PLOTTING—Specialist 4 Charles Cline of Harrisville, W. Va., must plot the requested direction and distance of fire before firing data may be calculated and passed to the guns. (LT R. S. PERRY)

HEAD ON—At Diamond Hill this 105mm was Private First Class Mario Alvarado of Sunland.

RAMMING THE PROJO—As the gunner sets the deflection and levels the bubbles on the sight, the #1 cannonner rams the projectile and cannister into the tube. (PHOTO BY LT R. S. PERRY)

READY AND SET — Corporal Dale Dahlinger of Toms River, N.J., and Specialist 4 Doyle Reynolds of Bisbee, Ariz., assist in preparing the gun to fire. Dahlinger is setting the elevation of the tube while Reynolds rams the projectile into the chamber of the breach. (PHOTO BY LT R. S. PERRY)
Artillery—the King of Battle—
1/8 Puts It Where It's Needed

By SP4 Bert Allen
SB PERSHING — “Battery list.” These words command the respect of the men in the 1st Battalion, 8th Artillery. Under this command, the men of Bravo Battery are constant, with their varied tasks of keeping projectiles out where they’re needed, when requested.

Located at three fire support and patrol bases, Bravo Battery is responsible for the support of the infantrymen and water sailors on the San Juan River. The crew, from left, consists of Specialist 4 Wayne Day of Anadarko, Okla. of Sunland, N.M.; Sergeant George Balch of Pittsburgh, Pa.; and Specialist 4 Roger Glover from Mansfield, Ohio.

Disorganization and uncleanliness at a fire support base in the fields of Vietnam is soon dispelled upon arrival at any of 1st Battalion, 8th Artillery, locations.

Each howitzer’s parapet is constantly raked and cleaned at least twice daily. It is almost impossible to find a cigarette butt in the battery areas.

The day of the artillerymen is long and arduous. If he’s lucky, he gets a few hours sleep at night, and that may be broken by fire missions.

The never-resting “brain” of the artillery, the Fire Direction Center, demands quick reactions and smooth, calm thinking from its men under the most arduous conditions. It is not unusual to see the men of F.D.C. finishing a fire mission as exhausted as the cannoneers.

The information is then calculated and given to the cannoneers in terms suitable for the guns to use.

The day of the artillerymen is long and arduous. If he’s lucky, he gets a few hours sleep at night, and that may be broken by fire missions.

His early morning hours are spent maintaining and cleaning his weapon, as well as the “office”—the gun’s parapet.

During the distribution of ammunition, other cannoneers may possibly be firing more rounds, which makes the task seem eternal.

The never-resting “brain” of the artillery, the Fire Direction Center, demands quick reactions and smooth, calm thinking from its men under the most arduous conditions. It is not unusual to see the men of F.D.C. finishing a fire mission as exhausted as the cannoneers.

It is in F.D.C. that data is gathered from the forward observers, the “eyes” of the artillery with infantry units. The information is then calculated and given to the cannoneers in terms suitable for the guns to use.

In little visible reward, but the infantrymen and water sailors on the San Juan River have seen the effects of the battalion’s precise fires. These elements have been bestowed, and the cannoneer is satisfied knowing that he has assisted in defeating an enemy, or destroying his resources.

Bravo Battery of the 1/8 is not only a fighting battery. It is a show unit capable of demonstrating the abilities of the artillery to any and all visitors, from admirals and generals, to Billy Graham or the statue of “Peyton Place.” Its guest list is impressive.

The howitzer at 105mm was lowered and belched fire 159 times that same night. The crew, from left, consists of Specialist 4 Wayne Day of Anadarko, Okla. of Sunland, N.M.; Sergeant George Balch of Pittsburgh, Pa.; and Specialist 4 Roger Glover from Mansfield, Ohio.

(Photograph by Specialist 4 R. B. WILL)

TOTE THAT BOX—Two cannoneers from Bravo Battery unload two of the several hundred rounds going to FSB Pershing daily.

(Photograph by 1LT R.S. PERRY)
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