

*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

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101st Airborne Division

Volume 13, Number 3

July 2011

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# ***The ALWAYS FIRST Brigade***



*Wounded Carried From The Battlefield*



On Memorial Day, MAJ(R) Ivan Worrell, INFO OFF 5/66-5/67, Editor and Publisher of *THE FIRST SCREAMING EAGLES in VIET NAM* lays a wreath, as a memorial to First Brigade (Separate) troopers who died when the brigade was in combat and those who have died since the brigade's battles have ceased.

The Memorial Day activities sponsored by the National Capital Area Chapter were a fitting memorial to Screaming Eagles who have soared and a tribute to those who now serve whether at Fort Campbell, or in Afghanistan with a very special emphasis on the wounded eagles now being treated in hospitals and clinics and those who have returned to civilian life to live with disabilities. The chapter officers and membership had a great plan for ceremonies at the most meaningful monuments that were very interesting for the first time attendee as well as for those who have attended year after year.

I find myself, as editor and publisher of this magazine, in an embarrassing position. In the April issue I did not edit the Letters to the Editor very well and let a sentence at the end of a letter by Grady Jones, that I should have removed, be printed. This produced a number of letters taking issue with the assessment Grady made of those who found fault with David Hackworth. Grady sent a letter of apology which will not be published. Enough that he has apologized I do not wish this to drag on with answers to his apology. I know that some personal animosities

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).



exist in our First Brigade band of brothers and do not wish to fill this magazine with expressions of personal angst directed against those who served in the Brigade by other brigade veterans.

I plan to go to the Cold Steel Cobra Reunion in Crossville this next weekend and look forward to posting material about it in the October magazine. Ken and Angie Ihle are, without fail, great hosts.

Those of you who sent in a renewal after June 1<sup>st</sup> will not find your names listed in the renewal section of the July issue. They will be published in the October magazine. I am trying to find a way to publish more timely information about those who have renewed and hope to have better coverage in future publications.

The First Screaming Eagle website guestbook has been violated by malicious hackers and will be closed for a while so a new guestbook may be installed.

The First Brigade license plate with magnets is no longer available because the glue that should hold the magnet to the plastic plate no longer holds. I do not expect this item to return.

The 66th Annual Reunion of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division Association will be held in Lexington, Kentucky on August 17-21, 2011. Make sure you sign up by August 2<sup>nd</sup> to receive the discounted hotel rates. For more information contact the Executive Secretary & Treasurer of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division Association, 32 Screaming Eagle Blvd, P.O. Box 929, Fort Campbell, KY 42223-0929 call (931) 431-0199 or e-mail [101exec@comcast.net](mailto:101exec@comcast.net).

Be sure to note the announcement, on page 28, by MAJ(R) Walter W. Jackson, 1/327 C 7/67-6/68, about the 2012 Brigade Reunion in conjunction with the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division Association Reunion in Nashville, Tennessee.

Please note all the material sent by readers used to make this magazine. If you have photos, published material, or your own story please send it to be used in the only magazine about the First Brigade (Separate) in Viet Nam.

OBSERVATIONS  
OF A  
PLATOON LEADER  
PART I OF III PARTS

Captain Patrick H. Graves, USA  
Former platoon leader, 1st Battalion 327th Infantry

Foreword by Brigadier General Willard Pearson, USA  
*Former commander of the 1st Brigade, 101st Division*

*The war in Vietnam is a small unit leader's war. Day after day troops move out on search and destroy operations to find the enemy. This movement to contact and the meeting engagement are the most frequent type operations. Once the enemy is found in the dense jungle he is engaged initially by squads and platoons. In some cases these contacts develop into battalion, brigade and division-sized operations. The majority, however, are small unit actions where the training, discipline and initiative of the individual soldier and his platoon leader spell the difference between success or failure.*

*In the accompanying article, Captain Graves writes from experience following a successful tour of leading troops in the jungles of Vietnam. He sets forth some practical observations on the fighting in Vietnam from the viewpoint of a platoon leader. It provides an insight to the problems encountered by small unit leaders. This article is rich in ideas. It should stimulate tactical innovations on how to fight the guerrilla. Those small unit leaders who read this article will better prepare themselves for a tour of duty in Vietnam—Brigadier General Willard Pearson.*

IN ANY combat situation, the leader is the control center. He makes an estimate of the situation, decides on a course of action, and directs his unit to completion of the mission. Whether these actions take place in a few minutes under the roar of a fire fight or in hours of deliberate planning, the leader is the control center.

In Vietnam, small unit actions are prevalent. Consequently, the squad and platoon leaders share a greater burden of combat activity. They are the control centers and their units' actions are their responsibility.

The following accumulation of information is offered to aid the small unit leader; it provides experience and information which directly concerns the squad and platoon leaders in Vietnam:

First of all, there are four distinct classes of terrain in Vietnam—the central highlands, the flat coastal areas, the delta region, and the jungle. Each area has its peculiar advantages and disadvantages to the Infantry unit.

#### **dense vegetation**

The central highlands, as found around An Khe, require extensive use of the file formation since the undergrowth is so thick. Although the terrain is dominated by mountains providing excellent navigational aids, the mountains break into hills and deep stream beds which contain the densest vegetation in the area which limits movement to a crawl. Also, the numerous mountain passes provide excellent ambush sites. Occasional open areas consist of cultivated land or fields of elephant grass.

Control is difficult in the thick vegetation of the central highlands. A unit's point team can provide frontal security and perform trail-blazer duties. Flank security proves unsatisfactory because such elements are difficult to control and require cutting three paths as opposed to one. Noise is a factor here. Observation is often limited to several meters, and fields of fire are nonexistent—factors which do not favor the enemy ambush on other than well defined routes.

In the flat coastal areas, completely different terrain is encountered; therefore, tactics and formations must be altered. In these flat areas between mountains unhampered vision may exist for thousands of meters. Rivers, streams, and canals, often unfordable, are plentiful; although they are comparatively narrow, canals present a great obstacle due to the water depth and foliage along the banks. Fords are frequent but must be used with caution. Bridges made of bamboo poles laced together with vine are more common than concrete or wood structures.

Villages built above the rice paddies dot the entire area. Access to the larger villages is by well defined

roads and trails, while foot paths along dikes bordering the paddies lead to the smaller villages.

The flat coastal areas are not entirely made up of rice paddies. In some areas, around Phan Thiet, Phan Rang, and Cam Ranh Bay for example, the flat land has more contours and consists of sparse scrub and few trees which resembles to a great degree the western United States. The density of vegetation increases as one draws closer to the bordering mountain ranges, but observation in the area generally is excellent.

It is well to keep in mind that the rice regions of Vietnam are not confined to any particular area. They exist inland and on the coast, and can be found bordering almost any river or stream where ample flat terrain exists.

Rice paddies are dangerous because they afford the enemy excellent observation and fields of fire. Since the paddy is flooded much of the time, movement through them is slow, noisy, and—during the rainy season—very dangerous. To run in the flooded rice paddy is almost impossible.

During the dry season, when the paddies have been plowed, movement is hampered by the roughness of the ground and is almost as difficult an obstacle to traverse as the wet rice paddy.

#### **speed movement**

To add speed to movement, dikes may be used provided the route is not restricted to one dike. However, dikes are dangerous because they are often narrow requiring constant attention to where one walks; thus, as one moves along a dike, his observation of the surrounding terrain tends to be neglected. Also, well traversed dikes which provide a high speed approach may often be mined.

In the open terrain of the flat coastal areas, the wedge and echelon formations are most useful. The file and column also may be used if proper flank and point security is pushed well out. Unless movement is conducted at night, troops must be disciplined to disperse in the open areas.

The Delta Region most closely resembles the rice paddy areas. Here, though, water is more abundant and canals, streams and rivers are influenced by tidal changes. Many marsh areas exist and present a formidable obstacle to foot and vehicular movement, while sugar cane brakes and pineapple drops are found in more abundance here than in the coastal regions.

In and around War Zones C and D west of Ben Cat and north of Bien Hoa, much of the jungle terrain in Vietnam is encountered. The jungle may be grouped into two distinct types of growth: primary and secondary. The primary jungle growth consists of trees often



Paratroopers of the 327th Infantry move up a jungle stream on Operation Hawthorne.

250 feet high, whose canopy blocks out sunshine and prolongs a heavy rain into a steady trickle on the jungle floor lasting long after the rain has subsided.

The absence of this canopy gives way to dense vegetation, or the secondary growth. Movement is rapid where the primary jungle growth, or canopy, exists as compared to movement through secondary jungle.

The file formation finds frequent use in the jungle since control is a major concern and all movement in the jungle resembles movement in the dense vegetation of the central highlands.

Because clear areas are scarce in the jungle and other densely vegetated terrain, landing zones are marked in the same manner as rallying points. Cutting an LZ is difficult and time consuming without the proper equipment and even then, this is done only with a great effort.

No matter what area of Vietnam or type of terrain a unit is operating in, a professional understanding and practical use of map reading and navigation are essential to the accomplishment of the mission. The junior officer who is proficient in map reading and navigation is a most notable asset to his unit whether it be US or South Vietnamese.

Units have been fortunate to have excellent maps—scaled 1 : 50,000—of operational areas of Vietnam. These are supplemented by aerial photographs of larger scales when available. Map accuracy in some areas has been compromised by time; however, large terrain features, as a rule, are accurate for navigational purposes, as are villages and rice paddies. Still, map errors do exist and this should be considered, especially when

using fire support.

A good map reconnaissance is invaluable to any mission and should be included as an integral part of the planning phase. Such a reconnaissance does not stop at squad leader level but is conducted with each member of the unit if possible. The map reconnaissance is most effective in conjunction with an aerial reconnaissance.

The compass finds extensive use in all areas of Vietnam. In the jungle and other densely vegetated areas where noticeable landmarks do not exist or are not observable, one must rely solely on the compass and pace for navigation, and it is desirable to issue a compass down to each fire team leader. Once in a semi-permanent or permanent base area, a unit should set up a compass check and pace course.

The platoon leader who does not use and trust his non-commissioned officers with the map is creating a problem for himself. Most senior NCOs have had many years of experience in map reading and navigation and they can offer much assistance.

The tactics used by US forces in Vietnam are, for the most part, conventional. Many officers seem to feel that duty in Vietnam means divorcing oneself from all former instruction on tactics. This is not true. Although the peculiarities of the war in Vietnam have resulted in the revision of certain tactics and the creation of new tactics, basic Infantry tactics form the foundation for any operation or action.

In a guerrilla infested area, the leader must keep one principle in mind at all time—security. It is mandatory to move with point, flank and rear security teams out the terrain permits. The rear security element

drops back from the formation periodically to detect and destroy a trailing enemy.

The formations used in movement in Vietnam are not new. They are the ones learned and used throughout the Army—the file, column, wedge, vee, and echelon. These conventional formations are effective even against an unconventional enemy, if the important principle—security—is remembered.

The difficulty of movement in the dense vegetation common to the central highlands and jungle can be lessened by the proper selection of routes prior to a mission. Avoid crossing compartments because this type of movement is time consuming and tiring. Instead, plan routes along ridge lines and other arteries. Stream beds and river banks provide high speed avenues of advance, and time limitations often make the use of these routes mandatory to accomplish the mission.

#### old proverb

The old proverb derived from past experience in guerrilla warfare—never use roads and trails—has a sequel that applies here: Never use roads and trails unless the movement can be secured.

During movement, more often than not, the enemy will be encountered in small numbers. At times, when he believes security is lacking or when he is trapped or surprised or enjoys superiority in number, the enemy will attack or allow engagement. The sniper is a good example of the type of small unit action frequently encountered.

The mission of the sniper varies, but most often he is employed to harass. The sniper, though, is used in areas where enemy strength is nominal, and where he can demonstrate to the inhabitants that the Viet Cong can resist a larger government or US force. Primarily, such light resistance is for propaganda purposes.

In a delaying mission, the sniper can be very effective, for a single sniper can hold up a greatly superior force while his comrades withdraw. Often, the sniper is utilized as bait to draw a force into a prepared ambush.

The effectiveness of the sniper depends on the type of enemy and the terrain. When the enemy is greatly outnumbered or when his experience and equipment make him other than a regular, he will usually engage at ranges which will allow him to retreat immediately after initiating the action. Main force Viet Cong and NVA snipers, who are bolder and possess better weapons, will allow forces to approach close to their position before opening fire. Obviously the latter sniper is more effective and casualties are higher for opposing forces.

Terrain plays a role here, too. The open areas found in the flat rice regions are critical danger areas. Here, well emplaced small forces and snipers can take advantage of rivers and canals to delay a larger unit. On

the other hand, densely vegetated areas force the enemy to engage at much closer ranges.

To destroy the sniper, closure must be executed with speed and aggressiveness, for the sniper is usually prepared to escape on preplanned routes. Thus, fire and maneuver come into play—fire to pin the sniper in place while a maneuver element closes to destroy him. Grenade launchers should be used to the utmost, their fires concentrated on trees and other suspected sniper locations.

Aggressiveness is often the key to success or failure in destroying a sniper; but, be cautious not to overreact to the sniper and be drawn into a baited ambush. A unit adept in rapidly neutralizing snipers can discourage ambush tactics in a particular area.

Artillery and mortar support may be employed; such support, though, requires time to obtain and adjust—valuable time which slows rapid closure. Heavy support to close off suspected avenues of withdrawal is usually neither needed nor desired in engagements with the sniper unless fire and maneuver cannot be executed.

Fire and maneuver or movement demand special consideration. These are the most basic of tactical lessons—the first learned in training but often the first forgotten in combat. The basic unit action of fire and maneuver is the immediate solution to almost any combat situation involving an engagement with the enemy. This lesson has often been violated to the point of being absurd.

#### proper execution

In the Vietnam war, two of the most common missions assigned to the small Infantry unit are the search mission and the movement to contact mission. Proper execution of the search mission requires adequate time, while the latter is concerned with contact and pursuit, and therefore is conducted quite rapidly.

The following example presents itself many times. A unit receives fire from a village or inhabited area. Upon closing on the village it is found that the enemy has fled. The question which now confronts the leader is whether to pursue the enemy or to search and secure the village. In a guerrilla war, the goal is to gain and maintain contact; thus, the unit should pursue.

If there is reason to suspect that the village may contain supplies and weapons for the enemy or intelligence data about him, a unit may leave a security force in the village to deny it to the enemy while the remainder of the force moves to contact. The separation of forces should not be made over a great distance unless each group is strong enough to sustain itself. Remember here, as in the case of the sniper, that over-reaction is dangerous and can lead into ambush.

The systematic and thorough search of a village is

rarely conducted because time is limited or the situation requires pursuit of the enemy; however, if the mission dictates a search, sufficient time must be allocated to make the search thorough.

In a search of a village, the mine detector is excellent to locate hidden weapons and supplies as well as mines and booby traps. The enemy will often hide his weapon in a nearby rice paddy, well or dung heap. He then carries on normal activity in the presence of troops. Unless located, the weapon later will be cleaned and used again.

During village clearing operations, villagers are used to precede point elements through the village, for they will avoid booby traps and any concealed enemy. Too, if the absence of children is noted, this is a good indication of enemy activity nearby, and a unit should exercise caution, observation, and alertness.

Village huts may contain bunkers for protection against artillery or bunkers may be outside, close to a hut. If a bunker is to be destroyed, make certain that no civilians are hiding inside; and smoke or tear gas are good means to drive persons from a bunker. The same results are obtained by indicating in the presence of villagers that a grenade will be thrown into the bunker. This will encourage villagers into talking friends and perhaps enemy from an underground shelter.

Never make the mistake of believing everything found belongs to the enemy. For example, if a large amount of rice is located in a hut, the search party must estimate the amount required to feed the civilian family present until the next rice harvest. The remainder may be extracted or destroyed as orders dictate. Viet Cong rice taxes are heavy but villagers are usually allowed to retain enough to sustain themselves.

Burning or dumping rice in a stream are two of the most effective methods for destroying it, although burning rice is difficult without fuel. A white phosphorus grenade will only char the surface grain. As a last resort, the rice may be scattered over the ground.

### **ambush**

Another common mission for the small unit is the ambush. For example, the night ambush is used frequently outside the defensive perimeter. Good ambush habits must be established early in a unit's training in order for the trap to be effective. Light and noise discipline is a major problem compounded by the frequency of ambush missions and the infrequency of contact. Such frustration lends itself to the impatience of the soldier.

Each ambush mission must be initiated with the belief there will be a kill. The planning must be thorough and precise since poor preparation serves to increase the soldier's indifference to the mission. The

planning phase of the ambush, however, is often shortened by last-minute missions; therefore, SOPs must be established to lessen the time required by a unit in preparing for a mission.

A reconnaissance is an absolute necessity, for a lack of knowledge of the terrain will cause confusion at the ambush site and often will lead to the selection of a poor location. If a leader's reconnaissance is not possible during the planning phase, it may be conducted as the unit moves into the area. This technique is especially useful when danger of enemy or native observation of movement into the ambush site exists. The entire unit is then able to observe the proposed location as the patrol moves through an area. The patrol then moves to a location preferably at some distance away to plan the layout of the ambush.

The ambush must be conducted with aggressiveness and speed. With special care in placement, explosives and automatic weapons play a decisive role. Claymores are ideal for the ambush and are used by both security and killer elements. Detonating cord is effective when laid linearly over suspected routes of escape from the killing zone.

### **fire support**

Fire support is an important part of a successful ambush and must be included in the planning phase. This reduces the vulnerability of the flanks and rear of a position and secures the withdrawal. Registering concentrations on the proposed ambush location will compromise its intended use, and is seldom accomplished.

Two other situations also are worthy of note: crossing open areas and breaching minefields. Rice paddies and other flat terrain present the problem of crossing large open areas. Such areas are always considered danger areas, and any movement across them is conducted only as a last resort and then with utmost caution, using all available cover and concealment. Very large open areas, of course, may be crossed with little danger, if the selected route is out of effective range of possible enemy locations.

If a danger area must be crossed, the move should be covered with all available supporting fires.

Open areas also present a formidable problem when a unit attempts to close with the enemy. And the rule is not to close with a well entrenched enemy, who commands excellent fields of fire, without first utilizing artillery and air support. After, or in conjunction with this support, a unit should close with and destroy the enemy.

Unmarked minefields do exist in Vietnam, some left by the French over a decade ago, others of more recent vintage. In breaching these obstacles, existing trails or cattle paths should be used, even though those routes might be covered by enemy fire. ■

# Faster Than A Speeding M-79 Round

By Bill Carpenter, Tiger Force HHC 1/327th Abn Inf 1966-67

Anyone who has ever served in combat for a substantial amount of time, has probably been witness to a situation where you may cheer your enemy and hope he makes it out of an almost sure death. The following incident happened west of Phan-Thiet RVN during late February of 1967.

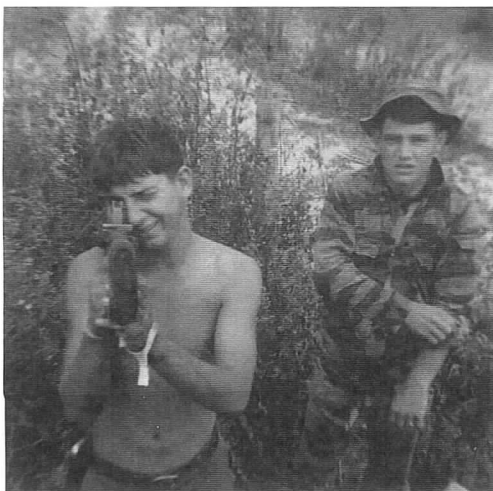


16 June 1967 – Choppers from 176<sup>th</sup> Attack Helicopter Company moving troops from B Company 1/327 and Tiger Force. Chopper on left would blow up seconds later, killing three and wounding all aboard.

If I forget any of those present in regards to the following story, I apologize but after 45 years the memory gets a little rusty. I have included the names of the members of Tiger Force HHC 1/327 1<sup>st</sup> Bde 101<sup>st</sup> Abn Div. The following story started out as a violent combat contact and ended with the Tigers laughing, clapping and cheering on the enemy.

We were on a combat patrol being led by Sgt Santana Carnero. There was an old French road in the area. The surface of the road was long gone. All of the small bridges on the road had been blown by the enemy to prevent vehicle traffic by the ARVN and American forces.

The day was a perfect, beautiful day. It was late morning, warm but not broiling hot. Along side the trail we were walking on was a small clear stream. We decided to take a break, have some chow and fill our canteens with the clear water. The canteens were filled in a two-man operation. One man would collect the team's canteens, string them on a strap or short



TIGERS – Butch Kobberman on left clowns for photo, a super soldier and point man from Lincoln, Kansas. Tiger on right I can't remember first name, but last name was Cobberly, a southern boy and good soldier.

piece of rope. The water party would keep their bodies concealed by vegetation, if possible, only putting their hand in the water to fill the canteen while, the other man would provide security, watching that they were not surprised by the enemy.

When the water party returned to the trail, we took a chow break. We were waiting on further orders

HQ as to where to continue the patrol. We had received some of the new freeze fried Long Range Patrol Rations. You simply added water, boiling preferred, stirred, folded the plastic bag over and waited a few minutes. The rations would then be soft enough to eat.

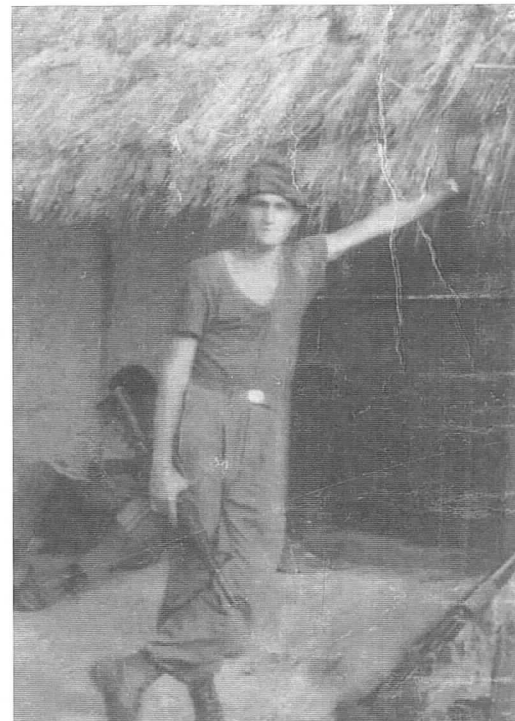
To heat the water you simply took a small ball of C-4 plastique explosives placed it in a small C-ration can, light it with a lighter and take a canteen cup of water. In less than a minute you would have boiling water. As we were setting up a 360-degree perimeter to take our break, shooting started.

We had removed our rucksacks and had our weapons lying on our rucksacks. I'm not sure who fired the first shot but some of the Tigers present were Jim Rasor, Philadelphia, PA; Butch Clyde Kobberman, a super field soldier and one of the best point man in the Tigers. Butch was a former rodeo cowboy from Lincoln, Kansas.

We had been in our present location for approximately ½ hour. Another trail intersected our position from a 90-degree angle. As we were moving off the trail to conceal ourselves, an NVA burst from the side of the trail bank. He must have been sleeping or just hiding. He was in complete NVA uniform having a rucksack and weapon. He took off running at a very high rate of speed leaving his rucksack and weapon. To say he took us by surprise was an understatement.

Several of the Tigers got on line and began firing on this speeding NVA. I can attest that Budda was very much on his side as M-16 fire was kicking up dust all around this individual. Those firing their M-16s soon needed to change magazines. By this time the soldier was at least 100 meters away.

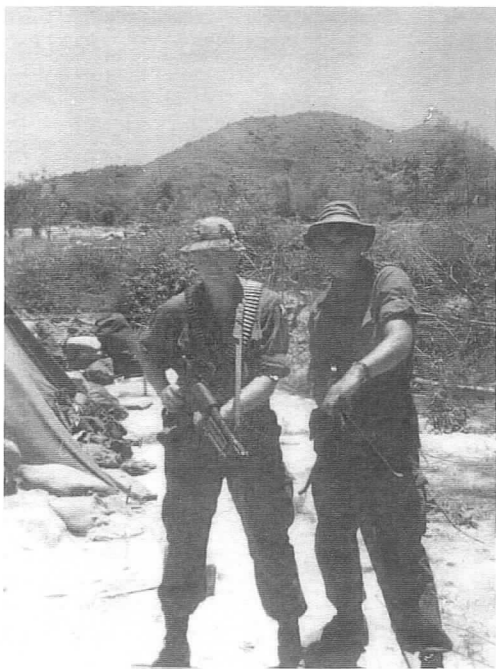
While the other Tigers were changing magazines, my old buddy "Hardrock" Steve Hoult from Danville, Illinois, stepped forward



Richard "Doc" Hise in Song Ve Valley morning of 16 June 1967.







Left to right: Bill Carpenter – Rayland, Ohio. Steve Hoult – Danville, Illinois (now Jacksonville, NC).

with an M-79 grenade launcher that he was carrying on this patrol. To those who may not be familiar with an M-79 – it was approximately 2 ½ foot long and worked on the same principle as a single shot shotgun.

Steve had the M-79 loaded with a HE (high explosive) round which could be fired out to around 350 meters. It was an excellent weapon with a lethal burst radius of around five meters.



William L. Carpenter, 1/327 HHC TF 12/66-12/67, and Steve Hoult, 1/327 HHC T.F. 9/66-9/67, at a Week of the Eagles celebration at Fort Campbell, Kentucky.

Steve told the other Tigers not to fire anymore and let him try with the M-79.

To this day I don't believe I have ever seen anyone run so fast. Steve brought the M-79 to his shoulder and fired. On a sunny day if you are standing on the correct angle you can see the M-79 round in flight. The Tigers stood watching. We could tell the M-79 round was going to be close.

The M-79 round impacted almost directly on the NVA soldier's heels. In the explosion, it looked like something out of Hollywood not Viet Nam.

The NVA soldier was blown several feet into the air. It almost appeared to be in slow motion. The NVA did a complete 360-degree loop in the air, his feet running the entire time. He hit the ground



Bill Carpenter – Rayland, Ohio. Photo at Phan Rang Airfield, he deployed to Phan Thiet RVN – Feb 1967.

feet first, running out of his truck tire sandals. Ho Chi Minh – Jump Boots.

He then vaulted a log across the trail and disappeared into the brush. At this point all firing ceased and much laughter and applause ensued. We moved forward and inspected the area where the M-79 exploded. On the ground was the NVA's sandals but not a drop of blood anywhere in the area.

I hope this warrior survived the war. We may have been on opposite sides but he was still a warrior. If he is alive today and his grandchildren ask him what he did in the war, I hope he will tell them this story and that his final days will be spent in peace trying to forget the horrors of war a long time ago.

### 1st Brigade (S) CHALLENGE COIN

This challenge coin is a beautiful example of taking a great design and having skilled artists produce a coin that any unit would be proud of. Designed by Roger M. John [1/327 C 7/67-12/68] for the 9th Biennial 1st Brigade (S) Reunion in Phoenix, Arizona in September of 2004, it is appropriate for any use or time because it is not identified with that reunion.



See order form on page 34

William V. Larsen, 2/327 BELT 65-7/66, 442 Otisco Drive, Westfield, NJ 07090-2716, (908) 233-2217 sent the following article.

Enclosed find my check to continue subscription of "The First Screaming Eagles in Viet Nam" quarterly. It has been a GAS to read in addition to being an invaluable resource for a lot of us to reconnect since the "NOMAD" days.

## Firebase Ripcord

Also enclosed is an article from one of the local newspapers here in New Jersey reporting on a recent reunion of "former Army Paratroopers of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division" who defended Firebase Ripcord over a 4-month period in 1970. Ripcord was located in the A Shau Valley, a neighborhood familiar to us in 1965-66. Among those killed at Ripcord were Weiland Norris, brother of popular actor Chuck Norris and Lt Robert Kalsu, an offensive lineman for the Buffalo Bills. He was the only professional athlete to die in Viet Nam.

I have a problem with one of the statements reporter Carol Comegno makes in the news article. Second paragraph states, in part, "the battle of Ripcord, the 10<sup>th</sup> worst U.S. defeat of the Vietnam War." Defeat? I doubt the paratroopers who fought there consider it a defeat. What were the other nine (9) defeats? I think we might contact this reporter and set her straight that we never accept defeat - "NUTS" comes to mind. Her E-mail address is: [ccomegno@camden.gannet.com](mailto:ccomegno@camden.gannet.com)

Ray Lake recently drove over to our house where we viewed 35 mm color slides we'd taken from arrival on the floating vomitorium, "Leroy Eltinge," to happy departure a year later in the summer of 66. It is amazing, in hindsight, just how much of Vietnam's geography we left our bootprints on. Ray came across two (2) dusty boxes of slides he'd never seen. Turned out they were photos he'd taken in and around Tuy Hoa. We were surprised to note that Ray and I hadn't changed a bit in 45 years. (Sure) What ever happened to the "Pirates of the Caribbean" French cannon dug up on that God-awful mountaintop? We rope block and tackled that sucker up to the crest where a heavy lift chopper hooked it up and slung it back to Tuy Hoa Airbase. Last I remember some enterprising welder had constructed a steel carriage complete with wheels which the cannon, nicely cleaned up, was proudly mounted upon. It sat at the top of the steps that led to the officers' tents. Ray and I recalled when we would hear this creepy deep toned gong or bell being rung somewhere way off in the distance from where we were perched on that mountaintop. Sure enough, that very night Charley would attack and try and drive us off. At first light we would find unexploded bamboo handled NVA hand grenades - duds littered all around us. We'd mark them by ringing them with C-Ration toilet paper so we would not inadvertently set them off.

I remember Dennis Reeves was one who gave his life on that mountain. Dennis had planned to buy a brand new 1966 red convertible Fiat Spider in California at the end of his tour. We were to drive it cross-country and I was designated his co-pilot.

"Where do you live Bill?" Dennis asked me. "Brooklyn, New York," I replied. "Cool Bill, I'll drop you off, it's on the way," Dennis would say. He carried the car's color brochure in his pack. Dennis was at his post as RTO in the mountaintop commo bunker that night when Charley ended Dennis' dream by lobbing a satchel charge in

through the gun slit. He's one of many we will all remember as the real heroes of this world. Dennis Lee Reeves is panel 06E, Line 113, at the Wall in Washington, DC.

Ivan, "Live Long and Prosper" as you do one hell of a great job with keeping our memories alive.

Airborne, Bill Larsen, 2/327/B Eltinge 65-66

*Editor's Note: Ripcord is a battle fought long past the days of First Brigade (Separate) but some veterans of the Always First Brigade were part of the action. The Ripcord story is an important part of the letter written by William V. Larsen.*

April, 1966

# Cave Exploring Is Deadly Game For 101st Troops

TUY HOA, Vietnam (IO)—Troopers of the 101st Airborne's "Screaming Eagles" has taken up spelunking.

The art of spelunking—or cave exploring—was widely practiced in Southeast Asia during the World War II when the Allies had to dig the enemy forces out of caves and tunnel systems.

The time is different, there are some new faces, but spelunking is still the same.

This year it is the Viet Cong who are dug-in.

The 101st's 327th Inf. found caves and a tunnel system in the mountains of the Tuy Hoa region of Phu Yen, a province in central Vietnam. The discovery was made during a search and destroy mission, a part of the 101st's Operation Harrison.

B Co. of the 327th was assigned the job of digging-out the inhabitants of the cave complex and then "spelunking" their way through the maze of tunnels.

But the Viet Cong were insistent that their eviction not come off, and so stuck it out for three days. And for three days B Co. called in artillery and air strikes.

On the third day, the troops entered the complex. Some weapons and equipment were found in the entrance. Inside, booby-traps slowed the project considerably.

At a point 100 feet from the surface, 92 individual and crew served weapons were found, and with them were also discovered: three field phones, two tape-recording telegraph instruments, six transceivers, and a number of documents.

• Capt. James W. Price of Ocean City, N.J., B Co. commander, said after the caves had been cleared and all the equipment removed, "There are enough weapons here to resupply an entire company. Give us five more caves like this one and the VC around here will effectively be out of the war."



This white ceramic 11 ounce mug has the First Brigade (S) logo on two sides.

\$13.00 + \$4.95 shipping through the U.S. Postal Service a total of \$17.95.

See order form on Page 34.

# Vietnam vets recall horror, courage at Battle of Ripcord



Photo provided  
This 1970 photo shows Mount Laurel resident Frank Marshall in the A Shau Valley in South Vietnam.

By CAROL COMEGNO  
Courier-Post Staff

## MOUNT LAUREL

The emotional bear hugs lasted far longer than a moment — as if the Vietnam veterans greeting one another couldn't let go.

For former Army paratroopers of the 101st Airborne Division, it had been more than 40 years since they last saw some of the men with whom they shared combat at the Battle of Ripcord, the 10th worst U.S. defeat of the Vietnam war.

Eleven of the men were reunited earlier this month at Prospector's Grille in Mount Laurel.

Some of them had fought during

four months of battles in 1970 against the North Vietnamese Army to defend Ripcord, a U.S. firebase atop a 2,800-foot high mountain that towered over jungle in the remote A Shau Valley of northern South Vietnam.

In a deadly firefight on July 22, the 76 members of Alpha Company/2nd-506th Infantry suffered 14 fatalities and 56 wounded. Only six men went unharmed.

The little-publicized Ripcord campaign cost 248 American lives between March and July 23, according to government statistics, and ended with evacuation of the base.



COWBOY KENN/For the Courier-Post  
Fred Gilbert (left) and Joseph Baggett meet for the first time in 41 years as Frank Marshall looks on.

See RIPCORD, Page 13A



Photo provided  
Members of Frank Marshall's squad right before they tried to open the firebase Ripcord on March 12, 1970. (Back row from left) Orvil Koger, James Hill, Joe Evans, James Aansonsen, (middle row from left) Carl Dykstra, Marshall, Greg Mitachek, Tommy Aquon, Gary McCoy, George Westervelt, (front) Richard Walsh.



COWBOY KENN/For the Courier-Post  
Ripcord veterans (back row from left) Joe Baggett, John Sherba, Dennis Bloomingdale, Frank Marshall, Lee Widjeskog, Dave Cordetti, John Reilly (front row from left) Randy Baldwin, Fred Gilbert, Peter Meloro and Tom Swayne gather in Mount Laurel.

## Ripcord/Old Vietnam warriors gather for joyous S. Jersey reunion

Continued from Page 1A

July's toll of 75 killed was the costliest.

But two weeks ago, the high point of the men's reunion was the entrance of 61-year-old Atco resident Joseph Baggett, whose Delta company rescued Alpha. He arrived to applause and shouts of "Welcome Home" — no longer a routine greeting but an emotional catchphrase for veterans who felt unappreciated when they initially returned home from the war. An overjoyed Freddie Gilbert of Odenton, Md., was the first to hug his long-lost friend.

"God bless you . . . 41 damn years," said Freddie, 61, who later showed Baggett some old war photos. "We were so young. This is a welcome home for you among people who love you."

A last-minute and unexpected phone invitation led Baggett to his first reunion with fellow paratroopers, seven of whom live in New Jersey. It came from fellow Ripcord veteran Frank Marshall of Mount Laurel, who was wounded three different times that deadly July day.

Marshall managed to locate Baggett two days before the reunion through Marilyn Griffiths of Mount Laurel, a member of the

Warrior Watch Riders, a veterans support organization.

Former sergeant Baggett said he had never known whether Gilbert made it back from Vietnam to his bride and newborn son.

"It was overwhelming for me and I was happy I went," Baggett said of the reunion. "I was so excited because I often wondered whether Freddie or some of the others ever made it home."

"It was like a brotherhood. You never forgot the guys who would lay down their lives for you."

At Prospector's, Baggett got his first, close look at some of the men of Alpha Company who were rescued. He recalled keeping his distance behind the rescue team that July day because he was scheduled to go home and fellow soldiers wanted to be sure he made it out alive.

Gilbert was at the front of the 44 Delta volunteers in the foot patrol rescue effort, the sacrificial "point" man looking for booby traps en route to the firebase. Found huddled in jungle at the foot of the mountain, all the survivors were airlifted to safety.

Baggett had his problems after the war.

"Twenty-six years I was an alcoholic and didn't

talk about the war stuff, which I blocked out," the now 62-year-old truck driver admitted to fellow paratroopers.

"I didn't want to remember and I miss a lot of my brothers that didn't come back from Vietnam."

Gilbert said he was the first American rescuer Alpha Company saw July 23 after 24 hours of jungle fighting.

"Since then, I met all these fellows on the Internet."

"It's a bond that nobody can understand because we were so involved in that battle," Marshall said of the soldiers' camaraderie.

"Even our wives and other family members enjoy this family gathering and want to know more about Ripcord."

Marshall was one of the organizers of a Ripcord Association reunion group in 1985 and more recently created the website RipcordAssociation.com. But he said it was difficult to find fellow soldiers until the 2000 publication of the book "The Siege of Firebase Ripcord," by Keith Nolan, author of nine books on the war.

"And thank God for the Internet," the 62-year-old Marshall enthused. "It's how most of us found each other."

Under almost constant



Photo provided  
Ripcord was a U.S. firebase atop a mountain in the A Shau Valley of South Vietnam. It was abandoned in 1970 in the last major battle involving U.S. troops in the war.

fire, the 101st Airborne fought for the mountain and on April 1, 1970, Bravo Company established Firebase Ripcord via helicopter landings. It was a strategic location from which the U.S. hoped to cut off supplies coming to the North Vietnamese Army down the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

But defending it proved futile. At the end, U.S. troops who never numbered more than about 600 at a time were sandwiched between two enemy regiments of thousands. They got no reinforcements because U.S. Army units were slowly being withdrawn from Vietnam after

homefront support for the

war eroded. The day after the rescue of Alpha, the last-stand company to leave, American F-4s bombed the evacuated base to keep the enemy from capturing the supplies.

"The battle didn't get media publicity because the military did not want a repeat of the negative coverage of the defeat at Hamburger Hill, a futile mountain assault not far away in the A Shau," said Marshall.

"And we had more casualties overall than at the Hamburger Hill, where Americans got slaughtered."

Among those killed at

Ripcord were Weiland Norris, brother of actor Chuck Norris, and Lt. Robert Kalsu, an offensive lineman for the Buffalo Bills and the only professional athlete to die in the war.

Lee Widjeskog, 64, of Bridgeton, a lieutenant leading the second platoon of Alpha Company on the last night of fighting, said his own platoon suffered tremendous casualties during the final firefight. He said Alpha was fearing another attack the next morning when Delta Company — whose rescue attempt had been thwarted the day before — arrived at 7 a.m. July 23.

Huey helicopters airlifted all survivors out after hovering a few feet above a makeshift landing zone.

"It was an experience I would have liked to have avoided, but I wouldn't trade it," Widjeskog said.

"I have no idea if the war was worth it to the country."

"The public is finally now finding out about the Battle of Ripcord and veterans need to get on the Web, find their old unit and reconnect," advised Marshall.

"It can make all the difference."

Reach Carol Comegno at (856) 486-2473 or ccomegno@camden.gannett.com



"GHOSTING REPORTER"

One of the biggest hobbies undertaken by members of this task force is that of ghosting-out efficiently on shipboard.

The best item of all is a white cook's hat. With this silent passport, all stairwells, the messhall, and off-limits area become accessible to the wearer - who can add to the impression of being an important person on an important mission by bellowing, "Make a hole!" or, "Hot Stuff!"

In addition to this, there are men on board who are performing meritorious ghosting above and beyond the call of dereliction. Some men, for instance, volunteered to risk their health and spend half of each day inhaling the smoke-filled atmosphere of the library; they have become part of the voyage staff - in return for which they are admitted (when sufficiently recovered from the noxious vapors) to the messhall, stairwells, latrines, and other places temporarily or permanently off-limits to troops.

In the event that one is not lucky enough to have filched a cook's hat or some other such ticket, and still don't want to work, what can one do? Two ingenious privates, by their own admission, avoided all onerous duties for the past week by the simple expedient of carrying an empty garbage can around with them, a system which gained them access to any area on ship. But a trash can is a pretty cumbersome thing to tote around for ten or more hours a day. To avoid this, consider the fellow who was seen coming aboard on the eve of our departure from Oakland, with clipboard tucked snugly under his arm, and has not been seen since. Current rumor has it that he spends his time on the bridge, where the captain thinks he is a CIC agent.

There is a method of ghosting, yet untried but apparently with unlimited potential, in which the ghost would come out on deck in some bizarre outfit such as a pair of longjohn pants and a civilian shirt. The NCO's will think that you are a member of the crew, and the crew - who know better - won't give a damn, while the officers will think you're a bad dream and hope you'll disappear.

Any other ideas about how to avoid work and get by the trooper's best (??) friend (?????) - the MP.

VanMeter, RR

\* \* \* \* \*

"BONGO BOOMS"

As fore the horizon comes light, comes light,  
Off to the galley I trudge.  
Belly to botton, packed tight, packed tight,  
My card is punched by a slack-eyed grudge.

Through the long mess line, I fly, I fly,  
As I'm ordered to go to the rear,  
I get to a table I pry, I pry,  
Looking for fast moving elbows to fear.

Watery, mushy are my eggs, my eggs,  
My milk lukewarm as my coffee.  
As there I stand on my legs, my legs,  
My thoughts remain far from lofty.

Bongo  
(Who the hell is "Bongo"?)

We wish to extend our happy birthday greetings to Sgt Lawrence Jackson of C, 2/502, on the occasion of his 25th birthday which he celebrated yesterday.

Also SP4 Edward Schnabel, D/Spt Bn, the Brigade Lab Technician, celebrates his 22nd birthday today.



# CHAPLAIN CORNER

How much would you give for a letter full of news from home right now? I'd say that a mailman coming aboard with such letters would be most welcome. Have you ever thought that your prayers are like "letters" to the Almighty King, and that our Father in Heaven desires to receive them?

Also, this need not be just a one-way correspondence. Our Father desires to communicate His good news to us, and does so through the words of the Scripture, through meditation, and through worship services. How we need to hear these messages from Him, and then to answer back in prayer.

Letters to God - our prayers - are not delayed in mailing due to being aboard ship. They are dispatched immediately. How long has it been since He has heard from you?

Chaplain (Capt) Robert C. Harllee, USA

## RELIGIOUS SERVICES:

All services are held daily on Hatch #5 (Officers' Lounge if bad weather).  
 0745 Morning Prayer - via ship's PA system  
 0830 Protestant Bible and Study Group (Mon-Sat)  
 0900 Catholic Confession 1830 Protestant Vespers  
 0930 Catholic Mass 1915 Catholic Rosary Service  
 1030 Protestant Service

## \*\*\* MOVIE SCHEDULE \*\*\*

Crew's Dayroom 1800 "Desert Fury" (John Hodiak)  
 Off Mess 1900 "Pyro" (Barry Sullivan)  
 Off Lounge 1800 "Road to Zanzibar" (Bob Hope)  
 #5 Hatch 2100 "The Unsinkable Molly Brown" (Debbie Reynolds)(all troops)

## \*\*\* TARGET AREA WORDS FOR TODAY \*\*\*

Co bao nio . . . How much?      Toi ngoi lin mi . . . I am an American Soldier;  
 Ngoi lin . . . . . Soldier      Come bang toi ban . . Don't shoot I'm a friend.

## \*\*\* ANNOUNCEMENTS \*\*\*

1. There will be a bingo party for cabin class passengers at 2100 hours 24 July 65 in the officers' mess. Tickets may be purchased from Lt Spears, SSO.
2. Bingo is scheduled tonight at 2130 hours in the troop mess hall for all troops. Tickets will be sold at the door.
3. The AG Postal Section will not be open for the turn-in of mail during the period from 1600 hrs, 24 Jul 65, until arrival at target area - all mail turned in prior to 1600 hrs, 24 Jul 65 will be mailed from Subic Bay. - Adj Gen.
4. All units will submit request for 2 Class A Agents orders for the month of July 65 prior to 1200 hours, Saturday, 24 July 65. - Adj Gen.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Epitaph for a Shorttiner"

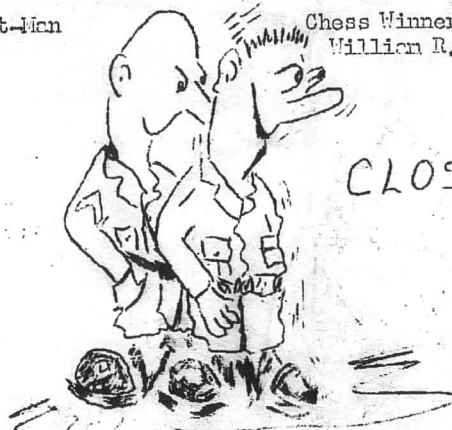
Short, shorter, shortest of all,  
 Davis sneered shortest of all.  
 The V.C. heard, they got the word;  
 And Davis lived shortest of all.

Pinochle Winners: (22 Jul)  
 Bobbie Williamson, HQ, 1/327th  
 Mc Arthur Williams, HQ, 2/502d

Checker Winner: (22 Jul)  
 Colin Keef, Co B, 2/327th

His Bst-Man

Chess Winner (22 Jul):  
 William R. Russell, 2/17th Cav



CLOSE IT UP.

2<sup>ND</sup> Battalion, 327<sup>TH</sup> Infantry (ABN)

**FIRST BRIGADE**  
101<sup>ST</sup> AIRBORNE DIVISION



A FINAL SALUTE...

TO THOSE WHO GAVE THE LAST  
FULL MEASURE OF DEVOTION

REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM, 1966

2nd Battalion 327th Infantry (Airborne)  
Tuy Hoa North Airfield  
Republic of Vietnam

MEMORIAL SERVICE

22 April 1966	1100 Hours
Presentation of Colors _____	Color Guard
Roll Call of Honored Dead _____	Adjutant
Hym «America, the Beautiful» _____	All
Prayer _____	Chaplain
Scripture _____	Chaplain
Eulogy _____	Chaplain
Commander's Comments _____	Battalion Commander
Placement of Wreath _____	Sergeant Major
Present Arms and Salute _____	Battalion
Taps	

NOTE: This general memorial service will be followed by a requiem mass for Catholic personnel and a Protestant memorial service for Protestant personnel.

- 2.— O beautiful for pilgrim feet whose stern, impassioned stress  
A thoroughfare for freedom beat across the wilderness!  
America, America, God mend thine every flaw,  
Confirm thy soul in self-control, thy liberty in law
- 3.— O beautiful for heroes proved in liberating strife  
Who more than self their country loved, and mercy more than life!  
America, America, may God thy gold refine,  
Till all success be nobleness, and every gain divine.
- 4.— O beautiful for patriot dream that sees, beyond the years,  
Thine alabaster cities gleam undimmed by human tears!  
America, America, God shed His grace on thee,  
And crown thy good with brotherhood, from sea to shining sea.

IN MEMORIAM

HEADQUARTERS COMPANY

SSG J.H. ALEXANDER  
SGT SHIRLEY O'BOYLE  
SGT CHARLES J MURPHY JR  
PFC DENNIS R BRUCE

COMPANY A - my company

\*PSG EUCENE F ROBINSON  
\*SSC EDWARD J COX  
SP4 WILLIAM F COLLIER  
SP4 DENNIS W MALEWSKI  
\*SP4 EDUARDO D GONZALES  
PFC PAUL E LABRECQUE  
\*PFC PAUL D RODRIGUEZ

\* KNEW THE  
ONES WITH  
THE MARK

COMPANY B

SP4 ARFIAN J ALI  
SP4 DENNIS L REEVES  
PFC HORACE A HAMPTON  
PFC WILLIAM L HINES  
PFC JIMMY ROLLINGS

COMPANY C

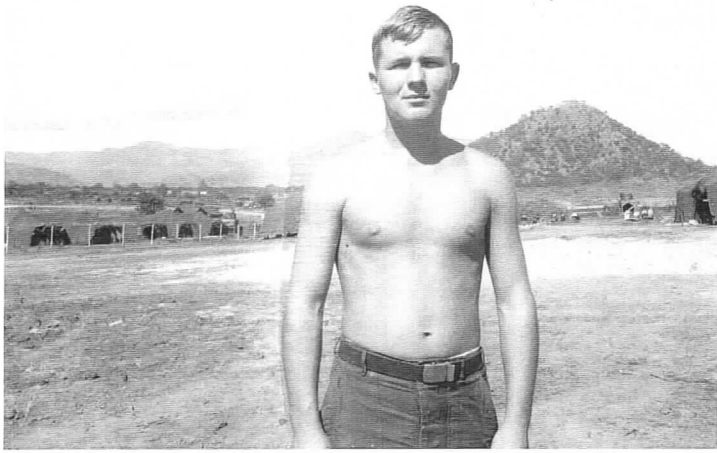
SP4 DAVID H ELISOVSKY  
SP4 WARREN E PHILLIPS  
PFC HAROLD T EDMONDSON  
PFC JOHN W ROWLAND  
SP4 EDGAR B LUEALLEN

«America, The Beautiful»

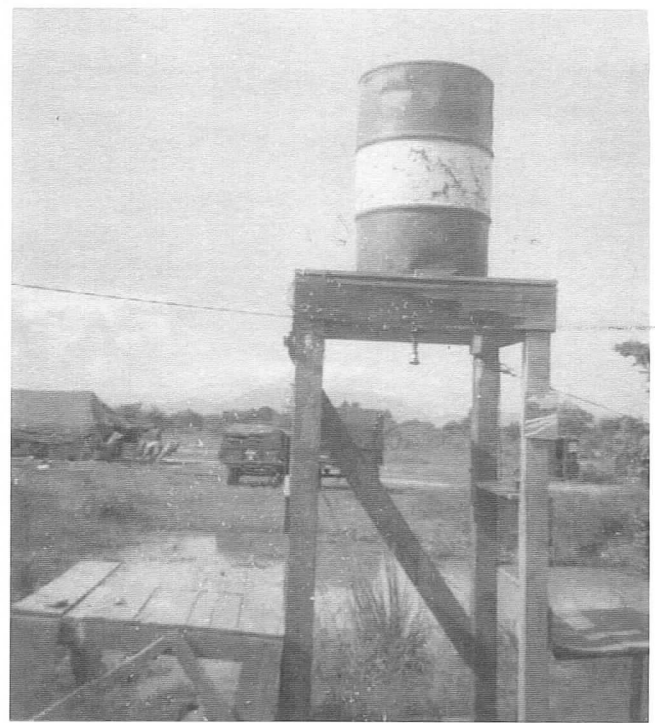
- 1.— O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain,  
For purple mountains' majesties, above the fruited plain!  
America, America, God shed His grace on thee,  
And crown thy good with brotherhood, from sea to shining sea.

SECOND BATTALION  
327<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY (ABN)





*Francis "Butch" Hones, A Co 2/327 7/65-6/66*



*Shower -- Cam Rahn Bay 1965*



*Francis "Butch" Hones, A Co 2/327 7/65-6/66 -- Tuy Hoa 1966*



*1966*



*My Squad 1966*



*My Squad 1966*

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through June 1, 2011

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# FIRST BRIGADE SCRAPBOOK



The FIRST BRIGADE, 101st Airborne Division SCRAPBOOK was compiled by Department of the Army "For Fighting Men too Busy to Keep Their Own!"

The SCRAPBOOK contains 105 8.5 x 11 inch pages and is three hole punched ready to be secured in a regular three ring notebook. Great care was taken to make copies that are true to the original.

Cost is \$15.00 per copy postpaid. See the order form on page 34.



The following First Brigade veterans who are in the magazine database are mentioned in the March 27, 1967, issue of THE DIPLOMAT AND WARRIOR.

**Page 1:** TROOPERS PURSUE NVA INTO CAVES, KILL THREE; LTG(R) Glynn C. Mallory, Jr., 1/327 B 6/66-6/67, subscription ended 4/02.

SILVER STAR AWARDED TO 1<sup>st</sup> BN, 327 MEDIC; James Dolinger, 1/327 HQ 3/66-4/67, subscription ended 4/06.

**Page 2:** HONOR ROLL; Michael D. Clodfelter, 2/502 C 7/65-2/67, never subscribed. MAJ(R) Burrwood Yost, 2/502 C LRRP 12/65-7/67, subscriber. Joe Trimble, 2/502 dates ?, subscription ended 7/06. William Hookham, 2/502 A 5/66-5/67, subscription ended 7/08. COL(R) John M. Grimshaw, 2/320 FA 6/66-5/67, subscriber.

**Page 3:** NEW WATER SYSTEM FOR VIET ORPHANAGE; Tom Bligh, HHC 7/66-6/67, subscription ended 7/01.

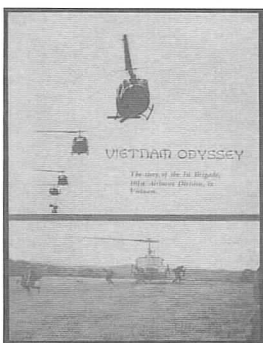
**Page 4:** Photo "AUTOGRAPHED" Bob Mirata, 2/502 C 9/66-9/67, subscription ended 4/11. 17<sup>th</sup> CAV DEPRIVES CHARLIE OF DAY OFF; Dale N. Wagner, 2/17 CAV A TRP 5/66-6/67, subscriber.



**VIETNAM ODYSSEY, The First Year** is available for ALWAYS FIRST BRIGADE veterans.

The story of the first year of action of the 1st Brigade in Vietnam is filled with photos of brigade activities written accounts of all operations, drawings by brigade artists, statistics and other interesting personal and unit material.

The book was edited by ILT Charles J. Apodaca. The writing and layout was done by SGT Robert F. Barry with sketches and art by SGT Robert Finney and PFC Raymond Brown. Photographs were by SGT Bernardo Mangaboyat, SP4 Richard Houghton, SP4 Oddvar Breiland and SGT Jack Baird. PFC Robert B. Gray furnished special mechanical assistance. Frank Faulkner and Steven Van Meter, who served with the brigade for the first six



months in Viet Nam, provided many of the photographs.

VIETNAM ODYSSEY is a 108 page 8.5 by 11 inch format, soft cover, with four pages of color photos. The layout is excellent, the photos, sketch art and text were produced by members of the 1st Brigade who were part of the history that is recorded.

The manuscript was completed in Viet Nam and sent to the 101st Airborne Division Association for publication.

This third printing of VIETNAM ODYSSEY is now in short supply and will probably never be printed, in quantity, again.

If you wish to obtain a copy of VIETNAM ODYSSEY, postpaid, send a check for \$15.00 to: The First Screaming Eagles in Viet Nam, P.O. Box 675, Sweetwater, TN 37874.

**1st BRIGADE**  
(SEPARATE)

**101st Airborne Division**  
**Viet Nam**  
**July 1965**  
**January 1968**

•"The Always First Brigade"•



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## Silver Star Awarded To 1st Bn, 327th Medic

PHAN RANG — In a special ceremony held in front of brigade headquarters here Specialist Four James R. Dolinger of the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry, was presented the Silver Star by Brigadier General S.H. Matheson, brigade commander.

Dolinger, a medic assigned to Headquarters Company, was awarded the nation's third highest medal for heroism for gallantry in action during Operation Hawthorne last June. When his platoon was unable to move forward because of heavy enemy weapons fire, the Bluefield, West Virginian dashed through murderous fire to aid wounded paratroopers, carried one man who was seriously wounded back to safety, and then gave life-saving treatment to other troopers throughout the night until they could be evacuated.

Specialist Dolinger was presented with the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry in an earlier ceremony and has been awarded the Combat Medical Badge.



**BOOBY TRAP** — Staff Sergeant Chester D. Holliday, Fayetteville, N.C., of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2d Battalion, 320th Artillery, demonstrates how a grenade was booby-trapped in the ammunition depot. Sergeant Holliday spotted the booby trap and threw the grenade into a safe area, saving lives and a large quantity of ammunition.

(US Army Photo by SSG Mike Mangiameli)

## Gen. Pearson New Asst CofS For MACV Opns

SAIGON — Brigadier Gen. Willard Pearson has assumed duty as Assistant Chief of Staff Operations on the staff of Commander, U. S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam.

Prior to reporting to his new duties, General Pearson was commanding general of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division.

During World War II, he served as a battalion commander in the 1st Infantry Regiment in the South Pacific. During the Korean War, he commanded the 21st Infantry Regiment.

His decorations include the Legion of Merit with Oak Leaf cluster, Silver Star with two Oak Leaf clusters, Bronze Star Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Air Medal with five Oak Leaf Clusters and the Republic of Viet Nam's National Order, 5th Class and Gallantry Cross with Palm. General Pearson also wears both the United States and Vietnamese master paratrooper badges.

## Opn Farragut Ends; Bde Kills 115 Reds

PHAN RANG — Elements of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division terminated Operation Farragut Thursday night one mile southwest of here.

Enemy casualties were 115 killed, 159 persons detained and 80 individual weapons captured in the operation which began on January 26.

Fourteen paratroopers were killed and 128 wounded in the operation.

Air Force pilots flew 85 close air support sorties and 18 AC-47 Dragon-ship sorties in support of the combined ground-air search and destroy operation. Seventh Fleet ships fired 31 naval gunfire support missions in the operation area.

### 'ABOVE THE REST'

## Troopers Pursue NVA Into Caves, Kill Three

By PFC Daniel Stroebel

PHAN RANG — "It was the finest platoon action I've seen in the brigade recently," stated Captain Glynn C. Mallory, company commander of Company B, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry, in reference to a recent action by the 1st platoon of the "Brave Rifles."

After a heliborne assault into an area south of Phan Rang during Phase Five of Operation Farragut, the company headquarters section and 1st Platoon drew fire from snipers in the rocks above them. Taking them in chase, the 1st Platoon pursued the snipers into a large rock formation. "It smelled of Charlie," said Platoon Leader Second Lieutenant William Howarth of Bethlehem, Pa., when recalling how his platoon had entered the area.

While searching for the snipers, two paratroopers spotted one of the enemy scrambling over the rocks trying to escape the "Screaming Eagles." The paratroopers of the "Above the Rest" battalion pursued the escaping enemy into a small cave, firing as they gave chase. Tossing grenades into a small cave, the troopers assumed they had killed the fleeing sniper — until they heard scurrying footsteps below them in the rocks.

Further inspection disclos-

ed several caves, tunnels and caverns with multiple access to each. A search of only one of the caves resulted in three North Vietnamese Army Regulars (NVA) killed and three weapons captured. At one point an NVA Regular fired on the paratroopers from four feet in the small cave, missing them all. As night fell, the platoon set a perimeter to seal the area from any escaping enemy while defending against a possible probe.

The following morning found the "Screaming Eagles" engaged in routing the enemy out of the cave complex. "This is when it became hairy," recalled Lieutenant Howarth.

After throwing grenades into the caves to clear booby traps and make possible kills, the lieutenant took three men and began probing the caves.

The size of the caves

(Cont'd on page 2, col. 3)

## Fast Action Foins 'Charlie'

**SONG MAO** — Quick thinking and fast action by an ammunition section sergeant foiled a Viet Cong attempt to blow an ammunition dump at the 1st Brigade's forward supply point in Song Mao.

Staff Sergeant Chester D. Holliday of Fayetteville, N. C., spotted a sandbag in an unusual place and went over to check it. Lifting up the sandbag, the 320th Artillery sergeant discovered a grenade primed to go off when the sandbag was removed.

Swiftly picking up the charge, Holliday quickly carried it to a nearby ravine and threw it in not a second too soon, as the charge exploded just as he took cover.

The quick thinking sergeant not only saved the lives of his fellow paratroopers, but hundreds of rounds of valuable ammunition.

### Honor Roll

The following men have been cited in brigade general orders for valor in action:

- STRIKE FORCE**
- SP4 Michael Clodfetter Co. C
- SP4 Howard Washington Co. C
- PFC William L. Cyr Co. C
- PFC Vincent Garvey Co. A
- PFC Robert A. Morales Co. B
- PFC Anthony C. Reed Co. A
- SSG Burrwood J. Yost Co. C
- SGT David K. Deen Co. B
- SGT Louis DeBlanc HHC
- SP4 Ronald Buckley Co. C
- SP4 Otis Jacken Co. B
- SP4 Fred Sanders Co. C
- PFC George Bryant Co. B
- PFC Robert J. Donovan Co. B
- PFC Randle Kinney Co. B
- PFC Ray R. Turner Co. A
- LTC Frank Dietrich HHC
- 1SG Douglas White Co. B
- PSG Ramon Soto Co. A
- SSG George T. Royster Co. B
- SGT Larry E. Whitaker Co. A
- SP4 Mike R. Manton Co. A
- PFC Raymond Kick Co. A
- 1LT Joseph H. Trimble Co. A
- CPT William C. Hookham HHC

#### NO SLACK

- SGT Kenneth P. Spurrier Co. B
- 2nd Bn, 320th Arty**
- CPT John M. Grimshaw HHB



**HELPING HAND** — Paratroopers of the brigade help load clothing and household items for Montagnards being moved from communist control to a Vietnamese government protected area. (US Army Photo by SSG M.ke Mangiameli).

### WARRIORS OF THE WEEK



Specialist Four George W. Price of Louisa, Va., a member of Company B, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry was chosen as the "Enlisted Warrior of the Week" for his actions against the Viet Cong near Phan Rang.



First Lieutenant William A. Horwath of Bethlehem, Pa., a member of Company B, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry, has been named "Officer Warrior of the Week" for his recent actions against the Viet Cong near Phan Rang in Operation Farragut. Lieutenant Horwath, along with three members of his platoon, explored and cleared several tunnels after pursuing snipers to that location. The action accounted for 10 dead North Vietnamese Army (NVA) regulars.

### EDITORIAL Silver Anniversary Of Service

Education often can be compared to the weather. That is, "everyone talks about it, but no one does anything about it."

There is, however, one organization that has done a great deal for servicemen's education.

The United States Armed Forces Institute, more commonly referred to as USAFI, has enrolled more than six million students during its 25 years of educational service to the Armed Forces.

Beginning as the Army Institute on April 1, 1942, were 61 correspondence courses in technical and academic subjects and a few hundred university and high school courses from the extension divisions of participating colleges and universities available to Army personnel.

Since then, USAFI has become a world-wide, all-service, comprehensive educational effort.

Located in Madison, Wis., USAFI's catalogs now list more than 6,000 available courses from 47 participating colleges and universities. USAFI itself has developed 222 courses.

In addition, thousands of service personnel have earned high school diplomas and college credits through the USAFI General Educational Development (GED) tests.

Continuing application of research and innovation in the USAFI program, such as the General Examinations of the College Level Examination Program, seek to improve the learning process of service personnel.

The USAFI contribution to the military community is immeasurable and has earned the respect, appreciation and admiration of all the Armed Forces. (AFNB)

### Cave

(Cont'd from P-1, Col. 2)

prohibited all but one of the four men from carrying a weapon. Wearing gas masks and using tear gas the four paratroopers crawled 150 feet into the caves finding seven more dead NVA. The extensive search also contributed five more weapons, 25 grenades, more than 600 rounds of ammunition, clothes, web gear, documents and eating utensils. In finding, routing and killing the NVA the platoon did not suffer a casualty.



**NEW RIFLE** — Brigadier General S.H. Matheson, commanding general of the brigade, tries out a new XM-148 at Battery A, 2d Battalion, 320th (Airborne) Artillery's firing position in the mountains northeast of Phan Thiet. The new weapon is a combination of the M-16 and the M-79 grenade launcher being used by the "Screaming Eagles" on Operation Farragut. Captain Joseph Jenkins, battery commander, El Paso, Tex., observes the strike of an M-79 round. (US Army Photo by 101-IO)

### DIPLOMAT and WARRIOR

The DIPLOMAT and WARRIOR is an authorized weekly publication of and for the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division APO San Francisco 96347. It is printed in Saigon, RVN by Dong-Nam-A.

The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Department of Defense or any of the Service Departments. The Service News Departments, Armed Forces News Bureau, and Army News and Photo Features augment local news.

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- EDITOR . . . . . SSG Mike Mangiameli

'Above The Rest'

# RTO Becomes Medic, Keeps Sergeant From Going Into Shock

PFC MICHAEL A. WILLEY

**PHAN RANG**—"Are all my men OK? Did anyone else get hit by that damned thing?" These were the words from a wounded sergeant of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, that shattered the quiet of the jungle southeast of Phan Rang during Operation Farragut.

This was a 12-man patrol conducted by troopers of Company B, 1st Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry.

On the way up the trail they passed a base camp which has been used by the Viet Cong, and where Company B had previously killed 10 enemy and captured eight weapons. The patrol proceeded along the trail with extreme caution as they knew the general area had mines and booby traps throughout. There was an explosion, and up ahead there was a trooper shouting, "Oh my God!"

The squad leader had stepped on an anti-personnel land mine, which the first three men had missed because it was very well camouflaged.

Immediately security was set up in all directions. One man, Private First Class David Robinson of Salem, N.J., was furiously working to stop the bleeding, and was giving the sergeant reassurance that everyone was alright, and that he would be alright. Robinson was telling him that the medics were on the way.

The medics were quick to come up the hill and finish

the work that Robinson had started, and they instructed the radio telephone operator to call in a helicopter. Both medics had worked for 10 minutes when the chopper, hovering over the wounded sergeant, prepared to lift him into the helicopter. The medics, Private First Class Frank M. Kimmel of Santa Cruz, Calif., assisted by Private First Class Mick Poulac of Miami, said, "It was the quick action of Robinson, and the other men who kept reassuring the sergeant that kept him from going into shock."

Later, the platoon leader, First Lieutenant William Horwath of Bethlehem, Pa., said, "My medics are number one in my book, and they, like the rest of my people, keep a cool head when the going gets rough..."



**FIRE IN THE HOLE** — Preparing to blow a landing zone (LZ) for a MEDEVAC, Private First Class Ronnie G. Woods of Tulsa, Okla., packs plastic explosive at the base of a tree. Woods is assigned to Company A, 326th Engineer Battalion (Airborne).

(US Army Photo by SP4 Alva G. Tate)

# Ambush Nets 5 VC, 3 Weapons

**PHAN RANG** — A company-sized element of the 1st Brigade ambushed and killed five Viet Cong and captured three weapons, one a sub-machine gun, and small amounts of ammunition while searching a tunnel complex seven miles

southwest of the coastal city of Phan Rang on Operation Farragut.

The tunnel complex included a natural rock cave with a 35 foot passageway leading to a cavern room. The unit is continuing to search the area. It has discover-

ed miscellaneous letters and documents and various types of equipment.

Another paratrooper unit, operating a check point on Highway 1 with Vietnamese National Police has picked up three Viet Cong suspects.

# New Top Kick In 1/327th Inf Not So New

By PFC Michael A. Willey

**PHAN RANG**—Company A (Abu) of the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 327th Infantry, will have a new face in the orderly room and around its company area soon. First Sergeant Joseph Dayer of Valley Forge, Pa., is back in Viet Nam and is slated to take over duties as the top noncommissioned officer in the company.

Not only is this his second tour in the Republic of Viet Nam, but he'll also be right next door to his old company, Company B, and he still carries a high 'Above the Rest' spirit.

On his first tour in Viet Nam, First Sergeant Dayer was with the brigade when it landed in July of 1965 and stayed until May of 1966, when he rotated back to the states.

While in the states, Dayer was a first sergeant in the 1st Battalion (Airborne), 501st Infantry, at Ft. Campbell, Ky.

When asked if he had any reason for coming back to the "Screaming Eagles" in Viet Nam, his reply was, "I came back to get a mere sense of satisfaction."

Abu's new first sergeant is presently in the "Screaming Eagles" Proficiency School at the base camp in Phan Rang.

## Civil Affairs

# New Water System For Viet Orphanage

**SONG MAO**— When First Lieutenant Gerard Palma of Hammontown, N.J., wrote home explaining the problems of orphans and orphanages in Viet Nam, the "Hammontown News," his hometown newspaper, began a fund campaign to raise money for donations to the orphanages. Through the use of television, radio, and other news media, the newspaper carried out the campaign to a successful end.

Lieutenant Palma has since rotated, but when the donation arrived, Major Thomas F. Bligh, brigade civil affairs officer, took immediate action to carry out the wishes of the donors. Inquiring at the orphanage in Phan Thiet, Major Bligh found that the Vietnamese sisters were carrying water from a distant well for use in the orphanage. After coordinating with province officials, Major Bligh, with the assistance of the Vietnamese Public Works Department arranged to have a water pipe system installed for the orphanage.

On a recent visit to the orphanage Major Bligh found the newly installed water system to be one of the most efficient he had seen in a Vietnamese orphanage. Stating his satisfaction, Major Bligh said, "It was beyond my greatest expectations."



**HELP FOR ORPHANAGE**—Major Thomas F. Bligh, brigade civil affairs officer from Douglaston, N.Y., poses with one of the sisters of the orphanage at Phan Thiet and her helpers and charges. The "Hammontown News" of Hammontown, N.J., donated funds for a water system to be installed in the orphanage. (US Army Photo by PFC Daniel Stroebel)

# Widow Makers Make Widow Of 'Missus' Tiger

SONG MAO — The jungles of Viet Nam have many hidden dangers—Viet Cong, North Vietnamese soldiers, and natural predators.

Staff Sergeant Bernard Yost and Specialist Four Wendell Rose of Company C, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry ran into one of these natural predators while on patrol during Operation Farragut in Binh Thuan Province, north of Song Mao.

Rose, of Campton, Ky., was on the point, leading the "Hard Core" squad up a trail when Yost, the squad leader, spotted something stalking his point man. The something turned out to be a 400-pound tiger. Yost, of Cambridge Md., and a fellow member of the "Hard Core" squad, Specialist Four James Duppert, of Wheaton, Md., quickly brought the tiger down with bursts from their M-16 rifles.

Commented Yost later about shooting the big cat, "We spotted the tiger as he was about to attack the point man of the 'Hard Core' squad. Point men are hard to come by, especially good ones."

The squad now has a tiger to add to the list of hidden jungle dangers it has wiped out.



AUTOGRAPHED — Miss Heather Woodruff, jecture attraction of "The Musician's Union", autographs the cast of Specialist Four Robert Mirata from Uriaah, Calif, of Company C, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry. The musical group entertained hundreds of brigade troopers at the base camp in Phan Rang while on a USO tour. (US Army Photo by SP4 Robert G. Lloyd)

## USARV Signal Chief Visits Brigade Units

SONG MAO— The First Signal Brigade commander, Brigadier General Robert D. Terry, paid a courtesy visit to signal units of the 1st Brigade.

The general received a briefing and orientation on brigade signal operations during operation Farragut and toured the signal facilities of Support Battalion, 10th Aviation Battalion, and brigade headquarters.



## Heather Woodruff 'Bewitches' Brigade

PHAN RANG— The beautiful Miss Heather Woodruff, star of stage, screen, and television ("Bewitched"), displayed her wares to hundreds of cheering paratroopers here recently.

Appearing with the "Musician's Union," a newly formed trio of enterprising young men on a USO-sponsored show, the talented lass from Los Angeles wowed the "Screaming Eagles" with song and dance routines, jokes and personal conversation.

The show ended too soon for the "Always First" paratroopers, who won't soon forget the musical and vocal renditions of the "Musician's Union."

## 17th Cav Deprives Charlie Of Day Off

By PFC Daniel Stroebel

PHAN RANG— Even when the local Viet Cong near Phan Rang decide to take a day off and relax, the paratroopers of the 1st Brigade are there to see that there is slack time for the guerrillas.

Operating a checkpoint a-long Highway 1, the members of Troop A, 2d Squadron, 17th (Airborne) Cavalry, along with Vietnamese National Police, were informed by passing Vietnamese that a group of VC were at rest in the village of Vinh Hao, south of Phan Rang.

Captain Dale Wagner, troop commander, along with 12 men of his "alert" platoon (Eagle Flight), made a heliborne assault north of the village and were immediately brought under fire by an estimated 15 VC who fled when the Cav troopers advanced on the village under a barrage of automatic weapons fire.

Two more platoons of Troop A were brought in while gunships pounded the area with rockets and machine gun fire. Moving through the village, the paratroopers trapped one VC in a bunker and literally "blew him through the roof of the bunker," said Captain Wagner. The other VC dispersed into groups of two and three and fled into the jungle escaping the paratroopers' determined assault.

Although the action resulted in only one VC killed, the paratroopers have shown "Charlie" that they intend to give him no rest.

SHAKE IT UP — The vivacious Miss Heather Woodruff, a feature attraction of the Musician's Union, belts out a song to paratroopers of the brigade during a USO sponsored show at the Phan Rang base camp.

(US Army Photo by SP5 Robert G. Lloyd)

## SPORTS QUIZ

(AFNB Feature)

1. How many teams are there in the new American Basketball Association?
2. What was the last year that a nation other than the United States or Canada won the Davis Tennis Cup?
3. Who are the five active jockeys who have won 3,000 races?
4. Who is the only American auto racing driver to win the Le Mans 24-hours of Endurance three times?

### ANSWERS

1. Eleven. The teams are New York; Pittsburgh; Indianapolis; Minneapolis; New Orleans; Kansas City; Mo.; Houston; Oakland; Dallas; Anaheim, Calif; and Louisville.
2. England won the cup in 1936.
3. They are Bobby Ussery; Willie Shoemaker; Bill Hartack; Steve Brooks; and Avelino Gomez.
4. Phil Hill won it in 1958, 1961 and 1962.

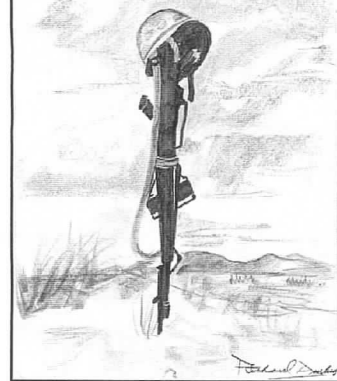


# OBITUARIES

**Kenneth Berryhill**  
1/327 C 67-68

The following obituary was received from MAJ(R) Walter W. Jackson (1/327 C 7/67-6/68). Ken served in the Weapons Platoon (4<sup>th</sup>) Company C 1/327 in 1967-1968. Condolences can be sent to his widow: Brenda Berryhill, 2259 Old Walthall Rd., Europa, MS 39744.

Services for Kenneth Berryhill, 63, of Eupora were March 3, 2011, at Wise Funeral Home in Eupora with the Rev. Jerry Hatcher officiating and the Rev. Dan Beardain assisting. Burial with military



honors was in Mt. Nebo Cemetery.

He was born Aug. 18, 1947, in Mathiston to the late Octavia Prewitt and Leon Hayes Berryhill.

Mr. Berryhill served in the Army and was a veteran of the Vietnam War. He was a member of the Masons and worked as an engineer on a riverboat for most of his life. He died March 1, 2011.

Survivors include his wife, Brenda Berryhill of Eupora; a son, Leon Wade Berryhill of Eupora; a stepson, Randy Westmoreland of Eupora; two daughters, Angela Campbell of Starkville and Jenny Crow of Eupora; a stepdaughter, Krystal Westmoreland of Eupora; a brother, Russell Berryhill of Eupora; a sister, Margie Berryhill of Murfreesboro, Tenn; 15 grandchildren; one great-grandchild and several nieces and nephews.

GERALD C. HORNBECK, 1/327 A 12/65-3/66, P.O. Box 195, Higley, AZ 85236-0195, (480) 586-0449, [eloise7543@msn.com](mailto:eloise7543@msn.com) sent the following obituary.

**David W. Haskell, Jr.**  
24 July 1947- 12 May 2011  
ABU Co. 1/327 7/65-6/66

On the 12th day of May 2011 at 6:50 AM with family by his side at home, Linda said goodbye to her ABU soldier as Dave took his last helicopter home. Dave will no longer feel the anger, pain, suffering and fears from long ago. The last year was hard on Dave, in and out of the hospital and unable to pursue his passions -- riding his new Harley with Linda, body building and weight lifting and volunteering and recruiting young Vets into the local V.F.W Post # 584. Dave realized if we did not recruit young Vets, our V.F.W.s would become a thing

of the past. There was a Celebration of Life held at V.F.W. Post # 584 in Albany, Oregon, at 1:00 P.M. on the 4th of June 2011. Dave and Linda were able to make the reunion in Omaha and visit with everybody. During a side trip from Omaha to Springfield, Missouri, Dave was able to locate an old friend that he played his first year of high school football with in Tecumseh, Nebraska. It turns out that this old friend married and is still married to a girl that both of them had a crush on in school. This discovery was very emotional and meaningful to Dave. Dave's family



lived in Tecumseh in the late 50's early 60's.

Dave was born 24 July 1947 in Pasadena, California, to Alice and David W. Haskell, Sr. David Jr. was the first born of six children (5 boys and one girl). Like a lot of families of the time, the family relocated a few times before settling back in Montclair, California, in the early 1960s. In 1964 Dave was going to school at Monclair High and working as a stacker in the new home industry. In July Dave decided to serve his country as an Army Airborne Paratrooper and joined the Army on 31 July 1964. Dave did his Basic and AIT training at Fort Polk, Louisiana, and Parachute training at Fort Benning, Georgia. Upon completion of jump school and receiving his wings, Dave was reassigned to ABU Company 1/327th Infantry 101st Airborne Division. During this time Dave was awarded his GED high school equivalent. Dave deployed with his unit as part of the First Brigade (S) on the troop carrier USNS General Leroy Eltinge, arriving Cam Ranh Bay Vietnam 29 July 1965. After one year and a number of operations and missions though out most of South Vietnam, Dave was reassigned state side with A Co. 1/325 Inf 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, North Carolina. While at Bragg Dave excelled as a fire team leader, A squad leader and all around strike trooper. Dave was promoted to E-4 on 27 Aug '66 and promoted to Sgt E-5 on 16 Feb '67. During his time in service Dave received his Parachute Wings, Vietnam Service Medal, Combat Infantryman's Badge, National Defense Service Medal. Dave cleared post at Bragg on 28 July '67, caught a military hop from Pope Field, Fort Bragg to Travis Air Force Base in Southern California.

Once home Dave was working as a carpenter and riding his motorcycle. Dave married and on Dec 23rd 1969, became a father of a baby girl, Michelle. Dave and the family moved from Southern California to Southern Washington during 1975 still working as a carpenter. During 1986, Dave went back to school in Mt Vernon, Washington, and got a degree in respiratory therapy, moving to Port Townsend, Washington, working in the local hospital. During this time Dave got back into weight lifting, body building, winning numerous competitions, awards, trophies and accolades. Dave retired from the hospital after ten years and moved around on his motorcycle. In 2002 Dave settled in Scio, Oregon. Dave and Linda bought a home in the area of Scio and were married on May 1st, 2004.

Dave is survived by his wife Linda, daughter Michelle, granddaughters Kayleigh and Megan, brothers Sam, Gary, Clark, Walter and sister Kathlyn.

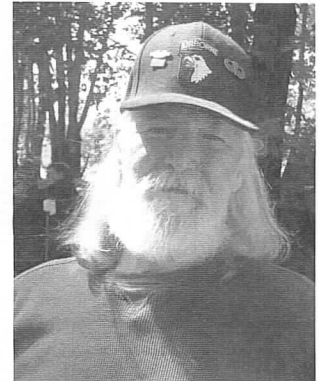
Please keep Dave and Linda and the family in your prayers. Dave was a "TRUE AMERICAN PATRIOT AND HERO."

DAVE REST IN PEACE AND YOU WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN, MY FRIEND.  
'ABU' IS THE BEST THE HELL WITH THE REST

The following was received May 23, 2011, from LTC(R) Billy R. Robbins, 1/327 ABU 11/62-8/66, P. O. Box 1327, Sharpsburg, NC 27878-1327, (252) 382-2300 (cell) [abuonezero@gmail.com](mailto:abuonezero@gmail.com).

I would like for you to print this in the next publication of **The First Screaming Eagles in Viet Nam** magazine:

Abu David W. Haskell, Jr., P.O. Box 724, Scio, OR 97374, rode Lee Roy Eltinge -- July 1965 to July 1966 Abu Company, Viet Nam -- passed away at 6:50 AM, on 12 May, 2011.





Also -- please print in your magazine the following poem written for David by his wife, Linda, and an article written by David.

Both are included in my book "ABOVE THE REST: ABU COMPANY."

### TO MY SOLDIER: DAVID W. HASKELL, JR.

*Thank you to my soldier and the many thousands more,  
who left the comforts of their boyhood and went marching off to war.*

*You fought a war that I and many others never fully understood,  
and I'm sorry for that soldier because I really should.*

*I can only glimpse a small part of your anger, pain and fears,  
from the expressions in your eyes as they so often fill with tears,  
and I realize you're still fighting after more than 40 years.*

*I can only hold your hand in mine and tell you that I love you and I care,  
I thank you for your service and I'm proud beyond compare,  
and I hope that when you're hurting you will always find me there.*

Your proud wife, Linda Haskell

### THE LAST HELICOPTER HOME

By David W. Haskell, Jr.

I'm not trying to justify my actions. I'm not even asking your forgiveness. I don't expect you to understand or even like me. That would be too much to ask for anyone. It's hard to be around someone who rejects friendship and love. But I crave them, even though I continually run from them.

You only see me when I'm angry or pissed or when I'm masquerading in my don't mess with me mode. That's a mode I have perfected and it has served me well. It protects me. It keeps you from seeing my pain and suffering, my guilt and frustration.

When I was 18, I fought in a war. I caused people to die. I piled their bodies like firewood to be burned. I carried my comrade's dead, stiff, limp bodies and added them to a pile inside a helicopter so they could leave the battlefield and take their last ride home. I also carried my wounded, screaming friends to a helicopter, some with a missing foot, some without a hand, arms, or missing a leg, yet, I laid their bloody, broken bodies on top of other Abu friends that were moaning, screaming, and going into shock, that were already piled on the floor of the helicopter. I can remember looking into the eyes of my friends, seeing their expressions of pain as they begged me to help them. But, at the time, all I could do was force myself to turn away and go pick up another broken friend and add him to the pile.

Some of my surviving comrades, proud, brave and young, were able to come home from Southeast Asia and get on with their lives, to function in society, to be successful in life, to be haunted occasionally by the horrors of war. They are the lucky ones.

Some of us, however, forty years later are trying to catch that helicopter, to leave the battlefield. Some of us are still struggling through those sweltering jungles and sloshing through those leech infested rice paddies. We're still fighting battles that never end, piling bodies and mourning our fallen comrades. At night our dreams are not sweet. Night after night Vietnam plays in our heads like a never-ending horror film, over and over. We cry a lot. Sometimes we don't sleep because we don't want to see the film again.

Some of us have intrusive thoughts that plague us during the day and won't leave us alone, like short previews of the nightly films. Sometimes something like the sound of a helicopter or the smell of a certain food or the sight of a tree line next to an open field can exasperate these intrusive thoughts and sometimes they can be so real that we are back in country. We call them flashbacks.

Some of us struggle to function, to act right, to act normal when we aren't. Some of us have committed suicide and hopefully they suffer no more. Others of us have chosen a slower death, escaping to oblivion through nightly rendezvous with alcohol or some other chemical for a short reprieve from pain, only to waken to the reality that the battle goes on.

We try to act right and sometimes we succeed. Other times we isolate, we act like hermits trying to avoid contact with as few normal people as possible, choosing to only be around other combat vets when we do socialize.

Often when we do try to interact with others it is disastrous. We are often frustrated, agitated, surly and angry. We are angry with ourselves and everybody else and we hate ourselves.

We don't want to be like we are. We would love to be your friend, but we can't. We seek help through counseling, religion, exercise and anything else that might help.

We want to catch that last helicopter.

We want to come home!

On 12 May 2011, Abu brother -- David W. Haskell, Jr., finally caught that last helicopter home, and now he is safe, patrolling Heaven for the Lord.

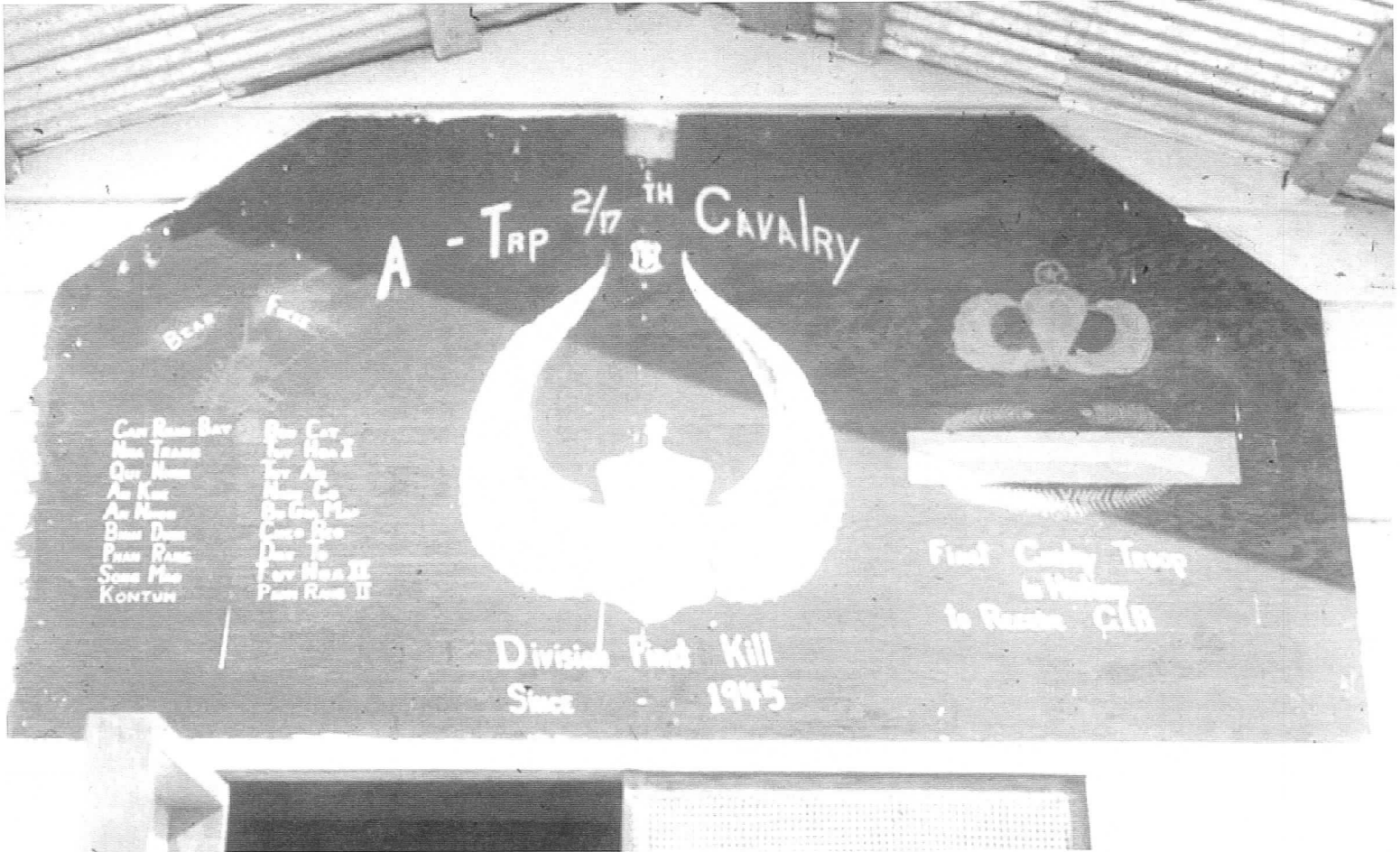
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LTC(R) Charles T. (Tom) Furgeson (2/327 A & HHC 5/66-5/67) sent the obituary below. Dieter was in the AT Platoon of HHC 2/327 66-67. He fought as Infantry in reinforcing C Company at the Battle of Trung Luong. He was also wounded there.

#### Dieter P. Steigerwald, Sr. 2/327 HQ 12/65-12/66

Dieter P. Steigerwald, 67, of Onondaga Hill, received his wings Monday, April 18, 2011, at St. Joseph's Hospital. He was the owner of Paul's & Steigerwald's Meat Market. Dieter was a Vietnam veteran, serving in the 2/327 Infantry Battalion, 101st Airborne Division and was an avid outdoorsman. Surviving are his wife of 38 years, Marion Reith; a son, Dieter P. (Amy) Steigerwald, Jr.; a daughter, Michelle (Scott) Johnson; four grandchildren, Heidi, Dieter III and Mia Steigerwald and Owen Johnson; his mother, Irene; brother, Armin (Liz); mother and father-in-law and family in Germany. Services: were 10 a.m. Tuesday, April 26 at St. Michael-St. Peter Church, 4782 W. Seneca Tpk. Burial was private. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Syracuse VA Medical Center, 800 Irving Ave., Syracuse, NY 13210, Attn: Voluntary Service #135. Butler-Badman Funeral Home [www.butlerbadmanfuneralhome.com](http://www.butlerbadmanfuneralhome.com)

Published in **Syracuse Post Standard** from April 22 to April 24, 2011



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

## A Troop History 1966 - DETAILS OF MY FIRST MISSION

GEORGE EDWARD BROWN, 2/17 CAV A 6/66-1/68  
 101 N. Eagle Rd., Havertown, PA 19083-3435  
 (610) 789-6609  
 grumpy377@gmail.com

*I finally found info on my first (cherry) mission with A Troop, 2/17 Cav., 1 Bde., 101 Abn. Div. and the man that was KIA on it. I may have been fuzzy as to the date, early July, instead of late June. I remember my first chopper ride and exit, six (6) feet above the grass, which was over six (6) feet high, carrying the PL's radio (PRC-25) and the run in with the VC/NVA in which Sgt. Curtis H. Ransdell was KIA (Panel 9E, Line 6) and two (2) others WIA. The survivor of the initial engagement (we were told at the time he was a Chinese SF type) kept us pinned down, though wounded in both legs, till a MIKE force patrol that was nearby came up behind him and killed him. After medivacing our KIA and WIAs on advice of the MF guys, we beat feet for VN and extraction. This report helped put some substance to what was in the back of my mind.*



### UNIT HISTORY Of

**Troop A, 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry  
 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division  
 For the Calendar year 1966**

**Written By: Geffory S. Moakley  
 Captain Armor  
 James R Roane  
 Captain Armor  
 Executive Officer**

**Approved By: Dale N. Wagner  
 Captain Armor  
 Commanding**

**"A" Troop, 2/17th Cavalry**

New Year's Day 1966 found Troop A 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry, 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division commanded by Captain William R. Wilson OF xxxxx, with 1<sup>st</sup> Sergeant E-8 Gerald Martelli RA xx xxx xxx as First Sergeant. The Executive Officer was 1/Lt Robert R Korkin OF xxxxx. 1/Lt Fowler Goodowens OF xxxxxx was Operations Officer.

## Platoon Leaders

1st Plt. Gerald V. Palma OF xxxxx  
2nd Plt. Doye W. Adams OF xxxxx  
3rd Plt. Seth F. Hudgins Jr. OF xxxxx

## Platoon Sergeants

E-7 James L. Richardson RA xx xxx xxx  
E-7 Karl F. Olga RA xx xxx xxx  
E-7 Ransom E. Smith RA xx xxx xxx

On 13 and 17 January 1966 PFC John W. Lewis US xx xxx xxx and David L. Jackson RA xx xxx xxx were respectively killed in action by sniper fire south of Phan Rang while escorting convoys. Enemy casualties were unknown. About the 20th of January, the Brigade left its Phan Rang base camp for an operation in the rice bowl area of Tuy Hoa, a coastal city north of Nha Trang. The Brigade's mission was to protect the rice harvest, estimated at 30,000 tons, a large amount of which was previously collected by the Viet Cong in the surrounding hills. The Cavalry Troop out loaded on landing ship transports and moved along the coast to Tuy Hoa some five (5) days. The seas were too rough to attempt a landing. In the mean time the infantry battalions were flown to Tuy Hoa North and South Airfields. After giving up all hope of effecting a seaborne landing the LSTs headed south to Cam Rahn Bay, where the troop was off loaded and then flew by C-130s to Tuy Hoa. Captain George A Hamilton OF xxxxx assumed command on 25 January, replacing Captain Wilson who went to the Brigade S-3. The troop finished out the month of January providing perimeter security at North and South Airfields. On 1 February, Lt Geoffrey S Moakley OF xxxxx joined the troop, making the troop two officers over strength.

About 1100 hours on 2 February, the troop was alerted to secure an Engineer Platoon from Co A, 326 Engineer. The engineers were being sniped at while repairing a one lane rice paddy road south west of the Brigade Command Post, located at North Field. The troop Commander and Lt Hudgins, 3rd Platoon, were mounted and on their way to the danger spot 15 minutes later. The 3rd Platoon arrived at the trouble spot was hampered by a tremendous number of field workers thronging the road away from the direction of the sniper's rounds and the displacement of an artillery battery just ahead of them. Arriving at the construction site, the platoon deployed dismounted, leaving a few men to secure the vehicles. After proceeding into the rice paddies amidst sniper fire, the platoon ran into a solid wall of fire from three sides as it neared a small village. The Viet Cong had prematurely sprung a well planned horseshoe ambush. The 3rd Platoon immediately deployed on either side of the foot path leading out of the second village, called for artillery

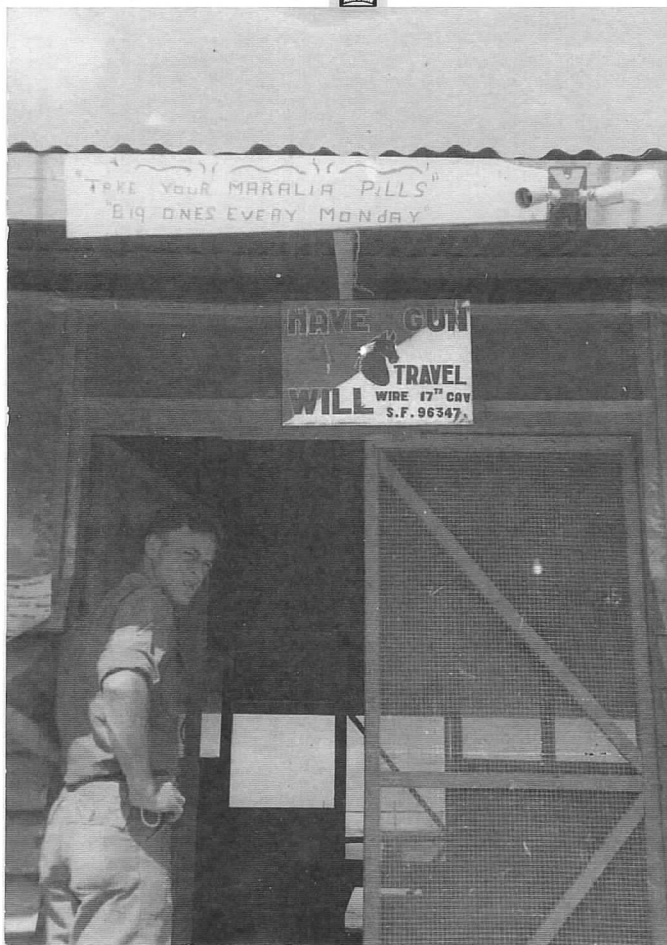
(L19) artillery observers and Forward Air Controllers, both of whom came up on the troop radio net. The aircraft spotted a company of well dug-in Viet Cong waiting in the village, as well as squad size enemy flanking elements in the village to the south and cemetery to the north. The brigade immediately committed an infantry battalion by helicopters; the battalion entered the village from the west and southwest, and destroyed the enemy in place while the Third Platoon acted as a blocking force on the east. Two air strikes were called, using A1E Sky Raiders and jets with napalm, fragmentation bombs, and 20mm cannon fire. During the five-hour battle, the troop suffered one KIA, PFC Richard G Philbin RA xx xxx xxx, who was evacuated and received credit for seven (7) of the fifty or sixty enemy killed (Body Count). With the main battle over, the 3rd Platoon, in conjunction with the infantry battalion, conducted a sweep of the surrounding area with negative results. It was 2030 hours before the platoon returned to North Field.

The next night, 3 February, about 2400 hours a 12 man patrol from the Second Platoon suffered four WIA at CQ107527 as they approached a village in which a VC rally was being held. The patrol, with its wounded, withdrew across the open rice paddies under cover of mortar and artillery barrages. Enemy casualties were unknown. The remainder of the month was spent securing artillery batteries at CQ134523, a location henceforth known as artillery hill, and sending out 36 hour, 12 to 15 man patrols into the surrounding troublesome villages. "Charlie" (the Viet Cong) usually had free run in these villages after sundown, although our patrols did police up twelve Viet Cong (Body Count) over the rest of the month. The troop suffered, a few more WIAs due mostly to night time VC ambushes

of our patrols, and had a machine gun jeep destroyed by a road mine on the 24th, resulting in three more American WIAs.

On the 26th of February 1/Lt Korkin departed for an advisory position with an ARVN (Army Republic of Viet Nam) Cavalry Squadron. 1/Lt Adams became the Executive Officer and 1/Lt Moakley took charge of the Second Platoon. About this same time a Fourth Platoon, provisional security was attached (later assigned) with 1/Lt Goodowens as Platoon Leader and SSG Stranahan as Platoon Sergeant. The troop also received a 60" search light detachment for night surveillance. With these attachments, the unit's strength approached that of a light battalion and was jokingly called "Hamilton's Battalion." The direct support artillery batteries, which we secured, enhanced this title.

In March the troop continued its mission of securing artillery batteries, patrolling and provided one platoon for the perimeter security of North Field. About 0800 hours, Sunday, 13 March, a patrol from the 1st Platoon became heavily engaged at CQ105526 and suffered four his patrol's assistance with the remainder



*Motto above doorway "HAVE GUN WILL TRAVEL."  
Taken during one of our rare visits to our home base.*

of the platoon. An air strike was also used. This engagement resulted in one Viet Cong KIA (BC) and an undetermined number of enemy WIA. The Dust Off (Medical Evacuation Helicopter) called to evacuate the American wounded was shot down over the rice paddies by the VC. The pilots were quickly rescued by another helicopter. 1/Lt Moakley's Second Platoon, located at North Field was brought in by Eagle Flight to secure the downed helicopter a half hour later. In the mean time, the VC had attempted to destroy the unguarded Dust Off by exploding a grenade inside it. Another Huey airlifted the crippled helicopter out at 1400 hours.

Towards the end of March, the troop, in conjunction with A Company 326 Engineers, was given the mission of opening and securing the thirty kilometer stretch of Route #1 north of Tuy Hoa to Tuy An. The road opening operation itself took some four days, with the troop guarding the engineers as they diligently mine swept every inch of the road and its shoulders, blew some 15 railroad track obstacles implanted across the road, filled some 200 cuts in the road and effected bypasses around or over blown bridges. This was the first time in well over a year that this stretch of road was open to traffic. Some nine (9) road mines were discovered by the mine detectors, with one mine blowing the rear wheels off a 2½-ton truck. The troop established its Command Post on "Hill 32," mid way between Tuy Hoa and Tuy An and made extensive use of the search light at night. Each morning the road was mine swept by the engineers. The troop physically occupied all major terrain features along the route during daylight hours.

Although VC sniping was common at ranges of 500 to 1000 meters, no major incidents hindered any of the daily resupply convoys while the troop secured this route. Platoon Sergeant Olga, who was medically evacuated to Japan in February, was replaced by SFC Jose M Perez RA xx xxx xxx.

The month of April found the troop CP still on "Hill 32," with the mission being the security of Route #1 between Tuy Hoa and Tuy An. Sergeant E-8 Michael Francis Lynn RA xx xxx xxx, joined the troop in April and shortly thereafter replaced First Sergeant Martelli, who DEROSed the 15th of May. Platoon Sergeant Smith went back to the states on emergency leave and was thereafter reassigned.

About the 23d the troop moved to Nhon Co by C-130 as a provisional infantry company, taking only 11 vehicles on this move. Our mission was to secure the airfield and brigade command post by establishing three (3) platoon bases 3000 to 4000 meters out and patrolling from these bases 24 hours a day.

On the 5th of May the troops four platoons were chinooked to Bu Gia Map to reinforce and help secure the airhead of the 2d Battalion (ABN) 502 Infantry. Again, the troop established near-by platoon bases with the mission of active patrolling. On the 10th, the troop's Second, Third and Fourth Platoons and one platoon Co C 2/502 made a forced march to reinforce A Co and the Recondos, both of whom had just made contact some seven kilometers due west of the airfield. A Co 2/502 was immediately exploiting information from a wounded prisoner, indicating that three NVA companies were strung out in ambush positions on an east west trail leading to Cambodia. Tree top level passes by helicopter gunships and Air Force jets (often with bullets cracking bamboo foliage above the platoons) were alternated with many hundreds of rounds of close in artillery during the four (4) day engagement.

On the morning of the 11th, while the infantry confronted the enemy head on along the trail, the troop cut its way 500 meters due north and then made a 4000 meter rear flanking movement due west, severing the enemy's wire communication line. As the trail was approached, the Fourth Platoon killed one member, of a wire recovery team and wounded another, capturing a half-mile of WD9 wire in the process. With the jaws of the vice in position, the enemy along the trail in between was mopped up as the pincers closed and the troop pushed east to meet the oncoming Infantry.

Staff Sergeant Robert L Williams RA xx xxx xxx, a scout squad leader in the Second Platoon, killed two NVA and captured two AK 47 Chinese Communist sub-machine guns. For his gallantry in action, Sergeant Williams was awarded a Silver Star. The action came to a close with a decisive American victory.

On the evening of 19 May, the troop secured the Bu Gia Map airstrip as the remnants of infantry and artillery were evacuated by CV-2 Caribou, C-123 and C-130 aircraft. The troop itself made a grandstand extraction to Nhon Co by UH1 helicopter at dusk, with gun ship swarming above like hornets.

On 26 May, the troop was air lifted to Cheo Reo, where it was reunited with its vehicles.

The first of June found the troop and Brigade's mission as well suddenly changed as the personnel complement were air lifted to Dak To. Captain Hamilton departed for the Brigade S-3 Staff and 1st Lt Palma went to Brigade S-2. 1/Lt Adams took command of the troop.

In the mess hall, Staff Sergeant Pablo Gonzales RA xx xxx xxx became the Mess Sergeant; and the quality, quantity and environment of food service within the troop improved 100%, almost overnight. Troop A may not have had the best mess hall in the brigade, based on inspection reports by the food service team; but it has served the best food in the brigade ever since SSG Gonzales took charge. Good food, well prepared by an industrious, conscientious team of cooks, has been one of the few real pleasures that a soldier can enjoy in Viet Nam, and it has been a tremendous morale booster.

At Dak To, the troop had its usual convoy escort missions, Brigade CP security and patrolling activities. About June 6th the First Platoon under PSG Richardson was attached to the 2/502 for a dismounted quasi LRRP (Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol) blocking mission. On 8 June, Lt Moakley's Second Platoon (mounted) was attached to the 1st Battalion (ABN) 327 Infantry for the purpose of helping to secure the artillery battery that was co-located with the battalion CP. The previous night, the artillery battery had been partially overrun by a fanatical mortar and human wave attack. On the 9th, the Second Platoon left its vehicles at the 1/327 CP and was heli-lifted to reinforce the Tiger reconnaissance element of this battalion. The next morning, the First Platoon was detached from the 2/502 and then attached to the Tigers also. The combined cavalry-infantry task force then helped disengage an infantry company which had suffered heavy casualties, screened the brigade front, and then pulled back while a B-52 Bomber attack took place. The remainder of the month was spent securing convoys and the Brigade CP.



The 4th Platoon was disbanded and reassigned to the infantry battalions, part of the reason being the brigade's low strength due to the rotational hump and a soldier's completion of twelve months of service in Viet Nam. The troop suffered a few injuries during the month of June and an unusual number of punji stake leg wounds. The average platoon's strength was about 20 men.

The end of June and first part of July saw many key new leaders joining the troop. Sergeant First Class E-7 Billy L Jones RA xx xxx xxx and Platoon Sergeant Allen H Daily Jr. RA xx xxx xxx were assigned to the 2nd and 3rd Platoon respectively. PSG Richardson DEROSed and Staff Sergeant E6 Richard Stranahan RA xx xxx xxx was promoted to E-7. First Lieutenant Adams, Goodowens and Hudgins DEROSed about 15 July, Goodowens and Hudgins having been with the troop since it departed Fort Campbell, Kentucky, in July 1965. Captain Richard R Maglin took command of the troop and 1/Lt Dale N. Wagner OF xxxxx became the Executive Officer. 2/Lt Michael F McEachin xx xxx xxx, an infantry officer, took charge of the 1st Platoon while 1/Lts Andrew J Hudson Jr. OF xxxxx and James R Harding OF xxxxx became the new Second and Third Platoon leaders respectively. 1/Lt Moakley returned to the Brigade rear to take charge of the troop rear area during the rear area reorganization phase engagement. The troop spent the first half of July at Dak To, running convoys, conducting patrols and perimeter security, maintaining a platoon on 30 minute alert status for an Eagle Flight performing vehicle maintenance and requalifying with all organic weapons.

On 5 July, prior to 1/Lt Hudson assuming command of the 2d Platoon, Sergeant Jones and his Second Platoon (dismounted) was attached to the 1/327 Infantry. On the 7th, while operating along the Laotian border on a blocking force search and destroy operation, the 2d Platoon made contact with the enemy. During the brief but intense fire fight which resulted, Sergeant Curtis H Ransdell RA xx xxx xxx the scout section leader, was killed and two other scouts, Sergeant E-5 John M Dichesare RA xx xxx xxx and PFC Larry Christenson US xx xxx xxx were wounded. Three NVA soldiers were killed (BC) and two (2) AK 47 rifles were captured. On the 8th, the Second Platoon rejoined the troop.

The Brigade then commenced air movement from Dak To to Tuy Hoa and established its command post at North Field with the troop closing on the 21st. For the next five months, missions centered on convoy escorts, security for the Brigade CPs, rice paddy patrols and joint operations with the local Vietnamese Army Units. The troop also established a 50 Caliber machine gun observation post atop Chap Chai, a 1200 foot mountain which overlooked the Brigade CP and much of the surrounding rice paddies. Pictures of the position were reprinted in all theatre publications and the *Army Times*.

On 1 August, PSG Stranahan was wounded in a rice paddy fire and soon after evacuated to CONUS for further treatment. PSG Robert L Weathers RA xx xxx xxx was then assigned to the First Platoon. Shortly thereafter 1/Lt James R Roane OF xxx xxx replaced Lt McEachin, who was reassigned to an infantry battalion. While guarding the brigade perimeter during the early part of the month, a masonry bunker, probably built by the French, collapsed around and severely injured PFC Harold E. Barnhardt RA xx xxx xxx. On the 16th, the troop was assigned the mission of securing a 20-kilometer stretch of Route #1 just north of Vung Ro Bay, where a harbor facility was being constructed. 1/Lt Dale N Wagner was promoted

to Captain on the 27th. The 30th, we were relieved in place by the newly arrived 1st Brigade of the 4th Infantry Division.

On 31 August the 3rd Platoon along with *Popular Force troops* began a joint operation just outside of the Brigade perimeter around the town of Minh Duc. The mission was for the cavalry to surround the village and the PF to search it for VC and weapons. On 1 September the 1st Platoon was deployed to the North West of the village as a blocking force. The platoon moved into a blocking position without incident, shortly after this the platoon was ordered to move south to rejoin the 3rd Platoon when it suddenly received automatic weapons fire from a wood line to the west. The platoon was unable to maneuver and the 3rd Platoon was called to assist. SP/4 Ronnie Bowman RA xx xxx xxx was wounded in this engagement. Captain Maglin ordered the troop to maintain contact with the enemy and the two platoons pushed west, through open rice paddies and a small village. The Third Platoon killed four (4) retreating VC and the troop was ordered to withdraw to the Brigade CP for another mission. The 1st Platoon left a 15-man stay-behind patrol to ambush in the vicinity of the dead VC. As the two platoons withdrew the 1st Platoon took up the lead, with the 3rd providing rear security. As the 1st Platoon neared Minh Duc the Third Platoon was attacked from the rear and two sides by the VC. Immediately the platoon began to suffer casualties and the 1st Platoon was maneuvered into a supporting position, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon which had just returned from another mission was placed in support near Minh Duc and employed their 106mm RR. After several artillery bombardments, a jet strike and numerous passes by armed helicopters the 3rd Platoon was able to withdraw, however, they had one (1) killed and nine (9) wounded. The wounded included a Lt from the Brigade S-5 and one Popular Forces soldier.

Later in the day, just prior to dark the VC began to come back into the area where the dead VC lay. Since it wasn't dark yet SGT Downer RA xx xxx xxx the patrol leader, had not established the ambush. Before the ambush was set, it was discovered and the patrol was forced to give its self away by killing two VC. Immediately the patrol was ordered to withdraw. This was no easy task as there were some 40 or more VC in the immediate area. However, SGT Downer, who was already known for his ability to remain calm in critical situations led his patrol through the VC and back to the base camp without suffering a single casualty.

On the 7th of September, Lt Harding's Third Platoon made a seaborne village invasion, using junks, while the other platoons, in conjunction with ARVN troops, cordoned off the village by overland movement. A thorough search of this village exposed an extensive tunnel fortification system and eight booby traps. On the 10th, the troop established two platoon base areas around Chap Chai, with the mission being intensive patrolling to hinder Viet Cong interference with the oncoming national Vietnamese elections. Lt Moakley resumed command of the Second Platoon on the 11th, with Captain Wagner taking charge of the Cavalry-Engineer Maintenance and Holding Team at Phan Rang and Lt Hudson becoming the Executive Officer. On the evening of the 12th, Staff Sergeant E-6 Charles Gaddis RA xx xxx xxx, had his legs critically injured on "Hill 32" by an Air Force butterfly bomblet used as a VC mine. The troop escorted two (2) ARVN food and resupply convoys on the 13th and 16th to La Hai, a town about 60 kilometers northwest of Tuy Hoa. On the evening of the 17<sup>th</sup>, the 1st and 2nd Platoons began a three day dismounted operation in the high ground northwest of



the Brigade CP with negative results. Another dismounted operation was conducted in the same general vicinity on the 28th thru 1st of October, resulting in one VC KIA (BC) and one carbine captured. Lt. Hudson was promoted to Captain on the 27th. During the months of October and November the troop ran convoys to Cung Son, hampered by heavy rains. The engineers mine swept the road each day. *These convoys had four vehicles blown up by mines that the engineers had missed.* The 2nd Platoon went on a two (2) hour hedge hopping Eagle flight with some ARVNs to destroy VC rice seedling beds with chemical herbicide. The 2nd Platoon provided security while the ARVNs sprayed the seed plots. About 10 seedbeds were sprayed.

During the month of November, the temple of our nighttime rice paddy patrols was increased. Lt. Roane was promoted to Captain on the 20th and replaced Capt. Hudson as Executive Officer. Captain Hudson went to Brigade S-4. Captain Wagner assumed command of the troop on the 21st, replacing Captain Maglin, who became an Assistant Brigade S-3 Officer. On Thanksgiving evening, 25 November, the Third Platoon was attacked by two (2) Chinese communist hand grenades and semi-automatic weapons as it entered Minh Duc to begin patrolling. Before the troops could dismount their 3/4-ton trucks, the two (2) or three (3) Viet Cong who perpetrated the attack had fled the normally friendly village. PFC John K. Thompson

RA xx xxx xxx, had just eaten his last turkey dinner. Two nights later a Cheu Hoi led the Third Platoon across the rice paddies to the normal haunts of the VC who killed Thompson. Two enemy were killed and some grenades, documents and medical supplies captured. This slight victory was not enough to make amends for the ironic death of an American on Thanksgiving night.

November's payday was held on 4 December and Lt. Harding reported for duty with Brigade S-1 on the 7th. The troop was airlifted to Kontum during the night of 7-8 December. Our mission at Kontum centered around Brigade, security duty and convoys. Christmas Eve was notable for the spontaneous fireworks display of some 500 hand held flares. The variegated colors of the star clusters and flares seemed to bring out the spirit of an otherwise listless Christmas Eve. The last major event of the year was a three-day joint ARVN-Cavalry road opening and military outpost resupply operation conducted with six (6) Vietnamese companies beginning on the 28<sup>th</sup>. New Year's Eve found the 1st Platoon heliborne on its way to an artillery battery security mission. SSG Gonzales, SGT. James L Howard RA xx xxx xxx and PFC Roger W Drought RA xx xxx xxx are the only 137 remaining members of this unit that landed in the Republic of Viet Nam on 28 July 1965.



## First Brigade Separate Dinner at the 2012 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division Association Reunion

“11 June 2011

Ivan!

Issue the “Warning Order” for the 13<sup>th</sup> First Brigade Biennial Reunion.

**Location:** Marriott Nashville Airport

**Time:** Tuesday 14 Aug 2012 through 19 Aug 2012

First Brigade Separate Dinner/Event (casual) Tuesday 14 Aug 2012

Week of the Eagles (WOE) DMOR Ceremony, unit visits at Fort Campbell, etc.

1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Grand Ole Opry visit Saturday 18 Aug 2012

/S/ Walt Jackson (208) 340-5740 (cell)

*I visited the hotel and the Grand Ole Opry today. The hotel can easily accommodate attendees from the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Separate. Little Jimmy Dickens is playing at the Opry tonight. The flood damage will be repaired by next year. This is a win-win for all concerned!”*



*This photo of HQ 2/327 was sent by Dieter P. Steigerwald (2/327 HQ 12/65-12/66). See his obituary on page 23*

# ABOVE THE REST, ABU COMPANY, By Billy R. Robbins

*Editor's Note: The book is in two volumes and is a down to earth account of Billy's life before and during his Army experience. His friends from those Army days also tell great stories of the exploits of ABU COMPANY. He writes great descriptions of the surroundings for his stories and pulls no punches about those he served with or for. Do not expect to always agree with his take on the matters he writes about. I recommend the two volumes and hope you enjoy them. To order write or call Billy R. Robbins, P.O. BOX 1327, SHARPSBURG, NC 27878 --or-- 2686 Clubhouse Dr. S., Clearwater, FL 33761, Phone: 252-382-2300 or 895- 327-1327. Following is a biographical sketch of the author.*

Billy R. Robbins was born on Veterans Day, 11 November 1936, a Scorpio, aerial-delivered by a stork to his father's farm-house near Sharpsburg, North Carolina.

He joined the United States Army as a Private E-1 on 1 August 1957, and retired as a Lieutenant Colonel on 31 July 1987.

On 6 January 1958, he was assigned to the Legendary Abu Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Airborne Battle Group, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division, Fort Campbell, Kentucky – and the Airborne hasn't been the same since!

He graduated from Airborne School at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, February 1958; pitched baseball for the 327<sup>th</sup> Battle Group from 1958 to 1960. His uniform number was 10 and First Sergeant, Trinidad Prieto, nick-named him ONE ZERO. He also pitched for the 1-327<sup>th</sup> from 1963 to 1965.

April 1960, as a Specialist Fourth Class (SP/4) Robbins graduated from the RECONDO School of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division and in May 1960, was promoted to sergeant; in November 1960, he was assigned to C Company, 504<sup>th</sup> Airborne Battle Group, Lee Barracks, Mainz, West Germany; a graduate of Jumpmaster School and Aerial Delivery School with German Paratroopers; and graduated from the Non-Commissioned Officer Academy in Bad Tolz, West Germany.

In November 1962, again assigned to Abu Company, he deployed to South Viet Nam as an Abu in July 1965, on the USNS General Le Roy Eltinge, eventually, serving seven (7) years in Abu Company.

In September 1966, as a member of the 501<sup>st</sup> Air Assault Battalion at Fort Campbell, flew to Detroit, Michigan, in 1967, assisting that city against a deadly riot and later in 1967, assigned to the Basic Training Marksmanship Committee Group at Fort Campbell, earning the role as primary shooter in the Army's Quick Kill Program.

In March 1968, Robbins attended the Infantry Officer Candidate School (OCS), Fort Benning, Georgia, graduated on 22 August 1968, as a Second Lieutenant, infantry branch, and assigned as an instructor in the U.S. Army's Ranger Department School at Fort Benning, teaching patrolling, ambushing, tracking, map reading, land navigation and survival.

In June 1969, Robbins was assigned as platoon leader, E Company, Recon Platoon, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 20<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, 23<sup>rd</sup> (Americal) Infantry Division, Chu Lai and Duc Pho, South Viet Nam, and in July 1970, reassigned to Fort Campbell as a company commander and in January 1975, assigned to Darmstadt, West Germany, and in 1977, assigned to the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Headquarters at Fort Monroe, Virginia.

July 2011

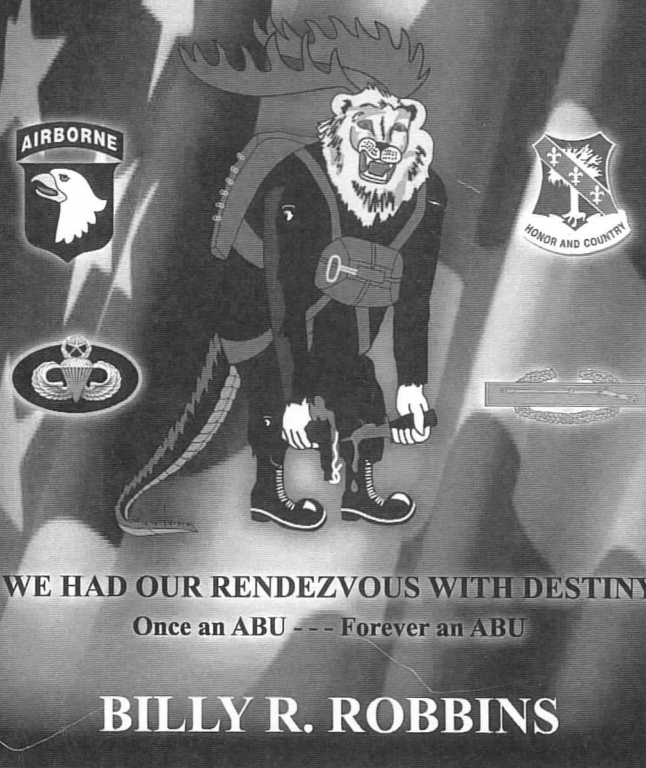
*The First Screaming Eagles in Viet Nam*

## ABOVE THE REST ABU COMPANY

### VOLUME I

A Collection of Reflections from Elite Paratroopers of the  
Legendary ABU Company, 1st Battalion Airborne, 327th Infantry  
of the Famous 101st Airborne Division.

During Peace Time : 1958 - 1965  
and from the Viet Nam War : July 1965 - July 1966



In 1980, he was assigned to Headquarters, 8<sup>th</sup> Army, Seoul, Korea, and in 1982, assigned to Fort Myer, Virginia, and placed in charge of the largest company in the U. S. Army, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, with over 2200 assigned and attached personnel.

He earned a Bachelor Degree in Human Resource and Management; a degree in General Business Management and is a graduate of the Command and General Staff College.

His awards include: Silver Star, Legion of Merit, two Bronze Stars (Adm), Army Commendation Award with "V" Device, Air Medal, Combat Infantry Badge, Master Parachutist Badge, Recondo Tab and a sundry of other awards.

He's a widower; has two sons, Scotty and Michael; three grandchildren: Tracey, Shelby and Sara.

His hobby is assisting WW II and other Veterans with their struggles with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Not bad for a one-eyed country boy – huh!



## 1ST BRIGADE UNITS CITED

The Second Battalion, 502d Infantry of the 101st Airborne Division's first Brigade, has been awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for September 1965 operations near An Khe, Vietnam.

"The gallantry, determination and esprit de corps of the 2d Battalion (Airborne), 502d Infantry in close combat against numerically superior enemy forces is in keeping with the highest traditions of the U.S. Army and reflects great credit upon the Unit and the Armed Forces of the United States," the citation reads.

The operation smashed two main force Viet Cong battalions, and resulted in 259 enemy dead.

In addition, Secretary of the Army Stanley Resor announced that Company A, 326th Engineer Battalion has been awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation for operations from July 1965 to February 1966 in support of the First Brigade.

The Presidential Citation won by the 2/502d was awarded for "extraordinary heroism in action against hostile forces in the Republic of Vietnam on Sept. 18, 19, 1965 during Gibraltar," according to the citation.

It says the battalion was ordered on Sept. 18 to conduct a heliborne assault and make contact with and destroy a Viet Cong battalion operating in the mountains east of An Khe.

"During the initial phase of the

---

battle, the enemy fire killed the battalion's operations officer and one of the company commanders, wounded the other two rifle company commanders, and hit over half the helicopters in the first hours of the battle, the decoration order continues, isolated elements of the battalion fought off frequent attacks by enemy forces of larger size, with small unit leaders often directing airstrikes within 50 meters of his own positions.

The battalion held the position all day and the following night, repelling nine enemy attacks, and then linked with another ground element that had been airlifted into the area the next morning.

"Despite the loss of key leaders," the account says, "the battalion's personnel manifested initiative, determination and the will to survive during the entire action."

The engineer company won its Meritorious Unit Commendation for construction of jungle base camps, extensive mine-sweeping operations, demolition actions, building of roads, bridges and fences and for "destroying an entire enemy regimental base complex" during combat.

"Above the Rest"

— 7 —

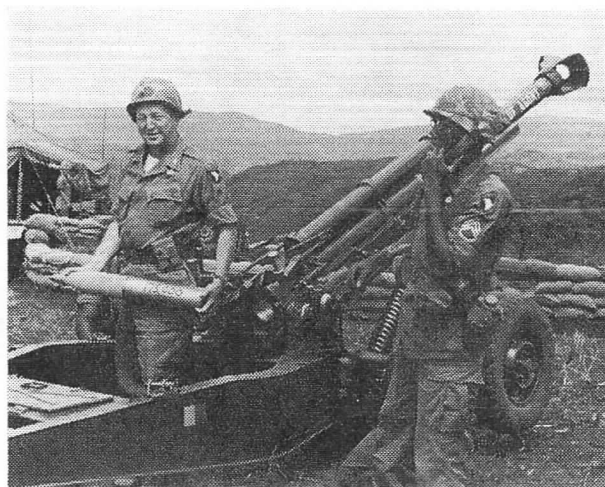
*The 101st Airborne Division Association publication from THE SCREAMING EAGLE magazine of July and August 1967.*



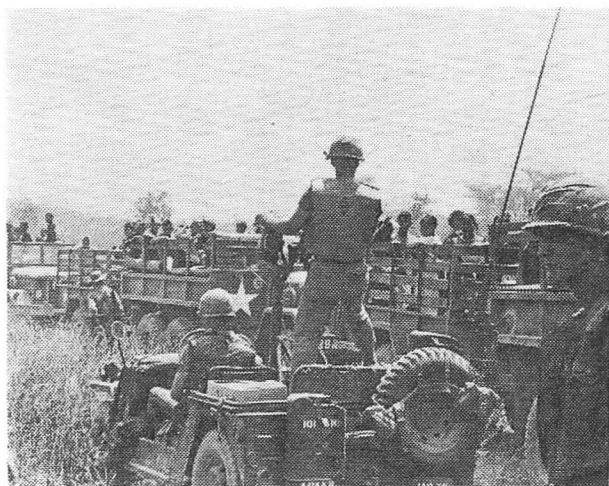
# VIETNAM IN PICTURES



Airborne alert.



Gen. Matheson and Sgt. Davis (Btry A, 2/320) fire the BM's 175,000th round.



The Bde MP's provide security for a move.



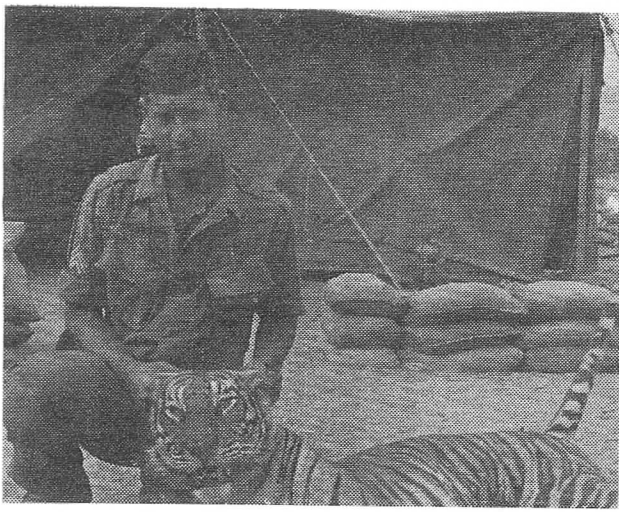
Trp A, 2/17, returns the fire.



Pfc Audi and Co A, 326 Engrs, clear the mines.



SP6 Nichols and SP4 Cruz, HHC, 2/502, aid South Vietnam allies.



**Sgt. Jerry Edwards, 2/502, repulsed this 7 ft. 2 in. tiger.**



**1st Lt. Stephen Naughton, A, 1/327, receives his Silver Bar from Gen. Mathe-son. Capt. L. Naughton, 1/327, looks on.**



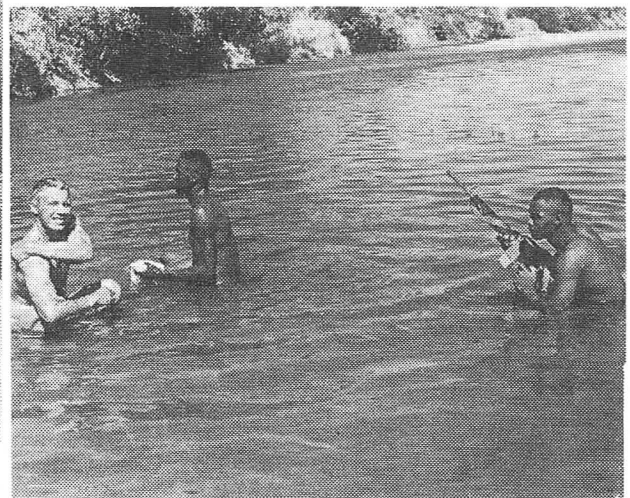
**Sgt. Metcalf and SP4 Kinnebrew help sack the rice.**



**SP4 Ruggles chats with Miss Le Thilan, who is being given school financial help in the Bde's "people to people" program.**



**Maj. T. Bligh, Civ Affairs, with sisters of the Phan Thiet Orphanage who received funds for a new water system from the Hammonton New Jersey News.**



**SP4 Wilson and Pfc Bevenue bath while Pfc Weather, HHC, 2/502, stands guard.**



**Issue #1**



**Issue #2**



**Issue #3**



**Issue #4**



**Issue #5**



**Issue #6**



**Issue #7**



**Issue #8**



**Issue #9**



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**Issue #13**



**Issue #14**



**Issue #15**



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**Issue #18**



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**Issue #26**



**Issue #27**



**Issue #28**



**Issue #29**



**Issue #30**

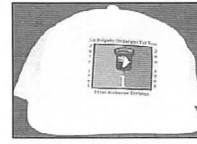
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1st Brigade (S) Logo Cap  
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Issue #33



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Issue #35



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Issue #37



Issue #38



Issue #39



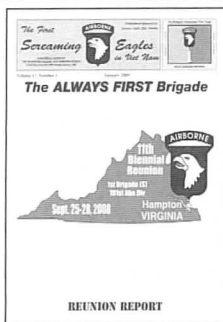
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Issue #42



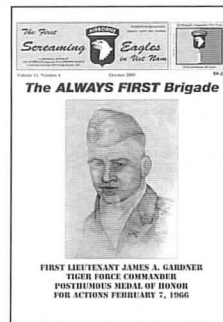
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Issue #48



Issue #49



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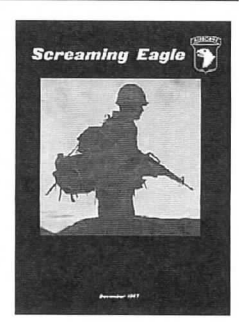
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Issue #52



Issue #53



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

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is published quarterly by Worrell Publications, Post Office Box 675, 117½ North Main Street, Sweetwater, Tennessee 37874-0675, as a service to veterans who served in the 1st Brigade (Separate), 101st Airborne Division from July 1965 through April 1968 and is mailed Standard Presort postage paid under Postal Permit No. 210, Sweetwater, Tennessee 37874.

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## Following Is A Short Description Of The Contents Of This Magazine.

### **OBSERVATIONS OF A PLATOON LEADER.....PAGES 1 – 5**

First of three parts of a paper written by Patrick H. Graves Jr., 1/327 B 7/65, while a student at The Infantry School. This first of three parts was published in INFANTRY in the May - June 1967 issue. The second and third parts will be published in this publication in October 2011 and January 2012.

### **FASTER THAN A SPEEDING M-79 ROUND ..... PAGES 6 & 7**

By William L. Carpenter, 1/327 HHC TF 12/66-12/67, about Tiger Force. The story and pictures give an insight into Tiger Force not before published.

### **FIREBASE RIPCORD ..... PAGES 8 & 9**

Material sent by William V. Larsen, 2/327 B ELT 65-7/66, about a Firebase Ripcord reunion. This is somewhat past the 26 month history of the First Brigade (S) although many of the participants were "The Always First Brigade" veterans.

### **FROM FRANCIS "BUTCH" HONES ..... PAGES 10 – 13**

Francis "Butch" Hones, 2/327 A 7/65-6/66, sent two pages from the mimeographed newspaper aboard the troop ship Eltinge along with a memorial service folder and pictures of himself, his squad and other 1966 scenes.

### **SUBSCRIPTION LISTS ..... PAGES 14 & 15**

Names and addresses of new subscribers, renewing subscribers, address changes and bad addresses. This section will not be as complete as usual because of the need to cut off new subscribers and renewals on the first of June. Look for a more complete list in the October issue.

### **NAMES OF THOSE MENTIONED IN THE**

### **UNIT NEWSPAPER .....PAGE 16**

Names of those who are in The First Screaming Eagles database and are mentioned in the centerfold reproduction of the Diplomat and Warrior on pages 17 – 20.

### **DIPLOMAT AND WARRIOR ..... PAGES 17 – 20**

Copy of Volume one Number 43 published in Viet Nam March 27, 1967.

### **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR ..... PAGE 21**

Messages from subscribers and non-subscribers sent by e-mail and the U.S. Postal Service that should be of interest to most readers.

### **OBITUARIES ..... PAGES 22 & 23**

Obituaries in this magazine include Kenneth Berryhill, 1/327 C 67 – 68; David W. Haskell, Jr., 1/327 A 7/65 – 6/66 and Dieter P. Steigerwald, Sr., 2/327 HQ 12/65 – 12/66.

### **A 2/17<sup>th</sup> CAVALRY HISTORY ..... PAGES 24 – 28**

History of A Troop, 2/17<sup>th</sup> Cav sent by George E. Brown, Sr., 2/17 CAV A 6/66-1/68, along with a note about his assignment to the unit.

### **BOOK REVIEW ..... PAGE 29**

A review of ABOVE THE REST, ABU COMPANY by Billy R. Robbins.

### **SCREAMING EAGLE REPRINTS ..... PAGES 30 – 32**

Pages 7, 8 and 9 from THE SCREAMING EAGLE of July and August 1967. The magazine is a publication of the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division Association.

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Above: September 18, 1965—Members of the U.S. 101st Airborne Brigade carry a wounded paratrooper to cover after the Viet Cong opened fire on an evacuation helicopter at An Ninh, 17 miles east of An Khe. Viet Cong guerrillas had surrounded the landing zone, pinning down units as soon as they were on the ground.