Montagnards, this included communal drinking of rice wine as CPT John Schmidt demonstrates. If a CA member refused to drink when offered, it would have been seen as a great offense.

one of those transferred. His thoughts at the time were: "I had all sorts of training that was not being utilized. Perhaps, I could make a better contribution as part of the infantry battalion."²⁷ The yearly Company report for 1966 noted the loss: "In retrospect the enormous potential presented by the availability of 16 doctors should have been evident to those associated with civil affairs planning."²⁸ However, despite their difficulties, the 41st opened the door for other U.S. Army CA units. The 29th Civil Affairs Company arrived in Vietnam on 11 June 1966 and the 2nd Civil Affairs Company followed later in the year. They immediately faced similar tactical situations, notwithstanding the lack of CA doctrine.

There was no specified mission for a CA Team. The individual teams had to develop their own. At any given time, a CA Team could be assisting with road and bridge building; supervising well, spillway, school, or dispensary construction; teaching English classes; creating agricultural programs such as building fishponds, introducing new kinds of livestock, or providing immunizations; or even digging latrines that benefitted an entire community. What they did was often decided by community leaders and based on what expertise and capabilities the team possessed.

One of the most important and popular missions performed by the 41st Civil Affairs Company—and a good way to gain entrance into a village—was conducting Medical Civic Action Programs (MEDCAPs). These were a shock for soldiers who had just arrived from the United States. Health and sanitation practices in the villages were well below Western standards. In 1966, the Company reported: "The majority of the civilians treated had not previously been exposed to modern medical ideas and practices."²⁹ Local health problems were so acute that one of the doctors told CPT John Schmidt in 1966 that going on a MEDCAP was "the best training that we can get. We learn about diseases and skin ailments in medical school but most doctors can go their entire careers in the States and not see a case of leprosy."³⁰ MEDCAPs served two very important functions: they were often the only source of medical care; and their popularity raised the CA Teams' stature in the hamlets. Helping children was a top priority. They were the country's future.

"Child mortality rate in the Montagnard villages from birth to 10 years old was 70-80 percent. We would focus on children's cleanliness," said First Lieutenant (1LT) Andrew Lattu.³¹ "We washed thousands of kids and gave away thousands of bars of soap," recalled Schmidt.³² Along with improving sanitation, the Teams immunized the people against communicable diseases. MEDCAPs opened the door for the CA Teams to promote lasting projects in the hamlets. Gaining trust was the first step.

1LT Lattu observed: "They had seen the French come and go . . . we were greeted with a mixture of welcome and suspicion, certainly caution, until they got to know you a little better."³³ Once in the



An ongoing project for the 41st was to help the Vietnamese rebuild the war damage in their villages. The Teams funded and supervised the building of schools and repair of bridges, culverts, and roads. These projects helped the locals get produce to market, promoted

community interaction, and kept the children engaged. This was critical because most areas where the 41st CA Teams worked were very isolated. CA projects built community involvement, improved the local economy, showed that the government cared, and weakened VC influence. Infrastructure projects met immediate needs, but had lasting results.

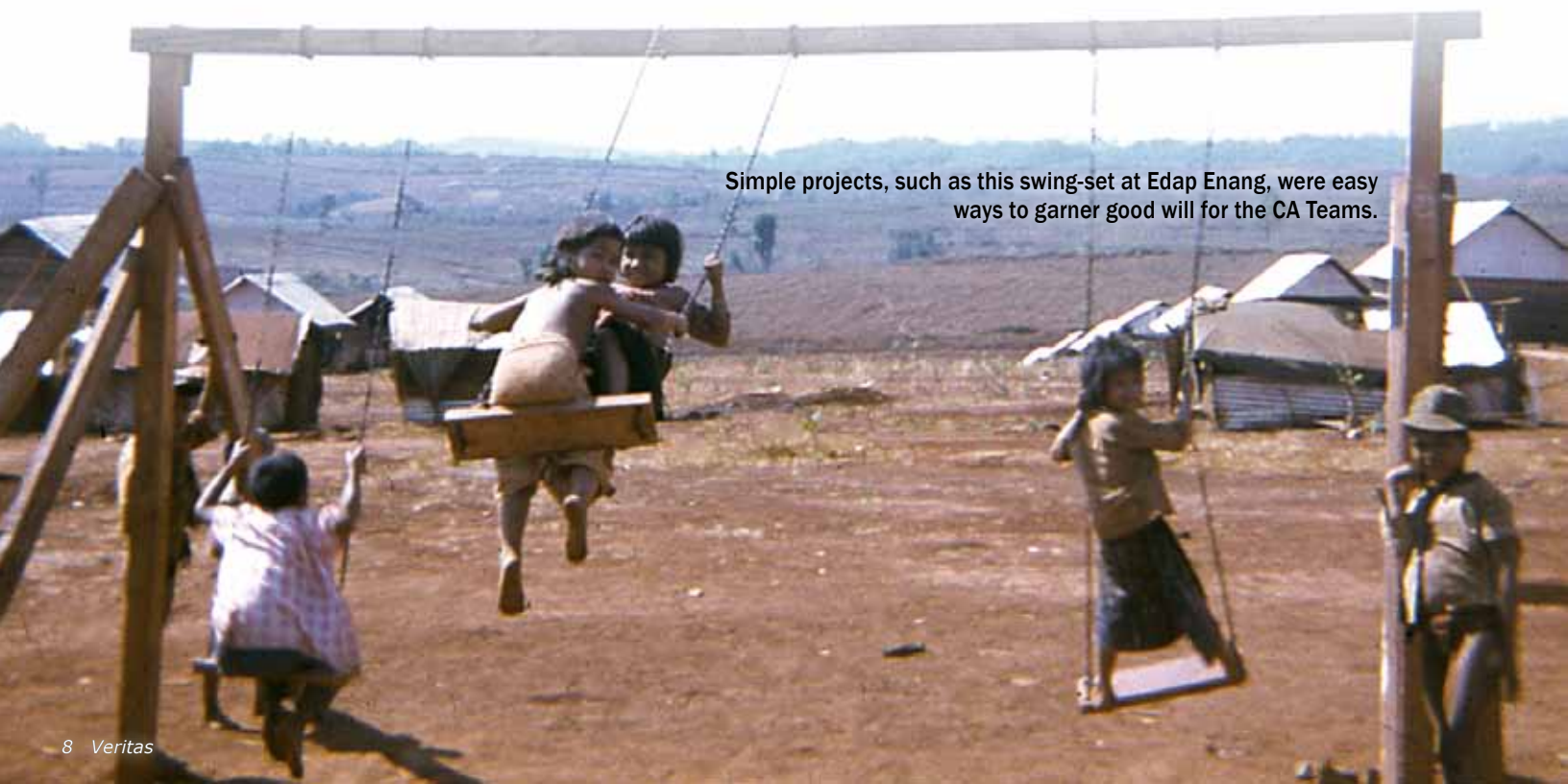
When village elders asked for assistance constructing a meeting house, the 41st CA gladly responded. They helped the villagers to erect a showcase building. As the pictures show, it had a stout frame and its completion was celebrated with a dedication ceremony. Having a place to decide local affairs helped the villagers become more self-sufficient and weaned them away from VC influence.

1LT Lattu, a geologist by training, helped Montagnard villagers hand-dig a 60-foot well in 1967. While surveying the area, Lattu noticed a thick layer of firm, water-resistant volcanic ash in the canyons in the area. He knew that one had only to dig down to the ash layer because water “flowed on top of the ash.”³⁶ When the U.S. 4th Infantry Division (4th ID) needed water to wash their vehicles, 1LT Lattu explained that their well site would require drilling more than 500 feet to hit water. But, the American engineers had a drill and liked their site. The competition began. The Montagnards dug their well by hand. They reached water at 62 feet and won. As Lattu had said, it took the 4th ID engineers 570 feet to hit water.³⁷ But, not all CA projects in the early years were a success.

village, the teams did a site survey to determine which projects were most needed, be it a school, clean drinking water, medical care, or agricultural improvements. The indigenous people had to accept ownership of the projects. Once that was done the teams were achieving their goal of helping the people become more self-sufficient.

From 1966 to 1969, when they first entered a village or refugee camp, the CA Teams were always security conscious. When the Teams had more freedom of movement in 1966-1967, they still never arrived at the same time or in sequential days. “I never visited the same project two days in a row,” said 1LT Lattu.³⁴ These precautions reduced the threat of ambushes by the VC who were in the villages. CPT Sparago echoed these sentiments: “There was little trust . . . you would go into a village and the women and children were there, but the men gone. This was a tip-off to me that the village was not overly friendly.”³⁵

With agriculture, short-term programs often did not work, nor were American methods always the best. This was particularly true when incompatible crop strains or livestock breeds were introduced. Team 9 at Edap Enang, a “model” resettlement center/village set up by the South Vietnamese government, had numerous setbacks like



Simple projects, such as this swing-set at Edap Enang, were easy ways to garner good will for the CA Teams.

MEDCAPS



41st CA Teams had to be prepared to treat numerous medical problems while conducting MEDCAPS. Ailments could range from simple immunizations to skin ulcers.

MEDCAPS were an important contribution by the 41st CA and helped foster a sense of trust.

A MEDCAP could be the only time that Vietnamese civilians in the countryside had ever seen a doctor or dentist. They were extremely popular programs.



One MEDCAP function was to administer immunizations to locals to prevent the spread of disease. Care was given to all, even if they were suspected of being VC, as was this patient.

Children were a MEDCAP target because the child mortality rate was so high.



The “Pot-Belly” pig is native to Vietnam and was often found by 41st CA Teams in the Montagnard villages. Although not large, they were well suited to the conditions and required little additional care or food.



In an attempt to introduce a larger and more prolific pig that would increase meat production, some CA Teams handed out hundreds of piglets of a different breed that had been shipped in from Saigon. But, unlike the pot-belly pigs, these finicky swine could not cope with the poor food and sanitary conditions. Most of them died or were slaughtered because they ate too much.

this. In late 1967, they planted hundreds of banana tree seedlings, only to watch them die during the dry season from a lack of irrigation. That same year, hundreds of piglets were shipped in from Saigon. Unlike the smaller breed raised by the Montagnards, these larger and more finicky swine could not adjust to the poor sanitation and having to scrounge for food scraps.³⁸ Civic Action in Vietnam underwent major organizational changes in 1967.

A significant operational change that year improved the effectiveness of the overall Civic Action program when the disparate efforts of the Department of State, USAID, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and U.S. Army Civil Affairs were placed under a single joint military-civilian organization, the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) program.³⁹ This was a unique experiment in which “civilians were embedded within a wartime command and put in charge of military personnel and resources.”⁴⁰ CORDS brought more focus to the pacification effort in the countryside because its civilian heads, like Ambassador Robert William “Blowtorch Bob” Komer and future CIA director William E. Colby, had the equivalent of three-star general rank and reported directly to the MACV commander.⁴¹ Although the program came too late to fulfill all of its goals, CORDS was regarded as a success because it provided greater cohesiveness to the pacification effort. In conjunction with this move were changes at the CA team level. At Company level, the 41st Commander faced major chain of command issues.

Beginning in April 1967 most of the 41st CA Teams were reassigned from U.S. combat units to Vietnamese province and/or district headquarters to support the MACV Advisory Teams. Administration and



Former WWII Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Jedburgh and Norwegian Operational Group veteran William E. Colby, headed CORDS from 1968-1971. The future Director of Central Intelligence, inspects a U.S.-armed Revolutionary Development Team in Kien Hoa Province.

logistical support reverted back to the 41st Company headquarters. The change was directed because the frequent movements of the U.S. combat units had caused projects to be abandoned before completion or only partially implemented. Only CA Team 8 remained attached to the 4th U.S. Infantry Division at Pleiku.⁴² Adequate logistical support had always been problematic for CA.⁴³ Now, the 41st headquarters reorganized to accommodate the change.

The new organizational complexity dictated the creation of two subordinate headquarters detachments to handle CA administration in II Corps. Detachment C at Qui Nhon supported Teams 1, 6, 11, 13, 14, and 15. Detachment B at Phan Thiet, supported Teams 2, 4, 7, and 12. Both detachment headquarters relocated to Nha Trang in April 1968 after the Tet Offensive was finally halted.⁴⁴ Of the original three specialty teams collocated with the Headquarters at Nha Trang, only the Public Health Team remained intact. Its role was to procure medical supplies for all teams, support health and sanitation programs in the Nha Trang area, and to inspect local restaurants.⁴⁵ The headquarters modified its structure to support the logistics needs of the widely dispersed CA Teams. A Civilian Supply Team and an Area Survey Team was created using the underutilized Public Welfare and Labor Teams.

1LT Elmer M. Pence, the first head of the Civilian Supply Team recalled that they “were supposed to get supplies from all the major civilian organizations like USAID, and send them out to the teams in the field. . . it was really haphazard.”⁴⁶ He recalled that “most of the time, I ran it out by truck, and if not, I had to kiss someone’s a** over at the Air Force to get a Caribou [C-7] to fly it out.”⁴⁷ Taking supplies by road was dangerous. Pence recalled: “We took the governor off the trucks and drove as fast as we could. A couple of times, there were bullet holes in the truck.”⁴⁸

1LT Pence was resourceful and got what supplies he could. “I was the biggest scrounger in the world.” For

Sanitation



The 41st supervised the digging of wells to give villages clean water.



The 41st CA Teams built numerous infirmaries in the relocation/refugee camps. Staffed by locals trained by the CA Teams, they served to provide basic medical care to the community.

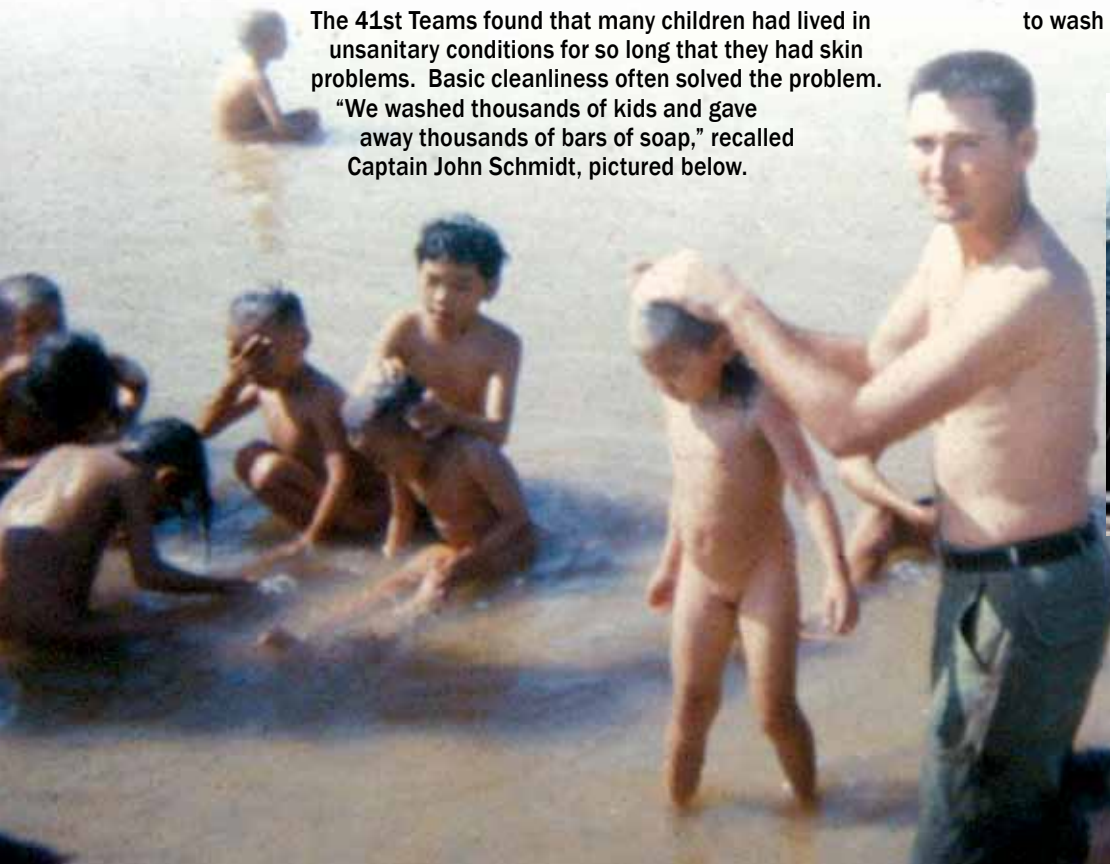


Some 41st CA Teams dammed creeks to create a swimming hole for children. Although simple, they helped to keep the children clean, and earned the CA Teams tremendous goodwill among the population.



Constructing spillways gave villagers a place to wash themselves and their clothes, and the children a place to play.

The 41st Teams found that many children had lived in unsanitary conditions for so long that they had skin problems. Basic cleanliness often solved the problem. "We washed thousands of kids and gave away thousands of bars of soap," recalled Captain John Schmidt, pictured below.



The CA Teams passed out bars of soap to help parents make sure that their children remained clean.



Acclaimed author John E. Steinbeck (front right) toured Vietnam on behalf of the newspaper *Newsday* in 1967. While there, he visited one of the 41st CA Teams.



With a simple plan, 1LT Patrick S. Brady developed a lasting program. His German Dodge Ball league was running without assistance years after its creation.



Because it was a low-priority unit, 41st personnel often had to scrounge materials for their projects. Sheet metal, lumber, and concrete had to be begged, borrowed, or appropriated.

and he had “an ample supply. That was always good trading material.” Pence said “The Colonel said just don’t get me sent to Leavenworth . . . He wanted to follow procedure to get things for people, but if you tried to do it with paperwork it was fruitless. He allowed me a little latitude . . . as long as I did not cause any trouble.” However, most Teams were responsible for the majority of their logistics. This is because of “the problem of trying to get the supplies out to them.”¹⁴⁹

After two full years in Vietnam, the 41st Civil Affairs Company still faced the same dilemmas. Neither the U.S., nor South Vietnamese Army leadership understood how to employ CA. And, there still was no strategic plan to implement programs nation-wide. But, the 41st was succeeding at the tactical level. On the ground, the Company had begun the process of winning hearts and minds, which contributed to offsetting VC influence. As an example, 1LT Patrick S. Brady, a Military Intelligence officer with Team 7 at Phan Thiet in 1967, found that he

instance, the teams requested non-authorized weapons. Pence recalled “I dealt with a guy over at Special Forces. They had warehouses full of [M-1] carbines and M-3 Greaseguns. I could get all of those that I wanted.” One of his most useful tools for trading for supplies was liquor. The Air Force flew in bootleg liquor from the Philippines,

41ST CA COMPANY LOCATIONS

CORPS	TEAM	ATTACHED TO	LOCATION	YEAR
I Corps	3	29 th CA Co	Da Nang	1 9 6 7
	5	29 th CA Co	Quang Ngai	
	10	29 th CA Co	Tam Ky	
	16	29 th CA Co	Da Nang	
II Corps	1	3 rd Bde 25 th Inf Div	I Corps (Duc Pho)	
	4	41 st CA Co	Phan Thiet	
	6	1 st Cav Div	An Khe	
	8	4 th ID	Oasis	
	9	41 st CA Co (4 th ID)	Thnah An (Edap Enang)	
	11	41 st CA Co	Phu My	
	12	41 st CA Co	An Khe (Phan Thiet)	
	13	41 st CA Co	Bong Son	
III Corps	15	1 st Bde 101 st Abn	I Corps	
	(14)	(41 st CA Co)	(I Corps Duc Pho)	
	2	2 nd Bde 1 st ID (41 st CA)	Phu Loi (Ban Me Thuot)	
	7	3 rd Bde 1 st ID (41 st CA)	Lai Khe (Phan Thiet)	
	14	1 st Bde 1 st ID (41 st CA)	Di An (Nha Trang)	

was not able to do his intended job. Instead, he decided to do something useful. He developed a wildly successful German Dodge Ball league for the local Vietnamese boys. He chose the game because it did not require much in the way of equipment, space, or training. Brady received a letter in 1972 from Jeffrey L. Ashley, a former 41st CA medic, then back in Vietnam as a civilian. He wrote to Brady that the games were still “the very most popular” and that “several hundred, perhaps thousands of children in Vietnam, are glad and thankful, without knowing it, that you were selected to spend some of your time in their proximity.”⁵⁰ Clearly, on the tactical level, the 41st was making a difference.

This was accomplished through perseverance by dedicated soldiers who, without a specific mission, took it upon themselves to do what was necessary. By 1968, the 41st CA Company had been credited with “winning significant victories without firing a shot” as they battled to rebuild a nation “under fire.”⁵¹ This proved acceptable until the 1968 Tet Offensive led to major changes in focus. How the 41st CA adjusted to the post-Tet environment until its disbandment in 1970 will be the subject of Part II. ♣

I would like to thank the veterans of the 41st Civil Affairs Company who provided their time and materials for this article. In particular, Elmer M. Pence, John Schmidt, Larry A. Castagnato, Lee Livingston, Gary Faith, Patrick S. Brady, Jimmy Gonzalez, David Gunn, David Forbes, David Schaffner, Ronald Matheson, Earl Palmer, Ivars Bemberis, Darrell Buffaloe, David Clark, Dr. Michael D. Sparago, and Andrew Lattu went out of their way to answer questions and furnish photographs. The 41st CA Company maintains a website at <http://www.41stcivilaffairs.com/>

Troy J. Sacquety earned an MA from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and his PhD in Military History from Texas A&M University. Prior to joining the USASOC History Office staff he worked several years for the Central Intelligence Agency. Current research interests include Army and Office of Strategic Services (OSS) special operations during World War II, and Special Operations units in Vietnam.

Endnotes

- 1 SP4 C. Blair Kenagy, “Peace Corps With Rifles,” (1969) copy provided by the 41st Civil Affairs Company veteran’s association, copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 2 Jeremy Patrick White, “Civil Affairs in Vietnam,” CSIS: *Center for Strategic & International Studies*, found on line at http://www.csis.org/media/csis/pubs/090130_vietnam_study.pdf, accessed 2 February 2009. **The ADVON arrived on 15 December 1965.**
- 3 CPT Jeffrey J. Clarke, “Historical Project, Army Civil Affairs Operations in Southeast Asia,” 25 January 1974, Box 47, Civil Affairs Vietnam-1973, ARSOF Archives, JFK Special Warfare Museum.
- 4 COL Francis J. Kelly, *Vietnam Studies: U.S. Army Special Forces 1961-1971* (Washington DC: Department of the Army, 1989), 41.
- 5 CPT Clarke, “Historical Project,” 25 January 1974.

Projects of the 41st Civil Affairs Company in 1967

<i>Project</i>	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Repaired</i>
Schools	10	22
Latrines	36	
Wells	44	28
Bridges	30	12
Culverts	65	
Roads	7	12
Dwellings	1,271	
Dispensaries	6	2
Playgrounds	22	5
Protective Fences	22	5
Information Boards	13	
Spillways	11	2
Dams	3	1
Public Buildings	5	1
Irrigation	2	
Drainage	7	

Total MEDCAP patients:	276,240
Total Immunizations:	16,769
Decontamination Showers:	8,628
Total Medical Treatments:	301,637

Items Distributed

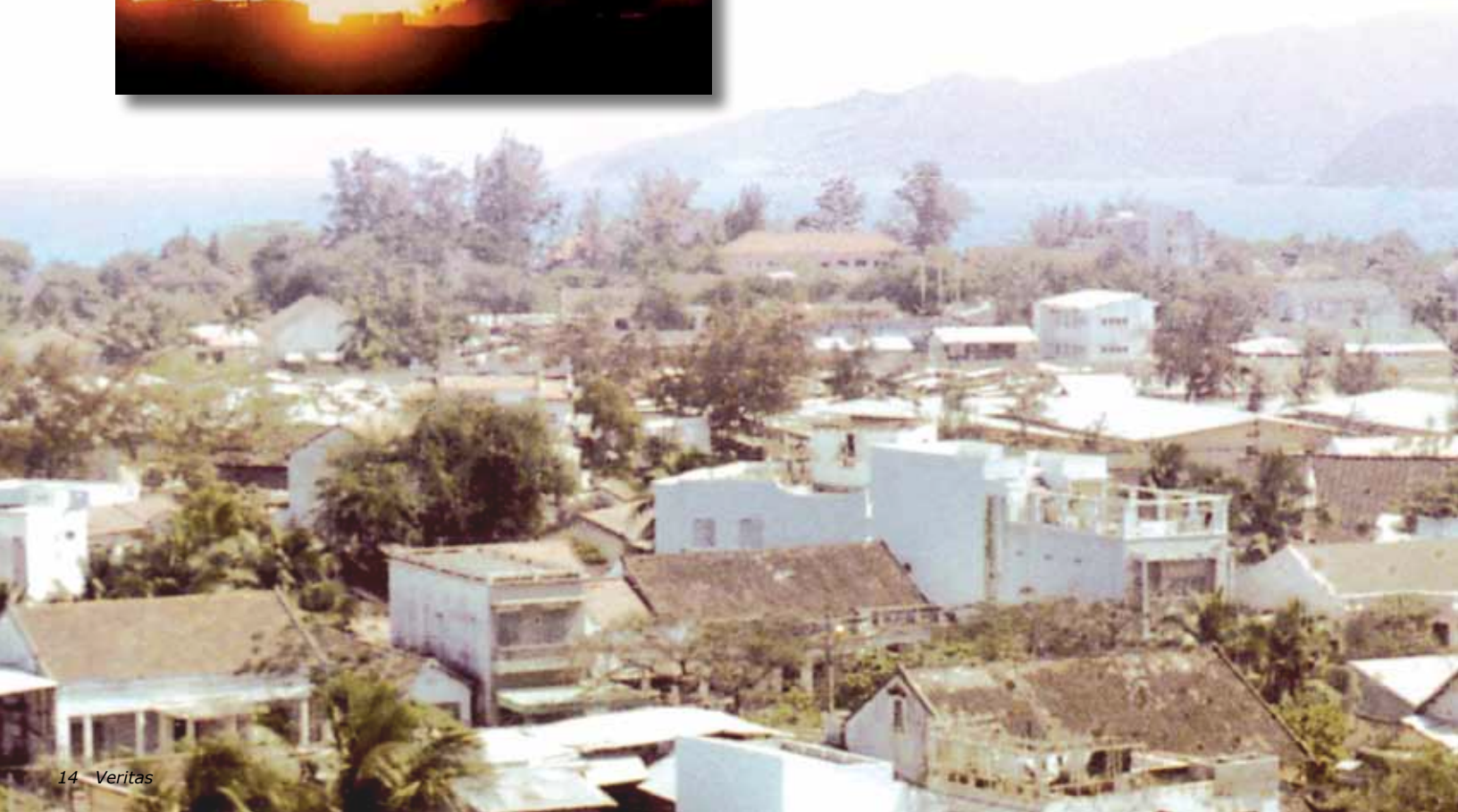
<i>Item</i>	<i>Number</i>
Cement	1,343,830 lbs
Lumber	177,300 board feet
Tin	19,303 sheets
Nails	1,072 lbs
Barbed Wire	53 rolls
Soap	39,453 bars
Clothing	39,487 lbs
Food	2,227,452 lbs
Candy	39,487 bars

- 6 “Unit History 1 January 1965 to 31 December 1965,” Posted by David Gunn on Flickr, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/dgunn/2596504675/in/set-72157605671591016/>, accessed on 30 June 2009.
- 7 Lawrence Castagneto interview by Dr. Troy J. Sacquety, 13 June 2009, Redding, CA, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 8 Lee Livingston email to Dr. Troy J. Sacquety, 1 April 2009, subject: Civil Affairs School, 1966, Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 9 Castagneto interview.
- 10 “Unit History 1 January 1965 to 31 December 1965.”
- 11 “Unit History,” [late 1967], 41st CA Company: Unit History Wire Diagram, F 8, B 17, Civil Affairs Vietnam; 1967-5, ARSOF Archives, Ft. Bragg, NC.
- 12 General Orders 2277, 31 December 1965, Headquarters, United States Army Vietnam, copy provided by the 41st Civil Affairs Association and residing in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC. **Initially the teams had an assigned medical doctor. However by mid-1966 they were deemed underutilized and stripped out of the unit for use elsewhere.**

- 13 CPT Akerlow, 2LT Liddle, and SP4 McAdoo, "A History of the 41st Civil Affairs Company; 1LT W.H. Smith to CG II Field Force Vietnam, "Attachment of CA Teams," 24 July 1966, F 40 "41st CA Company Readings, 66-70," Box 32, Civil Affairs Vietnam 1970-73, ARSOF Archives, JFK Special Warfare Museum.
- 14 LTC Johnnie Forte interview by CPT Thomas E. Ross, 13th Military History Detachment, Nha Trang, Vietnam, [late 1969], USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 15 MAJ Johnnie Forte Jr., "Operational Report: Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 41st Civil Affairs Company, Period Ending 31 July, 1969," 19 November 1969, F 54, Box 27, Civil Affairs Vietnam 1969-5, ARSOF Archives, JFK Special Warfare Museum. CPT Akerlow, 2LT Liddle, and SP4 McAdoo, "A History of the 41st Civil Affairs Company.": **CA platoons assigned to divisions were attached to the G-5 section.** LTC Jonnie Forte interview by CPT Thomas E. Ross, 13th Military History Detachment, Nha Trang, Vietnam, [late 1969], USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 16 CPT Clarke, "Historical Project," 25 January 1974, JFK Special Warfare Museum.
- 17 COL Ronald A. Shackleton, *Village Defense: Initial Special Forces Operations in Vietnam* (Arvada, CO: Phoenix Press, 1975), 124.
- 18 MAJ Johnnie Forte, Jr., "Operational Report of the 41st Civil Affairs Company for Period Ending 31 July 1969, RCS CSFOR-65 (R1)," 19 August 1969, 41st CA Company Report: OPS Jul 69, F 54, Civil Affairs Vietnam 1969-5, Box 27, ARSOF Archives, JFK Special Warfare Center, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 19 "General Orders Number 2277," 31 December 1965, Posted by David Gunn on Flickr, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/dgunn/2596506563/in/set-72157605671591016/>, accessed on 30 June 2009.
- 20 **For more information on the Harassment and Interdiction Fire mission, see John M. Hawkins, "The Costs of Artillery: Eliminating Harassment and Interdiction Fire During the Vietnam War," *The Journal of Military History* 1 (70) (January 2006): 91-122.**
- 21 "Unit History 1 January 1965 to 31 December 1965," Posted by David Gunn on Flickr, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/dgunn/2596504829/in/set-72157605671591016/>, accessed on 30 June 2009.
- 22 Castagneto interview.
- 23 Dr. Michael Sparago, telephone interview by Dr. Troy J. Sacquety, 14 July 2009, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files.
- 24 CPT Charles W. Akerlow, 2LT Larry F. Liddle, and SP4 Richard W. McAdoo, "A History of the 41st Civil Affairs Company (1 Jan 1966 to 31 Dec 1966," copy provided by the 41st Civil Affairs Company Association and held in the USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, N.C.
- 25 Sparago interview.
- 26 CPT Akerlow, 2LT Liddle, and SP4 McAdoo, "A History of the 41st Civil Affairs Company."
- 27 Sparago interview.
- 28 CPT Akerlow, 2LT Liddle, and SP4 McAdoo, "A History of the 41st Civil Affairs Company."
- 29 CPT Akerlow, 2LT Liddle, and SP4 McAdoo, "A History of the 41st Civil Affairs Company."



The Communist Tet Offensive, reflected in this rocket attack on Da Nang airbase on 30 January 1968, caught Allied forces by surprise. Although the attacks ultimately decimated the VC, they were a tremendous psychological victory because the American public watching television became fully aware that the war was far from over.



- 30 John Schmidt talk, 2008 41st Civil Affairs Reunion, 14 June 2008, San Antonio, TX, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 31 Andrew Lattu talk, 2008 41st Civil Affairs Reunion, 14 June 2008, San Antonio, TX, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 32 Schmidt talk, 2008 41st Civil Affairs Reunion, 14 June 2008.
- 33 Andrew Lattu talk, 2008 41st Civil Affairs Reunion, 14 June 2008.
- 34 Andrew Lattu talk, 2008 41st Civil Affairs Reunion, 14 June 2008.
- 35 Sparago interview.
- 36 Lattu talk, 2008 41st Civil Affairs Reunion, 14 June 2008.
- 37 Lattu talk, 2008 41st Civil Affairs Reunion, 14 June 2008.
- 38 1LT Edward P. Ruminski, "Edap Enang Resettlement Center, Pleiku Province, Team #9, 41st Civil Affairs Company," July 1968, F 15, Box 19, Civil Affairs Vietnam 1968-2, ARSOF Archives, JFK Special Warfare Museum.
- 39 **Department of State records often referred to the organization as the Civil Operations and Rural Development Support (CORDS).**
- 40 Dale Andrade and James H. Willbanks, "CORDS/Phoenix: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Vietnam for the Future," *Military Review* (March-April 2006), 14.
- 41 CPT R. W. Miller, "41st Civil Affairs Company," *The Typhoon*, July 1968, 16, 1LT John F. Seiber, Annual Supplement, History of the 41st Civil Affairs Company, 1 January 1968-31 December 1968," copy in USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 42 CPT Clarke, "Historical Project," 25 January 1974. **In 1968, the 41st began calling its teams "platoons." Team 9 was pulled back in late 1968, leaving Team 8 the only one assigned to the 4th Infantry Division.**
- 43 1LT Richard W. Foster and SP4 Robert C. Holloway, "History of the 41st Civil Affairs CO (1 Jan 1967 to 31 Dec 1967), Posted by David Gunn on Flickr, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/dgunn/2597374222/in/set-72157605671591016/>, accessed on 1 July 2009.
- 44 William R. Beavers, "Operational Report of 41st Civil Affairs Company for Period Ending 30 April 1968, RCS CSFOR-65 (ri)," 3 May 1968, 41st CA Company Readings 66-70, F 40, Civil Affairs Vietnam 1970-3, Box 32, ARSOF Archives, JFK Special Warfare Museum.
- 45 1LT Richard W. Foster and SP4 Robert C. Holloway, "History of the 41st Civil Affairs CO (1 Jan 1967 to 31 Dec 1967), Posted by David Gunn on Flickr, <http://www.flickr.com/photos/dgunn/2597374222/in/set-72157605671591016/>, accessed on 1 July 2009.
- 46 Elmer Pence, telephone interview by Dr. Troy J. Sacquety, 23 July 2009, digital recording, USASOC History Office Classified Files.
- 47 Pence interview.
- 48 Pence interview.
- 49 Pence interview.
- 50 Patrick Brady, email to Dr. Troy J. Sacquety, 28 July 2008, Subject: Leaflets, USASOC History Office Classified Files, Fort Bragg, NC.
- 51 CPT R.W. Miller, "41st Civil Affairs Company," *The Typhoon*, July 1968, 16.

1st LT Elmer M. Pence was the first commander of the Civilian Supply Team. It was based at Nha Trang with the Public Health Team.

The 41st Civil Affairs Company Headquarters was located in the coastal city of Nha Trang.

