

# 3 Americans Seen Fighting for Cong

DA NANG (Vietnam) — (AP) — Three Americans have been seen serving with the Viet Cong for at least two years, military sources report. U.S. military intelligence knows them as Pork Chop, Salt and Pepper.

The men are believed to be deserters but could be prisoners of war who defected, the sources say.

Although seen from a distance by Americans and several times close at hand by Vietnamese villagers, they have eluded capture and have not been identified.

Salt and Pepper work together in Quang Ngai Province 70 to 90 miles south of Da Nang. Salt is white, Pepper black.

## Face Hair

Pork Chop, a blond 6-footer, works a little farther south in Binh Dinh Province.

He is said to have had burn scars on his face and wears bushy sideburns to obscure them.

"They are members of small Viet Cong units, and as far as we can tell they enjoy no special privileges," one intelligence source said. "We are certain they do not command their units.

"We believe they have taken part in a number of hit-and-run raids on remote district outposts, but they never have been spotted at the scene of a major battle."

## 'Leaves'

Investigators say Pork Chop appears the most active and daring of the three. Several times he has flagged down South Vietnamese military vehicles and hijacked them at gunpoint.

He also is credited with

having made off with two American armored personnel carriers from a vehicle park, hitching one to the other.

He was last reported sighted two months ago as he drove a captured armored personnel carrier northward into enemy territory in Binh Dinh Province.

All three of the men are reported to have spent "leaves" in Da Nang, hitching rides into the city virtually under the noses of U.S. and South Vietnamese military police. Two of them were said to have been spotted riding a motorbike in the city last Christmas.

Villagers say the Viet Cong display the Americans in remote villages and tell the people:

"Look at these American

comrades. We offer them only a life of hardship and struggle and yet they choose to fight at our side. They are living proof that our cause is just and soon will triumph."

A small U.S. military intelligence team at Da Nang is trying to track down the three men. It has a helicopter at its disposal to move quickly.

Several reports have been received that one or another of the men has been killed, but none has ever been authenticated. One village chief reported that an American had been buried in his area, but the grave contained the body of an unusually tall, heavy Chinese.

## Reward

A reward for information about the three men has been suggested, but one source said officials were reluctant to do this for fear of endangering other Americans.

Reports of westerners serving or traveling with Communist field units have cropped up frequently during the Vietnam War.

The closest the Americans ever came to pinning down such a report was in 1969 when a U.S. Marine patrol shot at and apparently wounded a young armed American with a Viet Cong squad near Da Nang.

They heard him cry out, "Help me, I'm hit," but no trace of his body was found in a search of the area after the battle. Later, several Marines picked out the photo of a Marine deserter and said he closely resembled the man they shot.