

X5662/1

**Southern Cross information
for 198 BDE 23 INF
1/46 INF**

For date 710122

198 BDE 23 INF was a US Army unit

1/46 INF was a US Army unit

Primary service involved, US Army

Quang Tin Province, I Corps, South Vietnam

Location, LZ MARY ANN

Description: → The following is an edited version of an article titled "Professionals net five" by PFC John P. Szaynowski of the 198th Inf. Bde. IO. LZ MARY ANN - Quick decisive action by the "Professionals" of the 1st Battalion, 46th Infantry, coupled with the element of surprise, recently accounted for the deaths of five NVA soldiers who were ensnared in a hasty surprise set by the 198th Brigade soldiers. The first platoon of Company B encountered the five enemy troops in a heavily wooded area while on a search and clear mission southwest of Tam Ky. "We had just moved across a small rice paddy when I sent out a patrol to look for an easier route of travel," recalled 1LT Donald G. Rider of Cooperstown N.Y. While on patrol a short distance from the platoon, the 23rd Infantry Division soldiers detected a small trail leading up a finger of a ridge line. Sergeant Richard Whitlock from Detroit, in command of the squad-size patrol, sent the point man, Specialist 4 Santo M. Spinali of Florissant, Mo., to explore the trail. "I walked up the trail about ten meters," explained SP4 Spinali, "and happened to glance of f to the right and noticed the butt of a rifle sticking up in the bushes. "I called to Sergeant Whitlock and we checked it out. When we were satisfied the rifle was not booby-trapped we picked it up." "After SP4 Spinali found the SKS, we dropped our rucksacks and started to make a thorough search of the area, said Sgt. Whitlock. During the search, the sergeant, who had moved down the side of a nearby knoll, spotted the five NVA. "They were traveling in a gully about 25 meters away," he related. "After I noticed LT Rider, we moved back up the knoll to join the rest of our platoon. In an effort to capitalize on the element of surprise, the lieutenant quickly deployed the platoon in a hasty defensive position on the crest of the knoll overlooking a gully. As the platoon maneuvered into position,

x5262/2

Staff Sergeant Steve R. Sweat of Fayetteville, N.C., platoon sergeant, called in his unit's location to the battalion tactical operations center on LZ Mary Ann and requested artillery and gunship support. "The NVA were still unaware of our presence," related Lt. Rider; "When we opened up, they didn't know what hit them." After the initial bursts of fire, the "Professionals" silenced the remaining enemy resistance with a barrage of eight hand grenades. A short while later, after artillery and gunships had combed suspected enemy positions with preparatory fire, the first platoon linked with the second platoon and made a sweep of the area. During the search operation, the "Professionals" uncovered a small enemy storage shelter, which, upon closer scrutiny, yielded a sizable cache

The source for this information was *7101_404_scr supplied by Les Hines 01/2000*

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Mike Law Email address: law@vhpa.org

Return to panel index

Return to VHPA Home Page

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