

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



101st Airborne Division

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The ALWAYS FIRST Brigade



MAIL

50th Anniversary Commemoration



The two logos above are a first draft for artwork to identify the July 2015 50th Anniversary Commemoration of the First Brigade (S) 101st Airborne Division landing in Viet Nam. The back of the logo will depict the date and location of the reunion. The celebration will be on July 29, 2015.

The hotel will be the Nashville Airport Marriott and the schedule is a work in progress. The 50th Anniversary gathering will be sponsored by THE FIRST SCREAMING EAGLES IN VIET NAM magazine.

Late again. I hope you get your October magazine in late October or early November. My health has been a detriment to my keeping the publishing schedule I have used for years. My health is improving and I will attempt to get back on my accustomed schedule soon.

I could find no picture of me to go on this page, so the 50th Anniversary of the First Brigade landing in Viet Nam will be the main topic.

I will meet with the Catering Manager of the Nashville Airport Marriott in early November

This magazine is produced by and for veterans of the ALWAYS FIRST BRIGADE who served in the brigade from July 1965 through January 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).



to solidify arrangements of the room for our 50th Anniversary Reunion Banquet on July 29th, 2015. A registration form will be part of the January magazine. The reunion will be in conjunction with the 101st Airborne Division Association Annual Reunion so hotel reservations will be merged with the 101st Association room block. A hotel reservation form will be part of the January 2015 magazine. The First Brigade registration fee (to be determined) will cover access to the Reunion Hospitality Room.

I look forward to seeing you in Nashville!
Ivan

+ = Subscriber, * = Dropped Subscriber,
** = Never Subscribed, *** = Unable to contact,
**** = Not in database.

Outnumbered U.S. Paratroopers Outfight, Beat Viet Cong Force

By MICHAEL T. MALLOY
SAIGON (UPI) — American paratroopers, airlifted into a hornets' nest of hard core Viet Cong deep in the central highlands of South Viet Nam, outfought and eventually beat the guerrillas although outnumbered more than two - to - one, it was disclosed Monday.

The body count of the action, which turned from near-disaster into victory, showed 155 Viet Cong Communist dead against "light" U.S. casualties.

South Vietnamese rangers, coming in to mop up, discovered 100 bodies in a trench blasted by heavy aerial bombardment just before units of the U.S. army's 101st airborne landed in the area about 15 miles east and north of An Khe. The operation started Saturday morning and was continuing Monday.

Bitter ground fighting, frequently hand-to-hand combat, accounted for another 55 Communists killed. The operation was dubbed "Gibraltar."

For the first day and night, the company and one-half of the airborne troopers numbering about 160 held off a battalion of 400 well-trained Viet Cong guerrillas. By a "trick of fate" the troopers had landed in the Viet Cong headquarters area

area is a suspected Viet Cong haven.

Air Force and Navy fighter-bombers ranged over both South and North Viet Nam, hitting Communist troops concentrations, base camps, fortifications and rest and supply areas.



FUTILE FIGHT TO SAVE LIFE OF U.S. AIRBORNE TROOPER. A medic gives a blood transfusion to an unidentified 101st Airborne brigade soldier in a futile effort to save his life at An Ninh, South Viet Nam. He was wounded

when helicopters bringing in his unit for battle against Viet Cong were hit by heavy fire. Enemy fire pinned the Americans down for 24 hours and prevented evacuation of casualties. This soldier died three hours after he was wounded.

AP Wirephoto



The news clips and photos were sent by Tim Swain, HHC S-2 65, who served as Brigade S-2 when the brigade was deployed. His material, published in the past and in this magazine, amounts to a fraction of the First Brigade history in his collection. He has been a supporter and contributor to the magazine for a number of years.

1st Air Cavalry Lends Support To 101st, ARVN Clearing Operation

A combined clearing operation of the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division and ARVN troops was joined Saturday afternoon by helicopter and artillery support from the newly arrived 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) as the friendly forces continued the expansion of their perimeter.

The operation, taking place northeast of An Khe, base camp for the 1st Cav. troopers, marked the first action seen by the newly arrived unit in Vietnam.

Results of the continuing operations as of late Sunday evening showed 30 Viet Cong insurgents killed, four captured with weapons and a half dozen suspected communists detained, according to U.S. military spokesmen.

Four U.S. aircraft have been lost during the operation, three of them being destroyed. The four choppers — two UH-1Bs and two H-34s, were downed during the initial landing zone phase of the operation, the spokesmen said.

One battery of 105mm howitzer artillery and helicopter elements of the 1st Cav. joined the operation late Saturday afternoon as a "reinforcement" element, the spokesmen indicated. The helicopter support included both troop-carrying "slick" ships and armed choppers.

Communists engaged with the 101st, 1st Cav. and ARVN elements broke contact before darkness

Saturday as the American-Vietnamese force began extending perimeters around their positions in the search and clear operation in the An Khe area.

Some 15 VC were slain during Sunday's action before the insurgents broke contact, the spokesmen added.

Light, sporadic sniper and mortar fire were the only contact with the enemy reported Saturday night, the spokesmen said, and no contact was reported Sunday.

Peoria

JUNE 10, '64

Read

46 Pages

Evening Edition

Yanks Tangle With 2 Regts. Of N. Viet Nam

SAIGON, South Viet Nam (P) — U.S. paratroopers battled a stubborn, dug in North Vietnamese force for the fourth day in the central highlands today, while Premier Nguyen Cao Ky's government sent 400 Vietnamese riot policemen into the northern Buddhist stronghold of Hue.

Helicopters lifted at least two battalions of American and Vietnamese troops into the fierce action 280 miles north of Saigon. Battlefield reports indicated the Americans may be fighting as many as two regiments — some 1,800 men — of North Vietnamese regulars although the enemy force earlier was estimated at 900 men.

Heavy fighting was reported continuing late into the day.

AN AMERICAN military spokesman said 239 North Vietnamese had been killed in the fighting, which began before dawn Tuesday with a Communist attack on a small U.S. encampment. But the spokesman added: "The count undoubtedly will go much higher. Those people up there are more interested in killing North Vietnamese than in counting bodies."

U.S. losses were reported light over-all, but one platoon was badly mauled.

U.S. PLANES had flown 167 sorties so far in the battle, which erupted anew Thursday night in the dense jungles of Kontum province 280 miles north of Saigon. Pitted against units of the U.S. 101st Airborne Division's 1st Brigade, as it prowled Communist infiltration routes near the Laotian border, were an estimated 900 North Vietnamese.

Fighting was reported heavy throughout the day and was still going on late this afternoon, the spokesman reported.

The size and determination of the enemy indicated the Communists might be moving to the offensive again after waiting futilely for the Buddhists to depose Ky.

As the premier sent riot police into Hue, the failure of the Buddhist campaign was underlined by an announcement that Ky would fly to South Korea Monday to attend a conference of nine non-Communist nations.

You've Shown Courage: CO To 101st

By RICK MERRON
DAK TO, South Viet Nam (P) — "You have shown stamina, courage and just plain guts," Gen. William C. Westmoreland told the battle-weary paratroopers. "For every casualty you suffered you inflicted more than 10 on the enemy."

As the commander of U.S. forces in Viet Nam pinned a Silver Star Sunday on West Point's "lonesome end," Capt. William C. Carpenter, a battery of 155mm howitzers opened up on the Communists in the hills.

In five days of fighting in the treacherous, sweltering jungles of South Viet Nam's central highlands, the men of the U.S. 101st Airborne Division's 1st Brigade took all the Communists could give and gave back more and better.

Westmoreland came into

the hill country Sunday, as the fighting entrenched against the entrenched North Vietnamese, to pay tribute to the "Screaming Eagles" of the 101st.

Speaking to the troops as they rested on jeeps, ammunition boxes or other makeshift platforms, Westmoreland told them:

"This is difficult warfare here in Viet Nam. We must master it and prove to the enemy that he is second-rate. You have done just that."

The men roared their motto "Always the Best." Westmoreland shouted back: "You took the words right out of my mouth."

Westmoreland pinned the Silver Star on Carpenter as an interim medal for the 29-year-old captain's heroism in calling a

napalm strike on top of his company's position. Only this dangerous move saved Carpenter and his men from being wiped out by a North Vietnamese force three times their number.

Carpenter, a hero on the grid-iron six years ago, has been recommended for the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest award for gallantry in action, for his heroism on the battlefield.

Westmoreland told the survivors of Carpenter's unit, C Company of the 502nd Battalion, that they had been up against North Vietnamese regulars and that more may be across the border in Laos.

He said the North Vietnamese regiment threw two battalions—perhaps 700 men—into the battle against the U.S. airborne

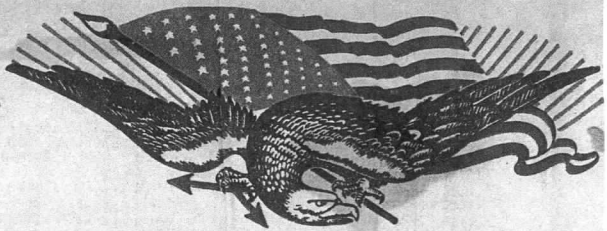
men in apparent hope of repeating some of the Communist successes in the highlands last year.

"The 101st was sent up here to fight that regiment and stop it," Westmoreland said.

In the five days, the North Vietnamese lost an estimated 393 men. Individual American units took moderate or heavy casualties but over-all U.S. losses were described as light.

"We had been ordered into position on the hill when all hell broke loose," said the topkick of Carpenter's company, 1st Sgt. Walter J. Sabalauski, 55, of Palm Bay, Fla. "The air strike right on top of us was the only thing that saved us."

Sabaluski's hand was burned by the napalm.



Cong Fire Harasses 101st

340,000-TROOP HIGH

Casualties 'Very Light'

By AP and UPI

Saigon—Troops of the 101st Airborne Division came under Viet Cong fire for the first time today, only six days after about 3,700 of the paratroopers landed at Cam Ranh Bay, 180 miles northeast of

Saigon on July 29.

A U.S. spokesman said guerrillas harassed the men with small arms fire but American casualties were "very light."

The paratroopers set up defensive positions around the harbor to provide security for

Saigon (UPI)—An entire division of American soldiers will soon be sent into the interior of South Viet Nam.

The U.S. Army's First Cavalry Division (Air Mobile) will be sent into the monsoon shrouded central highlands to confront the 325th Division of the North Vietnamese army.

Army engineers constructing a base there.

"The Screaming Eagles" were reunited with Gen. William C. Westmoreland, who formerly headed the group at Ft. Campbell, Ky. Gen. Westmoreland, commander of American forces in Viet Nam, had reportedly asked for the division to be sent there.

The commander of the 1st brigade of the 101st awarded Purple Hearts today to the first of his men to be wounded in Viet Nam.

Col. James S. Timothy presented two Purple Hearts in a brief ceremony at the 8th Field Hospital.

Timothy, 46, presented the Purple Hearts to two medics wounded superficially by sniper fire in a battalion support area about 1 1/2 miles from the brigade command post.

Receiving the decorations were Pfc. Edmund F. Jones, 23, of Cloutiersville, La. and Pfc. James W. Haywood of Chicago.

Both men are members of Company D, 326th Medical Battalion.

The Viet Cong inflicted "moderate" to "heavy" casualties on government forces in other scattered actions, a military spokesman said. He gave this report:

An estimated battalion of guerrillas ambushed a regional

★ ★ ★

Law Against Harassment Proposed

Washington (UPI) — Sen. Thomas J. Dodd, D-Conn., Tuesday introduced legislation to halt harassment of families of military personnel serving in South Viet Nam.

The bill would make such harassments as threatening telephone calls a federal crime and provide maximum penalties of 15 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

Dodd said the measure is needed "because there is mounting evidence that the Communist fifth column in this country is seeking to undermine morale of our forces in Viet Nam" through threats and harassments against their families.

Market Trends

New York (AP) — Selective strength pushed the stock market a little ahead early this afternoon. Trading was moderately active.

Gains of pivotal issues were from fractions to around a point, with most changes small.

A tentative advance was under way among steels, motors, rails, airlines, rubbers and coppers, but each group contained plenty of dead spots.

Defense issues were mixed, displaying no immediate response to President Johnson's request to Congress for \$1.7 billion of additional funds to in-

crease in Viet Nam.



—UPI Telephoto

Screaming Eagles Before Battle Cry

FT. CAMPBELL, Ky.—Members of the 101st Airborne Division embark for Viet Nam from here. The nucleus of 4,000 paratroopers from this division have already landed in Viet Nam. The 101st moved ashore at Cam Ran Bay, 180 miles northeast of Saigon, to as a defense force for U.S. Army engineers building a coastal stronghold and airbase.

How 101st Reacted When Reds Closed Fiery Trap

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Operation "Gibraltar" turned into operation "nightmare" for a handful of men of the U.S. 101st Airborne Division when they were trapped in a mountain bowl under a murderous criss-cross of machinegun fire from Viet Cong-held heights around them. UPI news film cameraman Ceferino Balbaboco was with the 101st. Here is his eyewitness dispatch.)

By CEFERINO BALBABOCO

An Ninh, South Viet Nam (UPI)—I shared the captain's poncho in the rain last night.

This morning, I saw him killed by a burst of Viet Cong machinegun fire that raked across his chest as he tried to lead his men to safety.

Within a few minutes, the lieutenant who replaced him in command also was to die, his body slamming into a mine and falling at my feet.

This was Company . . . of the First rigade, or what there was of it. (The name of the company is intentionally left blank since next of kin were not yet notified).

This is the story, from the beginning:

After dinner last night, Col. Wilfred K. G. Smith took me to the headquarters briefing near An Khe, where for a month the 101st of Fort Campbell, Ky., has been on a clearing operation along Rt. 19. The briefing officer outlined today's operation which was dubbed Operation "Gibraltar."

There I met the captain who offered to share his poncho with me.

He told me he would be in the lead helicopter, and that I would follow closely behind.

Not Much Sleep In Mud

On the muddy ground, in the driving rain, there was not much sleep. At 2 a.m. we were up again.

At 7:30 a.m. we took off.

Fifteen minutes later, we were over the landing zone.

Even before we landed, the area already was under heavy machinegun and automatic weapons fire from three hills dominating the landing zone. We landed in the middle of the fire.

Behind us were other choppers carrying more airborne troopers. The captain waved them off.

He told me to stay with him and we began moving east. Two hundred yards from the landing zone, machinegun fire from the east stopped us.

The captain was standing and I was crouching in a shell ditch about 15 feet behind when another machinegun burst raked him across the upper body.

A medic who jumped to his side also was pinned down. For perhaps another 10 minutes, the captain continued to breathe.

Then the lieutenant took over.

He told me to stay put while he checked on a sergeant and some other troopers pinned down close by.

A Grenade From Nowhere

From somewhere, a Viet Cong threw a grenade. Two of the troopers threw themselves out of their hole and landed squarely on top of me. In the blast, the sergeant received a leg wound.

The lieutenant told me to move back close to where the captain's body lay, and he would follow.

I made it. The lieutenant didn't. The machinegun caught him just as he made his final leap.

The fire was coming on us now from all around, from one wooded height rearing up 2,000 feet and from two others ranging down to perhaps 900 to 1,000 feet.

I held the rosary that had been given me in Manila by Cardinal Antoniotti and prayed that I would be allowed to live.

The sergeant called to me:

"Are you all right?"

"Yes."

"Is the lieutenant alive?"

"He is dead."

The sergeant told us that we would get out of the ditch and jump for a water-filled canal. He said for me to go and he would cover me.

Soon there were 11 of us standing in water up to our chins.

We stayed there for the next three hours, shivering as bullets tore at the earth around us and a U.S. Forward Air Patrol (FAC) plane circled suspiciously above us, taking us for Viet Cong.

Calls For Air Support

A signalman with us identified us for the FAC and called for air support. Thirty minutes later, U.S. B57s began bombing and strafing a Viet Cong machinegun nest 200 yards to the east.

But the Viet Cong were moving up on us and the sergeant decided we would have a 50-50 chance if we moved; none if we didn't.

We got out of the water and jumped into another ditch. Then we began crawling 150 feet to the south back toward the landing zone.

By this time it was 3:30 p.m.

On the way, we found a wounded American and dragged him out with us.

To our right was a wooded area and we crawled to it across a field. By now we numbered about 40. We found an officer who told us to keep on moving, north this time, to escape the bombing and strafing planes.

Under cover of the planes, a signalman called for a helicopter to pick up wounded. The chopper came in but it was taking hits.

My camera was wrecked so I helped carry the wounded men.

The chopper took off with four wounded men, a medic and me aboard, heading back for the 85th Evacuation Hospital at Qui Nhon.

It was not yet 4 p.m.



—AP Wirephoto

Buddies carry a wounded 101st Airborne Brigade trooper to cover when the Viet Cong opened fire on an evacuation helicopter during battle at An Ninh.

Nashville



Banner.

Nashville's Oldest Newspaper

Long May Our Land Be Bright With Freedom's Holy Light: Protect Us By Thy Might, Great God Our King

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OUTNUMBERED 'EAGLES' WIN



Associated Press

At An Ninh: With their dead in neat rows, paratroopers hold off the Viet Cong

GI's Pour In—And the War Looks Up

Cautiously but unanimously, officials in Washington and Saigon agreed last week that things were looking up in Vietnam. The Viet Cong seemed less aggressive and less capable of engaging in large-scale battles. Along with that, interrogations of Viet Cong prisoners indicated that enemy morale was sagging badly—a deduction implicitly confirmed from half way around the world. In Budapest, a Viet Cong representative seeking medical supplies from Hungary admitted that relentless bombings and the massive U.S. troop buildup were causing “undoubted difficulties.”

If all this was a result of the U.S. troop buildup in Vietnam, then as far as Washington was concerned the situation called for more of the same medicine. Although President Johnson announced last July that some 125,000 U.S. troops would probably be needed in Vietnam by the end of this summer, the figure already stands at about 128,000 men and more are on their way. The total is now expected to reach 225,000 by the end of this year, and some officials estimate there may be 300,000 U.S. troops in Vietnam by mid-1966.

More to Come: The latter figure is still speculative. But what is certain is that the remaining two brigades of the Army's First Infantry Division are now en route to join the brigade of the “Big Red One” already on duty in Vietnam. Several battalions of the First Marine Division are also in Vietnam, and they may soon be joined by the rest of the division. The U.S. would then have four full divisions engaged in the war—the First and Third Marine divisions, the First Cavalry and the First Infantry—plus the 173rd Airborne Brigade and a brigade of the 101st Airborne Division.

Despite all this, U.S. officials insisted last week that the main burden of the war still rested on the South Vietnamese

troops. “We’re not taking over,” said one Pentagon official. “We’re just beefing up the South Vietnam Army, filling up the central reserve and reaching out and hunting down the Viet Cong in their hideout areas.” Perhaps the GI's would indeed be used only as line backers in the extreme southern portion of the peninsula. But such did not seem the case in South Vietnam's central highlands, the scene last week of one of the war's bitterest battles (below) and an area in which U.S. troops are the only effective force opposing the Viet Cong.

In fact, if the military situation in Vietnam was improving, that improvement was being achieved primarily by increased expenditure of U.S. lives and material. (In a single day last week, a sobering toll of seven U.S. aircraft was taken in combat—including one F-104 Starfighter that strayed over Hainan island and was lost to the Red Chinese.) The Vietnamese war has often been called a “dirty little war,” but a war that bids fair to tie up more than a quarter of a million U.S. troops can hardly be termed “little” any longer.

Between Professionals

When the “Screaming Eagles” of the 101st Airborne Division set out on “Operation Gibraltar” in the central highlands of South Vietnam, they expected just another routine search-and-destroy mission. But minutes after giant Huey helicopters began landing a strike force from the 101st in an abandoned paddy near the village of An Ninh, the paratroopers found themselves fighting for their lives against a superior force of Viet Cong regulars. After the battle, NEWSWEEK's William J. Cook interviewed the surviving paratroopers at their base camp at An Khe. His report:

The trouble started when, in a case of

mutual surprise, the troopers landed literally in the midst of a Viet Cong battalion. The paddy was, in fact, right next to VC battalion headquarters, and, as the helicopters came in for a landing, the Viet Cong dove into prepared positions and began pouring deadly fire into the paratroopers. “I jumped into a hole with two of our troops who were firing up a storm,” recalled Pfc. Steve Van Meter, a 19-year-old combat photographer. “Next thing I knew the guy beside me had been hit right above the left eye. It almost tore his head off and killed him instantly. Before I recovered from that, the guy on my left yelled. He'd been hit in the arm.”

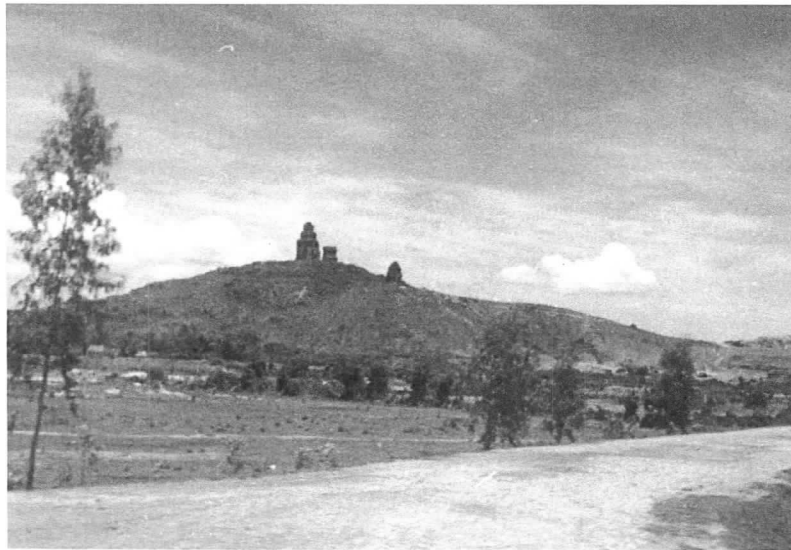
‘Don't Pull Back!’ Unable to land any more men, the helicopters had no choice but to leave the 260 they had already unloaded pinned down in an area about the size of a soccer field. The most damaging Viet Cong fire came from a 50-foot knoll at one end of this area. “About 30 of our men charged the knoll, yelling and screaming,” Van Meter said. Almost at once, the officer leading the charge, Maj. Herbert J. Dexter, was hit in the leg. “As soon as he fell,” Van Meter recounted, “a couple of VC came out of their holes less than 10 feet from him. They just stood there pumping him full of holes. The major's last words before he died were: ‘Don't pull back! Don't pull back!’”

Then Second Lt. George H. Carter, 24, promptly took over the command. Said Van Meter: “They took that hill almost by hand-to-hand combat. The men just grabbed the VC and threw them off the hill. One man went to a mortar and actually ripped the sights off with his bare hands.”

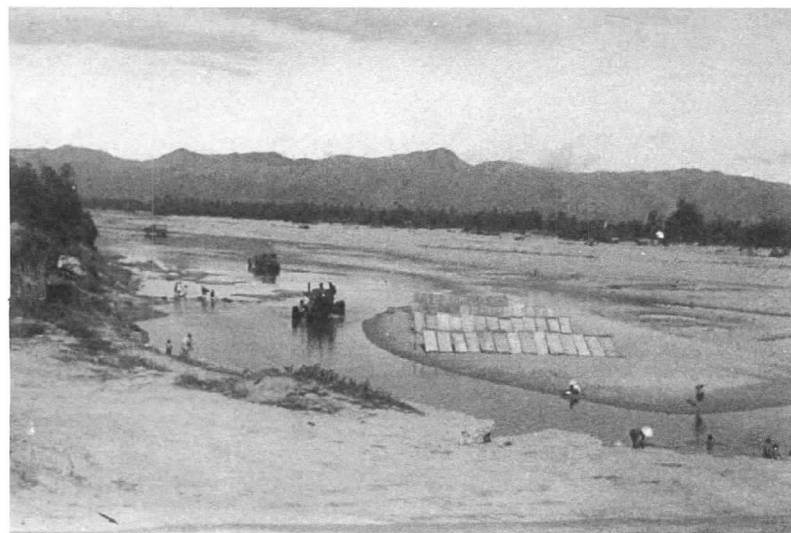
What finally kept the paratroopers from being overrun, though, was the Air Force. “They started bombing around our perimeter,” Van Meter said. “At



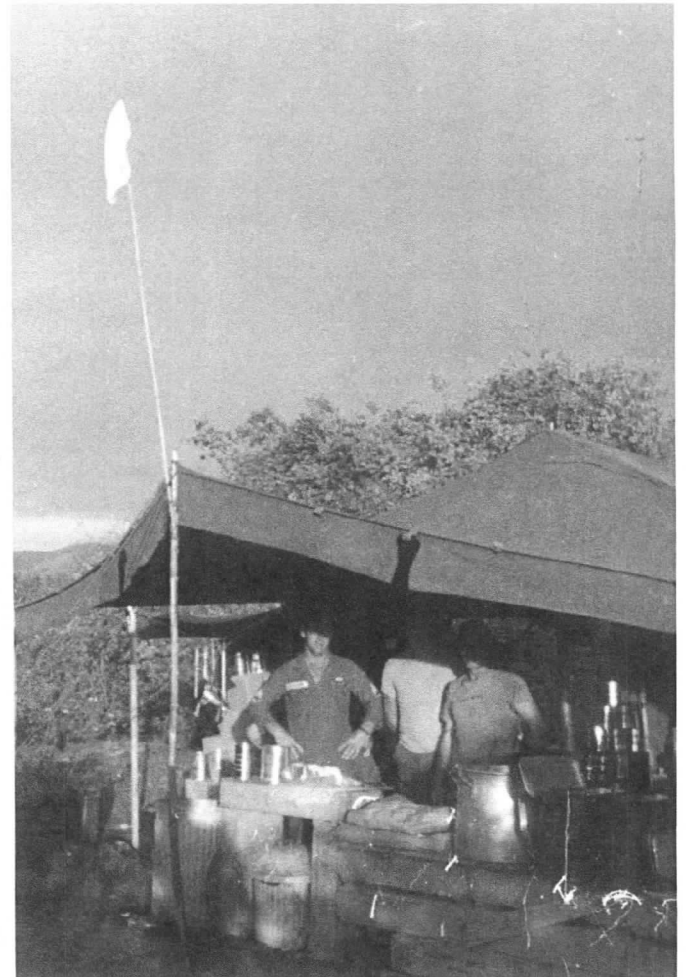
Stacks of steel (PSP) grating used for airstrips and other types of roads, floors, etc. In Qui Nhon



On R#19 – we received sniper fire from temple so we occupied the place.



Route 19 – VN troops using river to wash machinery.



Mess tent at Task Force Hansen – good food.



U.S. machinery "modernizing" Qui Nhon street.



With Task Force Hansen at end of one operation (1600 hrs) and continuing with a second one. Very hot day. (One of the troopers found a bike!)



Sept 65 -- Remnants of a destroyed U.S. chopper on Operation Gibraltar.



On operation with Task Force Hansen. These OH-1s used for CO's, etc. Very undesirable over here, but must do until our TOE gets augmented to give us Hueys. I have logged about 15 hrs in these over here on recons.



With 1st CAV – damaged chopper from Gibraltar.



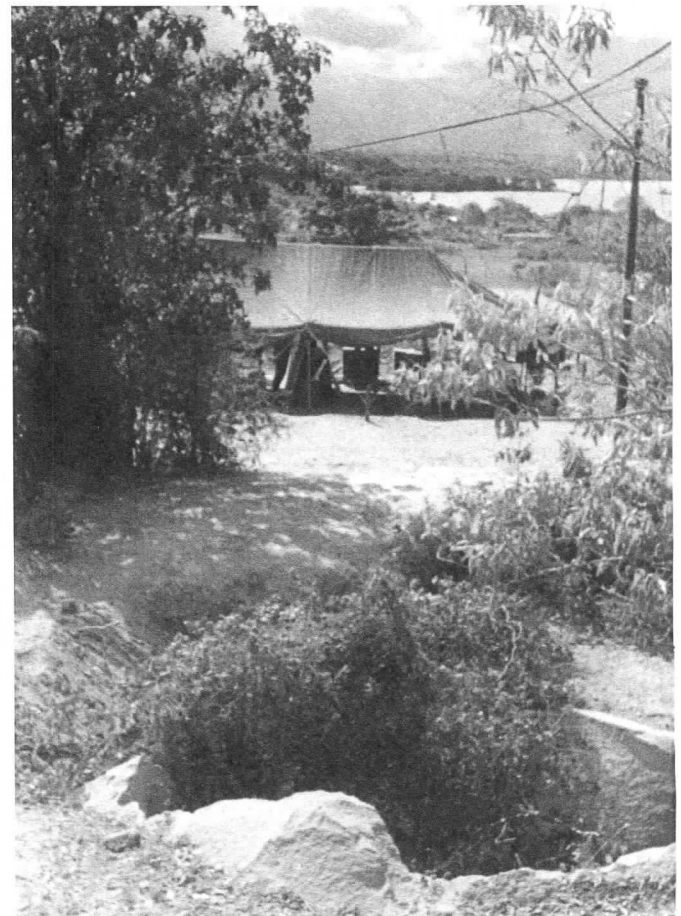
Gun jeeps as found in infantry – cavalry units. Task Force Hansen had two (2) troops of these. Getting ready to try a little hammer & anvil on a village. No contact.



Task Force Hansen - Water brought out to very thirsty troops at finish of one operation. Then got word of possible battalion in adjacent village, so swept it. 106 jeep to left – gun jeep to right. Water trailer like in picture is worth weight in gold over here.



Route 19 on way to An Khe – drove it many times.



July 65 – My Ca – looking from Capt Tom Taylor's roost down on S-2, S-3 tent.



Heading to phase #2 of operation – riding in jeep of LT John Dorland (1/327 A 65-66) S-3 for BN. Box on hood a general utility troop case made from 105 ammo boxes.



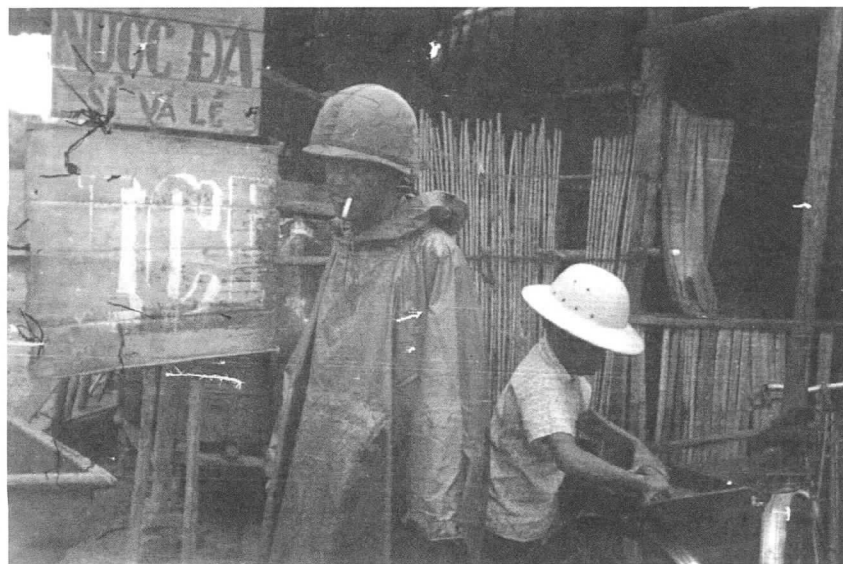
An Khe – home of 1st CAV. One CV-2 (Caribou), two C-123s (Providers), one HU-1B (Huey). Have jumped from all three types.



Troopers getting set for or returning from patrol on Highway 19.



July 1965 – On left is newsman from Massachusetts who wants to see some Massachusetts boys. At Arty camp. On right Arty CO – Lt Col Braun.



Sgt. (i.e.SSG) Girard (Bob Girard 2/502 HHC Recon 4/66-4/67) getting ice (\$3 a block).

First Sergeant **GALEN G. MITCHELL** (USA Ret.)

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Chapter 4

An Khe (Ann-Kay or On-Kay)

In August of 1965, the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division commanded by Colonel James S. Timothy, moved to secure the area of An Khe for the incoming 1st Cavalry Division. Our missions were to clear and secure the following: Highway 19, which ran from the coastal city of Qui Nhon; An Khe Pass; and the area above the pass, where the 1st Cav. would establish their base camp, conduct operations for the control of the Central Highlands, and block key infiltration routes from Cambodia.

The road slowly wound up through the mountains as the elevation increased from the rice paddies and floor of the valley below. Highway 19 meanders through the steep, winding and rocky Mang Yang Pass (U. S. troops just called it An Khe Pass) for about ten miles, and forms a defile, or what's known in the military as a D-File, and a perfect one at that. D-Files can be man-made such as by mines, booby traps or naturally by nature. Some of the best occur naturally and it's a matter of a leader taking advantage of the terrain to deploy his force. The right-side of the road of An Khe Pass or curve of the D-File for the most part went straight up so fast that it couldn't be climbed by man without some kind of special equipment. The left side of the road or left side of the D-File dropped straight off and down more than

900 feet. The road is also flanked by dense elephant grass and jungle foliage on either side. The famed Mobile Group 100 of France was annihilated at this exact location on 24 June 1954, about eleven years before our arrival. Their rusting hulls could be seen at the bottom of the drop off, south of the road or left side of the D-File. This road at the time was made of raised dirt and now was a paved, barely a two lane-wide improved road. This Battle occurred shortly after the French were defeated at Dien Bien Phu; the French Army sought to consolidate their troops for the anticipated withdrawal. GM 100 was ordered to retreat to Pleiku some 40 miles by enemy-held roads and merge with other French units.

Group Motor (GM) 100 originally contained a total of approximately 2502 men, plus 400 men from the 10th Colonial Artillery, whose weapons were towed. Approximately 300 French civilians were allowed to convoy with GM 100, even though this was against high command's orders! Their signal staff was short twenty radio operators. The Viet Minh's (VM) 803rd Regiment was composed of 1,500 men, actually just a battalion, though 400 support troops also reinforced the 803rd. They had many machine guns (light and heavy), 57 mm recoilless rifles, and mortars (an indirect fire weapon that fires an explosive projectile—also light and heavy).

Both sides were fully aware that the Pass was ideal terrain for an ambush, but the French assumed high-tech communication and fast moving trucks on

the road would give them the element of surprise. They abandoned earlier plans for recon and security in favor of maximum speed. The 803rd knew that to get to Pleiku, ten miles of the GM 100 route was through the Pass itself and the 803rd deduced that GM 100 would travel through it.

The French leader, Colonel Barrou, split his force into four battalions and they departed about a half hour apart. At 1300 hours, two VM formations were reported seen at about one mile and four miles north of Highway 19 and they proceeded without concern of other possible VM formations in their path. At about 1415 hours, Colonel Barrou was informed of a stone barricade on Highway 19 and, if found to be covered by interlocking fires, removing it would be a difficult and extremely dangerous task. It was covered, and at 1420 hours the battle had begun. The troops spotted had been decoys—a favorite tactic used on U. S. Units throughout the Viet Nam war by the VC (Viet Cong) and NVA. Once spotted, Americans would give chase with abandonment and run right into an ambush.

At 1420 hours, they came under fire by the VM, who picked the perfect ambush site. Then the VM disabled the first and last vehicle blocking any vehicle escape route; the French were trapped and unable to move in any direction. The stone barricade was covered by interlocking fires, making it impossible to move. Simultaneously as the 1st Company came under fire, all the vehicles surrounding Colonel Barrou, the Group Commander, also came under massive and accurate recoilless rifle and mortar fire. Then at 1425 hours, a 57mm recoilless rifle struck and destroyed their radio truck, killing everyone inside. At this point they had no command and control. From the right side of the D-File and high ground that the French couldn't climb or assault, the VM lobbed grenades down on them. They shot 57mm recoilless rifles along with 50 caliber machine gun into their vehicles. By 1450 hours the VM swarmed what was left of GM 100's Headquarters, rounding up and executing every French soldier they could find...no prisoners...no survivors...and no exceptions. The kill zone of this ambush location couldn't have been a pretty sight, and while a major victory for the VM, it was devastating for the French, who once more had violated security for speed.

At 1620 hours, French B-26 Marauders (planes) arrived to provide close-air support. The two sides were so close together and "friendly" strafing runs so

indiscriminate, more French troops were killed by air strikes than by VM fire. At the same exact time, French artillery ran out of ammunition. By 1715 hours, GM 100 was ordered to abandon its vehicles and link up with GM 42 on foot. They left behind the wounded and medical supplies, but their ordeal was far from over. The Viet Minh Commissar immediately confiscated the medical supplies and forbade the medics (at gun point) from treating the wounded. The medics could only watch as their wounded died.

The remaining leaders yet again decided to split up into platoon size units (about 40 men), as they fled to the supposed safety of GM 42. For days, GM 100's survivors endured thick jungle, VM ambushes and assaults by mountain tribesmen. Finally, at 1130 hours on 25 June, the remnants of GM 100 were rescued by GM 42. However, even after GM 100 survivors had been rescued, the VM continued to ambush their units for the next seven days before they finally reached Pleiku on 29 June 1954.

GM 100 lost 85 percent of its vehicles, 100 percent of its artillery, 68 percent of its signal equipment, and 50 percent of its weapons. Over 1000 of GM 100 men were killed—40 percent of the unit—and most were killed within a few hours. Of the 400 men from the 10th Colonial Artillery, 259 were lost. The U.S. Army has re-created the GM 100's concepts with their use of Stryker vehicles, and formation of Stryker Brigades Combat Teams units. Hmm...Go figure! Author's note: The above account of the French unit GM 100 was taken from internet research and historical facts, *The Real Stryker* (Chapters 1-3). Additionally, this battle is very briefly depicted at the beginning of the movie, *We Were Soldiers Once*.

One day in early September 1965, I was perched on the right side of that D-File in a two-man defensive position to protect Highway 19 and the Pass. When I was first assigned there my foxhole partner surveyed the situation and said, "If we're attacked, there's no place to go!" Behind us dropped straight down about 70 feet or so and I said, "I don't think we'll be retreating." My foxhole buddy just gave me a blank stare; our backs were up against a wall, so to speak, however I was sure our unit would fight like cornered rats.

After digging in, there was time to survey the area and take it all in as I sat on my steel pot smoking a cigarette. I could see some remains of GM 100 vehicles, rusting ever so slowly, down in the draw off the road, and was surprised that in this environment they even still existed. I wondered what the heck they were thinking. Then again, hindsight is always per-

fect, isn't it? Having heard by now of the battle I had a better feeling and insight into that day on 24 June 1954. It's one thing to read about history and imagine the events, while quite another to be able to be at the actual location to get a real visual. It just transports you back in time. I perused the valley below and we were so high up that I could see clouds below. The scene was an array of colors from the puffy white clouds, blue sky and green from vegetation, and it was then I realized just how beautiful a country Vietnam truly was.

The mountains were much cooler than down in the valley although we were operating in both while moving around from time to time with different missions. I preferred the cooler mountains, but at night the temperature would really drop and when I was wet from sweat it actually was downright cold. We didn't have a lot of extra clothing and I remember being wrapped up in a poncho literally shaking as the wind was blowing hard one night. The wind hindered our sense of hearing and my foxhole buddy kept hearing something all night long. Too cold to sleep it was a long night and we were glad to see daylight. I learned to take off my t-shirt during the day keeping it dry and to put it on at night, as it made a huge difference in warmth.

The enemy's knowledge of the terrain created an advantage, giving them the element of surprise as to when or where to strike. We were continually adapting to our environment, the enemy and the situation at hand. As men left we obtained their canteens, rifle magazines, boots and anything else we could scrounge from them to keep going. The Army's concept of a basic load just wasn't hacking it! Come on, one canteen in this environment??? We started carrying our c-rations in our socks and tied them to our web gear and if it rained, "Presto!" We had clean socks. By now our regular boots were beginning to fall apart from water and the environment, men resorted to holding them together with commo wire (communication wire). Our leaders saw the 3.5 rocket launchers were useless in the jungle and, plus the enemy had no tanks. They were turned in and we were issued lightweight M-72 LAW's (light anti-tank weapon) which were good against bunkers. The men that carried the 3.5's in weapons squad were made additional ammo bearers for the M-60s (machine guns). The plastic bags that radio batteries came in were a premium and were re-used to keep things dry such as my wallet that was also carried in the helmet liner of my steel pot to additionally keep it dry. The communication in

the chain of command was working to address operational problems except for that slow boat for resupply. Hmm...must have been the Eltinge and was probably broke down at sea.

Chapter 8

Hard Times

The jungle had the strangest creatures, the ugliest bugs...and, how could I forget the elephant grass that was taller than we were? If men had their sleeves rolled up to fight the heat, the grass would cut their arms worse than an army of ants with razor blades. Speaking of ants, the jungle has red ants that are huge compared to piss ants, about the size of wasps, and their sting or bite was just as bad. When they are on the ground they aren't a problem, but they also climbed up vegetation and trees, so that when a man brushed up against them unknowingly the ants would get all over him, stinging the hell out of him. All of a sudden if a man began un-assing all his gear and clothing while doing the fastest striptease ever, it was from red ants. Others would help in brushing them off as fast as could be done. Some of these men would have red welts all over themselves, while others would get an allergic reaction and have to be evacuated.

Anytime we spent in the stagnant water of the rice paddies, especially at night, the mosquitoes just swarmed over us as if we were the only meal within miles, biting through our fatigues as if we were naked. The insect repellent that we carried and used worked great, but we were only supplied with a couple ounce bottle of the stuff. What we needed was a five-gallon can of it, plus take a bath in it to stop these bumble bee sounding little bitches. Reflecting back, I see a little humor in it now, but trust me, at the time this stuff wasn't the least bit funny...except to Sergeant Clio Johnston, who found humor in everything and always had a shit-eating grin during tough periods.

Sgt. Clio Johnston, Squad Leader of 3rd Platoon and Boat Trooper.





Sgt. Clio Johnston, in a graveyard near Qui Nhon, October 1965.

One night in particular was so bad that the whole patrol violated security by breaking out our ponchos in order to stop the mosquitos. Ponchos weren't allowed in an ambush site, as they were noisy and, if too comfortable, the men would fall asleep; however, we kept all our gear with us in case we had to move. On many other ambush patrols, we would lie all night in the rain and wouldn't dare think of putting on a poncho. I have never been in a place, to include the rest of Vietnam, where the mosquitoes were that bad—probably due to the stagnant water of the paddies. Only the Anopheles or female mosquitoes bite, because a blood meal is necessary for reproduction, and there were literally thousands of females buzzing about the area instinctively sensing a feast. Oh, there was no doubt these bitches were dominating this battle. If not for the ponchos, our weapon of choice, I'm sure it would have been death by a thousand bites in the form of malaria, dengue fever, and other diseases. Which environment was the worst? I have no idea, take your pick, none of it resembled home, but the grass always seemed greener where we weren't standing.

Once in the An Khe area while out on patrol we crossed a stream that was about chest high deep. After arriving on the other side we posted security out, re-filled our canteens and as usual dropped an iodine tablet in for purification. By then Kool-Aid had become all the rage, and the men were demanding at least one packet minimum per letter to kill the taste of the iodine tablets. Those who were fortunate to have one dropped a package of Kool-Aid in with the tablet, which really was going first class. It is just truly amazing, how one can take an ice cold glass of water for granted. Private First Class Jimmie L. Stacey (Stace) took off his fatigue shirt and was wringing it out when I noticed something black on his back, which turned

out to be a leech. In a matter of maybe five or ten minutes, they were on us and some were already gorged with blood. Hell, we never felt a bite. Everyone began stripping down, which was a show in itself, because no one wore underwear. They had long ago ditched them due to heat, rashes and the fact that those Indian shorts were always sneaking up the crack of the ass and attempting to wipe us out. Security sort of went to hell with the men more concerned with leeches than with the enemy. We tried insect repellent on them but quickly found the lit end of a cigarette worked the best. So there we were, Private First Class Richard R. Taft, Private First Class David T. Rogers, Specialist Four John E. Petty, Specialist Four Charles E. Griffin, and Private First Class Clarence E. "Griff" McKinnis, to name a few, but essentially the whole platoon, having a leech burning party. They were worse in tight places like around the waist and ankles. I teamed up with Stace for the extermination party; if he hadn't taken off his shirt to wring it out, who knows what the outcome may have been, from diseases they may carry and so forth.

We were one of the first units to arrive in Vietnam and the supply boats were obviously slower than the USNS Eltinge that we had arrived on, that broke down in route. We had no base camp and everything we owned was carried on our backs. Essentials only were the priority; anything else was a luxury, due to weight. Everything was just about impossible to keep dry; however, we did hump and keep a few of those precious letters received from home that were re-read more than once. Men were even turning down c-rations (canned food) to lighten the load. Most days were spent humping all day, pulling 50 percent watch at night...that is if we were lucky enough not be sent out on an ambush patrol at night, which required 100 percent alertness and no sleep. We were functioning on about four hours of sleep a day. Some days we actually fell asleep while walking through rice paddies or if we stopped for more than five minutes. That pace pretty much continued throughout my tour, and it's truly amazing what the human body can adapt to and how it can endure on three to four hours sleep a night.

Hard times were made worse by the environment, along with elements a trooper had to endure, and the conditions changed daily, if not by the hour. A comfort zone seemed either to be non-existent or lasting only for short periods of time. We were always hot, at times cold, wet, thirsty, tired, sleepy or dealing with creepy crawlers ranging in size from the

bad ass red ants to python snakes. The harsh environment took a greater toll and turnover rate than the enemy was inflicting on us; men succumbed to malaria and other diseases. Some troopers, like Private First Class James D. Hawes from Waycross, Georgia, died from illness or disease, while others from the 101st even drowned. Then again some illnesses didn't show up for years later, such as diabetes and other related illnesses due to Agent Orange. The heat and wetness was the perfect breeding grounds for infections. Germs were the only happy campers around here!

The bath situation consisted of washing from a steel helmet, or once in a while from a stream if leeches weren't present. It was seldom, however, because it was a security risk, we weren't about to get caught with our pants down, and because most of the time our units were on the move. Rain cleaned much of the dirt off and good old sweat, which was in abundance daily, cleaned the pores. We had been in the country about three months while occupying a defensive position, when Platoon Sergeant Humphries said, "Get them up Robbie." In addition, Staff Sergeant Billy R. Robbins said, "Saddle up...we're moving out." My first thought was what else is new, when Private First Class Tom Joyce asked, "Where we going now Sarge?" Sergeant Robbins replied, "To get that dirt off your goat-smelling ass." After which Tom and I looked at each other with bewilderment, or a "you got to be kidding me" kind of look. Tell no lie as it turned into reality when we arrived at a stream where the Engineers had set up a shower point complete with tent, soap, warm water, and the works. Upon coming out the other side, we received a towel and gave our sizes to receive new jungle boots, jungle fatigues etc. This reminded me of when I received my first issued clothing in reception, upon entering the Army. These items were much lighter and thinner and dried out much more quickly. That slow ship must have finally docked, but at least the Army had its priorities correct with beans and bullets.

Not long after, we received word that the 1st Brigade(S), 101st Airborne Division was establishing a base camp in Phan Rang, wherever that might be located! Not that this did us much good, as the routine was constant humping, searching for Charlie (slang for Viet Cong guerrillas), kicking ass, adapting our tactics to the environment and anything else that was thrown our way continued to be the norm. Personnel in the 3rd platoon, along with those in Abu Company, began to turn over. This was not only from enemy

contacts with KIA and WIA, but also from a host of other reasons as well: malaria; foot problems from constant wetness; infections, as small cuts turned into major infections; boils on the butts (in which case I learned to sit on my steel pot rather than the ground); dysentery and fevers.

On 21 September 1965, Private First Class Manuel F. Fernandez of New York City, New York, became the first Abu to be KIA. He was clearing fields of fire to the front of his foxhole when he struck a mine in an old unmarked French or VM minefield. We had already been in this area for a few weeks on both sides of Highway #19 at the top of An Khe Pass in the form of two U's, with the open end of the U's adjacent to Highway #19 and the rest of the U's formed the forward edge of the battle area (FEBA). We rotated in and out of there going on different missions, sometimes for days, and the unopened part of the U actually became a worn path from position to position. No one had a clue until this fatal incident made us aware of the dangers that lurked there. Some engineers were brought in with mine detectors to sweep the trail; they laid out white engineer tape, which is made of a heavy cloth material, and this allowed us to hold our positions while continuing the mission. This wouldn't be the last minefield we'd encounter or which would claim additional casualties.

On 27 September 1965, the third day of a search and destroy operation, Abu company began setting up defensive positions for the night. Platoon Sergeant Humphries and Staff Sergeant Robbins observed the CO (Commanding Officer) and his headquarters group setting up in a sparsely overgrown area of an old destroyed hamlet. The time was approximately 1900 hours when they observed the company clerk, Specialist Fourth Class Thaddeus Zajac, sit down and an explosion take place, startling them—it was obviously a grenade type booby trap or pressure detonated mine. The result was three casualties: the Artillery Forward Observer (FO) Lieutenant James P. Kelly, his RTO, Halford Logan, and Specialist Fourth Class Thaddeus Zajac were KIA. Specialist Fourth Class Charles Lostaunau (Charlie Tuna) and three others were also wounded. The LT died in Charlie Tuna's arms. The medevac request was sent in at 1900 hours, but was denied by the 1st Cavalry Division due to rainy weather and night approaching. Company A, 502nd Aviation Battalion responded in their usual dedicated and professional manner by taking the mission and picking up six extremely urgent cases. They arrived at 2010 hours, after two men had already bled to death.

It was becoming unsafe to take a step or even to sit the hell down. These are just some of the reasons, as a complete laundry list for the attrition would be exhausting and overkill.

There were some shit birds we were glad to see gone, such as my squad leader, Sergeant Robert C. Turner, nicknamed M-17, so called because he looked just like one and was one ugly piece of shit. Dumber than a box of rocks, the whole squad was damn lucky that we weren't killed during his tenure. He was replaced by my fire team leader, Sergeant Clio Johnston, who had his shit together—along with great common sense and always a calm demeanor. M-17 was scared to death of his shadow and was always nervous. If taking a crap, he would probably forget to put asswipe (toilet paper) in his hand. I suppose one can tell I had absolutely no respect for him; however, my attitude wasn't the exception, but pretty much a consensus among the squad and platoon. It was the highly respected fire team leader Sergeant Clio Johnston who was keeping it all together anyway.

At a reunion many years later, Lieutenant Howard told the story of when Sergeant Johnston had come in drunk one night and at the time was rooming with M-17 in a two-man room. Sergeant Johnston actually pissed all over M-17 as he slept. Naturally a fight ensued and Lieutenant Howard had to report in to take care of the situation, which eventually was handled by the NCOs (noncommissioned officers) of the Company. Apparently M-17 must have gone too far with Sergeant Johnston about something, as he did with everyone on a frequent basis. I don't recall how or where M-17 went, but no one gave a shit. One thing for sure, it was a beautiful day in Vietnam that day. We hated to see the squared-away troops depart, no matter the reason, as we were greatly dependent on each other for survival. The new guy was arriving at a fast pace.

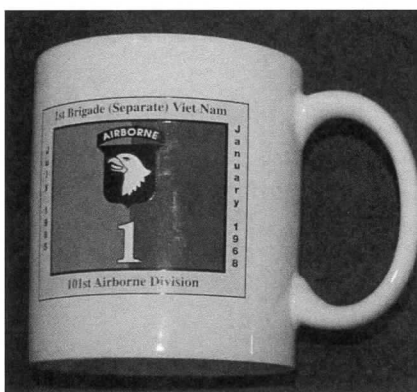
To Be Continued




Screaming Eagle 

December 1967

Reprint of the December 1967 issue of THE SCREAMING EAGLE magazine. The magazine covers First Brigade (S) history from July 1965 through December 1967. See page 35 for order form.



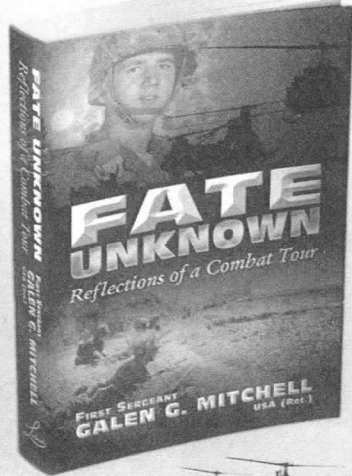
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This center section is an edition of **THE SCREAMING EAGLE**, December 25, 1967. Those mentioned in this paper, who are in the First Brigade (S) magazine database, are listed below.

Page 1, RADAR GUIDES VISITING CRAFT by ***Daniel S. Stroebel (BDE HQ PIO dates??).

Page 2, TWO HIDE IN WELL - 5 VC FALL TO 'O-DEUCE' UNIT, ***Jim Hale (2/502 B 67-68) and **Thomas Mercer (2/502 B 67-68).

Page 3, SCREAMING EAGLE BRIEFINGS - 'Boonie' Chef, **Harold Roberson (1/327 C 67-68); **Helping People**, *** Robert A. Bedard (1/327 C 65-66).

Page 4, photo - PAPER GIRL, *Jerald W. "Jerry" Berry (3/506 A&HHC 6/67-10/68).

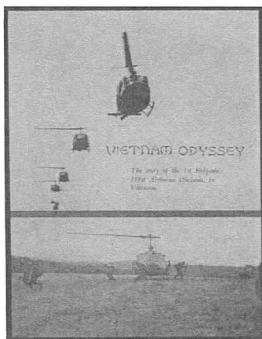
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The story of the first year of action of the 1st Brigade in Vietnam is filled with photos of brigade activities written accounts of all operations, drawings by brigade artists, statistics and other interesting personal and unit material.

The book was edited by 1LT 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.

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Radar Guides Visiting Craft

By SP4 Dan Stroebel

CHRISTMAS, Vietnam—A warrant officer radar specialist and his staff worked long hours tonight guiding the world's most famous personality to the Screaming Eagles in the field.

WO David L. Savage, New Philadelphia, Ohio, and his team qualified for this important assignment by turning in excellent radar work during Operation Wheeler. The selection of Savage and his crew was a good one, as the gift-laden sleigh landed and took off without mishap.

Savage, resting as he watched the sleigh move out of radar range, recalled the action which gained him the Christmas night assignment. It had been a similar night, but heavy storms raked the mountains near Chu Lai.

He was in his tent at the site of A Btry., 2nd Bn. (Abn) 320th Arty., when the first enemy mortar fell. He dashed toward the radar set where Spec. 5 James Conner, New Britain, Conn., and Spec. 4 Thomas A. Lee, Cochran, Pa., were shifting the radar's antenna toward A Btry.

"We were receiving small arms fire when I started towards the radar site," Savage recalled. "I could hear bullets whizzing by as I ran the 50 meters from my tent to the set."

Savage posted other members of Hq. Btry. to secure the radar set as he ran. Meanwhile, Conner, who saw the first round explode in the A Btry. area, watched the radar screen.

Two small blips appeared. Conner recorded the calculations and fed the data into the radar computer. In seconds, the paratrooper knew the location of the enemy mortar.

Savage arrived at the set and gave the mortar location to D Btry. Moments later rounds were 'on-the-way' toward the enemy position.

"I watched the rounds on the screen and saw them explode near the enemy position," said Savage. "I gave the firing battery a minor correction and they put the next volley on top of the mortar position."

Several men in A Btry. had been wounded by the small arms and mortar fire and waited for "Dust-Off" to arrive.

"When the first medevac neared our location he was lost in the low cloud cover," Savage explained. "He didn't think he could get in."

It was a challenge Savage and his radar technicians were prepared to take.

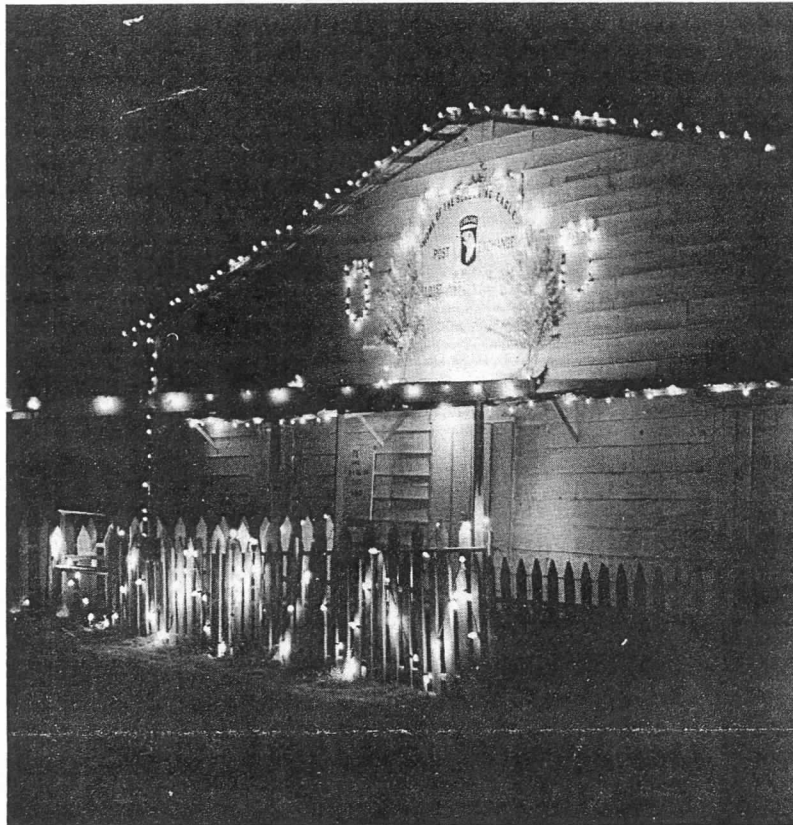
"We had been experimenting with the idea of using our radar set to guide aircraft in poor visibility situations," said Savage. "We now had a real test situation."

Savage computed the helicopter's position and gave the pilot a heading toward the A Btry. position. "It was similar to the ground control approach at modern airports," Savage said.

The first medevac chopper came in 30 feet above the battery position and made visual contact. The feat was repeated three more times during the night, twice by Conner and once by Spec. 5 James G. Yarber, Los Angeles.

"To my knowledge this was a first for counter-mortar radar," said Savage. "We had to do it. The wounded had to get out."

Savage added: "I always knew my crew could do the job. That night proved it."



Vietnam Shopping Center

The 1st Brigade's Post Exchange at the Phan Rang base camp got a face-lifting for the Christmas holidays. Troopers made thorough use of the facilities there to purchase presents for family and friends back home. (Photo by Staff Sgt. Art Campbell)

Troopers Not Forgotten by 'Old Santa Claus'

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the 'Nam,
Nothing was stirring—nary a balm.

Troopers in foxholes, scout dogs alert,
Were waiting and watching should 'Charlie' subvert.

As visions of Christmas filled every head,
The troopers all hoped every VC had fled.

When out on the perimeter there arose such a clatter,
I leaped for my weapon and readied its chatter.

But what did my war-weary eyes perceive.
Just a funny old man with an Eagle on his sleeve.

"Hi Trooper," he said, with a wave of his palm,
"Hope you didn't think I'd forget you here in the 'Nam."

The ruck on his back obviously was heavy,
And he teetered along on a rice paddy levy.
As the old boy got closer it was easy to see,

This guy was friendly, definitely not VC.

His boots—they were polished, his belt buckle bright,
My how they gleamed in the near morning light.

I could tell he was 'Hard-Core' by the beard on his face,
—I thought I knew him from some other place.

Thirty meters away I asked him to halt,
—If this was a trick, I'd be at fault.

"Strike Force," I challenged, and waited to see.
But quickly he answered, "I'm Currahee."

An O-Six man, I thought? I'll try one more test,
"What do you know of 'Above the Rest'?"

"That I am," he shouted back,
"I'm also a 'Redleg' giving 'No Slack'."

"You're airborne," I asked without a delay?

"You can be sure of that—All the Way."

I motioned him in and offered a smoke,
He dropped his pack and groped through his poke.

"I brought you a present," he said with a smile,
"I've been carrying it for many a mile."

This far in the boonies—a present for me?
This was something I had to see.

On stiff, bended knees he reached into his hold,
And took out an object wrapped all in gold.

With gentle hands he removed the cover,
While around the glass a light seemed to hover.

"Come look," he said, "At the present I brought.
It may help you understand the battles you've fought."

I looked in the crystal—and what did I see,
A small child back home, praying for me.





Tender Touch

A Vietnamese mother and children receive treatment from a paratrooper medic as his unit passes through a hamlet near Chu Lai during Operation Wheeler. The helpful aidman is Spec. 4 Theophilus Labyzon, New Orleans, a member of A Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 502nd Inf. (Photo by Pfc. Robert Mosey)

Troopers Help Needy Village

CHU LAI — A joint effort by Vietnamese and Americans is improving life for 20,000 persons in and near Tien Phuoc community, 35 kilometers west of here.

As Free World Military Allied Forces (FW/MAF) fought insurgent forces surrounding the community, refugees trickled in, causing Tien Phuoc to become a sort of 'half-way house' between security and Viet Cong terrorism.

Remembering reprisal action in their hamlets and villages, the arriving refugees were lukewarm to offers of assistance from the Special Forces team which established a camp near here.

Continued demonstration of a desire to help, however, won the will of the people to pursue a large-scale program of self-help and community improvement.

First Lt. John C. Scally, Fayetteville, N.C., Special Forces civil affairs officer and 101st Airborne paratrooper Sgt. Ronnie H. Little, Bloomington, Ill., and medic, Pfc. Harold W.

Kramer, Las Vegas, Nev., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 502nd Inf., sold the refugees on the idea of building a new community.

Little assumed the role of construction supervisor and in seven weeks the Vietnamese had constructed homes for more than 300 persons.

"I thoroughly enjoy working with Vietnamese people," said Little. "I have made a lot of friends here and gotten a lot of personal satisfaction from helping them help themselves."

While construction was in progress, Kramer set up programs of hygiene and sanitation and personally treated nearly 4,000 persons.

Scally maintained overall coordination in the project and handled liaison between military and civilian agencies.

"It's almost unbelievable the amount of good that has been accomplished here," he said. "The people, once convinced they were building their future, plunged into the program with enthusiasm and determination."

Two Hide in Well

5 VC Fall to 'O-Deuce' Unit

CHU LAI — Paratroopers of the 1st Brigade killed five enemy including two who tried to hide in a well west of here in a recent Operation Wheeler action.

Pfc. Jimmy Hale, a pointman with B Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 502nd Inf., led fellow paratroopers along a ridge line to a clearing overlooking a small valley. The Philadelphia rifleman halted and motioned the men behind him to get down.

"I could see 10 VC carrying weapons down a trail on the valley floor," he said.

Pfc. Ray Wondra, Lyons, N.Y., brought his M-60 machine gun forward. "Our point element opened fire and three enemy dropped immediately," said Wondra. "The others fled towards a group of huts."

B Co. commander, Capt. Tom Mercer, Flushing, Mich., moved two platoons to protect the flanks and the remaining elements advanced on line toward the three enemy dead.

"We picked up three AK-47

automatic rifles and moved on," said Wondra. "Hale joined with the end of the left flank."

"When I walked by the well, I noticed the water was being agitated," said Hale. "I thought it was unusual, because there was no wind."

Hale dismissed the thought and continued to advance with his element.

Suddenly two short bursts of automatic weapons fire sent the

Australia Open

Australia has been open to servicemen on R&R leave since October 1 according to Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV) officials.

Procedures for applying are the same as other R&R sites, however a physical examination will be required 24 hours prior to departure. After examination, a medical statement will be given each man. He must carry it with him on leave down under.

"Strike Force" paratrooper to the prone.

"It's coming from our rear!" yelled Hale.

The paratroopers searched for the source of enemy fire.

"The well" Hale thought aloud.

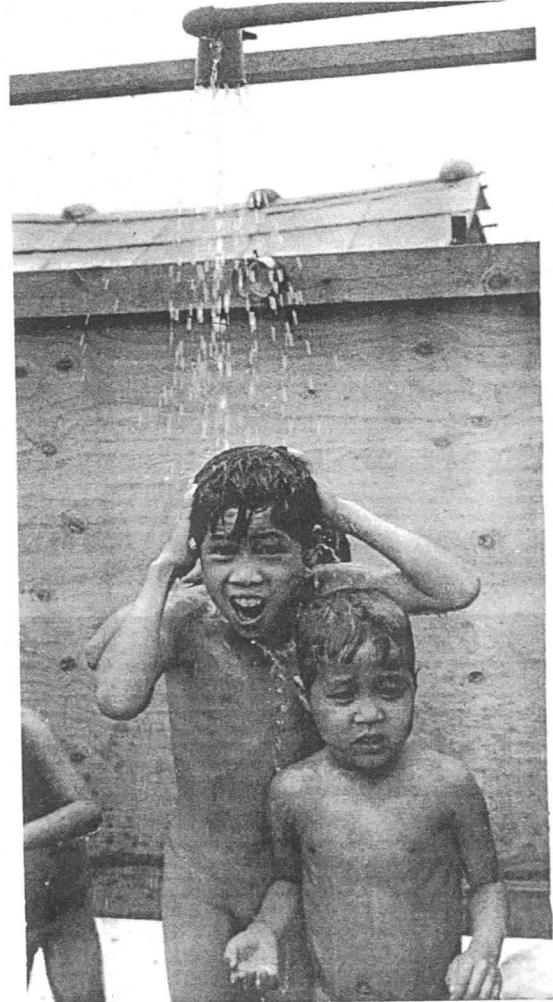
Pulling a grenade from his belt, Hale removed the pin and said: "Hope for a 'hole-in-one'." The grenade sailed through the air and 'plunked' into the well.

"Two scared, drenched VC scrambled to the top of the well," Hale recalled. "The grenade went off before they could get out."

Two bodies slid back into the water, an AK-47 teetered on the well's edge.

"I made a dash for the weapon, but it fell into the water before I could reach it," said Hale.

As Hale returned to his rucksack, Wondra asked: "What was that all about?" Hale answered: "A grenade in the hand is worth two VC in a well."



'Numbah One!'

So says the senior spokesman in this shower built by paratroopers of the 1st Brigade as part of a large civic action program in Ly Tra village near Chu Lai. (Photo by Spec. 4 Dayle Edwards)

Salt, Rice Denied to Enemy

CHU LAI — Paratroopers of the 101st Airborne denied the enemy enough salt to feed a regiment a year and rice for a month during four days of Operation Wheeler fighting west of here as four tons of salt and 30 tons of rice were extracted to GVN control.

Paratroopers of B Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf., discovered 11 tons of polished rice in three cribs which members of the Civil Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) extracted to Tien Phuoc.

The following day, B Co. found four tons of salt and another cache containing eight tons of

rice. A day later, A Co. was conducting search and destroy in the same general area. A scout dog team led the paratrooper element up a hill.

"Tunder" alerted three times as we climbed the hill," said handler Spec. 4 Ronald Mitchell, Caldwell, Ohio. "I warned the company and moved to the crest of the hill. When I looked over the top, three VC were standing in the trail."

Mitchell felled one with his M-16 rifle; two fled with the paratroopers in pursuit.

"The lead element found three huts containing polished rice," Mitchell said. "We quit the chase to secure the food."

Lt. Bennie L. Jagears, battalion civil affairs officer, Springfield, Mo., supervised the extraction of another 11 tons.

"It will be a long time before I eat rice again," grimaced Pfc. Milton L. Whittington, Washington, D.C., as he shouldered a sack of rice to the helicopter.



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Welcome Home, Paratroopers

This greeting, erected by the Support Battalion, welcomed paratroopers after an eight-month absence from their base camp in Phan Rang. The Screaming Eagles were transported from the Phan Rang AFB by truck, passing beneath the sign at the entrance of the 1st Brigade. (Photo by Spec. 4 Ben Croxton)

Viet Cong Clobbered By 'Redleg'

CHU LAI — An artillery reconnaissance sergeant brought death and destruction to eight Viet Cong west of here as the enemy unearthed a weapons cache.

Sgt. Albert A. Dobbs, Mishawaka, Ind., searched the valley with his binoculars and paused to watch a group of people digging at the edge of a clearing. As the work party removed the dirt, some began carrying objects to a hut.

"Weapons," announced Dobbs to the recon patrol. "They're carrying weapons from that hole."

Dobbs radioed a fire mission to B Btry., 2nd Bn (Abn), 320th Artillery. The shells came screaming in, causing the VC to take cover in the woods and huts nearby.

"They spread into small groups and created too many targets for artillery," said Dobbs. "I decided to call for gunships."

Two 'Muskets' from the 176th Aviation Co. arrived and Dobbs directed them to the enemy locations. Mini-guns and rockets burned the area.

"You got four on the first pass," radioed Dobbs.

"Is that all?" asked the gunship leader. "Stand by!"

The gunships turned and made repeated passes over the target area. Paratroopers cheered with each strafing run. "We could see bodies flying through the air when a rocket exploded near them," said Dobbs.

Screaming Eagle Briefings

'Boonie' Chef

CHU LAI — Pfc. Jake Sweet, Lewiston, Idaho, is the best chef in the boonies. Just ask the troopers in C Co., 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf.

During the 101st Airborne's Operation Wheeler west of here, Jake bought a chicken from a Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) platoon and began planning a gourmet's delight. Squad members contributed beef with spices, rice, hot sauce, onions, and some zippy-hot red peppers.

With these and a few other things, Jake had his polished steel pot bubbling away with the most tantalizing aroma ever to tease a paratrooper's nose.

"C-rations are O.K.," says Jake. "But when the company sets up for a while I like to try my own hand at fixing something different."

Other members of the squad attest to Jake's kitchen skill. "Sweet's cooking is the next best thing to a stand-down," says Pfc. Harold Roberson, Miami, Fla.

Sgt. Leonard Adams, Ithaca, N.Y., recognizes the talent in his squad member: "Why, we wouldn't trade Jake for five Audie Murphys."

Quick Diagnosis

An accurate diagnosis by a medic in 1st Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf., saved the life of a Vietnamese woman recently during a MEDCAP visit to Phu Nam village near Chu Lai.

As the team treated various ailments and issued soap in con-

junction with their personal hygiene program, a man carried his wife into the dispensary. It was obvious she was in great pain.

Spec. 4 Larry Cuttingham, Placerville, Calif., examined her and said: "She has appendicitis and needs immediate surgery."

Another paratrooper, Spec. 4 Cleo Armstead, Cleveland, rushed the woman and Cuttingham to the Vietnamese hospital at Tam Ky, seven miles away.

Arriving at the hospital the two paratroopers learned a surgeon was not present. Cuttingham stayed with the woman while Armstead drove through the streets of Tam Ky searching for a doctor.

With the help of the Tam Ky Chief of Police, a surgeon was located and rushed to the hospital. Surgery was performed quickly.

The MEDCAP team returned to Phu Nam and treated 114 persons.

During one month, MEDCAP teams of the battalion treated 1,130 persons and set a battalion record for aid to the people of South Vietnam.

Helping People

A new market place is an exciting attraction for residents of Ninh Chu 175 miles north of Saigon on the coast of the South China Sea. The credit for this new facility belongs to the citizens here and civic action personnel of Support Battalion 101st Airborne at Phan Rang.

"The old market was de-

stroyed to make room for new docking facilities here," said Capt. Barry Roller, South River, N.J., former battalion civil affairs officer. "A new market had not been constructed and the fishermen couldn't find a proper place to sell their fish."

Roller, along with Sgt. Robert Bedard, Salem, Mass., and Specs. 4 David Cannon, New Orleans and Lucien Bernier, Upton, Me., visited the hamlet and suggested the fishermen build a new facility with materials furnished by the paratroopers.

"Six hamlet residents were eager to begin construction," Roller said. "In three days they built a new market place 50 feet long and 10 feet wide, poured a concrete floor and covered the facility with a sheet metal roof."

Punji 'Pegs'

Lt. Edward M. Baldwin Jr., Indian Head, Md., 1st platoon leader of C Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 502nd Inf., was setting up his shelter for the night. On a hill covered with short grass, the officer needed short pegs to hold down the sides.

"Someone yelled a warning to watch for punji stakes," said Baldwin. "Then the idea came to me." I searched the area carefully and found six punji stakes perfect for tying down my poncho.

"Thanks a lot Charlie, I needed some of these!"

Pvt. Buck Valuable To Troops

CHU LAI — There's an 85-pound private in the 101st Airborne and the paratroopers swear he's worth his weight in gold. They're talking about Pvt. Buck, a German Shepherd scout dog assigned to the 42nd Scout Dog Plat. (Inf.), and veteran of 15 months in Vietnam.

While working with B Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 327th Inf., during Operation Wheeler, Buck and his handler, Pfc. Eugene Chase, Sussex, N.J., were leading the paratroopers down a mountain trail. "Suddenly Buck stopped, raised his head and gave a low growl," said Chase. "I crouched beside him and motioned the patrol leader forward."

A squad moved out to flank the area to Buck's front and surprised two VC trail watchers waiting in ambush.

Buck has a keen sense of smell and can alert paratroopers to enemy hiding 400 meters away. He has saved many lives by warning of enemy ambush positions. "It costs 60 cents a day to feed him," Chase added. "That's an inexpensive warning device."

Not only is Buck effective on patrol but an excellent sentry when the troops halt for the night. He's the first to warn of approaching danger.

"The troops like having Buck around," said Chase. "He has the drive of the 'No Slack' battalion. Buck was wounded in a previous operation, but like he bounced back fast. They all like him."

Squad Leader Recalls Past Christmases in Cuba

CHU LAI — "I spent two consecutive Christmases in a dark, ancient cave with nothing to eat but bread and dry macaroni," the 101st Airborne paratrooper said. "No one knew it was the holiday season. Time and the world had forgotten us."

Sgt. Ramon A. Quintero, squad leader in A Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 502nd Inf., recalled the days when he was a political prisoner of the Castro government.

"When the Cuban President's liberation promises turned into

a dictatorship, we knew we must overthrow his government if our people were ever to prosper in peace," said Quintero.

Enlisting in February 1961, Quintero joined the 2506th Cuban Brigade and was assigned to a .50-caliber machine gun team.

"We were defeated in five days of fierce fighting near the Bay of Pigs," Quintero said. "Those remaining fled."

Unable to find adequate concealment, Quintero was captured and imprisoned near Havana.

"It was good to be in the city of my birth," he continued, "but seeing it through barbed wire its beauty was gone."

Pushed into a cave, bound with rope and placed in foot stocks, Quintero existed on sparsely-rationed bread and macaroni.

"In a month they gave us freedom of movement, but we weren't allowed beyond the mouth of the cave," said Quintero.

"We didn't realize the first Christmas was upon us," he

said. "Our make-shift calendars had long since been abandoned."

During his second year of imprisonment, relatives and friends were allowed brief visits within the security compound.

"My mother and father burst into tears when they saw the condition I was in," Quintero said. "But I was thankful to be alive."

Christmas 1962 passed unnoticed by the prisoners.

During the New Year's holiday, Quintero's spirits were brightened by another family

visit. "They brought me food and clothing," he said. "They told me the United States was demanding my freedom."

Three months later, Quintero found himself on a ship bound for the U.S.

Now, nearly five years later, the Screaming Eagle is celebrating another Christmas away from home.

"Who's complaining?" Quintero concluded. "I'm having Turkey Loaf and all the trimmings."

Operation Silver Star

Christmas Mail Hits Brigade

CHU LAI — Spec. 4 Earnest Parker, Birmingham, was supposed to go home, but he extended his Vietnam tour three months so he could help out through the Christmas rush. "I know how it's going to be," he said. "I was here last year."

Parker, NCOIC of the post office forward, talked about the avalanche of Christmas mail now arriving for Screaming Eagles.

"Some Christmas packages began arriving in mid-October," said Parker. "The biggest loads are now coming and will continue arriving until the end of January."

He says it's not that packages aren't mailed early in the states: "It's just that so many packages are sent to Vietnam. The Army goes all out to get mail to the troopers. It just takes a little time."

To expedite Christmas mail from the states and Vietnam to the U.S., Operation Silver Star has been launched to speed delivery.

Incoming packages contain a variety of items with food being dominant. "You'd be surprised at the number of boxes we receive which read: 'Cake — Do Not Crush!' said Parker. Candy, canned tidbits and other food items are popular, too."



Yule Tidings

Taking a break beside one truckload of mail they must deliver are (left to right) Spec. 4 Edward Sneed, Ft. Worth, Tex.; Spec. 4 Frank Carrera, Los Angeles; Spec. 4 James Reed, Nashville, Tenn., and Spec. 4 Roy Nobles, Jacksonville, Fla.

Spec. 4 Louis R. Perez, Denver, money order clerk, and Pfc. Leonard Greene, Kearny, N.J., parcel post clerk, help keep the mail moving in the forward area. The trio at the Screaming

Eagle's forward post office enjoy their work although it is now a 24-hour job. "The mailman is the trooper's link to home," said Parker. "You couldn't ask for a more important job."



Paper Girl

A cute province miss circulates a newspaper saluting a Vietnamese craftsman who improved pumping techniques and a picture story hailing the Republic of Korea's assistance to the Republic of Vietnam. Her pensive pose is directed at a 1st Brigade paratrooper passing through her community. (Photo by Pfc. Jerry Berry)

Maintaining Generators Big Task for Troopers

CHU LAI — Around the clock, they never stop—the generators that power illumination and communication in the 101st Airborne's forward base camp.

Staff Sgt. Dennis H. Arsenault, Westbrook, Maine, Hq. Co., Brigade, and Spec. 4 Ronald L. Peters, Dayton, a member of the Signal Co. (Prov) are responsible for maintenance and operation of 19 generators, a mission that sometimes requires them to work 24-hours a day.

"It's the best job in the brigade," said Arsenault, looking at the oil and grease stains on his arms. "I get a lot of satisfaction from seeing all those lights on at night and knowing our generators are doing the job."

Peters, a former communications center specialist, says

there are times when the job is frustrating, especially when it starts raining at midnight and a generator quits.

In addition to maintaining power for the electrical system, the two paratroopers lay and repair the intricate wiring system which supports the forward command post.

"When we move into a new area, we work 20-hours a day laying wire and getting the generators set up," said Arsenault. "Once we get the system in, we average about 10 hours a day on the job."

The two men have adapted their lives to the constant hum of the generators. Sometimes, they sleep along side them, with only a row of sandbags separating their cots from the monotonous hum. "We get used to it," Peters said.

Trooper Topples Buffalo

CHU LAI — Paratroopers of A Co., 2nd Bn. (Abn), 502nd Inf., took time out from Operation Wheeler recently to watch a bull fight, Vietnam style: The matador was a rifleman and the bull, an enraged water buffalo.

"I was leading our squad across a small rice paddy when a bull buffalo charged from some bushes," said Pfc. William Austin, Athens, Ga.

The Screaming Eagles beat a hasty retreat, that is all except Austin.

Before the animal could slam into the rifleman, Austin side-stepped and thrust his weapon into the buffalo's face.

"Luckily he missed me, but knocked my M-16 from my hands and wheeled for another pass."

Unable to fire for fear of hitting Austin, the other paratroopers lowered their rifles and waited.

"Before he could charge me again, I made a leap for my rifle laying in the mucky rice paddy," said Austin. "I pulled the rifle out of the mud and prayed it would fire."

He squeezed the trigger. Nothing happened.

Before Austin could take immediate action, the buffalo lunged.

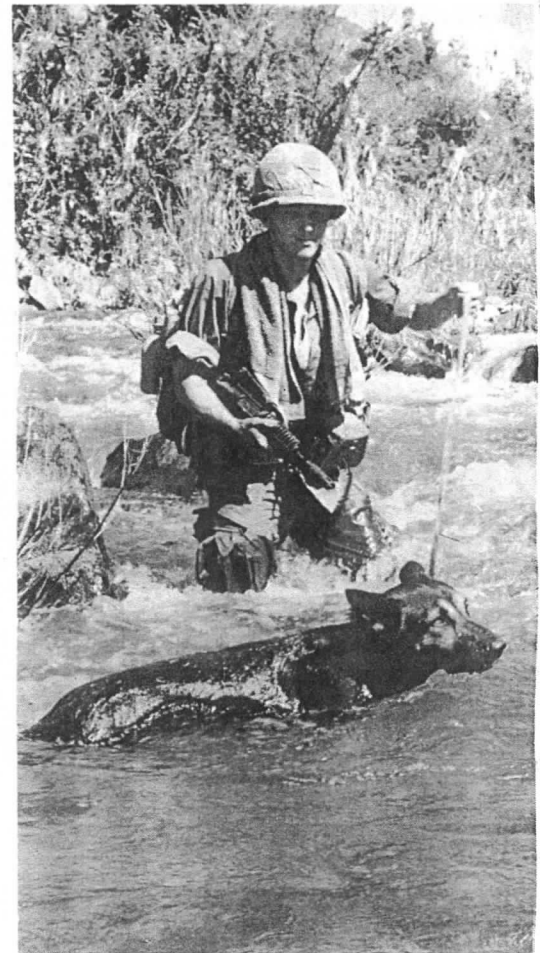
Again the agile paratrooper side-stepped but slipped and fell in the mire.

"I thought I was a goner for sure," said Austin. "I chambered another round and fired at the charging buffalo."

The bull collapsed and fell, its head pinning Austin to the ground.

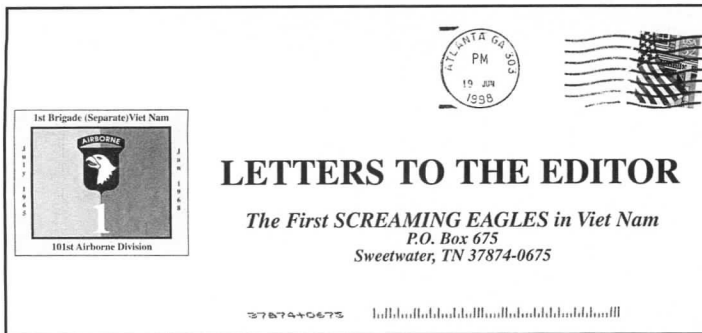
The stunned paratrooper looked over the dead buffalo's horns and shouted at his buddies, their mouths still open in awe.

"Just don't stand there," Austin yelled. "Do something!" "Ole! Ole!" came the response.



Another River to Cross

Spec. 4 Charles R. Poovey, Maiden, N.C., guides his scout dog, Spook, across a monsoon-swollen river during Operation Wheeler. Poovey and Spook are members of the 42nd Inf. Plat (Scout Dog). (Photo by Staff Sgt. Art Campbell)



U.S. POSTAL SERVICE

+ **LUIS VARGAS**, 2/502 C 6/65-6/66, 511 Pineview Lane, Brandon, MS 39042-9748, (601) 825-4121, when renewing his subscription wrote: Greetings and trust that all is well with you and your loved ones. May God bless you for keeping the memory of the 1st BDE (Separate), 101st Airborne Division alive.

God willing I'm looking forward to the 2015 Anniversary.

Enclosed is my renewal dues, would appreciate past copies of the magazine.

Again, thank you for your hard work and dedication to the memory of the 1st BDE – Nomads of Viet Nam – with no equal.

Editor's Note: Luis was sent information about how he can order back issues.

+ **COL(R) HERBERT D. WILLIAMS III**, 2/327 A&B 7/67-6/68, 124 Artillery Road, Winchester, VA 22602-6945, (540) 723-6730 wrote - Here's my subscription renewal. I look forward to every issue.

Veterans who were serving in C/2/327 and A/2/327 during the Fall of 1967 may be interested in watching the NBC News Special: Same Mud, Same Blood. They can see it by typing "Same Mud, Same Blood" in the Google search block and clicking the search icon. The first item on the next screen will be "S671201-NBC News Special: Same Mud, Same Blood." The segment covering C/2/327th's response to help A/2/327 in the Battle of the Que Son Valley on October 8, 1967, begins at 41:15:00 minutes into the documentary and ends at 47:26:00.

Best wishes on your battle with "The Big C." I've had a few minor skirmishes with it too and can empathize.

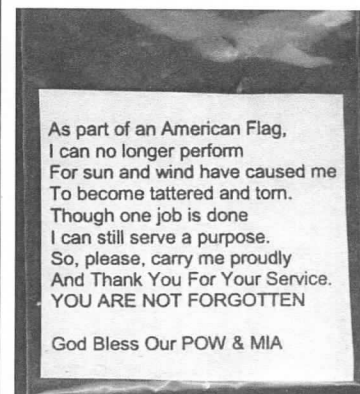
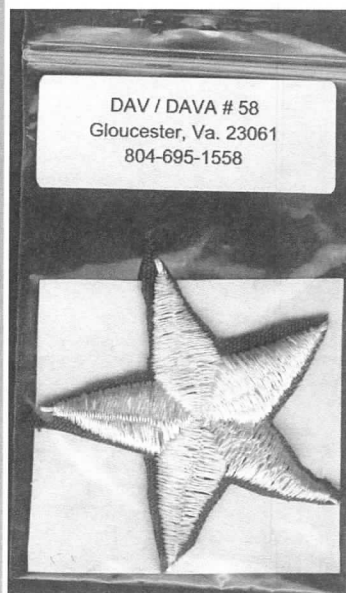
Herb (Flash Gorden) Williams

+ **CSM(R) HARVEY P. APPLEMAN**, 2/327 HQ 2/67-3/68, 530 Pond Apple Road, Clarksville, TN 37043-2222, (931) 591-2678 wrote: You will find a check for \$50.00 for dues. Just received the magazine. Looking forward to our 50th year 1st Bde. You have sure done your part to keep us informed and together. I am doing fine at 81 years young. Keeping busy. God Bless you my friend.

+ **COL(R) WILLIAM J. NORTHQUEST**, 1/327 C 6/66-12/67, 7532 Brookstone Circle, Flowery Branch, GA 30542, (770) 945-8783 along with his subscription renewal wrote: Thanks for all you do for all of us – what a valuable service you provide.

I hope and pray you are doing well!! Airborne!!

+ **DAVID "DOC" NELMS**, 1/327 HHC T.F. Med 10/66-10/67, PO Box 311, Hayes, VA 23072-0311, (804) 654-0415 wrote when renewing his subscription: Please use the extra as needed. God Bless our POW MIAs.



The stars are off tattered flags. Remains are properly retired.

Thank you, Ivan, for what you do for all veterans. Please accept these stars. My wife, mother-in-law and I do this on our own. We sent about 300 or 400 stars to our brothers and sisters overseas in harms way.

"Doc"

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OBITUARIES



Michael J. Davis *
1/327 HHC 7/66-5/67
March 2, 2014

From THE SCREAMING
EAGLE MAGAZINE –
SUMMER 2014

Colonel O-6, U.S. Army
Elliott P. (Bud) Sydnor, Jr.**
1/327 HHC 8/67-8/68
August 15, 2014

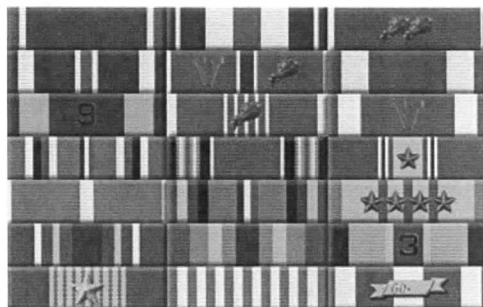


Veteran of:

- U.S. Navy 1945-1948
- U.S. Naval Reserve 1948-1950
- U.S. Army 1952-1981
- World War II 1945 (Ceasefire)
- Cold War 1945-1950, 1952-1981
- Korean War 1954 (Ceasefire)
- Vietnam War 1961-1962, 1967-1968, 1970

Tribute:

Bud Sydnor was born on June 30, 1927, in Auburn, Kentucky (pop 850). He enlisted in the U.S. Navy on September 6, 1945, and after completing Submarine School, he served aboard the attack submarine USS Raton (SS-270) with the Atlantic Submarine Fleet out of New London, Connecticut, until his discharge from active duty on January 15, 1948. He remained in the Naval Reserve until September 19, 1950. Sydnor received his commission as a 2d Lt of Infantry in the U.S. Army through the Army ROTC program at Western Kentucky State Teachers College on May 29, 1952, and went on active duty beginning August 25, 1952. After completing Infantry Officer training and Airborne School, Lt Sydnor served with the 11th Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, from February to December 1953.



During this time, he completed Ranger School at Fort Benning, Georgia. His next assignment was with the 160th and then the 23rd Infantry Regiment in Korea from January to September 1954, where he served as a Platoon Leader, Company Executive Officer, and Company Commander. Lt Sydnor served with the 27th Infantry Regiment in Hawaii from September 1954 to December 1956, followed by service as an airborne instructor with the International Student Division at Fort Benning from January 1957 to August 1958. After completing Special Forces training, Capt Sydnor served as a Team Commander with the 77th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, from June 1959 to March 1960, and he then completed an exchange officer assignment with the British Special Air Service (SAS) in England from April 1960 to June 1961. He served with the 7th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg from June 1961 to January 1964, and during this time he deployed to Laos as part of the White Star project from October 1961 to June 1962. His next assignment was as a staff officer with the Infantry Branch at the Pentagon from January 1964 to January 1967. Col Sydnor attended Armed Forces Staff College at Norfolk, Virginia, from January to August 1967, and then deployed to Southeast Asia, where he served as a battalion commander and executive officer with the 327th Airborne Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division in the Republic of Vietnam from August 1967 to August 1968. After completing his Master's Degree at George Washington University and attending Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, Col Sydnor served with the U.S. Army Infantry School at Fort Benning from June 1970 to June 1973. During this time he trained and commanded the ground forces for the Son Tay Raid, a clandestine mission to rescue American Prisoners of War held in North Vietnam, on November 21, 1970. He served as Commander of the 1st Special Forces Group on Okinawa from July 1973 to September 1974, followed by service as Chief of the Infantry Branch with the Army Military Personnel Center in Alexandria, Virginia, from November 1974 to June 1976. Col Sydnor next served as Chief of the Company Grade Combat Arms Division with the Army Military Personnel Center from June 1976 to June 1977, and then served as Director of the Ranger Department with the Infantry School at Fort Benning from June 1977 to May 1980. His final assignment was as Director of Plans and Training with the U.S. Army Infantry Center at Fort Benning from May 1980 until his retirement from the Army on September 1, 1981. He earned the Combat Infantryman Badge, Master Parachutist Badge, Ranger Tab, Special Forces Tab, and the Enlisted Submarine Warfare Insignia. In addition to his U.S. badges, Col Sydnor was awarded the British Air Service Jump Wings, the Thai Army Jump Wings, and the Republic of China Jump Wings. He was inducted into the Ranger Hall of Fame on June 18, 1992. Bud Sydnor died on August 15, 2014.

His Distinguished Service Cross Citation reads:

The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 25, 1963, has awarded the Distinguished Service Cross to Lieutenant Colonel Elliott P. Sydnor, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism



in action: Lieutenant Colonel Elliott P. Sydnor, Infantry, distinguished himself by extraordinary gallantry in action on 21 November 1970. Colonel Sydnor volunteered to command an all-volunteer raiding force organized to conduct a heliborne assault in an heroic attempt to rescue United States military personnel being held as prisoners-of-war at the Son Tay prison in North Vietnam. Colonel Sydnor displayed outstanding leadership and personal courage as he personally directed the assault on the compound and the withdrawal of the entire raid force. Colonel Sydnor's masterful command and control of the operation under the most hazardous combat conditions was exemplary. His keen mind and alertness to the constantly changing situation enabled him to effectively direct and control the actions of the joint assault force air and ground elements and maneuver them as the situation required. In order to maintain the critical control required over the complex raid operation, Colonel Sydnor unhesitatingly and fearlessly exposed himself time and time again to the enemy's small arms and automatic weapons fire. When the withdrawal began, Colonel Sydnor, with utter disregard for his personal safety, constantly stood fully exposed in the helicopter landing zone in order to direct the withdrawal and insure that not one man was unwittingly left behind. The success of the mission was directly attributed to his dynamic and fearless leadership and to the heroic example he set for his officers and men. The degree of his valorous action was further accentuated by his prior knowledge of the location of the prison compound--eighteen kilometers from the capital city of North Vietnam. Knowing full well the enemy forces were armed with automatic weapons, and the target area saturated with enemy installations, high performance aircraft and anti-aircraft defenses, Colonel Sydnor's premeditated personal risk, extraordinary heroism against an armed hostile force, and extreme devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest tradition of the military service and reflect great credit on him and the United States Army.

After his remarkable service in the military, Col Sydnor along with his wife came to Fernandina Beach, Florida. He began a career as a security consultant of the U.S. Department of Energy until his retirement in 2012. In August of 2011 he was awarded the U.S. Department of Energy's Distinguished Service Award. He also was a substitute teacher for the Nassau County School Board for many years. He was a member of Memorial United Methodist Church of Fernandina Beach. Along with his parents, two sisters preceded Col Sydnor in death. He leaves behind his wife of nearly 60 years, Jean Sydnor; his son, William W. Sydnor and his wife Shelley of Lake Mary, FL; his two daughters, Sara L. Sydnor and her husband Craig Cyphers of Jacksonville, FL and Susan L. Levy and her husband Kirk of Colleyville, TX.

* = Dropped Subscriber, ** = Never Subscribed



Renewals

July 31, 2014
through October 6, 2014

Doug Abran

2/327 A 4/67-4/68 - 7/15
P.O. Box 1092
Lawai, HI 96765-1092

Robert L. Andrews

2/17 CAV A Trp 6/64-6/69 - 7/15
1461 Stillhouse Road
Salem, WV 26426-8607

CSM(R) Harvey P. Appleman \$

2/327 HQ 2/67-3/68 - 4/16
530 Pond Apple Road
Clarksville, TN 37043-2222

LTG(R) Steven L. Arnold

2/502 A&Recondos 9/66-9/67 - 7/15
10848 Big Canoe
Big Canoe, GA 30143-5137

Larry R. Barnes

1/327 C & HHC 6/67-6/68 - 7/15
8308 Herrin Road
Herrin, IL 62948-6301

Chris Bayless \$

1/327 C 6/66-6/67 - 7/15
41150 Oak Ridge Drive
Three Rivers, CA 93271

Adrien O. Belanger

1/327 ABU ELT 7/65-6/66 - 7/15
130 Hardaway Dr.
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This four (4) inch diameter round decal is manufactured so that it may be used both inside and outside. The patch is full color. Price is \$2.50 each postpaid. See order form on page 35.

FIRST 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.



I

THE 17th CAVALRY 1916 - 1964

The origin of cavalry in the United States Army dates back to the mounted militia commands of the Continental Army of the Revolutionary War period. Although some of today's National Guard units can trace their lineage back to the Revolutionary War, it was not until 1833 that the Congress authorized the formation of the First Regiment of Dragoons that a regular army unit can trace its own lineage to. This marked the beginning of the 1st Cavalry Regiment, which was formally constituted into the regular army on 3 March 1855.

US Cavalry has fought in every major action in which the army has participated, and in innumerable minor actions during the heyday of the late 1800's: the Civil War, the Frontier (1890's), Cuba (1898), the Philippines (1899) and in China (1900).

By 1900, US and European Cavalry differed greatly. The European armies still clung to the idea of cavalry trained almost exclusively to fight mounted, charging in mass and relying on sabres and lances. On the other hand, US doctrine stressed the use of cavalry in open order formations in which the pistol or revolver was the principal arm.

In August 1914, Europe found itself plunged into World War I, but the US Cavalry directed its attention to the US-Mexican border, which had been a constant source of friction since rebellion and insurrection had broken out in Mexico (1910). [As a result of the requirement for more security, the National Defense Act of 1916 provided for a reorganization of the Army. As part of the planned increase, two new cavalry regiments were authorized. Designated as the 16th and 17th Cavalry, they were constituted on 1 July 1916 at Fort Sam Houston and Fort Bliss, Texas. With this act, the history of the 17th Cavalry begins.

In order to get the Regiment formed and ready as quickly as possible, veterans from five other cavalry regiments were transferred to the 17th Cavalry. A tent camp was formed in the Fort Bliss Reservation due to the lack of barracks space for the new regiment. The remainder of the summer was spent completing the regimental organization, training recruits, adjusting administrative matters, acquiring equipment and attending to a magnitude of details connected with the organization of a mounted command.

In the fall of 1916, the 17th Cavalry was ready to take to the field. A one hundred and fifty mile march was undertaken to determine the various assignments of wagon transportation. "Cavalry weather" prevailed throughout the march, drenching man and mount, and putting the spirit of the new regiment to the test.

On 26 January 1917, orders were received instructing the Regiment to proceed to Brownsville, Texas, for station; but on the 4th of February orders arrived countermanding the former instructions—the unit was to return to Fort Bliss. On 14 May, new orders were received and the 17th moved to their new "home" at Douglas, Arizona.

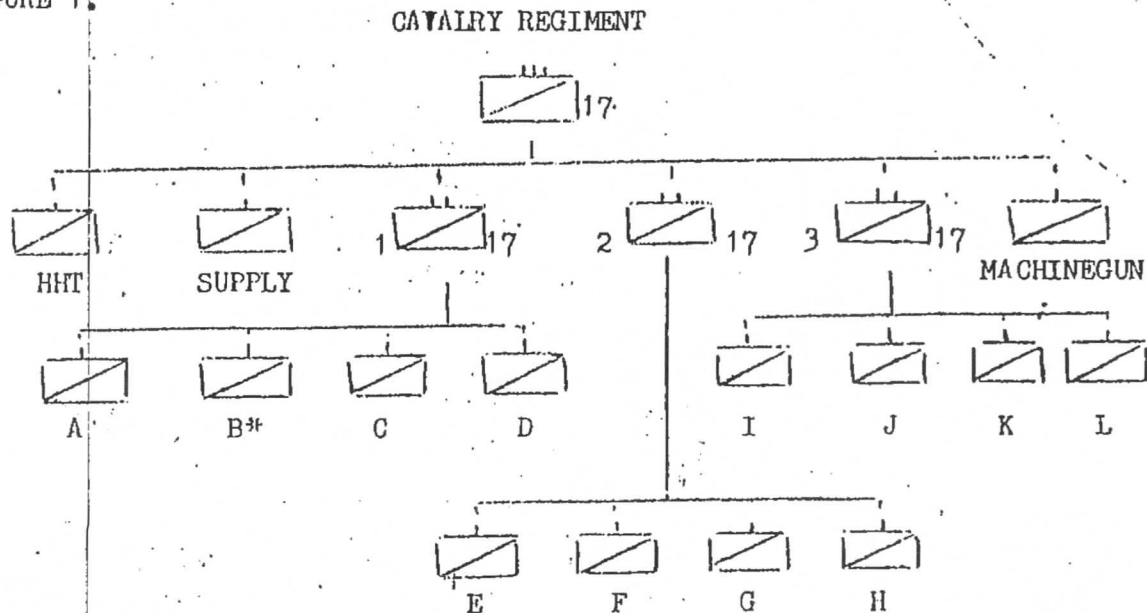
It was about this time that war preparations began in earnest. During April and May, recruits began to flock to the "colors", a total of 278 joining the regiment at this time. But rather than shipping out to Europe, the 17th was destined for "action" in Arizona.

Early in July, 1917, trouble in the copper mining districts of Arizona became serious, and the regiment was called out to quell the disturbances. Late November found the 17th Cavalry still in the Douglas area and again juggling troops. By the end of 1917, the regiment had attained full strength, even though it had transferred 163 trained men to the 5th Infantry Division, which was preparing to go to Europe.

In March of 1918, indications were that the 17th Cavalry would be moving to France, and the troops lived in daily anticipation for permission to entrain. Finally in November 1918, the Armistice was signed and the stand down began.

During the first three months of 1919, the 17th Cavalry saw its ranks rapidly depleted. Orders were received for transfer of the regiment to Hawaii and as a result, all those men who had enlisted for the period of emergency (WW I) had to be transferred to other cavalry units, as they were destined for early discharges. When the 17th finally left Douglas for the last time in April 1919, approximately 900 men went with it. The 17th was moved to Schofield Barracks in 1920 to take over for the demobilized Hawaiian National Guard. In September of 1921, General Orders were received that placed the Cavalry on the inactive unit list. The Regiment was moved to Monterey, California, and all of its personnel were transferred to the 11th Cavalry. On the 26th, the 17th Cavalry Regiment officially entered the list of inactive units, and was never to see active duty as a full regiment again.

FIGURE 1.



*NOTE: B Troop, 17th Cavalry would later become ancestor of the 2nd Sqdn (Air), 17th Cavalry.

On 1 July 1940, the 17th Cavalry Regiment was redesignated as the 17th Cavalry (Corps Reconnaissance), but was not activated during World War II. The 17th Cavalry did have "parallel lineages" however, in the form of the 17th Armored Group and the 57th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop.

A great many units which had participated in WW II had been created solely for that war, and to prevent future "lineage crisis" from occurring, the Army instituted the Combat Arms Regimental System (CARS). The CARS basically stated that each of the "old" regiments would be perpetuated by having each of its original companies or troops act as the lineage predecessor for the present day battalion or squadron. The original A Troop of the 17th Cavalry would be the predecessor of the new 1st Squadron, 17th Cavalry; the original B Troop would tie into the 2nd Squadron, 17th Cav. While the CARS system was approved in early 1957, the actual changes it wrought came very slowly.

In order to carry out the changes, some of the old cavalry and armor units had to be reconstructed and though activation was not a necessity, reconstruction was required. Troop C of the 17th Cavalry was the first troop to be reconstituted and was followed very shortly by B Troop (on 25 April 1957). Simultaneously, the 17th Cavalry and the 101st Airborne Division began their Airborne Reconnaissance Troop to form Troop B (Reconnaissance)(Aviation). This action also brought the 57th Cavalry Recon Troop (Mechanized) from the World War II era, to a CARS unit.

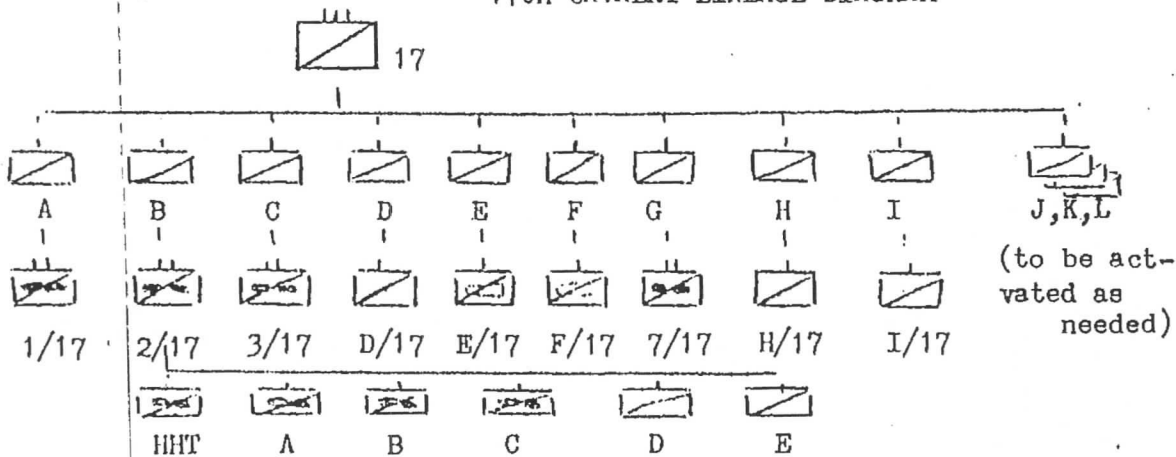
B Troop remained a part of the 101st Command and Control Battalion and participated in its first "action" in the fall of 1957. Oddly enough, the Troop found its first mission similar to that of the original B Troop (some forty years earlier), as President Eisenhower sent the Screaming Eagles to Little Rock, Arkansas to quell civil disturbances caused by racial tension over the desegregation of the school system.

The late fifties and early sixties were a time for continued training for the 17th Cavalry. Large scale maneuvers, the Cold War and the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962) kept the troopers of the CAV "on their toes".

In 1963, the Army went to a new TOE--the ROAD table of organization and equipment, which provided for an air cavalry troop in the divisional armored cavalry squadron. The mission of the air cavalry troop was described as an extension of the squadron's reconnaissance and security capabilities by aerial means. At full strength, the troop had 26 helicopters (OH-6, UH-1B and UH-1C) and greatly resembled the air cavalry troop of the post-Vietnam era.

FIGURE 2.

17th CAVALRY LINEAGE DIAGRAM



II

THE 2nd SQUADRON, 17th CAVALRY (AIRBORNE)

1964 - 1967

On 30 January 1964, Third Army General Order #26 took the Division from its pentomic TOE and changed it to the ROAD structure. The change gave the 101st three brigade headquarters and a variable number of maneuver battalions which could be controlled by any of the brigades as various missions dictated. The General Order covered a wide spectrum of actions to accomplish the change, including the activating, deactivating, transferring, redesignating and reorganizing of units.

Troop B, 17th Cavalry finally became the new HHT 2/17th Cavalry (Airborne) and to the new Squadron were added new Troops A, B, and C; these being organized as ground cavalry units, similar to the D Troop organization of today.

The new C Troop was to be organized as an air cavalry troop similar to the 1963 model. However, equipment necessary to set up a full troop was lacking, so instead, a small air cavalry section of nine OH-13s was attached to HHT.

On 19 February 1964, MG Critz presented LTC Wilmot Kinns the Squadron's colors, making him the first Commander of the new Squadron. Less than a month later however, LTC Kinns relinquished the Squadron to its second commander, LTC John T. Hodes.

The early months of 1964 were spent expanding the Squadron and in training each unit to obtain combat readiness. The first major test of the new Squadron was to come in the Mojave Desert of California, in May during Exercise DESERT STRIKE. The Squadron commenced air movement to the exercise site on 9 May, and closed into its intermediate staging base on the 14th. Following a week long acclimatization period, the troopers began to perform their roles of cavalymen in the traditional "old west" environment. While the climate and the terrain were reminiscent of the cavalry's heyday, the Squadron found itself in a reversed situation with regard to comparative combat power. Instead of the lightly armed Indian adversary of the late 1800's, the 2/17th found itself pitted against the massive firepower of the 2nd Armored and 5th Mechanized Divisions. These regular forces along with the 258th Infantry Brigade (Arizona NG) and the 191st Infantry Brigade (USAR) formed the Army of NEZONA, which attacked across the Colorado River to seize the capital of CALONIA. The CALONIA Army was composed of the 1st Armored Division and the 101st, supported by the 2nd Brigade, 40th Armored Division (California NG). The situation was one that required the Squadron to make maximum use of its mobility to accomplish its assigned mission.

From the intermediate staging base, the "CAV" was committed to the defense of the Nipton Pass. During this action, the 2/17th received reinforcements in the form of two companies of SP/ATs from the 2nd BN, 16th Armor. While the defense was initially successful, heavy pressure forced the Division to withdraw on the following day, taking the Squadron with it.

The Squadron's next mission was also defensive. Following the 2nd Armor's successful attack through the previous defense line, the 5th Infantry Division (Mech) moved through the Nipton Pass and planned on driving through the Ivanpah Pass, completely shattering the 101st's line.

While the scout elements of the Squadron hurried south to locate the main body of the advancing mechanized force, the remainder of the Squadron with its attached SP/AT's, rushed to occupy defensive positions at Ivanpah Pass. When the leading tank company of the 5th Mech entered the pass, it was halted by the combined fires of the M56 Scorpions (SP/AT's) and the Squadron's AT weapons. The tank company was then taken in the rear by the battalion from the 101st's 3rd Brigade, and in the flank by other cavalry elements. This action blocked the pass and denied its use to the "enemy". These defensive actions were important in the 101st's halting the penetrations, thus permitting them to switch to the offensive.

The 2/17th was tasked with screening the Division's flanks while it prepared to counterattack. The 2nd Brigade was designated to execute a vertical envelopment of the "enemy" by parachuting into and taking the town of Needles, California, while the remainder of the Division drove to the south and west to link up with the brigades. The Cav's mission for this phase of the exercise was to reconnoiter the main axis of advance for the link-up force.

The success of the airborne envelopment forced the enemy to retire east of the Colorado River. The Squadron immediately established a screen along the west bank in the Division's zone and began a reconnaissance for fording sites. In addition, the 2/17th pushed southward to establish contact with the friendly 1st Armored Division. Shortly thereafter the exercise was terminated and the Squadron returned to Fort Campbell.

On 13 July 1964, the 2nd Battalion, 16th Armor underwent deactivation ceremonies. The Battalion had provided the 101st Airborne Division with M56 Scorpion SP/AT's, which had given the Division a solid anti-armor punch. In its place was substituted Company D, 66th Armor. D Company was attached to the Squadron for administrative purposes, but was generally controlled by Division.

In October, the Squadron participated in an exercise, CHEROKEE TRAIL IV, at Fort Bragg, providing the aggressor force against the 82nd Airborne Division. The 2/17th and advisors from the Special Warfare School of the J.F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center provided a guerilla force for the country of "Sattia". The exercise was a big success and provided the troops invaluable experience in dismounted patrolling and security operations.

In November, the Squadron received their annual General Inspection and they passed with flying colors. Mounted operations gained the spotlight in December, as the Squadron conducted a road march to Fort Knox. HHT, A and B Troops and the air cavalry section of the 2/17th, as well as Company D, 66th Armor, made the move by road and rail for their annual qualification firing. While the M56 SP/AT's and the OH-13's were running their courses, the Squadron's scout sections took a crack at the Scout Section Proficiency Course. Upon completion of this training, the troopers returned to Fort Campbell for a brief, but well deserved rest.

In the early months of 1965, the Squadron was once again undergoing extensive field training as it participated in Exercises COLDFIRE and EAGLE LAND. Operation EAGLE JUMP, conducted from 8-12 March, constituted the Squadron's first Operational Readiness Training Test (ORTT), since

At the time, Ft. Campbell did not have the proper facilities for range firing.

its activation. As expected, the CAV did an outstanding job, and received a Combat Ready rating in all phases of tactical operations.

In April, the Division was alerted for possible commitment to the Dominican Republic, only to see the mission fall to the 82nd Airborne Division. However, experience gained in the preparation of equipment for the possible deployment was to prove invaluable in the near future. May was highlighted by the Squadron's conversion from the old TOE and the addition of Troop C (Air Cavalry) as an active participant in the Squadron.

The conflict in Vietnam had considerably worsened since 1962 and US Army ground combat forces had been committed, beginning with the 173rd Airborne Brigade, in the spring of 1965. In early May, the 101st was placed on alert to prepare a brigade task force (to include all of the necessary supporting units) for deployment to Vietnam. First Brigade was chosen and A Troop was informed that they would be included in the task force. By the middle of June, the majority of the units had packed and shipped their equipment, and those troopers who had not previously had a chance, took a 15 day leave.

The Squadron celebrated its Organization Day on the 29th of June with refreshments, games, and a general good time. LTC Hodes placed the red and white streamer on the Squadron Colors, signifying one year of active duty as an airborne unit. The 3rd Platoon of B Troop took first place in the competition that afternoon, and A Troop received the Third US Army Certificate of Proficiency for attaining a rating of 97% on their annual Command Maintenance Management Inspection.

On 7 July, A Troop flew from Ft. Campbell to Oakland, California, where it began loading the luxurious USS GENERAL LEROY ELTINGE. At 1835 hours on the 8th, the troopers threw their "good luck" coins into San Francisco Bay, as they sailed under the Golden Gate Bridge. The trip lasted twenty-one hectic days, with only one brief stopover at Subic Bay Naval Base (Philippines) before reaching the Republic of Vietnam. The talk of "going to" Vietnam ceased on the 29th of July, when the USS ELTINGE sailed into Cam Ranh Bay. A Troop would spend the next thirty-one months separated from the remainder of the Squadron. During the time they were in Vietnam, they would see some of the hardest fighting in the Vietnam Campaign.

With A Troop gone, the remainder of the Squadron continued its training at Campbell in preparation for the time, if it came, that they too would go to Vietnam. For many of the officers and men, their chance came sooner than they expected. As the conflict magnified in intensity, many 2/17th troopers joined their comrades in the embattled Republic via the Division replacement channels. This personnel drain hit the new Squadron hard, as it struggled to maintain its operational capability. It managed to do so only as a result of the increased efforts of its remaining personnel.

Late in July, LTC Hodes relinquished command of the Squadron to his executive officer, Major Darsey Mason, who turned the 2/17th over to LTC Jack MacFarlane, when he arrived in late August. September found the Squadron being put through its paces in the annual General Inspection, yet despite severe personnel shortages, the 2/17th attained ratings above that of the previous inspection. The Squadron spent the remainder of 1965 and the first six months of 1966 conducting cadre-type training so as to send only well-trained troopers as replacements to Vietnam.

On 1 July 1966, LTC MacFarlane turned the Squadron over to LTC Ellsworth Crowley, Jr. Two weeks later, the CAV was notified that it would have complete responsibility for the organization and execution of the Presidential Honor Guard for the visit to Fort Campbell by President Johnson, on July 23rd. All members of the Honor Guard had to be at least five feet, ten inches tall, possess good military bearing, and have been a combat veteran of Vietnam. This was no small feat in 1966, and it was soon found that the Squadron did not have sufficient personnel to fill the fifty-man Guard, so filler personnel were accepted from other units in the Division. LTC Crowley and SGM Ted Arthurs personally screened all of the candidates and when the 23rd came, the Honor Guard was ready. LTC Crowley acted as Honor Guard Commander and accompanied the President for a review of the troopers.

In August, the Squadron was assigned the mission of supporting a visit by Vice President Humphrey to Barkley Dam, which was to take place on the 17th of August. This visit also came off without any major problems, and the CAV received another "well done".

The rest of 1966 consisted of field training exercises. The Squadron acted as aggressor forces against the infantry battalions.

With the new year, it became increasingly apparent that the Vietnam conflict was widening in scope, and the 2/17th started thinking towards possible deployment.

The early months of 1967 found the Squadron in the field testing the new Redeye Air Defense Missile and in conducting no-notice ORTT's. Routine training continued throughout the summer and early in August, the 101st received word that they would be deploying to Vietnam by February of 1968. Every man in the Squadron immediately began the tremendous task of preparing for the movement and in conducting advanced combat training. Unfortunately, the 2/17th had few personnel who were deployable, so a large personnel turnover was imminent. In September, the CAV traded its non-deployable personnel to the 1/17th Cavalry of the 82nd, for personnel who could go to Vietnam.

On the 20th of September, a change of command ceremony took place in the midst of the "organized confusion" and LTC Julius Becton took over the Squadron. With all of the necessary changes made, the Squadron began intensive training in October. Late into the fall, the CAV was notified that the air cavalrymen of C Troop would not be deploying, because they did not have the necessary helicopters. The Aero-rifle Platoon joined HHT however, and was deployed to Vietnam. The Division Long Range Patrol Unit was also attached to the Squadron for the move to Vietnam, and the immediate period thereafter.



Issue #1



Issue #2



Issue #3



Issue #4



Issue #5



Issue #6



Issue #7



Issue #8



Issue #9



Issue #10



Issue #11



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Issue #35



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Issue #37



Issue #38



Issue #39



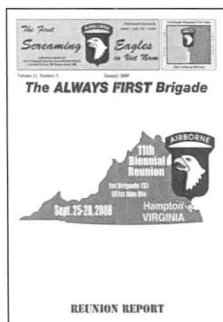
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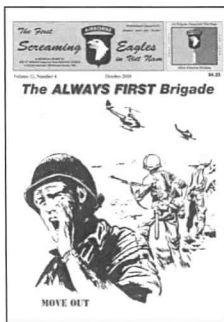
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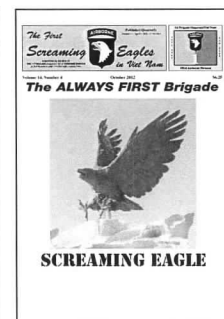
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