

The First

Screaming

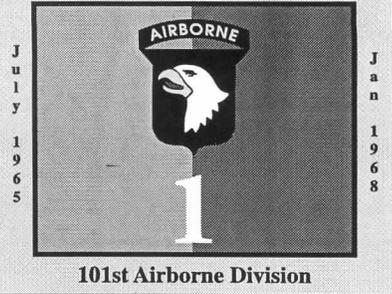
A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF
THE 1ST BRIGADE (Separate) 101st AIRBORNE DIVISION
in Viet Nam from July 1965 through January 1968



Published Quarterly
January - April - July - October

*Eagles
in Viet Nam*

1st Brigade (Separate) Viet Nam



Volume 10, Number 2

April 2008

\$6.00

The ALWAYS FIRST Brigade



—Associated Press Drawing by HOWARD BRODIE

HELICOPTER DOOR GUNNER OPENS FIRE ON VIET CONG POSITIONS

... on attack mission against the enemy



**THE 11th BIENNIAL
REUNION OF THE
FIRST BRIGADE (S)
101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION**

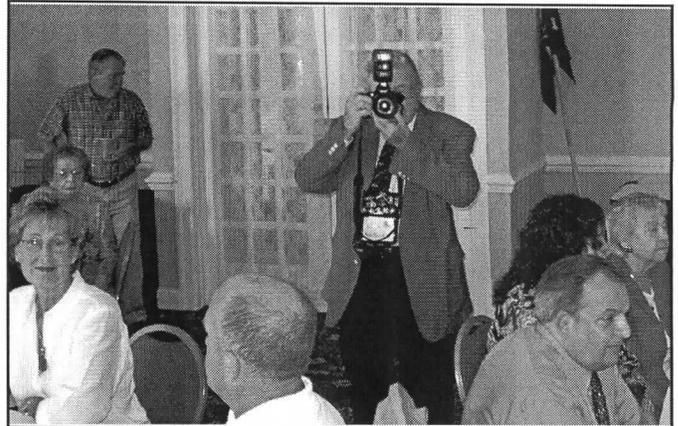
**WILL BE IN HAMPTON, VIRGINIA
SEPTEMBER 25 – 28, 2008**

**AT THE HOLIDAY INN
HAMPTON HOTEL &
CONFERENCE CENTER**

Reunion registration packets have been mailed to all those who are in the magazine database. Register early to avoid the rush. More reunion information on page 15. If you need registration material, contact the editor. Names and units of those registered for the reunion will be posted on the website in April.

This magazine is produced by and for veterans of the ALWAYS FIRST BRIGADE who served in the brigade from July 1965 through April 1968. The publication will chronicle the military history and accomplishments of veterans who served, as well as units that were assigned, attached or supported the brigade. The editor solicits material about the brigade for use in the magazine and for future publication in a book that will contain a comprehensive history of the brigade.

Another goal of the editor is to lead an initiative to place a monument, to honor members of the brigade, at the Wings of LIBERTY Military Museum at Fort Campbell, Kentucky (the museum will be located on the Tennessee side of Fort Campbell).



Many readers have seen your editor and publisher, IVAN WORRELL, in this pose. The picture was taken by ALTON E. "TONY" MABB, JR., 2/502 E Recon 10/70-8/71, at the 101st Airborne Division Vietnam Veterans Reunion in Charleston, SC in 2007.

My first order of business is to thank all of you who have submitted material to make this magazine possible. I should also apologize to those of you who have submitted material that I have not been able to get into the magazine. I will keep trying.

Working with the General William C. Lee Chapter to prepare for our September reunion has been a real pleasure. I know they will conduct a great reunion for the ALWAYS FIRST BRIGADE. The WINGS OF LIBERTY Historical Foundation is sending a display, the museum gift shop will have a PX and we will have an official photographer again and produce a memory book for those who attend and have a picture taken. The hospitality room is large. The committee is working on tours if enough people are interested. I expect that Fort Monroe will be one of them. I have asked Secretary of Veterans Affairs James B. Peake to see if he can have a seminar at this reunion, as we did in Atlanta, to advise our veterans and their families of the VA services available and how best to access and use them.

I have received considerable positive feedback about the Trung Luong story in the January issue. Because of this I plan, for the July 08 issue, to republish the Trung Luong story written by LTC(R) Louis M. McDonald, 2/327 B 5/66-10/66, first published in the October 1999 magazine and mistakenly attributed to Tom Furgeson.

As usual, I am asking all of you who have photos and other written material from our tour in Viet Nam to please send it to me so I can scan it and return it to you. When I use it I will give you credit for submitting the material.

The page of pictures from the First Brigade Combat team in Iraq were interesting because of the great amount of exposure the brigade gives to the Iraqi police and troops they are training. This sure is a different war, in every way, than Viet Nam.





Department of
Veterans Affairs

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 20, 2007

Peake Sworn in As VA Secretary *New Leader Pledges to Look to the Future*

WASHINGTON – In a ceremony today Dr. James B. Peake, a combat veteran of the Vietnam War and former Army Surgeon General, was sworn in by President George W. Bush as the nation's sixth Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

"Dr. Peake takes office at a critical moment in the history of this Department," said President Bush. "Our nation is at war – and many new veterans are leaving the battlefield and entering the VA system. This system provides our veterans with the finest care – but the bureaucracy can be difficult to navigate."

Secretary Peake stressed his commitment to easing the transition of our current generation of returning, combat experienced men and women and of "the opportunity to look to the future of this newest generation of combat veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan – getting it right for them and for their families."

Peake, who retired in 2004 as a three-star general, is a board-certified thoracic surgeon. His commands included the U.S. Army Medical Command, headquartered at Ft. Sam Houston, Texas; Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, Wash.; the 44th Medical Brigade at Fort Bragg, N.C.; and the 18th Medical Command in Seoul, South Korea.

Secretary Peake told those assembled, "You need to know that I believe deeply in the mission; and that I believe in you. I know quite a number of you already. I've seen the ethic, the caring, the compassion, and the technical skills."

A native of St. Louis and graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Peake attended medical school after serving in Vietnam, where he earned the Silver Star and Purple Heart.

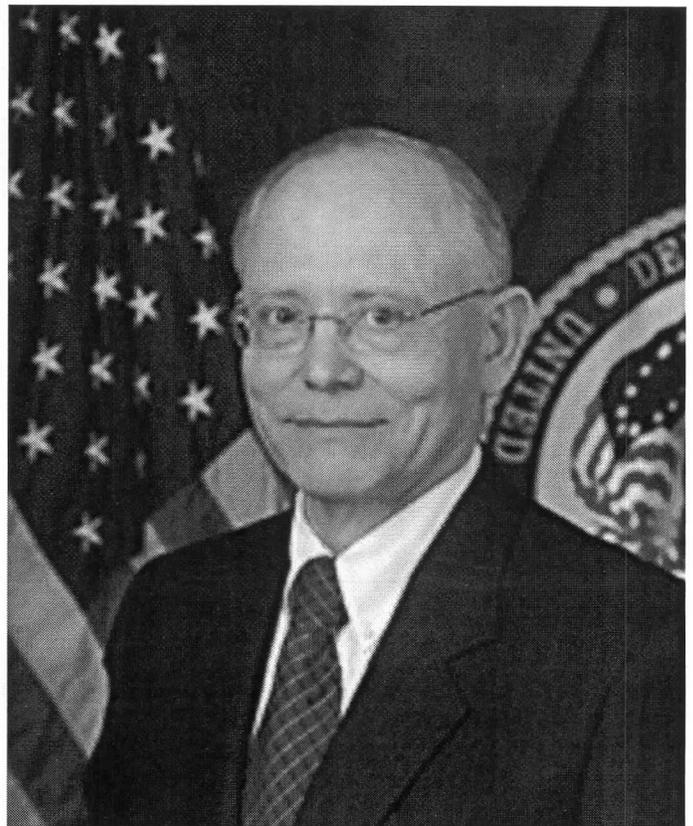
As Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Peake assumes leadership of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the second largest cabinet department, with about 250,000 employees and a budget last year exceeding \$82 billion.

More than 5.5 million veterans are expected to receive care this year in VA's 153 hospitals and 900 clinics. VA also provides disability compensation and pensions to 3.5 million veterans and family members, and operates 125 national cemeteries.

Below are the Secretary's remarks during the ceremony.

Remarks of Secretary James B. Peake For His Swearing In December 20, 2007 -- Washington, D.C.

Mr. President, Vice President Cheney, Secretary Mansfield, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen of the VA -- and of, really, the United States -- I cannot tell you just how proud I am to be back in service to this country and, most particularly, in this role serving those who have defended her.



VA Secretary James B. Peake

Janice, thank you. We've been in lots of ceremonies over the 31 years, and none quite like this, I must admit. (Laughter.) But each time, I recognize just how lucky I am to have you. Mr. President, I know how strongly you feel about doing right by our veterans. Your visit here at our headquarters today

speaks volumes to that. I am deeply appreciative of your confidence and I pledge to you, sir, that I will do my very best to live up to that confidence.

As part of the process of confirmation, in addition to the hearing, there were a series of written questions from the Senate. One of them was: If given the chance, what would you say to all of the people of the VA? So they've sort of prepped me for today for you. What I told them then is what I tell you now: first, just how privileged I feel to be joining this team. I know of your commitment to veterans. I know that many of you have dedicated your lives to taking care of veterans, and that many of you are veterans yourselves.

I know many of the advances -- for example, leading in health care innovation -- that have been because of you. You touch lives all across this great nation, from enabling veterans to have a home, sometimes a special home; to getting an education; to having rehabilitation that enables a productive and proud citizen. Secretary Chao, I look forward to working with you, particularly in that regard. You need to know that I deeply believe in this mission, and that I believe in you.

I know quite a number of you already, and I have had emails from across the field of people that I have known over the many years. I've seen the ethic, I've seen the caring and the compassion and the technical skills, and I truly appreciate the quality of the leadership team, Gordon, that you've assembled. I want you to get to know me. You've heard my background: 38 years in the military, with a chance to do lots of different things. But I also have had a rather long association with the VA: 10 years on the Special Medical Advisory Group for the VHA; this last year working with the VBA, and even experience with the VA cemetery when I was commanding general at Fort Sam Houston. I'm not a total newcomer.

With this great team in place, I aim to hit the ground running. And as I review the history, I cannot think of a recent time with more focus on our veterans or more in-depth looks coming together to allow us to chart a course forward, and the opportunity that provides to look to the future with this newest generation of combat veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, simultaneously honoring our nation's commitment to that generation of World War II and Korean veterans, and addressing the needs of the men and women of the Vietnam era, my generation, who are now finding more and more needs of our services.

The Dole-Shalala report that the President commissioned has given us a powerful blueprint to move forward. Already in partnership with DOD, recommendations are being implemented to better serve our wounded warriors. I do look forward to working closely with Congress and with our veterans' service organizations and our military service organizations -- and many, I am delighted to see, are represented here today -- to make meaningful progress where legislation is needed.

Secretary Gates, General Cody, Dr. Casscells, thank you for coming today. Our partnership in this quest is really important to move forward. I don't want "seamlessness" to be a buzz-

word -- I want it to be our way of doing business. I know we can do that together.

Admiral Allen, Commandant of the Coast Guard, is here today, and we not only take care of your veterans, but your presence highlights the VA's role in readiness and homeland security, and I appreciate you being here.

Finally, I told the Senate that I would commit to each of you in the VA my dedication to the mission, to you, and to creating the environment for your success as together, we serve the needs of veterans. Well, I do that now with all of my heart and all of my energy. We have a special mission, and I am delighted to be on this VA team. I'll see you on the high ground.

The White House, President George W. Bush

*For Immediate Release
December 20, 2007*

Fact Sheet: Lt. Gen. James B. Peake (Ret.), M.D.: "A Worthy and Strong Leader" for Our Nation's Veterans
President Bush Participates In Ceremonial Swearing-In Of Former Army Surgeon General With Lifetime Of Military Medical Experience As VA Secretary

White House News

President Bush Attends Swearing In of Secretary of Veterans Affairs



Doctor, LTG (R) James B. Peake, A 6167-6168



"The Secretary is charged with a solemn responsibility: to ensure our nation's veterans receive the care and the benefits they deserve. Dr. Jim Peake has the skills and experience to carry out this mission. He is both the first physician and the first general to lead this department. Throughout his long career, Dr. Peake has worked to improve the way we deliver medical care to our troops. And thanks to his efforts, many who once might have died on the battlefield have returned home to live lives of hope and promise."

- President George W. Bush, 12/20/07

President Bush: "I Am Confident That You Will Have A Worthy And Strong Leader In Our New Secretary"

Dr. Peake was awarded the Silver Star, a Bronze Star with 'V' device and oak leaf cluster, and Purple Heart with oak leaf cluster for his service in Vietnam as a platoon leader with the 101st Airborne Division.

* Dr. Peake was wounded twice in battle and received his acceptance letter to Cornell University Medical College while in the hospital recovering from injury. He attended medical school through an Army scholarship and then returned to the Army for his medical internships and residencies.

* As Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-HI) noted, Dr. Peake's "time as an infantry officer gave [him] a unique warrior's perspective on how our wounded should be cared for." (Committee On Appropriations, Subcommittee On Defense, Hearing, U.S. Senate, 4/8/04)

From 2000 to 2004, Dr. Peake served as the 40th Surgeon General of the United States Army. In this position, he commanded 50,000 medical personnel and 187 army medical facilities worldwide with an operating budget of almost \$5 billion.

Dr. Peake was also commander in several medical posts, and is credited with improving the training and techniques of the Army medical force. Notably, Dr. Peake served as Commanding General of the U.S. Army Medical Department Center and School - the largest medical training facility in the world, with over 30,000 students.

Dr. Peake has been honored with the Order of Military Medical Merit; the "A" Professional Designator; and the Medallion, Surgeon General of the United States. His awards and decorations also include the Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit with three oak leaf clusters, the Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, and an Air Medal. Dr. Peake wears the Combat Infantryman Badge.

Dr. Peake's Private Sector Experience Managing Medical Examinations For Veterans And Separating Soldiers Further

Qualifies Him To Serve As VA Secretary.

Dr. Peake recently served as the Chief Medical Director and Chief Operating Officer of QTC Management, Inc. QTC serves veterans and separating soldiers by providing timely medical examination and electronic medical record services to help government agencies manage medical data and information in a cost-effective manner.

From 2004 to 2006, Dr. Peake was the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Project HOPE, a non-profit international health foundation with offices and programs in more than 30 different countries on five continents. While at Project HOPE, Dr. Peake helped to orchestrate the use of civilian volunteers aboard the Navy Hospital Ship Mercy as it responded to the tsunami in Indonesia and aboard the Hospital Ship Comfort as part of the Hurricane Katrina response.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING: "An Extraordinary Career Of Service"

President's Commission On Care For America's Returning Wounded Warriors Co-Chair And Former Senator Bob Dole: "He's been on both sides. He was a patient after he was wounded in Vietnam, and he spent much of his career as a caregiver." (Michael A. Fletcher and William Branigin, "Ex-Army Doctor, Vietnam Vet Nominated As VA Secretary," [The Washington Post](#), 10/31/07)

American Legion National Commander Marty Conatser: "He seems uniquely qualified to lead the department." ("Legion Pleased Peake Tapped to Lead Veterans Affairs," Press Release, 10/30/07)

VFW National Commander George Lisicki: Gen. Peake "certainly has the prerequisite credentials and organizational skills to lead the second-largest federal department." ("VFW Hopes New Nominee is a Strong Veterans Advocate," Press Release, 10/30/07)

[The San Antonio Express News](#): "It is clear that the department needs someone with his credentials in medicine." (Editorial, "VA Nominee Boasts The Right Experience," [The San Antonio \[TX\] Express-News](#), 11/6/07)

[The Orlando Sentinel](#): "His bona fides are indisputable." (Editorial, "The Right Choice," [The Orlando \[FL\] Sentinel](#), 11/5/07)

[The Chicago Sun-Times](#): "For the first time ever, a doctor and military general has been named to lead the Veterans Affairs." (Editorial, "Nominee Just Might Be The One We Need To Head The VA," [The Chicago Sun-Times](#), 11/1/07)





2/502 Airborne Infantry Battalion Staff (1967)

KNEELING: L/R SPS TAGA, PFC MURPHY, SP4 VAN SETTER, SP4 BUFFANE, SGT DE ROSIER, PFC SILBERTIAN, PFC DEMPSEY, SP4 BAYER, SFC JONES, 1LT PEAKE
SECOND ROW: L/R 1LT THROCKMORTON, CPT GORSKI, CPT ANDERSON, LTC DANFORD, MAJ SHALIKASHVILLI, CPT CAMPBELL, CPT TANAKA, SFC SMITH, SGM PERRY, SGT WILLIAMSON
THIRD ROW: L/R SFC MEYER, CPT BENNETT, SFC JOHNSON, MSG GALLOWAY, MAJ OTSTOTT, CPT COE, LT WILSON
FOURTH ROW: L/R PFC MITELLY, SP4 WATSON



2/502 Airborne Infantry Battalion Staff (1967)

KNEELING: L/R SFC MEYER, MSG GALLOWAY, SFC JONES, SFC SMITH, SGT WILLIAMSON, SGM PERRY
STANDING: L/R MAJ OTSTOTT, 1LT THROCKMORTON, CPT GORSKI, CPT ANDERSON, LTC DANFORD, MAJ SHALIKASHVILLI, CPT CAMPBELL, CPT TANAKA, CPT COE, 1LT PEAKE, 1LT WILSON

Editor's Note: The photographs of the 2/502nd Headquarters element were sent by 1st SGT(R) Wayne Smith, 2/502 HQ 3/67-3/68.



E-MAIL MESSAGES

+ TOM GROLL, 2/327 C 5/67-8/67
24195 Via Llano, Murrieta, CA 92562-5572
(951) 600-1673
geminiguy1@verizon.net

I was helping my husband sign up for a subscription to the First Screaming Eagles and I typed in the wrong information.

Tom was with C Company, 2/327, not the 1/327 that we gave you. Could you please make that correction for him for your upcoming magazine.

Editor's Note: Tom was listed in the October 2007 issue New Subscribers with the incorrect info. A correction has been made.

+ MAJ(R) WILLIAM E. GROVES, HHC (AG) 6/66-5/67
576 Coast Oak Circle, Lawrenceville, GA 30045-6114
(770) 722-5953
BillRojam@aol.com
Subject: Follow up to article January 2008 edition

Ivan, as a follow up to the article in the January edition (page 25), concerning my tour with the brigade. I indicated the Phan Rang beach complex was dedicated by Major Strong, the Brigade AG and General Collins. That should have been General Matheson. I realized the mistake while recently going through some old slides. I believe General Collins was later associated with the brigade or the division, but General Matheson assumed command following General Pearson.

On a different subject, I recently had the pleasure to speak to a Robert Dickson (2/320 FA B Btry 7/65-8/66), a former member of the 2/320th Artillery. In the January edition, he had identified some members taken from a picture of a 105 Howitzer unit. One, specifically, SFC Mack E. Burney, who was an old friend that I had lost contact with. Robert informed me that it was his understanding that Sergeant Burney had been killed in a car accident. If anyone has any additional knowledge concerning Sergeant Burney or his family, I would appreciate the informants-mail address: billrojam@aol.com or telephone (770) 722-5953.

Editor's Note: Thanks for the clarification Bill. I hope some of our readers can help you with the details about SFC Burney.

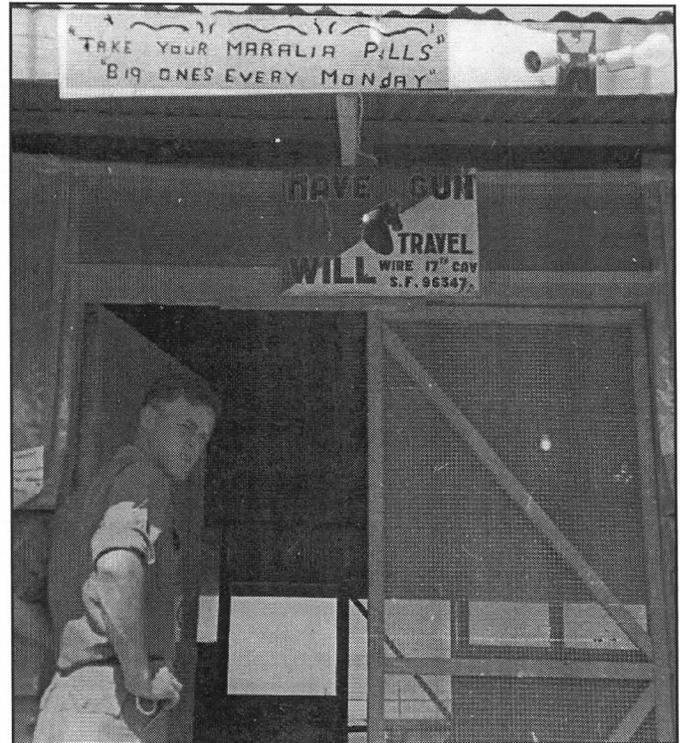
+ GEORGE E. BROWN, SR., 2/17 CAV A 6/66-1/68
101 N. Eagle Rd., Havertown, PA 19083-3435
(610) 789-6609
grande3@verizon.net

Subject: A Trp Mess Hall

Motto above doorway "HAVE GUN WILL TRAVEL."

Taken during one of our rare visits to our home base.

GEORGE E. BROWN, PRESIDENT VVA CHAP. 67,
DELAWARE COUNTY, PA.
<vvachapter67.freesevers.com>

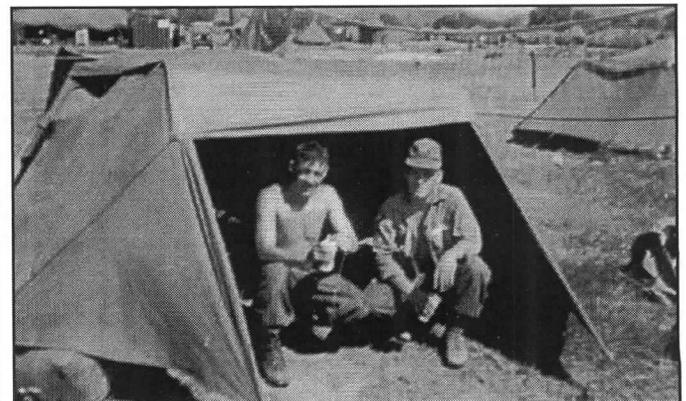


Entrance to new Mess Hall at 101st Base at Phan Rang, 2/67. Jones in the doorway.

Phila. Stand Down, Security Chairman, Jack of all Trades
Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another!
"We are forever grateful for the sacrifice of our fallen heroes"

Editor's Note: When asked if he knew the first name for Jones he sent a reply saying "UNFORTUNATELY NO, I CAPTIONED THOSE PICS 35 YEARS AGO. THERE WERE SEVERAL JONES IN THE PLATOON DURING MY TIME IN IT."

+ JAMES F. LILLY, SR., 2/327 C 7/65-2/66 ELT
7 Waterfall Rd., Chester Gap, VA 22623-2030
(540) 636-6536
jblilly@shentel.net



My name is James F. Lilly. I am sending you a picture of me (on right) and a buddy in Phan Rang in Vietnam. I would like to know his name. Please can you help me. I can not remember his name.

Editor's Note: Can anyone help?

+ JOE MASTRIANI, 2/320 FA C 1/65-6/66
56 Smoke Hill Ridge, Marshfield, MA 02050-2576
(781) 834-3420
jmastriani@aol.com
Subject: Catholic Chaplain

Attached is a photo of Father McCullough about to celebrate Mass somewhere in Nam circa 65-66. My best guess at his first name was "Robert," but searching around using Google and dozens of combinations, I couldn't turn up anything on him. Has anyone ever run across him?



Slowly, as I convert slides to prints (and scan them), I'll send more along.

Joe Mastriani
C/2/320 & B/2/502 FO 65-66

+ COL(R) KENNETH W. PFEIFFER, 1/327 C 8/66-8/67
9330 Laurel Grove, San Antonio, TX 78250-3552
(210) 684-4034 • k.pfeiffer@sbcglobal.net

Ivan:

The two platoon leaders in the photo on the top of page 31 of the latest edition (January 2008) of THE FIRST SCREAMING EAGLES IN VIET NAM are: L-R Ty Harrington and Harry Stevenson. This was confirmed today by Col (R) H. C. (Steve) Stevenson himself. He had not seen the photo until today when



CAPT. ROGER M. JOHN (L) BRIEFS TWO OF HIS PLATOON LEADERS IN THE JUNGLE 10 MILES NORTHWEST OF CHU LAI.

Editor's Note: This August 23, 1967 Stars & Stripes story published in its entirety in the January 2008 magazine is from the COL(R) Gerry Morse, 1/327 C.O. 7/67-6/68, collection.

April 2008

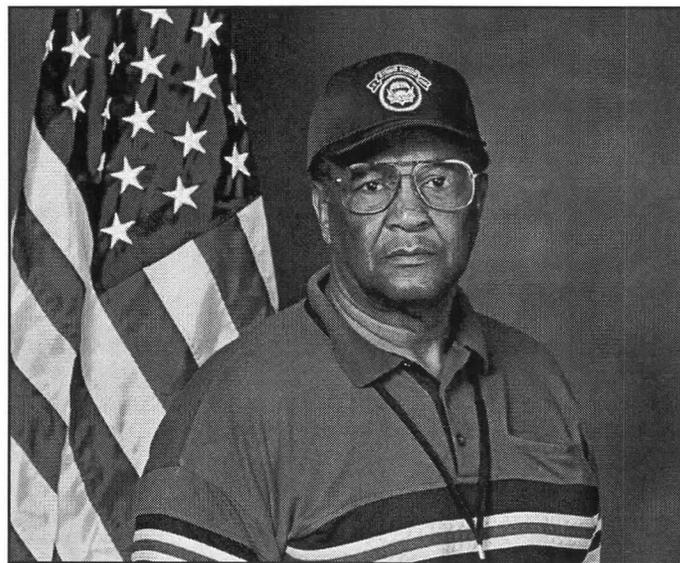
The First Screaming Eagles in Viet Nam

I scanned and sent it to him. Thanks again for all you do for us old warriors. Merry Christmas.

Editor's Note: I am not accustom to having a magazine out as early as I did the January issue. I have COL(R) Harry Stevenson, 1/327 C 67-68, 19405 Encino Summitt, San Antonio, TX 78259, (210) 497-5979 in my database. Would you help me with Ty Harrington?

FROM U.S. POSTAL SERVICE

+ BENJAMIN C. SMITH, 2/502 C 7/65-7/66, 5909 Ironstone Dr., Columbus, GA 31907-5706, (706) 568-4139 wrote: I am writing this letter for three reasons. First to tell you that I enjoy reading the magazine that you publish quarterly. I pray God



Benjamin Smith

will give you many more years and good health so you can continue to do a good service. My second reason is I saw a picture of SSG(R) Hilliard Carter on page 10 of "The First Screaming Eagles In Viet Nam" magazine January 2008 issue. Carter is a very good friend of mine. Please send me his phone number and address. You can give my name and phone number to him, if you have contact with him. Third I enclosed a couple of VIETNAM magazines which may or may not be helpful to you. I also enclosed a copy of my award for the Bronze Star Medal for Heroism along with a picture. Hope you can print this in the April issue.

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES ARMY VIETNAM
APO San Francisco 96307

GENERAL ORDERS
NUMBER 3300

1 June 1966

AWARD OF THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL FOR HEROISM

1. TC 320. The following AWARD is announced.

SMITH, BENJAMIN C. SERGEANT E5 United States Army



Co C, 2d Bn (Abn), 502d Inf, 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div, APO US Forces 96347

Awarded: Bronze Star Medal with "V" Device

Date action: 6 February 1966

Theater: Republic of Vietnam

Reason: For heroism in connection with military operations against a hostile force: Sergeant Smith distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 6 February 1966 while serving as a fire team leader near Canh Tinh, Republic of Vietnam. On this date, Sergeant Smith led his fire team to reinforce elements of his platoon that were assaulting a Viet Cong fortified village. While crossing an open area under intense fire, one of the men in Sergeant Smith's fire team was wounded and lay in an open field. Sergeant Smith, with complete disregard for his safety while exposed to the hostile fire, dashed unarmed to the wounded man's position. Upon reaching his stricken comrade, Sergeant Smith put him on his shoulder and ran toward a ditch, still under the intense sniper fire. Stopping only once, Sergeant Smith ran two hundred meters across an open field to carry the wounded man to an evacuation area. After he was certain that the wounded man was safe, Sergeant Smith returned to his fire team. His actions resulted in the saving of a man's life. Sergeant Smith's personal bravery and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

Authority: By direction of the President under the provisions of Executive Order 11046, 24 August 1962.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

OFFICIAL: C. M. MOUNT, JR.
Brigadier General, US Army
Acting Chief of Staff

/S/ DONALD G. MOFFAT

1st Lt, AGC

Asst Adjutant General

+ NANCY HESLER, Associate, 602 Taft Ave., Charleston, IL 61920-4133, (217) 345-5377 wrote when renewing her subscription: Your magazine is most helpful (and informative) for me to do my project. The combination of current and "in-time" articles can't be found any other place – making it a valuable resource for those researching and seeking information. Thanks for doing it all so well.

+ JAMES D. AGINS, 326 MED D 7/66-2/67, 33 Sunset Blvd., Hamilton Sq., NJ 08690-3940, (609) 586-3724 wrote: Renewal enclosed. Please keep up the good work. Can't wait for the next magazine.

Great seeing you in Tennessee – looking forward to Reno and Hampton. Airborne



+ BG(R) JOHN W. COLLINS, III, DCO 7-12/67 CO 12/67-7/68, 210 Hillview Dr., San Antonio, TX 78209-2205, (210) 822-0873 along with his renewal wrote: Excuse the writing as hands are still not working very well.

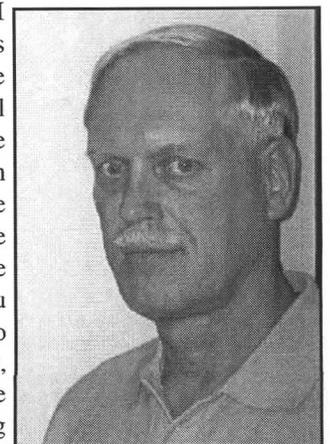
Excellent January edition.

Beautiful memorial for Billy (Spangler INFO OFF 4/67-4/68). I attended as a representative of First Brigade.

Rip Collins

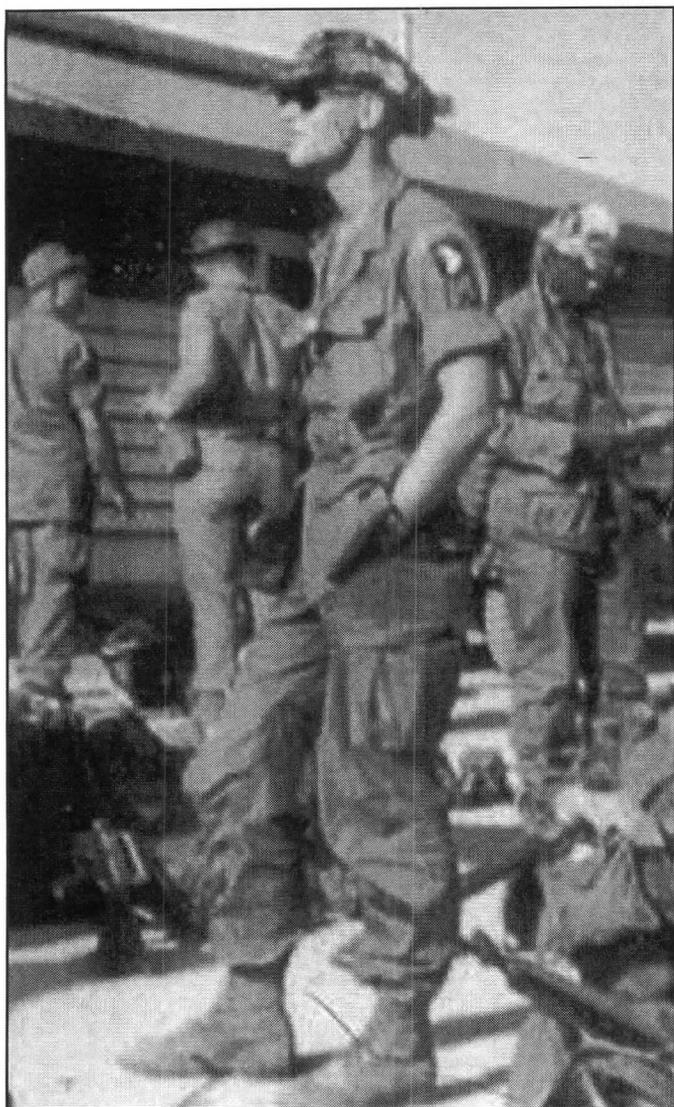
+ LEONARD A. VITHA, 2/502 Recon HQ 7/66-7/67, C/O Melanie A. Martin, 200 Hwy 71 South, Apt 5D Jackson, MN 56143 wrote when renewing his subscription: Send my magazine to my daughter, Melanie Ann – sold my trailer and have been traveling all over. Currently in Apache Junction, Arizona for the winter. Sorry I got behind with my subscription – guess I've become a Nomad again. Back to MN in May.

+ LTC(R) MAX J. RIEKSE, 3/506 HQ LRRP 10/67-10/68, P.O. Box 82, Fruitport, MI 49415-0082, (231) 865-3238, is running for president of the United States. His National Constitution Party may not be well funded, as he has not been present when those from the major parties have debated. He furnished your editor with some campaign material which you may wish to have by writing to him at P.O. Box 82, Fruitport, MI 49415-0082. He was on the California ballot representing the American Independent Party.



His California Campaign was called "low budget" and with 88% of the vote in he garnered 30% of the votes. Some of the websites where he is represented are www.madmaxforpresident.com, www.constitutionparty.com and www.ustaxpayerspartyofmichigan.com. No e-mail address for Max is on file at THE

Recent photo of LTC(R) Max J. Riekse, 3/506 HQ 10/67-10/68.



LTC(R) Max J. Riekse, 3/506 HQ 10/67-10/68 in Viet Nam.

FIRST SCREAMING EAGLES IN VIET NAM OFFICE. We welcome him back as a subscriber.

+ EDWARD "BILL" BARKER, 2/320 FA HHB 8/67-11/68, 6405 Acorn Blvd., Punta Gorda, FL 33982-2140, (941) 639-5137 along with his subscription renewal wrote: Sorry about the delay, had a few things I needed to handle. All is good now.

I wanted to ask you if you would reach out to anyone from the 2/320 Arty 66-68 HHB 1st Brigade.

I have lost contact with John McCreary – we were both in Nam together and I just wanted to wish him well. Also wish all my Airborne Brothers the same.

Airborne All the Way, Sgt Edward (Bill) Barker, 2/320 Arty HHB 1966-68, Welcome Home!

Editor's Note: John McCreary was not in my database. Can anyone help?



+ JAMES E. LEGGETTE, 2/327 B 7/66-7/67, 206 W. 157th Street, P.O. Box 1481, Harvey, IL 60426-1481, (708) 339-4275 sent the following letter with his subscription renewal.

Dear Ivan,

Thanks for a job always well done. I look forward to the Screaming Eagle – each issue. "Wife" tries to make me file all old issues, but I'll never do that. Especially the issue showing actual pictures of the 327th's practice combat "blast" shortly after Christmas 1966. We were stationed at Duc Pho, I believe. If you still have access to that issue, I was the one closest to the ground with the PAE Bag suspended. I goofed on my PLF and ended dragging about 1/4 mile across that rock hard dry rice paddy. I entered in my jump log book the date of Dec 27 – 2 days after Christmas 1966.

If you can give a bit more space, I would like to share another interesting story which THE STARS & STRIPS head-lined: KILLER BEES MAKE THE 101ST DO WHAT CHARLIE CAN'T DO – RETREAT!!

I was a member of Command Post (C.P.) Platoon as Assistant Como Chief under Sgt Long (?Doug Long?). The 4th Platoon went out on a short recon mission. The guys left in C.P. had to pull perimeter duty – all SIX of us.

As fate would have it, first sign of trouble was when 4th Platoon disturbed a massive hive of "killer bees," and man were they POed! They went on a mission of their own. Myself and another comrade ended up in the middle of a stream, splashing water on each other. The bees would leave us alone until we stopped splashing water and dive in for another round of viscous stinging! Smoke was popped all over the place, but the bees kept up a relentless battle for a good 20-30 minutes. Finally, their bugler must have sounded retreat.

We spent the rest of that evening picking bee stingers out of our clothes and anywhere else where bare skin was exposed. Also the bee sting was somewhat toxic because most of us had a severe case of GI _____'s for about two days.

Needless to say, in our next encounter with Charlie, we made HIM PAY!

I can't remember a lot of names that were in that encounter: Sgt Roan Smith, Jackson, MS; Capt Rondiak, Arizona (?Roman Rondiak?); Spec 4 Wilbert Scott, New Jersey.

+ COL(R) JOHN P. LAWTON, 2/327 A 67-68, 10120 Westford Drive, Vienna, VA 22182-1532, work (703) 221-9718, home (703) 757-7961 sent the following letter. Last week I got the latest The Always First Brigade (V-10, #1). Just a short note to tell you that I thought it was a truly professional job that shows the 'people out there' – the professional soldiers we were. No cut off shirt sleeves, FTA BS, etc.

Thanks ole buddy for the hard work.

+ JOEL E. PITTENGER, 2/320 FA HHB 6/67-6/68, 275 Portico Dr., Chesterfield, MO 63017-2207, 314-724-8820 (cell) sent the following:

9 Jan 08

RE: Passing of Bernard Gordon, SSG (R)

Dear Ivan,

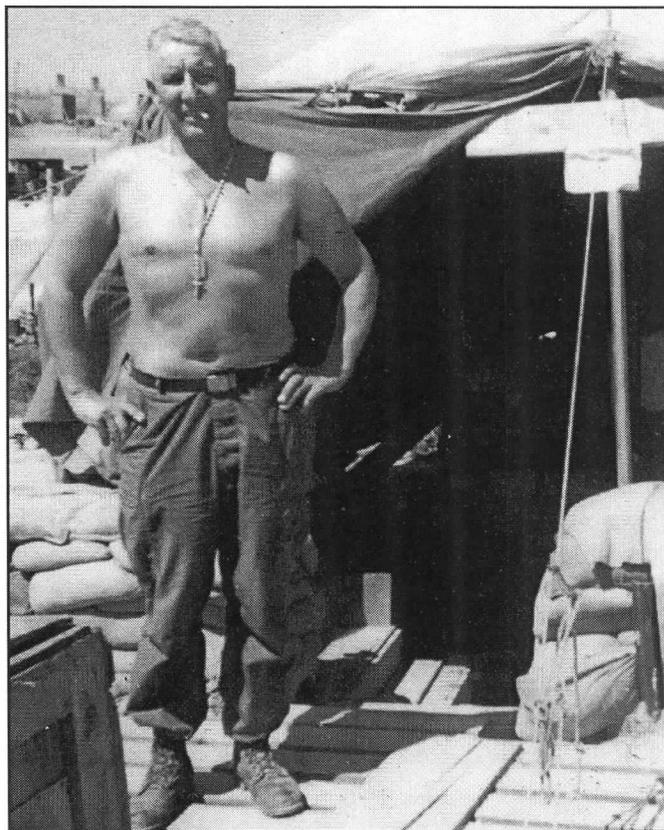
I was informed by a fellow trooper, Charles "Buck" Minderlein, (A Btry 2nd Bn (ABN) 320th Arty) of Baltimore that he had received a note from the daughter of Bernard "The Scuffer" Gordon, who had passed away on the 27th of January 2006 at age 87. He had been in a nursing facility near his home in Chicago for the last few years. He had had several minor strokes, but his daughter Sharon, said he never let things get him down and always enjoyed hearing from Buck or myself.

We've had a lot of colorful troopers in the 1st Brigade, but Scuff had to be the poster boy! We have all seen the poems and such that he has contributed to "The Diplomat and Warrior" and the Division Association magazine over the years in Viet Nam, and he did have a special flair for it. He had a very long career in the Army beginning in 1942 and served in the South Pacific, having jumped "The Turkey's Back" among others. He also served in Korea, but I'm not sure with whom.

He was one of the men who went to Viet Nam with the Brigade in 1965 on the USNS Eltinge and continuously extended his tours for six (6) months at a time, until they MADE him return to the states in the early 70s. He spent his first two years humping the hill as a Recon Sergeant (forward observer) for the 320th. It eventually began to affect his health in general, so they brought him in out of the field and made him mail sergeant for the 2nd 320th Artillery.

A lot of guys thought Scuff was crazy, and to some degree he was, but he was crazy for fun. Whenever I had a rough day (often) as the PSNCO for the 320th, I would go over to his mail hootch and shoot the breeze. One night at Chu Lai I walked in and saw that he had "Scuffed up" a few things ... a card display case, like you would see at Hallmark, and a couple of chairs. It didn't take me too long to realize that I probably didn't want to know where that stuff came from. He always had funny stories and could make light of almost anything, making my tour more bearable.

One day in Chu Lai I got the Message Center delivery and there was an MPR. I said to myself, who screwed up now? The name on it was SSGE5 B Gordon. My first thought was he finally got caught SCRUFFING stuff. Nope ... caught in an off limits establishment. When I talked to Colonel Bolcar about it, he looked a bit baffled, then said to bring him over. I did and the Colonel asked him about the event. Scuff went into graphic detail (which we can't print) and complained about the MPs. (He could tell a story in a manner that would just crack you up.) It was at about this point that Andy Bolcar, who was nearly rolling on the floor of his hootch in laughter, told me to "get him the Hell out of here"! I asked him what to do with the MPR and he said "put Congratulated EM on fine performance and send it back to them." I did, and never heard anything more about it.



Bernard "Scuffer" Gordon (2/320th Arty 7/65-early/70 at Camp Eagle from Charles 'Buck' Minderlein

Yes, he was a fun individual, but he also knew the soldier's craft. Didn't much matter what we were doing, he knew the drill and gave some of us younger guys some balanced insight. He also had no fear, if there was a rocket attack, perimeter action, whatever, he was right in it. The one time he really did blow my mind was at Song Be about the time Tet started and we were waiting to move to Hue. We had a rocket/mortar attack and we (except Scuff) dove under deuce-and-a-halves and I looked up to see him walking around yelling "OH EZ, There's Cong in the area." My eyes were as big as saucers as I yelled to him to get down, I need you as a live sergeant! That was the one time I would have voted for commitment, but the fact was, he took everybody's mind off their fear for the moment. Fact is, when the going got tough, he was there ... you could always count on him.

I know Buck Minderlein and I are especially happy to have known him for our own experiences and for the dedicated and honored life as a professional soldier that he lived.

Thanks Scuffer, we'll miss you!

Ivan, thanks for all you do with the magazine, I know what a demanding event it has to be. You are, of course, welcome to modify or eliminate any of this as you see fit. Call if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
/S/ Joel E. Pittenger
Former, PSNCO, HHB 2/320th Arty

FROM SGT. BERNARD GORDAN, Btry A, 320 th Arty, 1st Bde, 101st Abn Div, APO San Francisco 96347, we continue to receive letters and clippings of the great job being done in Vietnam by our airmen, soldiers, marines, and soldiers of the American and Vietnamese ground forces including the "Always First" Brigade. These clippings not only reflect the war effort but the help to the local Vietnamese, children and civilians, in this war-torn land. In late October, from near Quinlton, B/Co, 1/327th Inf, engaged in an operation against the Viet Cong village of Binh Lam. 81mm mortars and 106 recoilless rifles were manhandled up a nearby hill. Communications were kept with the patrol in the valley by radio and smoke. A Company was in blocking position. The VC took refuge in this village and used it as a gathering point. It was a knee-deep rice paddy operation, with roads and trails flooded by the rains. AMTRACS would have been better. Bernie says you really must have a sense of humor or go nuts. Bernie has sent us a C ration box with some souvenirs and is worried about his mail as little is coming through. He did hear from Col. Kuhn. B Co, 1/327, contributed a Viet Cong flag to be sent to the museum. Bernie is on OP duty and they cover a patrol by direct fire from available high terrain. When an enemy drops his farming tool and picks up a weapon, they let him have it. Very effective. The water is receding somewhat now. Dinner with the Popular Forces consists of rice, meat, greens, and peppers. On his next payday, Bernie plans to send some more Bush hats home. Patrols come and go constantly. "It's the same SOS of WWII." Bernie says he is content with a good bath, a change of clothing, and some chow. Bernie would like to take his R&R in Japan where he helps a family every Christmas as a remembrance from America. "It is the minds of the little children that you leave an impression of our country." He thanked us for the string and wrapping paper sent to him. Quinlton is OFF LIMITS. "Same old stuff." Bernie sends us humorous sayings and cartoons, such as, "It isn't your position but your disposition that makes you happy or unhappy." November letters now arriving. A VC village taken after 1½ hours of arty support—many rifles captured. Korean help expected soon. Bernie took a chopper ride with some Vietnamese—one woman badly hurt—"I had tears in my eyes for her." More refugees—some kids, dirty. "I washed them, butts and all. Got some C's and fed them good. It is good to be courageous and brave but to also show compassion." Bernie promised your Secretary some Vietnamese dolls when he gets the chance. He has a case of the GI's. Bernie got his package off. Received The Screaming Eagle on the Reunion. He says the dolls are OK—not loaded. Sent us a good conduct pass fired at the VC. (Can't read a word of it.) Middle Nov. On a LST for a mission. Dinner with the Japanese crew. Then the OFF Limits sign again. From Phan Rang. Received letter. Busy "scuffing for the Bn." The 173rd suffered casualties before help could arrive. The VC stripped the dead but left the weapons untouched. More clippings from the Vietnam publications. Dec. now and on the way to Bien Hoa in preparation for a 30-day operation in Tay Ninh province. Sending two VC flags taken 15 NW of Quinlton. The boys got a big kick of the use of the word "scuffed" in the Nov-Dec Screaming Eagle. Seems like this is a word all of Bernie's origin. The flags were taken by B, 1/327, in Binh Lamb—the real McCoy. (The flags arrived Dec. 7—full of bullet holes and are now in the Assn's office.) Bernie stated mail would be delayed at this point. Bernie received the copy of the new RWD—"it's a knockout." Plans to send it home to his library. Received some goodies from Col. Kuhn and had some ice cream—"we dreamed of it." Saw Prieto and he is OK. Bernie has a nickname—"EZ"—reminiscent of the Bible and the graveyards at Campbell. Getting set for an operation with hopes that the VC don't get the word first. More later.

SE Mag Jan-Feb 66

Editor's Note: Sergeant BERNARD "SCUFFER" GORDON was a well known and respected "character" in the First Brigade. His poems were published in the unit newspaper and he was an excellent source of information about what was happening in the 2/320th Artillery Battalion. In addition, as you can read in the article from the January - February 1966 issue of THE SCREAMING EAGLE he carried on a constant correspondence with the Secretary and Treasurer of the 101st Airborne Division Association, Walt Miller.

+ = CURRENT SUBSCRIBER



Support Platoon, 2/502 Airborne Infantry Battalion (1967)

KNEELING: L/R SFC WAYNE SMITH, SSG MELVIN HUMPHREY, SP4 WILLIAM JONES, SP4 HAROLD NEWSOM
SECOND ROW: L/R SSG JACK TAYLOR, CPL O'BUCKLEY, SP4 WESLEY BLESSING, SP4 ROBERT TRAVIS, SP4 PAUL PRESTIDGE
THIRD ROW: L/R SP5 BITTING, PFC BEN BARTLEY, PFC EARL BRANTLEY, SP4 ROBERT SEBRING, SP4 FRANCIS THOMAS

1st SGT(R) Wayne Smith, 2/502 HQ 3/67-3/68 sent this photo of the 2/502 Support Platoon in 1967.

One Brave Company in Battle

The 2/502nd Battalion had been moved into a valley near Chu Lai as part of a Brigade blocking position while elements of the 1st Cavalry Div drove the NVA Regiment towards us. The 1/327 was on the West side of the river, our battalion, 2/502 was on the East side. The 2/327 was working to our South. The instant the battalions were inserted they were in contact. C Company and a Scout platoon made immediate contact. C Company was inserted were the Scout platoon had made contact the previous day. There was an Artillery unit supporting the battalion. It was nearly over run and one of the NCOs in that action later received the Medal of Honor.

On Sept. 28th Charlie Company spent the night in a company perimeter on top of a grassy hill. While we dug in, we could see the NVA soldiers in the valley below walking back and forth across the rice paddy. They called in artillery that night where they had seen them and also on a hootch complex near by.

At first light the following morning we were moving into position to conduct a three (3) platoon sweep to the river area at the west of our position. As we moved out, 2nd platoon, 2nd squad was leading. I remember coming off the hill into a small vil-

lage below the hill, winding our way to the far end of the rice paddy, where we had seen the enemy the night before. The sweep never happened. 2nd platoon walked into a planned ambush. (A NVA Company size element.) They were on a well used trail with small grassy mountains on the right. 1st platoon was following, then 3rd platoon. 4th platoon was remaining with the Company CP as support.

On our left, at first, as we came out of a small village, was a little brush area and then a rice paddy fifty yards wide with a hootch complex on the other side. We humped down the trail that led along side the rice paddy. The hills were on our right and the hootch complex was on the other side of the paddy. The rice paddy was narrow and long, not giving us very much cover.

Art Vandergrift was carrying the M 60 machine gun, and he was about 7th or 8th in the column of men. Lt. James Hayes (the platoon leader) was two (2) or three (3) men ahead of Art. The platoon had moved all the way down the trail to a small clearing. The trees were few and were to the front of where the column was headed. We never got to employ the sweeping maneuver. As Lt. Hayes reached the clearing, he saw a NVA



soldier with a back pack and hollered, "Vandergrift, bring up the gun." When Art got to his side, Hayes pointed to the hootch area and said, "There's a gook."

Art fired two (2) or three (3) bursts and saw the enemy fall. Then the gun jammed. As he was standing up jacking the bolt to get the gun to fire again, the rest of the platoon was laying on the ground.

The platoon had moved out early in the morning, and because of Lt. Hayes' noise discipline, we had surprised them. Lt. Hayes spotted them seconds before they had spotted us. As Art was standing there for the two (2) or three (3) seconds, Lt. Hayes yelled at him to get down. But while standing, Art had seen where the enemy was located across the rice paddy. They were entrenched in fox-holes between the rice paddy and the hootch area. They were dug in and well fortified. Things began to now seem like they were in slow motion.

Art could see their heads popping up and down like "jack-in-the-boxes." The NVA had been asleep. He could even see them reaching for their AK 47 rifles that were still in the holes. There were so many of them that it looked like a "Wack-Em" games as they continued to pop up. "I could see them, they were in front of me, and on both sides. There must have been over a dozen or more positions that were aimed at us. I can remember thinking; we're in for it now."

Vandergrift was on the ground and at the same level as they were. The gun was ready and I was again firing in the direction of where I had seen the heads popping up and down. There was a little grass in front of me. I couldn't see clearly, but I know the gun was on target, by where the tracers were going. I had fired all the ammo in the gun and yelled for more. My assistant gunner, George, was reluctant to come to me, but he did. By this time, all hell had broken out and the platoon was taking heavy casualties. George and I were able to keep the gun firing. I kept laying down as much lead as I could, until George was killed. By this time, the ammo-bearer had also been killed trying to get more ammo to me. I had been thrown some extra

ammo, but the gun jammed again before I could fire all of the rounds. This time the firing pin was bent and it would no longer work.

I picked up George's M 16 and continued to fire at the enemy positions in front of me.

At this time, I was all alone and I was in front of the column. To add to this, there was a sniper somewhere on a hill to the right of us firing at our positions.

By this time, they had put a real hurt on 2nd platoon. 3rd platoon with Sgt. Fletcher, was over near the hootch area, and were beginning to make their support move.

Lt. Hayes sent a man (crawling) out to where I was, and helped me get back to the rest of the platoon. The man was hit in the shoulder. When we reached Lt. Hayes he was all alone except for one other man, Sgt. Wilson (Moe).

We were then told over the radio, NOT to fire in the direction of the hootches. Fletcher and his men were

over there. Lt. Hayes, and Sgt. Williams proceeded to call in artillery and were directing air strikes. At this time, 1st platoon had almost reached us. Their lead squad had seen we were in bad trouble and we had no cover. They decided to "pop smoke" and use it for cover to get to us. Smoke doesn't stop bullets. As they tried to get to us they were taking casualties immediately. Then Sgt. Wilson was fatally hit in the chest. The medic was frantically working on him in vane, to save his life. There was just Lt. Hayes, the medic, a couple of other guys, and me. We were huddled together. Hayes helped one of the other guys use an M 79 grenade launcher to try and knock out the bunkers in front of us.

By this time, the fight was gone from the 2nd platoon. At this time both 1st platoon and Fletcher's 3rd platoon were also in heavy contact.

3rd platoon was able to break free and was able to go behind the enemy, forming a blocking force. They then attacked and



Photo of battlefield taken by a ReCon soldier just days before the encounter

eliminated the enemy. It was a foxhole-to-foxhole, bunker-to-bunker assault by Fletcher's 3rd platoon that was the deciding factor. The enemy now was trapped between 3rd platoon and 1st platoon. The battle that had started out very early in the morning was now over. It was becoming dark and there was no time to move to a new location for the night. We took a head count and readied our wounded and KIAs for evacuation. Charlie Company had over 12 KIAs and over 30 men wounded. 2nd platoon started out with about 30 men, only 12 remained unhurt.

For their bravery, Sgt. Larry Fletcher and Spec. 4 Mike Perry were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. Their bravery resulted in the saving of those men's lives that were in Charlie Company.

Art Vandergrift, for his gallantry was awarded the Army Commendation Medal with a V Device for Valor.

If it hadn't been for the Leadership of Lt. Hayes and his conduct under fire, the heroic bravery of the men of 3rd platoon, the results would have been catastrophic. Lt Hayes had this to say about this encounter and its results.

"The key to that day was, as I have said before, Brave, disciplined, tough soldiers immediately reacting to an unbelievably dangerous and chaotic situation. Although we had walked into a company sized ambush position, they weren't expecting us to be moving before daylight and we were able to take out some key positions before they could initiate the full ambush. If it hadn't been for the brave men of C/2/502, and their heroic actions under fire, in combat, it could have been much worse."

Article written by Art Vandergrift, 2/502 C 6/67-1/69
Those who wish to use this article have his full permission

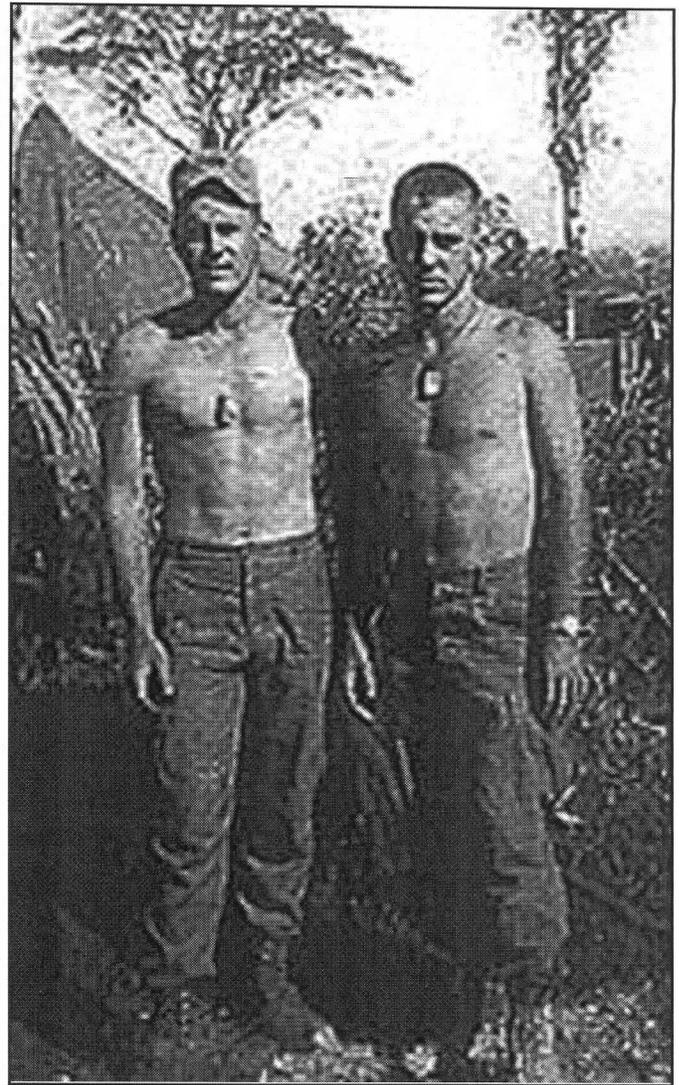
Charlie Company 2/502 Inf. 101st Airborne
Chu Lai - Sept. 29th 1967

Editor's Note: Following are those listed as KIA in Khanh Hoa Province on September 29th, 1967. If you know of others please let me know.

SGT William E. Wilson, SP4 Edward C. Beck, SP4 Kenneth L. Green, SSG James B. Fields, 1LT Clyde V. Moore, PFC David A. Gentry, PFC George E. Overshine, PFC Clarence Rivers, PFC Robert J. Smith, PFC George H. Ulrich, SGT Cullen Barksdale, Jr., SGT Willie Farmer, Jr. and SGT Craig L. McDaniel.

FLETCHER, LARRY A., Staff Sergeant, U.S. Army, Company C, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division
Date of Action: September 29, 1967

Citation: The Distinguished Service Cross is presented to Larry A. Fletcher, Staff Sergeant, U.S. Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Company C, 2d Battalion, 502d Infantry, 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division. Staff Sergeant Fletcher distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 29



James "Mac" Hayes, 2/502 C 7/67-1/69 and Larry Fletcher, 2/502 C 3/67-1/68 in 1967.

September 1967 while serving as platoon leader of an airborne infantry company on a search and destroy operation near Chu Lai. The company's forward platoons were savagely attacked and pinned down by a large Viet Cong force, and Sergeant Fletcher immediately led his men forward to reinforce the embattled elements. After advancing five hundred meters, his force came under a murderous enemy barrage from well-concealed bunkers to the front. Completely disregarding his personal safety, Sergeant Fletcher, accompanied by one of his squad leaders, attacked the hostile emplacements with rifles and grenades. Enemy grenades landed all around him as he assaulted, but he refused to take cover, picked up the grenades, and hurled them into the insurgents' bunkers. Fighting his way through a withering hail of bullets, he succeeded in destroying four fortifications. As he again led his men forward, they were hit a second time by intense automatic weapons fire from the front. Once more ignoring his welfare, Sergeant Fletcher charged the enemy position. Despite bullets striking all around him, he reached hand grenade range and destroyed the hostile bunker with a deadly throw. As they neared the trapped platoons, his troops came under heavy fire a third time. Armed with enemy grenades captured earlier, Sergeant Fletcher and his squad leader assaulted the last bunker complex through a

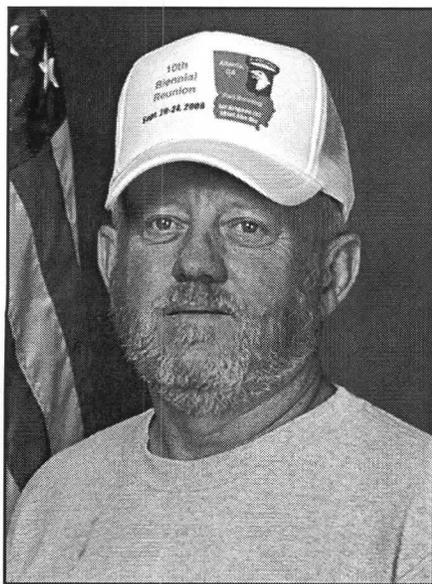
curtain of fire. Maneuvering from bunker to bunker while the Viet Cong concentrated fire on him, Sergeant Fletcher demolished four positions with grenade and rifle fire and forced the remaining enemy to flee the battlefield. His fearless actions in the heat of battle resulted in the destruction of nine bunkers and the elimination of eighteen enemy soldiers. Staff Sergeant Fletcher's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.
 HQ US Army, Vietnam, General Orders No. 886 (February 27, 1968)

PERRY, MICHAEL P., Sergeant, U.S. Army, Company C, 2d Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division

Date of Action: September 29, 1967

Citation: The Distinguished Service Cross is presented to Michael P. Perry, Sergeant, U.S. Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations involving conflict with an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam, while serving with Company C, 2d Battalion, 502d Infantry, 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division. Sergeant Perry (then Specialist Four) distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 29 September 1967 while serving as squad leader of an airborne infantry company on a search and destroy mission near Chu Lai. The forward platoons of the company received a heavy volume of enemy automatic weapons fire that pinned them down and inflicted several casualties. Sergeant Perry's platoon was contacted and requested to move forward and flank the Viet Cong. While advancing toward its sister elements, his unit was suddenly subjected to intense hostile fire from fortified and well concealed bunkers. While the rest of the troops provided supporting fire, Sergeant Perry and his platoon sergeant charged through a hail of bullets, firing their rifles and throwing hand grenades into the Viet Cong position. Several enemy grenades landed near Sergeant Perry, and he unhesitatingly

grabbed them and hurled them back at the insurgents. Although wounded by fragments from an exploding grenade, he refused to withdraw for medical treatment and continued his fierce assault until he had destroyed four enemy bunkers. He then quickly helped reorganize the platoon's troops and led them to relieve their beleaguered comrades. When savage automatic weapons fire again erupted on the platoon, Sergeant Perry and his platoon sergeant braved murderous fire to assault a Viet Cong position,



Mike Perry

successfully destroying it with hand grenades. Having expended his grenades, Sergeant Perry armed himself with enemy grenades and continued the attack through a curtain of fire. Sergeant Perry's extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit upon himself, his unit, and the United States Army.

HQ US Army, Vietnam, General Orders No. 836 (Feb. 23, 1968)



REGISTER EARLY

Everyone should have received a reunion registration form in the mail. If you need a form contact the editor.

Chaplain (COL-R) Curtis R. Bowers, 1/327 HQ 7/65-6/66, will conduct the Memorial Dinner Service on Friday evening, September 26th. Chaplain Bowers is the author of FORWARD EDGE OF THE BATTLE AREA, A Chaplain's Story. He was known as the "Pistol Packing Padre" because he carried a 45 caliber pistol in combat. His book can be ordered on the internet from Beacon Hill Press for \$9.99. Proceeds from the book go to support Chaplains' Ministries. We hope to have copies of the book for sale at the reunion.

Speaker for the ALWAYS FIRST BANQUET on Saturday evening, September 27th will be Secretary of Veterans Affairs LTG(R) James B. Peake, 2/502 A 6/67-6/68. Secretary Peake has many decades of experience as an Army Medical Officer. He retired in 2004 as the Surgeon General of the Army. He is the first military veteran to head the Veterans Administration and the first doctor to do so. (See pages 1 - 4 for more information about him.)

Mansfield Bias
1/327 B 6/66-6/67

Notification was received that Mansfield Bias of 66 Brown Road, Phoenix City, AL 36869-3017 passed away on June 26, 2007. No other info was given.



Dennis R. Buck
2/502 C 9/66-9/67

Notification was received that Dennis R. Buck of 611 Hiller Rd., Chapin, SC 29036 passed away on August 19, 2007. No other info was given.

COL(R) Harry A. Buckley, Jr.
2/502 CO 66-67

COL(R) Harry A. Buckley, Jr., 2076 Bradley St., Dupont, WA 98327-7712 passed away on January 2, 2007. Sarah Buckley wrote that Colonel Buckley was proud of his service and she was also.

Frank De La O
1/327 A 9/67-4/68

Frank G. De La O, 59, who served in 1/327 A 9/67 to 4/68, died January 3, 2008 in Doña Ana, New Mexico.

He was born December 15, 1948 in Doña Ana, NM to Aron and Esther De La O.

His awards and decorations include the Combat Infantry Badge, a Bronze Star with V device, Purple Heart, Vietnam Service Medal with four bronze service stars, National Defense Service Medal, the Vietnam Campaign Medal, Parachutist Badge, M16 Expert Badge, M14 Sharpshooter Badge and Pistol Marksman Badge. He was honorably discharged in 1970.

His career was with the New Mexico State Police. He attended the Academy in 1972 and retired in 2003.

Survivors are his wife of 36 years Rebecca Molina De La O, one son, two daughters, three brothers, one sister and numerous nieces, nephews and grandchildren.

Funeral services were at Our Lady of Purification Catholic Church and burial was at Doña Ana Cemetery.

Editor's Note: The full obituary was sent by Antonio B.(Tony) Cardon, 1/327 C 4/67-4/68. Frank De La O was not in my database.

Charles J. "Chuck" Hansen
326 MED D 7/65-6/66

Notification was received that Charles J. "Chuck" Hansen, 109 Schooner Cv, Hercules, CA 94547-2616 was deceased. No date was given.

Joe E. McGill
2/327 A 3/66-3/67

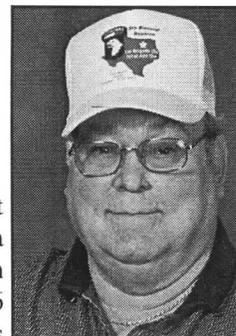
Wednesday, February 20, 2008
Rick Salazar

<rmsalazar101@yahoo.com> wrote:

As per an earlier email (from Pat Noonan), Joe McGill passed on to a better place yesterday. Joe served with A/2/327th from approximately Mar 66 - Mar 67 with the first platoon. Joe has put up a courageous fight with some form of lymphoma leukemia, which normally attacks children. This leukemia also attacks the brain.

Although originally from California, Joe met his wife, Regena and then elected to relocate to Harrison, Arkansas, a few years back. Services were held Saturday, February 23, 2008, at Coffman Funeral Home and Crematory of Harrison. Graveside services followed the funeral service at Plumbley Cementary. Condolences may be sent to the family at 26 Mimosa Dr., Harrison, AR 72601.

Rest In Peace Joe! Airborne All the Way!



COL(R) Billy Spangler
INFO OFF 4/67-4/68

(March 6, 2008, For Immediate Release)

Services for Colonel Billy E. Spangler Set For April 15 at Arlington National Cemetery

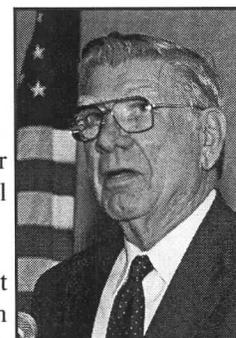
(He Served as 1st Brigade and 101st Airborne Division PIO in Vietnam 1967-68; Commander of the U.S. Defense Information School for all military services; and Commander & Editor of Stars & Stripes Europe.)

Church Services for Colonel Billy E. Spangler are scheduled for 1300 hours, Tuesday, April 15, 2008, at Fort Meyers, VA chapel, followed by burial in Arlington National Cemetery.

Son Evan Spangler will deliver the eulogy and Paul Evans, pastor at the 1st United Methodist Church in Boerne, Texas, will lead services. Barry Hana will offer remembrances on behalf of the military people who served with Colonel Spangler.

The military procession and Burial in Arlington National Cemetery will begin at 1330 hours immediately following the church services. For those people who might attend, Colonel Spangler's wife, Mrs. Melba Spangler, and her family, have scheduled a reception for approximately 1500 hours at the Fort Meyers Officers Club.

Anyone planning to attend, can call Barry Hana, 314-753-8932, or email him at: auburnlad@aol.com. This will aid the Spangler family in making preparations.



Operation Wheeler Climbs to 1,105

CHU LAI — Enemy losses for Operation Wheeler reached 1,105 on Nov. 25 as the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division out fought a stubborn, well-equipped 2nd NVA Division west of here.

Not only did the paratroopers inflict heavy losses on the enemy, but denied him vast stores of food, weapons, ammunition and medical supplies.

Wheeler has been marked with several noteworthy events:

—the rallying of an NVA captain who led paratroopers to three large weapons caches.

—the kindly old Vietnamese woman who lashed back at NVA

and VC forces by leading paratroopers to more than 25 tons of rice one afternoon.

—the Hoi Chanh who pointed out an NVA hospital and caused the detention of 11 enemy wounded.

—the countless hamlet and village residents who revealed booby traps and ambushes laid by the enemy.

—the destruction of numerous base camps, bunkers and fortified positions.

But more than all these, the sanctuary enjoyed by the 2nd NVA Division in Quang Tin province was invaded and shattered. Intelligence officials said

it was doubtful if the once elite NVA division would ever become combat effective again.

Hours of interrogation of insurgent officer and enlisted detainees produced an identical picture of conditions within the 2nd NVA Division — hunger, fatigue, sickness, fear and morale at an all time low.

Operation Wheeler was also marked by significant civic action victories:

—the hamlet of Ly Tra has a new school, wells, showers, improved sanitation and roads.

—the village of Tien Phuoc has new accommodations for 3,000 people who fled enemy ter-

rorism and found new hope in their future.

—the health of 11,250 persons was improved through extensive MEDCAP programs and 1,150 persons were evacuated from the combat zone to refugee centers at Tam Ky and Tien Phuoc.

—vehicular traffic was restored between Tam Ky, Chu Lai, Mo Duc and Duc Pho.

The Screaming Eagle offensive in I Corps began with combat operations on May 11 in Quang Ngai province and pushed north into Quang Tin Province. In six months and two weeks of fighting, the 1st

Brigade, 101st Airborne killed 2,405 enemy; captured 704 individual and crew-served weapons, 504 tons of rice and 141 tons of salt.

The significance of these confirmed losses to the enemy is the equivalent of enough men to field eight combat battalions; weapons to equip three battalions; rice to feed 25 battalions for one month and salt to support these 25 battalions for more than five years.

The 'little white eagles with the black rifles' — as the enemy calls the Screaming Eagle — hit hard and cut deep into the Communist forces in I Corps.

'Tiger' Claims 1,000th

CHU LAI — Spec. 4 Sam Ybarra, Globe, Ariz., didn't know it at the moment, but at 8:50 a.m. on the 66th day of Operation Wheeler west of here, he added the 1,000th enemy kill in the brigade's largest action since arriving in Vietnam.

Ybarra, a member of Tiger Force, 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf., lay in ambush along a well-worn trail. Only the sounds of the jungle could be heard.

Suddenly, the jungle stillness was interrupted by the soft thud of trotting feet. A lone khaki-clad VC jogged into view, his web equipment riding up and down as he moved along.

A paratrooper was ready to shout "Dung Lai!" (meaning "Stop"), when he heard voices on the trail behind the lone runner.

Staff Sgt. Harold Trout, Hopkinsville, Ky., realized he had to stop the enemy point man without alerting the party following. His eyes searched his Tiger Force and settled on Ybarra. "If anyone can do it — he can," thought Trout. "Ybarra!" Trout called softly.

The young Tiger looked up and saw Trout tap his knife and nod toward the VC coming down the trail.

Ybarra nodded, removed his knife and inched closer to the trail. Every man watched. Weapons were ready.

As the VC passed Ybarra, the paratrooper leaped from behind, smothered a shout with his left hand and forced the enemy into the brush. When the enemy made a lunge to escape, Ybarra stilled the effort.

Moments later, three VC walked toward the hidden Tiger Force. Automatic weapons fired a burst in unison. The insurgent trio collapsed in a heap.

The Tiger Force moved out to a new location, unaware that enemy losses for Operation Wheeler had topped 1,000.

The Screaming Eagle



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1st Bde, 101st Abn Div

December 20, 1967



Pass the Ammunition!

Paratroopers of Hq. Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf., pour it on the enemy during Operation Wheeler. Sgt. James A. Atkins, Brooklyn, places a 4.2mm mortar round in the waiting hands of Spec. 4 Abelson Perkins, Beaumont, Tex., as Pfc. George B. Matthew, Baltimore, drops another round in the tube. The section fired 400 rounds in 15 minutes on this mission in support of a combat assault.

(Photo by Staff Sgt. Al Wilson)

Appeal Corrals 8 Enemy

CHU LAI — The power of persuasive speech prompted eight enemy to rally during a recent Operation Wheeler action west of here.

Spec. 4 John Dorne, Van Nuys, Calif., a member of the 244th Co., 6th Psychological Operations Bn., and Pfc. Vince Thompson, Sheridan, Wyo., Americal Div, G-5 office drew looks of consternation when they joined A Co. of the 2nd Bn. (Abn), 502nd Inf. carrying strange-looking rucksacks.

"Some troops thought we were nuts, but their opinions changed when the VC started walking out of the jungle following our first broadcast," said Dorne, who carries an amplifier and microphone. His buddy, Thompson, handles the loudspeaker.

As the "Strike Force" paratroopers secured a village, the two persuasion experts began their broadcast with ARVN Staff Sgt. Thieu making the appeal.

"He had finished only a few sentences when five men in black pajamas walked out of the brush, their hands above their heads," said Thompson.

The five detainees walked into the American lines and showed their "Chieu Hoi" passes to Lt. Leonard Anderson, Bau Xite, Ark.

The five were extracted to the Screaming Eagle base camp for further interrogation.

A day later, a similar broadcast prompted three VC to surrender. "The three came running across a rice paddy toward us, waving their weapons above their heads," said Staff Sgt. Reyes Ruiz, Uvalde, Tex. "Our first reaction was to fire, but when they kept coming without taking cover, we knew what they wanted." The three "Hoi Chanh's" presented their safe conduct passes and weapons to the Americans.

'Currahees' Complete Training, Laud 'P-School'

PHAN RANG (3/506 IO) — The "Currahees" of the 3rd Bn. (Abn), 506th Inf., recently completed Proficiency School at the Screaming Eagle rear base camp here and won commendations from Gen. William C. Westmoreland and the school faculty for their enthusiasm and spirit.

"I knew from the moment I met the troops at Cam Ranh

Bay they were high spirited," said First Sgt. Tom Fulton, Fayette, S.C. "They demonstrated a keen alertness and responsiveness to orders when they loaded up for the convoy to Phan Rang."

While the school's reaction course and weapons familiarization cycle were the most talked about, all troopers praised the five-day course.

"I feel I got as much from P-training here as I did from five months of training in the states," said Pfc. Dave Stiles, Huntington Beach, Calif. "It was really interesting."

Staff Sgt. Robert E. Clark, Pensacola, Fla., says one of the school's purpose is to refresh troops with training they have completed in the states and "to make the training here as real-

istic as possible so the men have an idea what they will face in the weeks and months ahead."

A highlight of the battalion's training cycle was a visit from Gen. William C. Westmoreland, commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam. In welcoming the 3/506, Westmoreland emphasized the importance of Free World, Military Allied Forces

(FW/MAF) in Vietnam and said: "With the help of ARVN and allied forces, we are defeating the Communists here."

In conjunction with P-school, the "Currahees" received an orientation from U.S. Air Force and Royal Australian Air Force officials on types of aircraft and ordnance used to support (FW/MAF) operations throughout the Republic.



Candy and a Baby

A Vietnamese infant purses his lips as he tastes candy given him by Pfc. Randel B. Mundel, Los Angeles, Mundel's unit, C Co. of the 2nd Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf., shared food and friendship in a hamlet west of Chu Lai during Operation Wheeler. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Al Wilson)

Screaming Eagle Briefings

Creepy Foxholes

Spec. 4 Theopolis Labyzon, New Orleans, doesn't like snakes. "They give me the creeps," confesses the combat medic of A Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 502nd Inf.

During Operation Wheeler, A Co. occupied a grassy hill which 'Charlie' attacked with mortars. Labyzon scrambled into a deep hole. Something squirmed beneath his feet.

"Snake!" yelled the medic as he leaped out of the hole and dived into another.

As the enemy pounded the hilltop, Labyzon crouched low. Again he noted movement and saw another snake coiled beneath his feet.

"What the hell," he said, grabbing the snake and heaving it out of the foxhole.

"I would have looked for another hole," he said, "but jumping in three foxholes during a mortar attack is supposed to be bad luck."

Costly 'Dallying'

Two NVA were killed by the Hawk Plat. when the paratroopers surprised a squad of enemy dallying in a stream.

"We were moving down a trail when we discovered the 'Charlies' playing in the water," said Staff Sgt. James Dean, Newbern, N.C. "Their weapons were laying on the stream bank and they were really having a good time."

The Hawks moved quickly to encircle them, but the NVA happened to see the Americans. "They just stood there for a moment," Dean said. "We fired

'em up and got two before they fled."

The next day, the Hawks set up an ambush near the stream and killed one and wounded another.

"Our mission is reconnaissance, but sometimes 'Charlie' gives us a target we can't ignore," said Dean.

Pilot Rescued

Two battle-tired paratroopers saved the life of a helicopter pilot when his aircraft tumbled off the side of a hill and exploded during Operation Wheeler.

Pilot WO Michael Migliore, East Pine, Utah, had assisted in the extraction of B Co., 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf., to the battalion training command post.

Migliore noticed his idling aircraft was not functioning properly. He decided to test its lift capabilities and directed his 176th Aviation Co. crew to leave the helicopter.

The chopper climbed sluggishly and hovered momentarily.

Realizing he could not gain sufficient altitude, the pilot attempted to set his craft down.

When the helicopter landed, it teetered on the edge of the steep hillside.

"Before any of us could move," said Spec. 4 George Welsh, Pomona, Calif., "the chopper tumbled down the hill, coming to rest 200 yards below us."

The hillside was a hazard for the rescue party.

Trip flares and barbed wire studded the area. Recent NVA probing actions created the possibility of booby-traps.

Welsh and Spec. 4 Henry O'Leary, Stanford, Conn., were the first paratroopers to reach the helicopter. Quickly, they helped the injured pilot out.

Seconds later the helicopter exploded.

Forceful Order

The forceful order of a 1st Brigade paratrooper was carried out by a VC and the enemy died.

"We had made contact with the enemy and were moving out fast," recalled SFC Norman Bozeman, Sebring, Fla., a team leader with the Screaming Eagle Long Range Reconnaissance Platoon. "There were six of us and we couldn't afford to hang around and fight it out."

The flat terrain and open trail permitted the paratroopers to move quickly and silently. Only an occasional snapping twig could be heard as the six men hurried along.

Suddenly a shrill voice broke the silence: "Lai dai" (come here), said the caller.

Pfc. Dirk A. Sasso, Lincoln, Neb., yelled back in a stronger tone: "Lai dai."

The first voice repeated the request and Sasso replied in a stronger voice: "Lai dai!"

A second later, a lone VC stood up on the trail — rucksack on his back and weapon in his hand. Sasso fired. The Viet Cong collapsed.

"It was quick thinking on Sasso's part," said Bozeman. "He convinced 'Charlie' to come out."

Other VC in the area heard the shooting and were yelling to one another in an effort to chase the Americans.

Spec. 4 Samuel Roloff, Kirkland, Wash., provided rear security as the team fled the area and escaped unhurt.

New Addresses

Maj. Gen. Paul A. Gavan; director of regional activities for the Association of the U.S. Army, urges all members in Vietnam to keep AUSA informed of their current address. Write: Association of the U.S. Army, 1529 18th St. NW, Washington, D.C.

'Load' Pays Off

Platoon Lugs Mortar

CHU LAI — A guffaw greeted a 1st Brigade platoon when they carried a 60mm mortar on a combat assault, but ridicule became a loud hurrah before the day ended.

Paratroopers of B Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf., prepared for an operation that was to take them to a suspected NVA regimental headquarters.

"We received enemy mortar fire in previous contacts and decided to fight 'Charlie' on his own terms," said Lt. William F.

Hughes, Lexington, Va. "My platoon decided to carry the mortar and 80 rounds of ammunition."

As Hughes' platoon boarded the chopper, other paratroopers joked about the extra load. However, minutes after the troopers leaped from the helicopters, a platoon in contact called for support.

Quickly Staff Sgts. Willie J. Sigler, Birmingham, Ala., Mathis Banks, Sr., Denver, and Spec. 4 Salvatore Melendez, Chicago, positioned the mortar and began firing.

As they fired, members of Hughes' platoon spotted several enemy running along a trail.

"I took a quick look and figured they were about 500 meters away," said Hughes. "The first two rounds scored a direct hit. We saw at least two enemy fall with the explosions."

Sgt. Sharon L. McCracken, Paris, Ky., an artillery reconnaissance sergeant, observed the rounds as they clattered the running enemy. "Everybody in the platoon stood up and cheered," said McCracken. "It was like a football game after the home team just scored the winning touchdown."

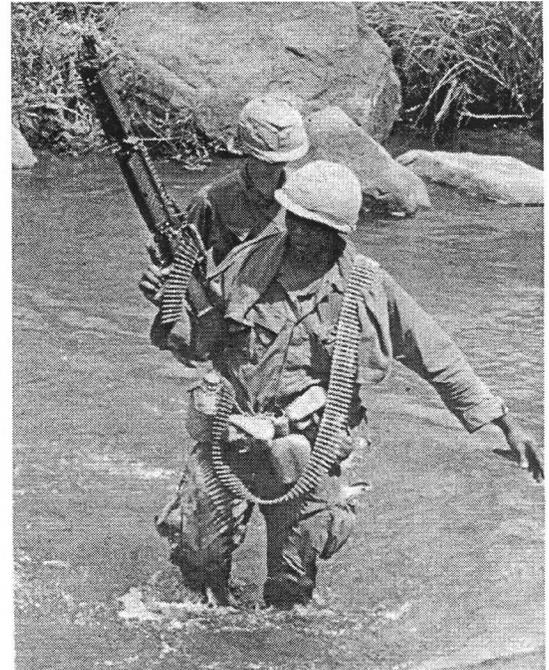
Sigler took a patrol to confirm the mortar kills. "We found an SKS rifle, several NVA rucksacks and numerous pools of blood," he said.

Odyssey Available

"Vietnam Odyssey," a history of the brigade's first year in Vietnam may be purchased for \$1.50 from the 101st Airborne Division Association.

Add 90 cents extra postage with your request if you want the soft-bound book mailed first class.

Send your order to: 101st Airborne Division Association, P.O. Box 454, Greenville, Tex., 75401.



Weapon Stays Dry

Machine gunner, Pfc. Alton Jones, Fitzgerald, Ga., holds his M-60 high as he and a buddy cross a stream during Operation Wheeler. Both are members of C Co., 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf. (Photo by Spec. 4 Ben Croxton)

The Screaming Eagle



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'Redleg' RTO Moonlights as Tunnel Rat

By Pfc. Robert Mosey
CHU LAI—A 1st Brigade radio-telephone operator (RTO) who moonlights as a tunnel rat killed two NVA in the bowels of a hill 10 miles southwest of here recently.

During Operation Wheeler, Spec. 4 Stewart Bestwick, Chicago, and other paratroopers were crossing a rice paddy when they received enemy fire from a hut complex on the far side. Lt. Peter J. Thomas, artillery forward observer, searched the area with his field glasses and

decided an air strike would be more effective against the heavily fortified hillside position.

"When the jets unloaded their 500-pound bombs, the enemy ceased firing and the infantry swept the area," said Thomas.

Searching the complex, the paratroopers found two carbines and a blood-soaked litter. Three NVA bodies were discovered on a trail leading to the jungle. As the search continued, the Americans located tunnels and began a systematic probe.

Dropping his radio, Bestwick

entered a tunnel — flashlight in one hand, a cocked .45 in the other.

"About 10 feet into the tunnel, I came to a Y," he said, "and decided to check the left entry first."

As he crawled through the dank passageway the tunnel became smaller and smaller.

"It got so tight I had a hard time crawling on my belly," he said. "The air was getting thin, also."

Bestwick stopped. Ahead he could see a large room curving to the right. Suddenly a human

form filled the beam of his flashlight. The paratrooper fired; a scream answered.

"I didn't know whether I had killed him," Bestwick recalled. "I hoped he was dead and crawled forward."

Easing his flashlight around the corner of the tunnel he saw an NVA soldier crumpled on the floor, a .38 caliber pistol in his hand.

Bestwick breathed a sign of relief.

"I crawled into the room and found a Chinese Communist sub-machine gun and nearly 500

pounds of rice and corn," he said.

Taking the weapons, Bestwick wormed back to the surface and reported his findings to A Co. commander, Capt. Charles Otstott, La Habra, Calif., and Thomas.

"There's still another section I haven't searched," Bestwick said.

"Drive on, Troop," said Thomas. "Show the infantry what a 'Red Leg' can do!"

Bestwick whipped a snappy salute and returned to the tunnel.

"The right entrance was larger and partially flooded," he said. "I crawled about 30 feet when my flashlight went out. That's when I felt like the walls were closing in."

Bestwick yelled for someone to bring him another flashlight, but was too far underground to be heard by the Americans outside. He started crawling back.

Suddenly a weapon roared in front of him. The bullet thudded against the tunnel wall and Bestwick flattened on the tunnel floor. He pointed his pistol down the tunnel and emptied it.

"I heard something splash in the water," he said. "But I sure as hell wasn't hanging around to see what it was."

Bestwick crawled back to the surface, reloaded his pistol, grabbed another flashlight and returned to the tunnel.

"I found what I shot at," Bestwick continued. "He was lying face down in the water." The tunnel rat removed a belt of grenades from the enemy's body, pulled an M-1 rifle out of the mud and crawled out.

"What happened down there?" Spec. 4 James Taylor, Manchester, Tenn., asked the mud-covered Bestwick.

"You mean you didn't hear all that shooting!" exclaimed Bestwick.

"We didn't hear anything," answered Taylor.

How does Bestwick feel about his avocation? "It's exciting and frightening at the same time," he said. "I do it because it gives me a chance to do more for the unit than just monitor a radio."

'We Get Letters'

CHU LAI—There is something about a soldier that captivates a child. Perhaps it is the uniform, the child's image of the soldier at war or the mystique of "play-like" darting in and out of those precious years when every day is a breathtaking adventure—where time and place are stopped and only the magic of the mind is free to move.

The following are some of the letters received by paratroopers in the 101st Airborne. They are presented here with the thought each might provoke a smile, or perhaps a hurried trip back in time where you held the magic of childhood.

Dear Trooper: I hope you are having a nice time in the war and USO. Could you sent me a tank. Your friend, Frank.

Dear Trooper: School is sometimes fun. We bring toys and leave them on the windowsill. Your friend, Timothy.

Dear Parajumper: Are you all right? I hope so. I hope the war is over. Your friend, Robert.

Dear Lt. K.: You must be beat up because of shooting. It must be hard work to throw a grenade over North Vietnam lines. Bye now. Your far away pal, Peter.

Dear Soldier: How are you doing in Vietnam? We saw the World Series on TV. Yours truly, William.

Dear Lt. How are you? I hope fine. Do you know how Miss—Brooks up a fight? She punches us in the nose. Your friend, William.

Dear Trooper: When will you come home? What do you eat? We will be glad when you come home. Your friend, John.

Dear Trooper: How are you? I have a dog and two goldfish. One of them keeps jumping out of the fish bowl so we put a hair net on it. Candy.

Dear Sir: My name is Rowena and I am going into fourth grade. I have a sister named Brenda. She is going into first grade. She is six years old and I am nine. I hope the work is not too hard. My vacation trip was to New Mexico and it was fun.

To whom it may concern: My name is Mike. I live in Simi, Calif. I have two tortoise, two dogs, three guinea pigs, one peacock, 12 chickens, 20 pets in all. I used to have 48 pets. What kind of equipment do you use?

Dear Lt. K.: I hope that you will win the war. You should come home so you can see the school. It's lovely. The teacher lets us talk for two minutes. I hope that none of the men get hurt. I hope that you will like our school. I hope you are fighting for everyone in the world, to save our country. Your friend, William.

Dear Lt.: How are you? I hope you don't get shot. I guess you will be glad to come home. You should of went in the Navy, it is much better. In the Navy you get fed much better. I guess you like the Army better. Our teacher said you like football. I like football, too.

Dear Lt. K.: How is the Viet war? I hope you get more stripes. I hope you come home soon. Your friend, Roberta.

Dear Lt.: I know how it is in Vietnam fighting. Every man has to take care of himself. Fighting in Vietnam is very dangerous because you never know who could pop out and shoot you. Then men have to be strong and brave and they have to be able to use a gun. I hope that you will safely get through the war. Your friend, Gerard.

Dear Trooper: Our Sunday School teacher said we should write you a letter. I have two goldfish and a turtle. My sister would like a boyfriend. So long til next time. Sincerely, Martha.

Dear Trooper: Hello! My name is Dale. I'm 11-years old. I HOPE you can read my writing. I have a sister named Cosette, who is 14 Robin 13, and two brothers Donny 6 and Tony 2. I also have a tortoise named Peabody and four frogs, Peter, David, Mark and Mickey. Peter is the opposite of me. He eats very little and I eat a lot. I weigh 96 pounds. Aren't I a lightweight?

Dear Parachuter: How are you? I am almost eight. I watch TV. Do you? My dad watches TV and my mother turns it off. I like cartoons best. I saw a go-go dancer. Have you? Your friend, Billy.



Bestwick

Brothers 'Competing' During Vietnam Tour

CHU LAI — Identical twins assigned to the 101st Airborne saw each other for the first time since they arrived in Vietnam during a recent pause in Operation Wheeler here.

Lts. Donald and Harry Stevenson, Dallas, swapped stories as they relaxed:

"Donald is three minutes older than I," mused Harry. "Yet, I've been ahead of him since we left home."

"What he means," Donald interrupted, "is he graduated

from the University of Texas one month before I did, finished jump school and came to Vietnam ahead of me."

Harry stood up quickly and snapped:

"At ease, Lieutenant!" "Oh yes, I forget," chuckled his brother. "He ranks me by 38 days."

Harry is a member of C Co., 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf. Donald is an artillery forward observer in Hq. Btry. of the 2nd Bn. (Abn), 320th Artillery.



Twin Lieutenants

Harry (left) and Donald Stevenson, Dallas, are identical twins serving with the 1st Brigade. Both are lieutenants, Harry with the 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf., and Donald with the 2nd Bn. (Abn), 320th Arty. (Photo by Sgt. Bob Chambers)

14 VC Zapped In Raid

CHU LAI — An early morning raid on a suspected Viet Cong location netted the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne 14 enemy kills during Operation Wheeler west of here.

"Intelligence pinpointed the VC element on a large hill and gave us the mission of destroying it," said Lt. James M. Hayes, Santa Fe Springs, Calif.

The first wave of helicopters landed the paratroopers of C Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 502nd Inf. in deep elephant grass on an adjacent hill. Quickly the paratroopers secured the landing zone for succeeding elements. "Everything was quiet until the second wave came in, then all hell broke loose," recalled Sgt. William J. McQueeney, Avenel, N.J. "Enemy automatic small arms opened up from a treeline and we couldn't move, so we called in the gunships."

Spec. 4 Lubert Jolly, Augusta, Ga., watched the rockets and mini-guns rip into the enemy position. "They didn't have a chance," he said.

The VC dropped their rucksacks and fled down the hill, just as Capt. Cordell Godboldt, Reading, Pa. suspected. "We had two elements waiting for them," said the company commander.

When the fleeing enemy entered into the cross-fire set up by a LRRP and Recondo force, a claymore triggered a withering volume of fire from the concealed Americans.

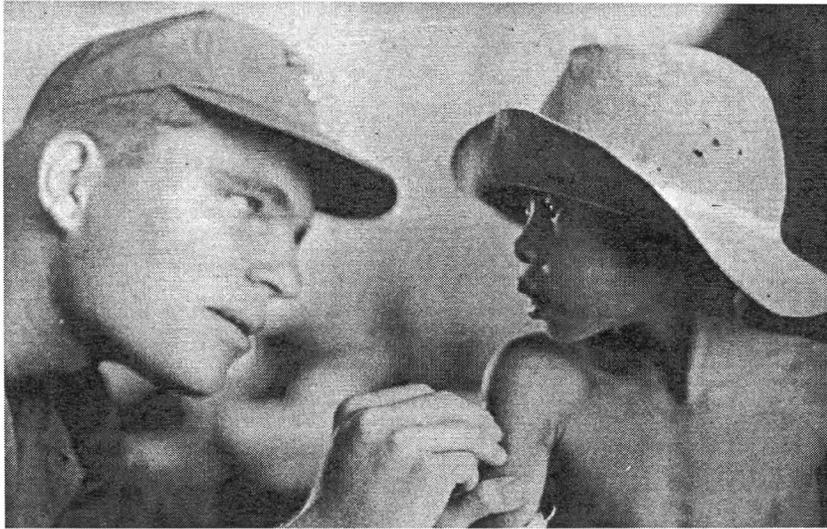
Forty-five minutes after the first paratroopers leaped from their helicopters they were airborne again.

Fourteen VC died in the raid.



Grass Waders

Paratroopers of the 4th Plat., A Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 502nd Inf., wade through elephant grass as they file down a mountain side during Operation Wheeler. (Photo by Spec. 5 Dick McLaughlin)



Standoff

A Vietnamese youngster and Spec. 4 Nick Poulos, Miami Beach, Fla., regard each other carefully prior to the first vaccination ever given the youth. Poulos, a medic with the 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf., was successful and the boy was protected against smallpox. (Photo by Sgt. Bob Chambers)

'Worked Perfectly'

Sound Tactics Rout Enemy

CHU LAI — Sound tactics and aggressive action by a 101st Airborne company routed a reinforced, entrenched NVA squad recently during Operation Wheeler west of here.

The 4th Plat. of A Co., 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf. had just moved out from their overnight bivouac position when 20-year old Pfc. Patrick F. Cummings, Greenbelt, Md., hoisted his 60-pound pack onto his 130-pound frame.

"All of a sudden we heard enemy fire," said Cummings. "I grabbed the radio and lis-

tened as the platoon leader of the 4th Plat. explained the situation to the CO."

The lead element of 4th Plat. had started across a rice paddy toward a cluster of trees which formed a sort of island in the wide paddy when 'Charlie' opened fire.

Capt. Julius F. Johnson, Washington, D.C., company commander of A Co., mapped quickly a plan of action:

The 4th Plat. would maintain a base of fire on the enemy; the 3rd Plat. was to move to the right flank; the 1st and 2nd Plats. would maneuver and join them on line.

When the 3rd Plat. reached the right flank of the 4th Plat., Cummings could see they had established a heavy fire base and were placing mortar fire on the treeline. "The mortars were really accurate," Cummings said. "They pounded the treeline and artillery fire was coming in also."

The 1st and 2nd Plats. now joined the 3rd and 4th in placing heavy fire on the stubborn enemy.

Johnson's next move was to maneuver 3rd Plat. under the cover of the 4th Platoon's base of fire while the 1st and 2nd Platoons maneuvered to hit the enemy's flanks.

"As we approached the treeline, I could see the smoke from the enemy weapons," said Cum-

mings, who notified a squad leader and all weapons fired on the entrenched enemy.

Moments later the enemy fire ceased and the paratroopers searched the area. Three NVA bodies lay in the long trench. The quantity of expended cartridges in the trench indicated 15-20 enemy had been firing on the paratrooper platoon. During a search of the area, two more NVA were killed as they tried to evade capture.

"Everything worked perfectly," said Cummings. "It was like they teach you in training. No one got hit. We did have one casualty, though. A platoon sergeant rolled off a dike and broke his ankle."

Workers Donate Books for Brigade

Maj. Harvey B. Blanton Jr., FAC pilot for the brigade, recently received three boxes of books and magazines from Mr. and Mrs. Claude French, Concord, Mass.

Mr. French is an engineer with Allied Research Associates, Inc. where the collection of reading materials was made.

Workers contributed the books for the benefit of the FAC pilots and men who operate the TOC at brigade headquarters 24 hours a day.

Grandstand Seat Turns Hot

CHU LAI — A grandstand seat for a recent river side battle during Operation Wheeler turned into a hot spot for two paratrooper spectators.

Members of C Co., 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf. were taking a break when B Co. engaged the enemy.

"It sounded good, but you couldn't see much," said Spec. 4 Lonnie Lane, Murfreesboro, Tenn., a medic.

Word was passed for C Co. to take cover as the enemy might try and cross the river. As the paratroopers deployed, the enemy sighted them and took them under fire.

"You could hear the bullets

whipping through the air," Lane said. "I didn't think they had a bead on us."

Lane and Sgt. Henry C. Madigan, Wivon, Mich., were still trying to get a better look at the fire fight across the river. Madigan tried to stand up when a burst of enemy fire cut the air around him.

"Hey! They're shooting at us," yelled Madigan.

Before he could hit the ground, a bullet knocked the weapon from his hands. The rifle fell, striking Lane in the head.

"I thought I was hit," Lane said. "I was rubbing my head, feeling for blood when I saw

47 NVA Allowed No Slack

CHU LAI — Paratroopers of the 101st Airborne ruined R&R for an NVA company west of here, killing 26 and seriously wounding 21 during an Operation Wheeler action.

C Co. of the 2nd Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf. approached a small hut complex at 12:45 p.m. and began a systematic search.

"We were going through the huts when our lead platoon discovered NVA khaki shirts hidden in the brush," said Capt. Jesse W. Myers, Greensboro, N.C. "This and other signs of enemy activity in the area indicated we might have stumbled on to something."

Lt. Michael McDermott, Highmore, S.D., and his platoon met an elderly woman who, through gestures, tried to warn the Americans of enemy ahead. A squad moved to investigate and spotted five NVA moving toward them. The squad point man opened fire and killed one.

Spec. 4 Edward G. Berry, York, Pa., yelled 'Charlie' and fired his machine gun as the squad charged into the complex. "All of a sudden there were NVA all around us," he said. "We fired them up with weapons and grenades. I know we got at least 20 of them."

McDermott was pressing the attack when he was wounded by a grenade. In spite of his wounds, the platoon leader killed the enemy who threw the grenade and continued to lead the assault.

Meanwhile, Berry's squad had pushed the enemy into what appeared to be a base camp. Berry yelled back to the rest of the platoon: "If you want a real war, it's up here."

Platoon Sgt. Bob C. Steward, Farmington, N.M., heard the challenge and shouted to his platoon: "Drop your rucksacks and let's go."

Steward's forces were momentarily pinned down, but extracted themselves with fire and maneuver.

"The NVA were still trying to figure out what was going on," said Myers. "The idea of a squad running into their base camp really shook them up."

The contact raged into the late afternoon and evening. A Co. moved to assist Myers' forces and air and artillery reinforced the paratrooper fight.

When the contact ended, C Co. had killed 15 NVA, captured a Russian light machine gun, five AK-47's, an SKS rifle and numerous rucksacks.

A search of the battlefield by A Co. the following day revealed 11 NVA killed by air and artillery and four weapons.

'Sarge' was bleeding." Lane patched up his friend as both of them hugged the ground.

Meanwhile, the enemy was caught between B and C Co's., but the men of 'Charlie' company couldn't fire on the enemy for fear of hitting paratroopers in B Co.

Finally the enemy retreated to the river bank and C Co. opened fire, sending the enemy running in search of a new escape route.

"We had a good seat to watch the fight," said Lane rubbing his head. "I guess the moral of the story is spectator's shouldn't stand up when the action begins."

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**If you can help with
a current address –
please contact
the editor.**



Col. Michael McBride and Command Sgt. Major Robert Wright uncase the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) Colors October 25th during the Transfer of Authority Ceremony at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq. The Bastogne Brigade replaced the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, which was responsible for the Salah and Din Province over the last 15 months.

Bastogne Public Affairs Office, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), COB Speicher



U. S. Army Military History Institute

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS 1ST BRIGADE, 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION
APO San Francisco 96347

U. S. Army Airborne Division, 101st Brigade, 1st
30 October 1967

SUBJECT: Presidential Unit Citation

[*Officer action report, Operation Benton*].

THRU: Channels

TO: The Commanding General
United States Army, Vietnam
ATTN: AVHAG-PD
APO 96375

1. Pursuant to authority contained in AR 672-5-1, it is recommended that the Presidential Unit Citation (ARMY) be awarded to the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division for extraordinary heroism in military operations against a hostile force from 13 August 1967 through 29 August 1967 in Quang Tin Province, Republic of Viet Nam.

2. On 10 August 1967, Headquarters, Task Force Oregon, ordered the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division to conduct combat assaults in Quang Tin Province to canalize enemy forces into killing zones within the area of operations. Seal, search and destroy missions were integral parts of the operation order. This military endeavor was code named "BENTON".

3. All units, assigned and attached, to the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division participated in the operation in Quang Tin Province with such heroism, gallantry, determination and esprit de corps that, in addition to achieving a great and decisive victory, they were able to prove conclusively to the well trained and equipped North Vietnamese regulars, whom they opposed, that the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division was the most formidable opponent whom they had yet encountered. The outstanding heroic actions of individual paratroopers and units within the brigade are documented herein and were undertaken and accomplished under exceedingly adverse conditions comparable to any experienced by the American soldier in any war.

4. The devotion to duty, professionalism, proficiency, decisiveness and unexcelled intrepidity of every individual and his propensity for unparalleled, aggressive conduct in the area of operation, and his desire to promote the team role, contributed, in large measure, to the brigade's ability to inflict on the enemy this resounding defeat. Combat support and service support units and all resources of the brigade were brought to bear on the enemy with a degree of professionalism not achieved elsewhere in the history of the United States Army.

5. The mission assigned to the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division by Task Force Oregon on 10 August 1967, was to conduct combat assault operations moving into Quang Tin Province. Seal, search and destroy missions were to be conducted within the area of operations in the vicinity of the Chien Dang Village complex which was the last reported location of suspected major enemy units.

6. Intelligence reports captured during the action and subsequently evaluated, and other sources of information, revealed that the 21st North Vietnamese Army Regiment of the 2d North Vietnamese Division was operating in the area of responsibility. Professionally led, tactically sound and well disciplined, this enemy was a superior product of the North Vietnamese Army. The 11th, 22d, 33d, and 70th Battalions of the North Vietnamese Army's 21st North Vietnamese Regiment were determined opponents during this conflict. Operating under the control of the 2d North Vietnamese Army Division or as independent battalions within the

area of operations, they were a dedicated, professional and, if the occasion demanded, a fanatical enemy with which to contend. This Regiment, the 21st North Vietnamese of the 2^d North Vietnamese Division, was supported by the 76th Company, 409th Sapper Battalion; which made the task of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division incredibly difficult because of strong, mutually supporting systems of fortified bunkers and trench complex positions, which were exceedingly difficult to assault. Viet Cong local force units were also active opponents of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division during operation BENTON. Seven companies of Viet Cong local force units were prepared to deny the 1st Brigade successful execution of its mission in Quang Tin Province. Equipped with mortars, automatic weapons, grenades, individual weapons, well led, supported by the GK 33d Artillery Battalion of the 2d North Vietnamese Division, this foe, while not equal in valor to the men of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, proved a true test of the mettle and heroism of the entire brigade.

7. Terrain and weather combined to favor the enemy. Monsoon conditions, which incorporate strong winds and heavy rains, were prevalent during this season and made resupply of material and extremely difficult consideration. At least once, for an entire day, atmospheric conditions actually prevented any resupply missions, by air, to the brigade while in the area of operations. Heroic conduct was the daily performance of the pilots and crews of the 176th Aviation Company and the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division Aviation Section. Their hazardous mission was made more difficult by the constant harassment of accurate, intense enemy fires in addition to the negative weather conditions. Adverse weather conditions were a constant challenge to artillery fire support missions. Artillery fire support and accuracy was praiseworthy. However, the small unit leader was frequently obligated to do without this vital element, when inclement weather was so intense as to cause unnecessary hazard to his own troops due to early detonation of friendly forces artillery rounds. Additionally, temperature during the course of the operation ranged up to 101 degrees Fahrenheit which, when coupled with extremely high humidity, made long overland movement fatiguing and attacks incredibly exhausting.

8. The terrain was characterized by rugged mountains in the central and southern portions of the Province and low hills and low mountains surrounded by valleys in the northern portion of the area of operations. Elephant grass, often taller than a man covered rolling hills and the valley floors were frequently cultivated with rice paddies which greatly inhibited rapid, secure, orderly movement. Secondary growth and the topographical characteristics of the terrain made movement difficult, at times, for the paratroopers of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division. Conversely, this inhospitable environment favored the enemy by providing him cover and concealment and made extremely difficult the access to his sanctuary in his assumed safe area of operations within and adjacent to Quang Tin Province. Although weather and terrain combined to present obstruction to the mission of the gallant paratroopers of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, they were not to be denied contact with the enemy, and did in fact vigorously seek him in his own milieu. Despite incredible personal hardship, the paratroopers accomplished the mission as they were assigned.

9. The honor of initial contact with the enemy in Quang Tin Province fell the lot of Company B, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry shortly after 1300 hours on 13 August 1967; D-Day of the operation, Company B annihilated an enemy force of seven Viet Cong whom they caught unaware. Hard hours of combat experience and conditioning were rewarded as no members of Company B were wounded or killed in the engagement. The Reconnaissance Platoon, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry, shortly thereafter, engaged and killed one Viet Cong with rifle fire. The trend of operations continued favorably when at 1425 hours a company size mobile strike force composed of former North Vietnamese and Viet Cong defectors, called "Mike Force", 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, captured three prisoners of war.

10. Fire, started by an unknown source, accomplished what the enemy could not do. Battery B, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 320th Artillery's firing position at the tactical command post was engulfed by flames forcing the

artillerymen, despite a magnificent effort, to abandon their position due to exploding ammunition. This in turn necessitated the relocation of the Tactical Command Post of the 2d Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry. Unfortunately, the raging fire and exploding ammunition destroyed four howitzers, the section equipment, and material that was organic to the Tactical Command Post which was forced to be abandoned. This chain of circumstances was further debilitated by an enemy probe of the new position after darkness fell on D-Day. Prior to the unsuccessful probe, the hostile force placed accurate mortar fire and grenaded the 2d Battalion, 327th Infantry Tactical Command Post and raked the paratroopers command position with fire. The attack failed though performed in a sophisticated manner by a North Vietnamese force of undetermined size, employing satchel charges, rifle grenades, automatic weapons and mortar fire. The men of the "No Slack" Battalion did not capitulate to this aggressive and well executed attack. Instead, exercising sound judgement and using the support rendered by sister services, including Air Force C-47 aircraft with mini-guns, free world military forces demonstrated to the common enemy that the defenders were not to be overrun. Determined to hold their position on the terrain, the tactical command post fought throughout the night of 13/14 August 1967 upholding the honor and displaying the traditional paratrooper courage of their battalion, brigade and division. The attack was repulsed and the enemy fled from the battlefield taking his dead with him. The postscript to this heroic stand in the face of incredibly severe odds lay in the rapid return to duty of the artillery battery which had been destroyed by fire. Battery B, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 320th Artillery, was extracted, along with its damaged guns, by helicopter on the afternoon of 14 August 1967. Two weapons which were test fired in the Chu Lai airfield complex were found to be safe for duty on the line. Emergency requisitions were submitted for four additional howitzers and essential items of equipment. Support and logistical personnel performed in an outstanding manner by their rapid assembly of fire direction equipment, tentage and section equipment which was provided from battalion resources. Signal equipment, that essential ingredient without which modern artillery cannot provide its rapid response, was provided by the Brigade Signal Officer. Significantly this previously destroyed artillery unit was back in action in the area of operations less than 48 hours after its calamitous encounter with fire. Hard work, excellent cooperation, rapid action and the desire of all support personnel added immeasurably to the accomplishment of the mission by providing minimum down time for this unit, Battery B, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 320th Artillery. The enemy in Quang Tin Province, Republic of Viet Nam, was not allowed surcease from the intense pressure exerted upon him by the paratroopers of the brigade whose standard carries proudly the Screaming Eagle-1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division.

11. In conjunction with the 2d Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry's operations in Quang Tin Province, simultaneous activity was initiated by the 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry. On the afternoon of 13 August 1967, Company B, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry led off in a north-westerly direction from its heavily mined landing zone. A numerically superior enemy force attacked the 1st platoon with deadly, accurate, heavy fire consisting of rockets, rifle grenades, machine gun and small arms fire. The platoon leader, who later died, was critically wounded when one of the first enemy rockets fired hit and exploded upon his rucksack. Unhesitatingly, First Lieutenant Fred L. Meyers assumed command and called for artillery fires. Lieutenant Meyers, not originally assigned to the platoon, was along to observe the action in anticipation of gaining his own command. The enemy was in well covered, concealed positions. Breaking contact and taking all their wounded, the platoon withdrew to the original landing zone to reconsolidate their forces. The second platoon, B Company, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry, at 1715 hours moved to the northeast where it too engaged an extremely strong numerically superior enemy force and engaged it in a heavy fire fight. Ordered back to the landing zone with the first platoon, they returned to consolidate their position with the company, which began digging into defensive position for the night. The courage of the pilots of the medical evacuation and ammunition resupply helicopters was tested to the limit as every airship, without exception, encountered automatic weapons fire from surrounding enemy positions as they delivered needed ammunition and evacuated critically wounded soldiers during the battle. They, however did not shrink their duty and medical evacuation of wounded soldiers and ammunition resupply was accomplished by early evening. This brave company

was attacked, without respite, for over four hours that night during which the enemy utilized mortar fire, rockets, machine guns, hand grenades and ground attacks. Fighting what was apparently a North Vietnamese Battalion, the company commander called on all available resources at his disposal, including harrassing and interdicting artillery fires, armed helicopters and United States Air Force C-47 aircraft with mini-guns. At 1800 hours the company perimeter was brought under intense enemy fire from the north, west, and south. Rifle grenades fell inside the perimeter, fired by this well armed enemy, but no ground attack developed at this time. At 2000 hours firing slacked off and the remaining wounded paratroopers were evacuated. Just prior to midnight the position was bombarded heavily by 60mm and 82mm mortar rounds. Following the mortar attacks, rockets, rifle grenades and machine guns were fired into the company area of defense. Precisely at 0100 hours a Viet Cong company launched a ground attack from the southeast against the 3d platoon position. Directing a furious volume of individual weapons fire on the attacking force, it was broken up by the highly effective, combined efforts of the defending company, the artillery support and the excellent Air Force response. Attempting to force the perimeter from the northeast, the enemy launched an attack, but this attack also was broken up before it could get within hand grenade range of the gallant defenders. The main enemy effort came from the west against 1st and 4th platoon's sector. Two enemy companies advanced against the two defending platoons but although they got within five meters of the line of defenders they could not force the courageous paratroopers of B Company, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry, to concede their positions. Firing an accurate and furious volume of small arms weapons at the attackers, they killed many and forced the remainder to flee from the battlefield. The enemy was forced to beat a retreat during the early morning hours immediately prior to dawn, after having suffered grievous losses to himself upon his first contact with the paratroopers of Company B, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry, 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division. That morning the company found 35 enemy dead, 18 weapons and large amounts of ammunition and equipment surrounding their perimeter. Company B, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry was able to blunt this enemy only by heroic self sacrifice and selfless endeavor on the part of every man in the company. Two soldiers of this gallant, courageous and determined company were killed and 19 were wounded in hostile action.

12. The 1st Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry, 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, moved into the area of operations on 14 August 1967. Early afternoon found A Company as the Brigade Immediate Reaction Force, and as such at 1420 hours, the company assaulted into Quang Tin Province. A Company's report of action is similar to the entire Brigade's report of action for that day. The enemy, stunned by the furious onslaught of the previous day, was forced to fall back and regroup his forces. Enemy contact on 14 August 1967 was very light with occasional sightings of single men or small groups of the enemy. Sniper fire from this diabolically well hidden enemy continued to harass the American soldiers. The remainder of the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry joined the battle on 15 August 1967. The 3d platoon of Company B made their first significant contribution to the mission that day. Observing a squad sized element of North Vietnamese soldiers, they immediately took them under intense individual weapons fire. Again the company commander was able to enforce his will on the enemy by having superior resources available to him from the 1st Brigade. Accurate artillery fire was immediately available and he also called on the Army's armed helicopters and U. S. Air Force support to wreck havoc on this foe. Killing ten of the enemy and capturing a weapon, the platoon was not to go unscathed. Two soldiers of the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry, called "Above the Rest", were killed in this furious action against the enemy.

13. Strong defensive positions with fortified bunkers, caves and tunnels were found early on the morning of 16 August 1967 by Company C, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry. Search and destroy operations were employed and ultimately, with artillery and air strikes called by Company C, the day's fighting resulted in ten enemy dead with no loss to friendly forces. Large amounts of enemy equipment, foodstuffs and weapons were captured or destroyed, if the occasion warranted, on this fourth and successful day of operations by the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division. The Brigade had annihilated 95 of the enemy thus far on Operation BENTON.

14. Action on 17 August 1967 was characterized by a continuation of

search and destroy missions with sporadic enemy contact. The longevity of the enemy's unmolested occupation of Quang Tin Province came to light on this day. About 0900 hours, Company B, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry found a hospital complex. Twenty thousand pounds of rice and 2,000 pounds of salt were at this location, presumably to feed patients. Later that afternoon, Company A, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry uncovered a medical supply cache, containing large amounts of medical dressings, 300 bottles of penicillin, syringes, a large number of surgical instruments and like appurtenances. Similarly, Company B, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry discovered a cache which contained several mortar rounds, rockets, homemade bombs, explosive compound and a large quantity of miscellaneous small arms ammunition gave ample evidence to this enemy's ability to support his attempted subjugation of Quang Tin Province. Organic and attached units of the 1st Brigade maintained their unrelenting pressure on the enemy. Troop A, 2d Squadron (Airborne), 17th Cavalry, at 0145 hours apprehended seven Viet Cong. Company A, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry apprehended two Viet Cong at 0830 hours. The Reconnaissance Platoon, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry engaged and killed one Viet Cong at 0930 hours. Shortly thereafter, Company A, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry killed one Viet Cong. Company C, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry encountered two stubborn enemy snipers in fortified positions; tactical air was employed resulting in no loss of life to friendly forces and two enemy dead. The Reconnaissance Platoon 1st Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry saw two uniformed enemy soldiers whom they engaged. The enemy was killed and an assault weapon was captured. Damage to helicopters of the 176th Aviation Company resupply missions was a constant threat and this day proved no exception. At 2100 hours, a utility aircraft received small arms fire which damaged the aircraft and wounded one of the occupants. Company C, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry called on medical evacuation helicopters to extract one of their comrades who had been wounded by sniper fire. This aircraft too, was fired upon by the enemy. At midafternoon on this day, Company A, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry captured a prisoner of war moments later. Assaulting the enemy at 1609 hours, Company C, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry, at no loss to themselves, killed two of the enemy. This day's action was reported as light. However, this relative term must be adjusted with respect to the total picture. Courageous action by every unit of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division kept the hostile force off balance, prevented him from regrouping his forces, discovered, and as a result, confiscated or destroyed large amounts of foodstuffs, medical supplies, arms, explosives and ammunition, killed twelve of his soldiers and captured, as prisoners of war, 20 more. The 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division was not to be denied its mission. By now a total of 107 enemy had been killed.

15. Heavy contact with the enemy was made on 18 August 1967. One platoon of Company A, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry made contact with the enemy at 1200. The enemy opened up with automatic weapons. Replying with a furious volume of fire, the platoon extracted itself by employing air strikes and artillery. Maneuvering its remaining platoons, the contact was broken and somewhat later, battle was joined again. Fighting furiously, the battle lasted until 2215 hours when the enemy was forced to quit the area; this time he withdrew permanently. On this same date, one platoon of Company C, at about 1700 hours came into contact with enemy force of company size. Again, this well armed enemy opened fire, this time with nine automatic weapons which prevented the platoon from maneuvering effectively. Skillfully maneuvering his remaining platoons against the enemy force, the company commander called artillery to rain down a hail of steel and called for air strikes upon the hapless enemy. Heavy fighting continued for over two hours. The enemy finally was forced to break contact and withdraw, dragging his dead and wounded with him when it became readily apparent that Company C was not going to capitulate. 140 of the enemy had been killed by this date.

16. The objectives originally envisioned for Operation BENTON

were coming to fruition. It was not until 25 August 1967 that the North Vietnamese Regulars and Viet Cong dared to again engage the soldiers of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division in any strength. Company A, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry became engaged with a large, strong enemy force. After a brief but furious fire fight, a medical evacuation helicopter was called to the location to evacuate a wounded infantryman. Ignoring custom, the enemy shot the medical helicopter down with automatic weapons fire. However, the company secured a perimeter of defense for the downed aircraft immediately, and in the process, killed one enemy soldier near the helicopter. Northwest of the main body of Company A, the 2d platoon was maneuvering against enemy positions and placing a maximum of individual weapons fire on the enemy, but they could not dislodge this well entrenched hostile force. Heroism that day was not only the forte of the infantrymen. Engineers rushed forward under cover of machine gun fire and placed explosives on the bunker complex itself. Those charges succeeded in breaching the enemy works. Assaulting the position, the platoon found four enemy dead and two of their weapons were captured. Operation BENTON had been in progress 14 days. Two hundred seventy-seven of the enemy had been killed.

17. Individual acts of heroism and unquestioned gallantry marked the final three days of action during Operation BENTON, but the enemy contact was virtually non-existent. His hold over Quang Tin Province had been broken at a fearful cost to himself in terms of men killed, weapons and equipment captured or destroyed, and his logistic and communication lines interdicted. The unquestioned valor, professional skill and common courage of all men of the units assigned and attached to the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division was evidenced by the magnificent accomplishments of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division from first contact with the enemy on Operation BENTON, 13 August to 29 August 1967. The enemy had been driven from the field leaving 303 killed in action. Forty-one soldiers of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division paid for this stunning victory with their lives, and 251 were wounded seriously enough to require medical evacuation. Six million, four hundred thirty-two thousand pounds of rice, 2,800 pounds of salt and 8,000 pounds of tea were discovered and denied the enemy during Operation BENTON.

18. Special note must be taken of the courageous pilots and crews of the 176th Aviation Company. Their hazardous mission was performed in a characteristically courageous manner with never any questions of personal safety respite the reward. Ten Purple Hearts, their Flying Crosses, Silver Stars and other awards for valor cannot fully document their truly magnificent support of the brigade during Operation BENTON. A brief examination of flight statistics will afford an idea of the magnitude of their support for the 17 days of the operation. HU-ID's were flown 1,146 hours for a total of 4,174 sorties. Six thousand eight hundred sixty-three paratroopers were flown into battle and 42 medical evacuations- which is not normally their business-were accomplished. Additionally, the 250 hours spent by the gunships, the HU-IC's and their 537 sorties were invaluable succor to the brigade- as evidenced by the 185, 100 rounds of 7.62mm, 3,964 rounds of 40mm, and 1,413, 2.75 inch rockets which were expended in behalf of the brigade. Uncommon courage was their invaluable ally from the inception of Operation BENTON until its completion on 29 August 1967. 3 Distinguished Service Crosses, 5 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 7 Silver Stars and more than 156 Bronze Stars and Army Commendation Medals for Valor, awarded or pending, attest to the undeniable courage of the paratroopers of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division and their supporting elements, during the successful campaign in Quang Tin Province.

19. Response to call of human need has always been the history of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division. The Province Chief of Quang Tin Province requested only those refugees who desired evacuation be taken from the area of operations. Twenty-four aircraft sorties relocated 701 Vietnamese civilians who requested evacuation. Due to the hostile environment, medical treatment of indigenous civilians under the "MEDECAP" program was not considered a goal in the operation order; however, medical treatment in the field was planned and 21 refugees received treatment within the area of operations.

20. These 17 days of intensely fought, continuous battle proved conclusively that the indomitable spirit, courage and gallantry of the 1st

Brigade, 101st Airborne Division would persevere over a well trained, equipped and fanatical enemy who would deny the people of Quang Tin Province, Republic of Viet Nam, their rightful heritage of liberty and freedom. These qualities of esprit de corps, outstanding courage, professionalism, determination and compassion for their fellow man against a formidable oppressor were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service, and reflect great credit on all members of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division and all attached units who participated in this extraordinary combat action.



12 Inclosures

1. List of Participating Units
2. After Action Reports: Operation BENTON
3. Operations Order and Fragment Orders
4. Overlays
5. Strength Figures
6. S-5 Memorandum for Record
7. Selected Individual Award Citations
8. Summary of Recommendation
9. Proposed Citation
10. Photographs, Operation BENTON
11. Operation BENTON: 13 August 1967 through 29 August 1967 Daily Journals
12. Map of Area of Operations - Quang Tin Province

S. H. MATHESON
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding

Editor's Note: David P. Perrine, 2/502 HHC 5/67-10/67, sent the following messages along with copies of two recommendations for the Presidential Unit Citations. He wrote:

"I just returned from the Military History Institute at Carlisle, PA and found two recommendations signed by (Brigadier General) Matheson for unit awards.

The first is for a Presidential Unit Citation and is dated 10/30/67 for Operation Benton (8/13-8/29). It is seven pages in length (long sheet). There were no enclosures except Enclosure 7, consisting of many pages which I did not copy.

The second is also for a Presidential Unit Citation and is dated 12/20/67 is for Operation Wheeler (9/12/67-11/25/67). It is 11 pages in length. All of the enclosures were present but the file was at least 12 inches thick and I did not copy any of the enclosures.

I presume both were disapproved or returned without action.

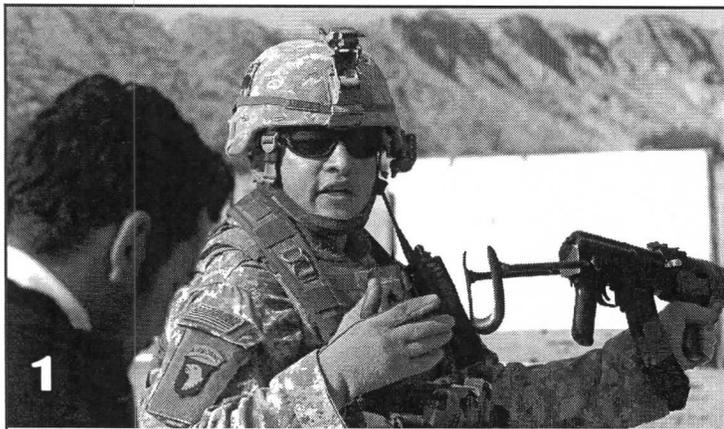
I e-mailed Ralph Puckett, (2/502 CO 7/67-3/68) and asked him if he knew of the history of these two recommendations and he knew nothing. Both were news to him. Perhaps one of the subscribers might know whether these were withdrawn or disapproved?"

Skip Perrine

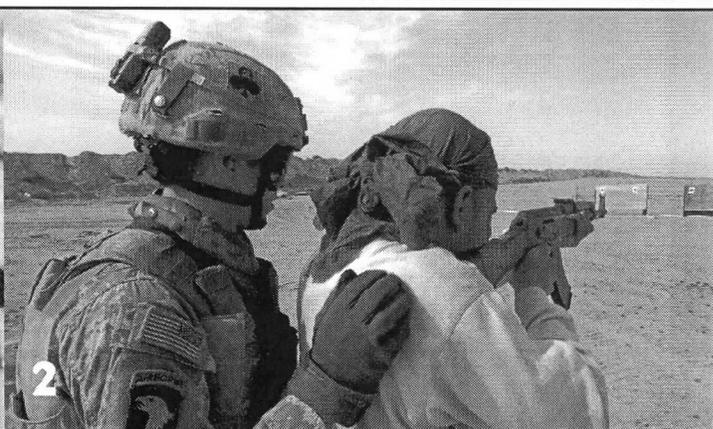


327th INFANTRY

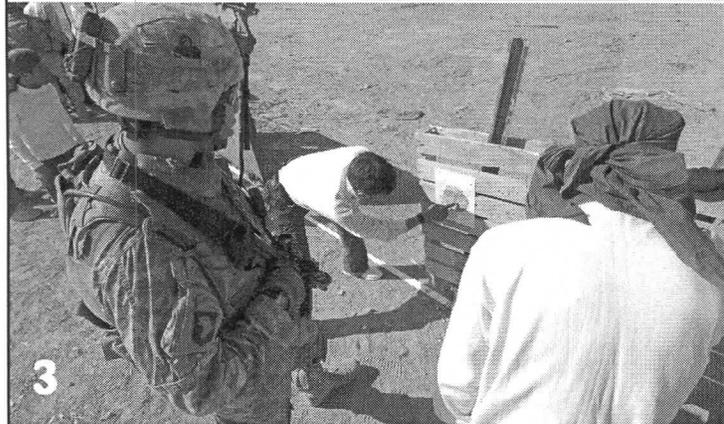
Yesteryear, Today and Yet to Come



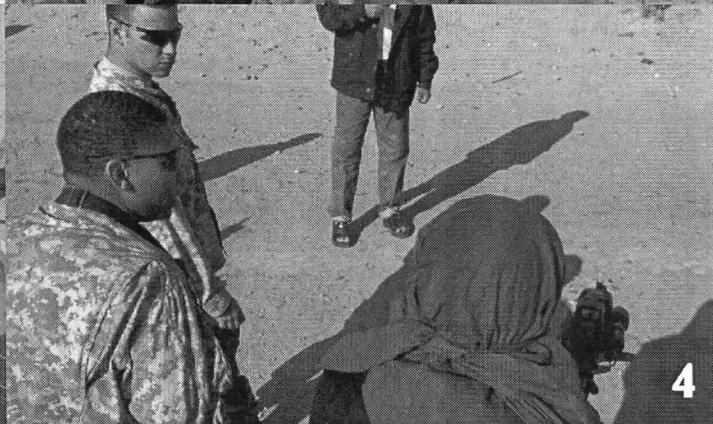
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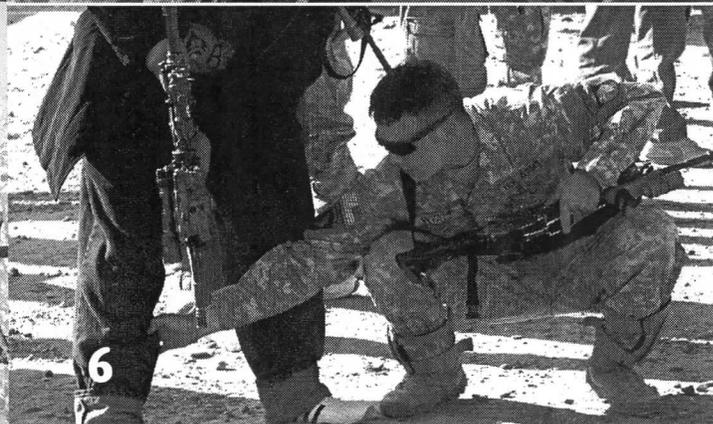
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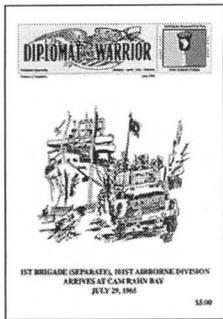
5



6

1. Staff Sgt. John Harper, Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, explains how to effectively fire rounds from an AK-47 to members of the Samarra Rescue Committee while practicing firing the weapons on a range at Forward Operating Base Seven Feb. 14, near Samarra, Iraq. 2. A Samarra Rescue Committee member fires his AK-47 assault rifle at a range at Forward Operating Base Seven Feb. 14, while Spc. Derek Hill, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, watches to ensure he does so safely. The SRC members were placed in Samarra two days later in an attempt to help the security situation in the strategic northern-Iraqi city. 3. After engaging their targets, Samarra Rescue Committee members check to see how well they fired with their AK-47s, while Sgt. James Spiller, Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment looks on. 4. A member of the Samarra Rescue Committee watches as another member receives proper instruction on how to fire a weapon while standing at Forward Operating Base Seven near Samarra, Iraq, Feb. 14. The SRC was at the FOB in order to receive training before they were to be placed in the city Feb. 16 in order to help secure their neighborhoods. 5. Specialist Derek Hill, Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, watches a member of the Samarra Rescue Committee as he learns the proper way to fire a weapon while standing at Forward Operating Base Seven near Samarra, Iraq, Feb. 14. 6. Sergeant Adam Wyatt, Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, shows a member of the Samarra Rescue Committee how to properly stand while firing his weapon Feb. 14 at Forward Operating Base Seven. The No Slack Soldiers trained Samarra's local Sons of Iraq groups before they entered the city Feb. 16 in an attempt to help secure the strategic city.





Issue #1



Issue #2



Issue #3



Issue #4



Issue #5



Issue #6



Issue #7



Issue #8



Issue #9



Issue #10



Issue #11



Issue #12



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Issue #15



Issue #16



Issue #17



Issue #18



Issue #19



Issue #20



Issue #21



Issue #22



Issue #23



Issue #24



Issue #25



Issue #26



Issue #27



Issue #28

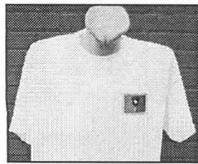


Issue #29



Issue #30

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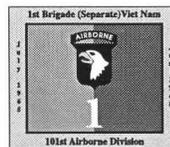
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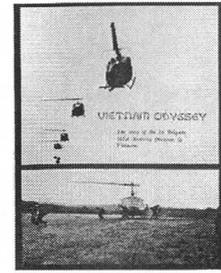
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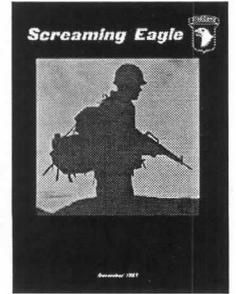
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Issue #40



Viet Nam Odyssey



Dec. '67 Reprint
History July '65 - Dec. '67



The 1st Brigade (S) plastic auto tag is not new but it has been improved. It now can be ordered with magnets on the back so it can be attached to any ferrous metal surface. Regular tag without magnets \$5.00. Improvement costs \$3.00 - total price \$8.00.



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[Actual 1 1/2 inch size]

The 1 1/2 inch diameter coin is crafted in vivid colors, has a beveled edge and is coated with a clear acrylic to preserve the coin's surface. (It is unfortunate that it cannot be shown here in color.) Cost is \$10.00 per coin, postpaid. See page 34 for order form.

THE FIRST SCREAMING EAGLES IN VIET NAM

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Opinions expressed by writers and the editor are entirely their own and are not to be considered official expressions of any organization that plans reunions and otherwise acts on behalf of veterans of the 1st Brigade (Separate), 101st Airborne Division.

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Manuscripts, photographs, slides and drawings are submitted at the contributors' risk. All material submitted will be copied and returned to the owner.

The editor and publisher reserves the right to edit all submissions for clarity and to meet space constraints. The editor and publisher has the right to refuse any article or advertisement that may, in his opinion, cause embarrassment to any veteran of the 1st Brigade (Separate), 101st Airborne Division. Deadlines for submissions are the first day of March, June, September and December.

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Material to be published in the
JULY 2008 issue of The First SCREAMING EAGLES In Viet Nam is Due JUNE 1st, 2008

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Following is a description of most of the items published in the April 2008 issue of THE FIRST SCREAMING EAGLES IN VIET NAM magazine. The editor sends his sincere thanks to all those who contributed material to make the magazine more interesting for all veterans of the brigade who make this magazine possible.

NEW VA SECRETARYPAGES 1 - 4
Information on James B. Peake who served in the 2/502 in 1967 – 68 and is now the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR PAGES 5 - 12
Messages from the First Brigade website, e-mails and the U. S. Postal Service that should be of interest to most of our readers.

ONE BRAVE COMPANYPAGES 12 - 15
Story of C Company 2/502 on September 29, 1967. Two soldiers were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for this action.

REUNION SPEAKERSPAGE 15
Some information about the principal speakers at the two main events for the September 2008 Reunion.

OBITUARIESPAGE 16
All First Brigade veterans are urged to send notices of the death of any brother veteran you become aware of.

THE SCREAMING EAGLEPAGES 17 - 20
The December 20, 1967 issue of the weekly unit newspaper published for soldiers of the brigade has a lead story about OPERATION WHEELER. This paper is from the COL(R) Gerry Morse, 1/327 C.O. 7/67-6/68 collection.

SUBSCRIBER INFORMATIONPAGES 21 - 24
This list is composed of NEW SUBSCRIBERS, RENEWED SUBSCRIBERS, ADDRESS CORRECTIONS and BAD ADDRESSES.

PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATIONPAGES 25 - 31
Recommendation for the PUC for the brigade for its conduct of Operation Benton. No evidence can be found about action on this recommendation. It is assumed that it was disapproved.

FIRST BRIGADE IN IRAQPAGE 32
Photos and captions sent by e-mail by SFC Kevin Doheny, PAO NCOIC, 1BCT, 101st ABN DIV (AA).

ITEMS FOR SALEPAGES 33 - 35
Illustrations of all past magazines are shown in thumbnail format and other First Brigade memorabilia are pictured. An order blank with prices is included.

AIRBORNE ASSOCIATIONSPAGE 36
On the page facing this index is a list of some associations that may be of interest to veterans of the First Brigade (S).



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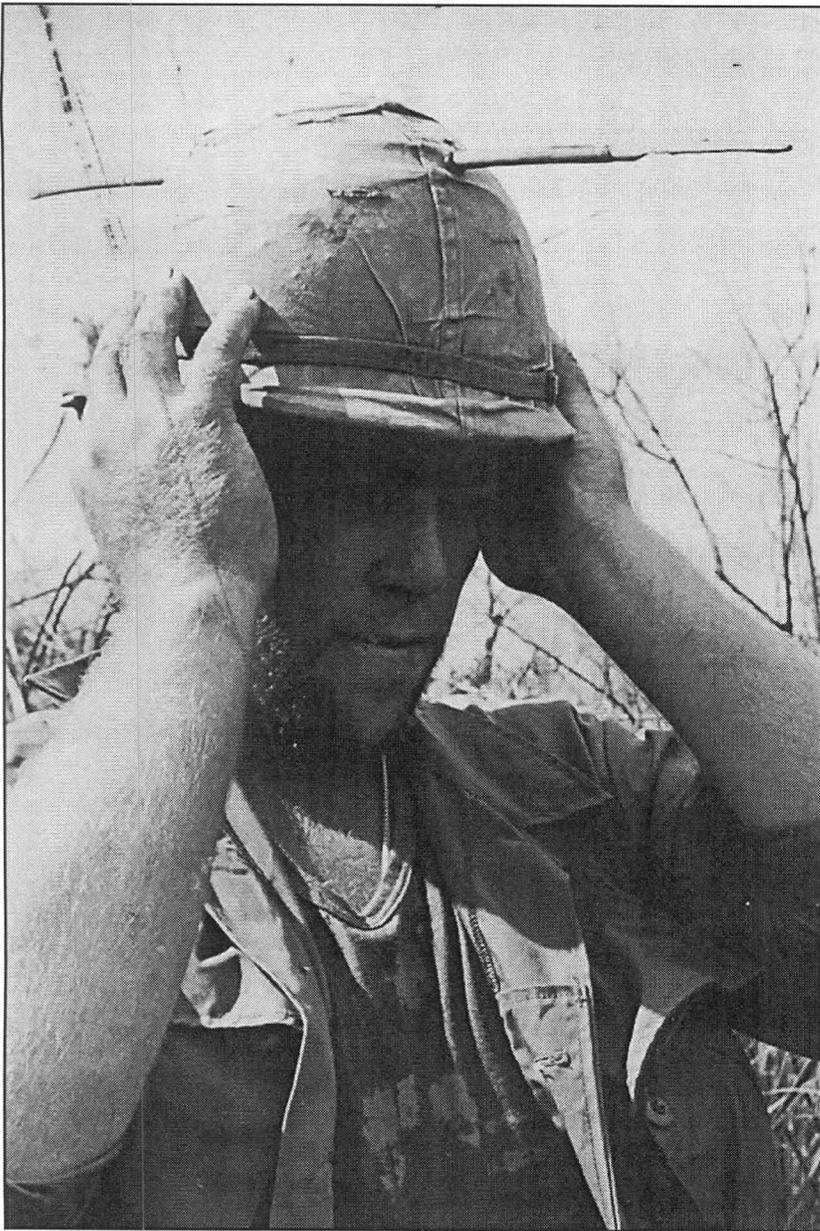
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CHU LAI, Vietnam—CLOSE CALL. Pfc. JAMES L. RUSSELL, Rockford, Mich., uses a stick to measure the space between his head and the path of an enemy bullet, which pierced his helmet during Operation Wheeler. Russell is a machine gunner in C Co., 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf., 101st Airborne. (USA Photo by Staff Sgt. ART CAMPBELL)

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