

FOR 3RD BRIGADE INFANTRYMEN

2/77th Provides Close Fire Support

By Sp4 Dave Hamson

Dau Tieng — Staggering firepower from 18 105mm howitzers, the ability to go where the infantry goes, and dogged determination to fight when the guns are threatened characterize the 2nd Battalion, 77th Artillery of the "Famous

Fourth's" 3rd Brigade.

The "Redleg" unit arrived in Vietnam October 12 after a 19-day cruise across the Pacific on the USNS General Nelson M. Walker.

No time was wasted in getting the artillerymen to Camp Martin Cox at Bear

Ca, Long Binh Province, where they linked up with the advance party led by Lieutenant Colonel Walter R. Rehm, battalion commander.

Two short weeks later, the battalion was in the field supporting the troops of the 3rd Brigade on Operation

Bremerton in the Rung Sat Special Zone about 20 miles southeast of Saigon.

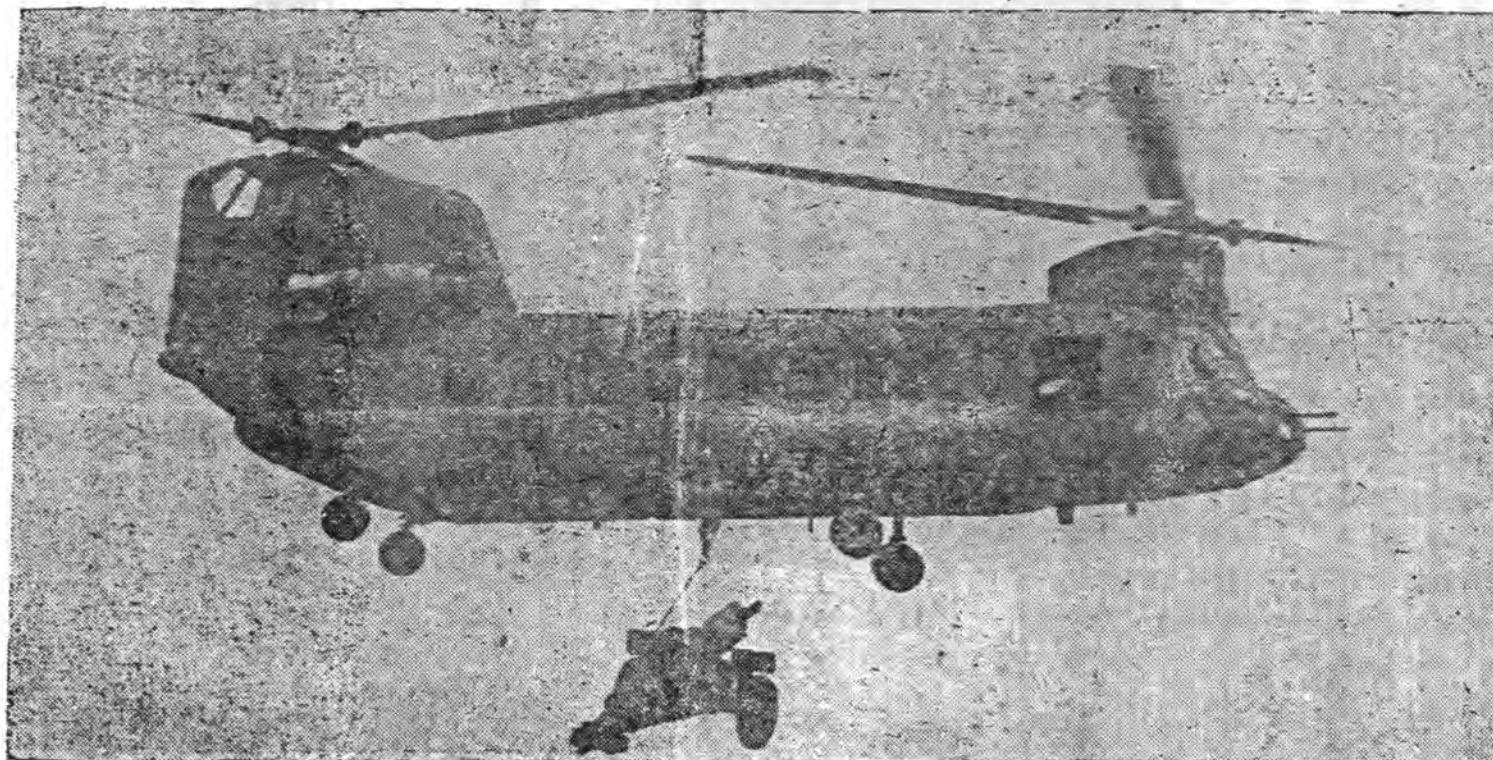
The mud and marsh of the area posed new problems for artillery that could not have been duplicated in the training exercises the battalion

had held at Ft. Lewis, Wash. Many of the lessons learned in Bremerton would be put to good use in the operations that followed.

The battalion was split shortly after Thanksgiving when two batteries convoyed with the brigade to Dau Tieng where the new brigade base camp was set up amid the sprawling Michelin Rubber Plantation. The third battery rejoined the battalion after completing pacification operations in the Nhon Trac District.

Out of the Dau Tieng base camp, the 2nd Battalion, 77th Artillery has moved with the brigade on several operations, including Attleboro, Cedar Falls, Gadsden, and Junction City. On each occasion the battalion went with the brigade and gave close fire support where it was needed.

In addition to its combat role, the 2nd Battalion, 77th Artillery has been active in civic action projects in the village of Dau Tieng. A nursery was recently opened for the children of Popular Forces troops who defend the village.



AIRBORNE — Mobility by air is the key to the 2nd Battalion, 77th Artillery's ability to go where the infantry is fighting.
(USA Photo by Lt. Ralph F. Campbell)