

Cholly Leads 'L' Co. To Hidden VC Sites

By: LCpl. Chuck Giesler

PHU BAI—"Cholly", a former Viet Cong and now a Chieu Hoi, led "L" Co., 3rd Bn., Twenty-sixth Marines, to three harboring sites and one POW compound in the Thon Ben Tau area, south of here.

Cholly left a VC medical unit he had been forced to serve with since 1963, and requested sanctuary one month ago under the Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) program.

VC Mine Explosion Kills Playing Child; Five Others Injured

DA NANG—It was an idyllic spring day and six Vietnamese children, like those everywhere, were playing their games and enjoying life.

One small child reached down to pick up a stick, and the fun and games ended as the air was rent with a rocking explosion, killing the tot and injuring the other five, two critically.

The children, ranging in age from three to eight, were playing near their homes some nine miles southwest of Danang near the command post of the 1stBn., Seventh Marine Regiment.

This was just one more example of the Viet Cong terrorism tactics used in this war torn country. The stick, which was to become a play thing for the children, had been set up by the Viet Cong terrorist forces as a triggering device for an anti-personnel mine.

He readily led the Marines to the sites hidden in the dense, triple canopied highland jungles.

"It was obvious that he was familiar with the area," said 1stLt. T. A. Bailey (Dallas Tex.). "As a result of his knowledge of the trail system we were able to locate and destroy these enemy sites which had been a thorn in our side for months."

Capt. F. D. Bynum, (Columbus, Ga.), "L" Co. commander, said they located and destroyed 17 40-man huts with underground bunkers the first day, and found the POW compound on the second. "It was extremely well constructed, had three permanent houses, underground bunkers and running water nearby," he said.

"The area was so thick with jungle foliage that we saw daylight only in rare instances. Without Cholly we could have walked within 50 yards of each site and still not seen them."

The unit captured uniforms, cooking utensils, a rifle grenade, 7.62mm ammunition, 10 pounds of TNT, an anti-tank mine, a K-50 loaded magazine and a new automatic weapon barrel still in cosmoline.