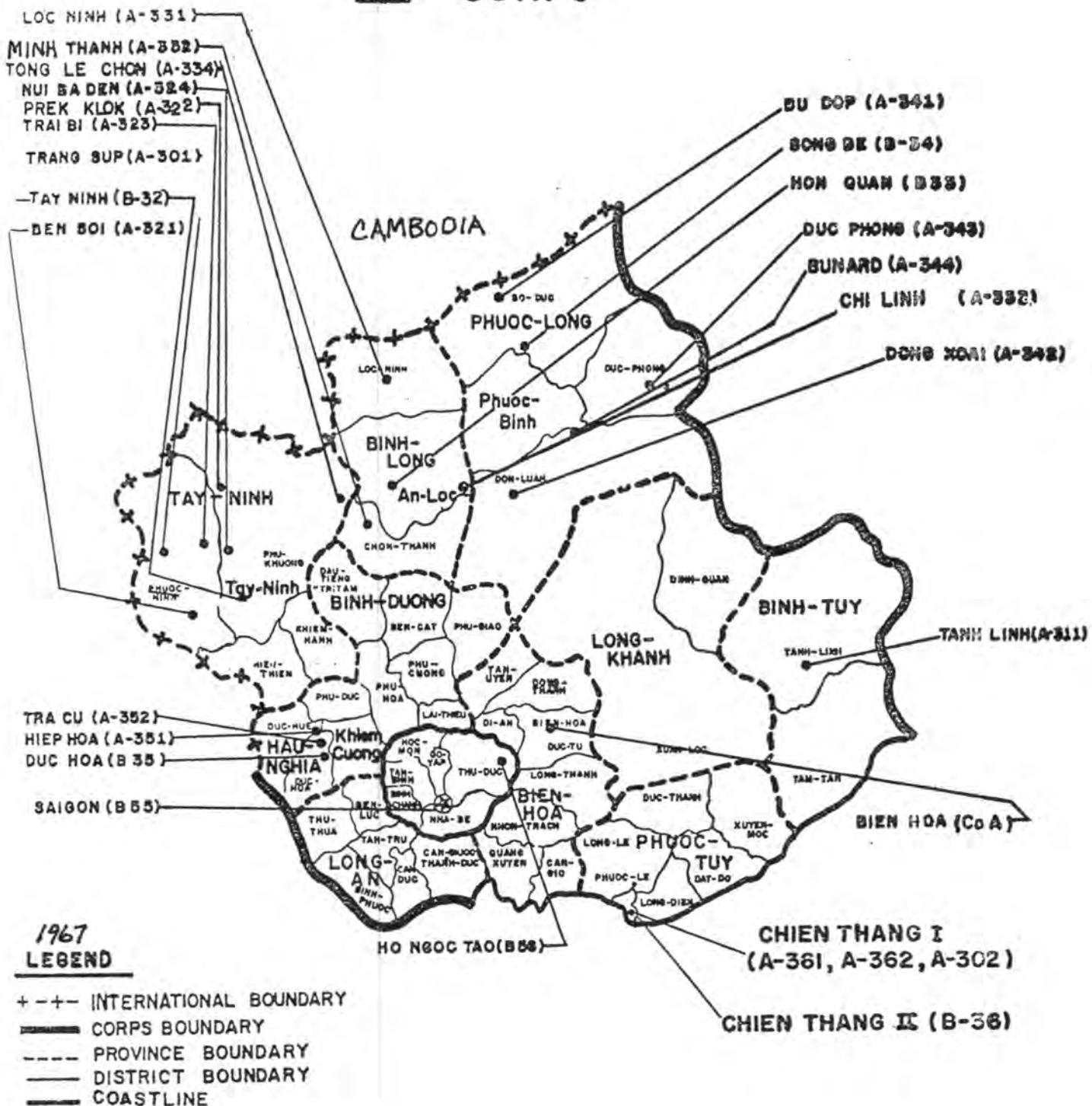


Operation Rapid
Fire II was a
Top secret operation
along the Cambodian
border NE of Taq Nua
All volunteers - no
married personnel -
Most dangerous mission
u ever volunteered for
pre-Tet 1968

III CORPS



1967

LEGEND

- ++-+ INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY
- CORPS BOUNDARY
- PROVINCE BOUNDARY
- DISTRICT BOUNDARY
- COASTLINE

Tay Ninh East - 12/67-1/68

Special Task Force Rapid Fire V

B-36-A-361/A-362-1889 Assaret Helicopter Co.

"BLACK WIDOWS"

"SPIDERS" GUN PLATOON

→ CAMBODIA/BLACK OPS →



TAY NINH CITY, VIETNAM XT203510 11°19'N 106°06'E

VNA (A) 39 L 19(PSP)① 02/20 100' wide

FUEL - A+ **AMMO - 7.62 2.75**

AERODROME REMARKS - SECURE, S.F. Apch to Rwy 02 over city. Apch to Rwy 20 over 30' trees 300' fr end of rwy and 4' fence 50' fr end of rwy. Recommend land Rwy 20, T/off Rwy 02. 300' twr 600' W of S end of rwy. O-1 revetments 34' fr edge of rwy W end. Bldgs 31' and 46' fr edge of rwy S side. 4' fences ea side rwy. Not recommended for C-123. Turnaround W end S side. Type 2 for C7A. ① PSP warped and broken several places.

RADIO - Ctc as per S.F. SOI.

ARTILLERY ADVISORY - 41.3



The information was compiled from After-Action Reports, National Archives in Maryland and witness statements on Petrus DSC.

Also included is Description of actions on Picavet II, conducted during Rapid Fire II. You had a resupply helicopter go down, no casualties. Helicopter recovered. ~~One~~ Picavet II lasted over 7 hours. As you can see from attached captured document I was a large base area. From the 11th of Dec 1970 to 7 Jan 68 they treated over 287 patients at this location. Unit IDs included in Typewritten description of contact.

As you might not know in a matter B-36 had 13 killed, 5 evacuated 100% disabled or many others wounded with an operational force of U.S. at less than 44. That is heavy casualties.

Bennie Sends

Info Removed by VNCA

RAPID FIRE V. WAR ZONE C. DEC 7TH THROUGH JAN 24th 68. Reckon and ambush patrol were conducted during this period of time. On the 30th Dec 67, a patrol consisting of, W>O> Cahill, Burr, Newman, Grant Sgt. Maj Hillman and 7 Cambodians ambushed a 5 man enemy unit. Jimmy Cahill was the right Flank Security, Obe one of the Bodes moved, Cahill shot one, wounding him fire off his claymore killing the rest. We had one pow anf captured weapons and document. One of the units identified was the 141st V>C Regiment. , 03 January 1967 a recon patrol was re-enforced because enemy comma wire had been discovered. The Patrols mission was now to TAP the wire. A device was used to intercept any comma coming over the wire. Sgt. Wallace Handwork commanded the patrol. Sometime during the morning of the 4th of January an enemy security patrol checking the wire discover the patrol a firefight ensued. Two Americans were killed and two wounded. Handwork called for gunships. A re-action force was soon airborne an inserted into the LZ. Patrick Martin a member of the relief force killed two enemy on the edge of the LZ. The relief force moved into the jungle linked up with Handwork and carried the wounded and dead back to the LZ. After all the wounded and dead had been removed, a second patrol from B-36 was engaged further to the North, One helicopter was hit extracting a patrol with a POW. STAN YOU ALREADY HAVE THIS INFORMATION. THAT WAS THE ACCOUNT ON STARK I SENT YOU. N Handwerks patrol was Taylor, Simons, both Killed. an attachment was assigned . His was Toten, I had been in Panama with him and at that time he was in the Army Security agency, attached to the 8th Special Forces. I have a picture of Toten at Tay Ninh. On Starks Patrol, Tabodia was killed Stark lost a portion of both legs, the helicopter pilot was also hit in the eye. A couple of Crew members were wounded. Members of that patrol were , Ruiz, Patterson, Stark, Tabodia, Hooper, Miller and eight Cambodians.

Because of the wire it was decided to put another patrol in area west of were the wire was discovered. The patrol was inserted close to the Song vamp Dog, a river that separates Cambodian from Vietnam The patrol went in on a Sunday Morning at approx. 0800. On the 7th of January 68. The mission was dubbed PICNIC II. Less then 75 meters into the jungle the patrol made contact and over ran 2 to three bunkers. They were not fighting positions; the patrol then came under heavy fire from the enemy. We engaged those bunkers with 66-mm Light anti-tank weapons. The gunshots were soon on station proving supporting fire. It soon became evident that we were receiving 360-degree fire. The enemy on the Cambodian side of the border engaged us with small arms. Automatic weapons. We were receiving enemy fire from the north, south, east and west. We tucked into a tight perimeter. I informed the TOC that we already had 4 enemy rucksacks full of documents. We had initially hit the commo bunker and from the looks of the captured documents, their operations center. Somehow, through pure luck we had landed inside their perimeter, The gunships engaged about a platoon size force attempting to move across the LZ we had landed in. SMOKY THE FAC now had an air strike going in. The first strike was 500 lb. bombs. They dropped them about 250 meters north east of us. A visual reckon by smoky reported a large base area, trench lines connecting the different areas. The patrol now had 5 wounded and one dead. Smoky continued to put in the air strikes. The gun-ships hit the CAMBODIAN SIDE OF THE RIVER. Field Force supplied a 14-helicopter lift to put A-362 on the ground. A-362 landed at approx. 1015 and begin moving to re-enforce. Theta were hit with withering fire. The helicopters now were picking up the Special Forces, III crop mike force. The were inserted alongside A-362. In the mean time a re-supply helicopter dropping Ammo into the patrol was hit by ground fire and went down. (St. Laurent was on that helicopter. It was secured with no causalities.) The enemy was still delivering heavy fire on both the patrol and the relief elements by this time smoky had put in three air strikes. His last call to me was." Marauder I have one last bird on station, it has napalm. I called 362 and the Mike force, instructed them to smoke the foreword edge of their line. 50 meters separated the patrol from the relief forces. The second napalm strike did the job. Link up was accomplished. The documents that were captured included the Standard Signal Instruction, Standard Operating Instructions, one time pads, crypto, training schedules, base camp locations, roster of people, the number of cases treated by their dispensary, name and locations of units. Their training Schedual indicated Sunday was a training holiday. Extracting the force started at 1630 hrs. we had been in contact over 7 hours. Two of the people that were with you were Morrison and Deo. Deo was wounded. The patrol from A-361 was Newman, Martin, Burr, Handwerk, Aleo, Grant and 14 Cambodians. Martin, Aleo, Burr and Grant were wounded. 5 Cambodians were wounded 1 Cambodian Killed.

According to the initial read out. We had hit the Hqs of the 82d Rear Service Group, along with the U-80 training regiment. . From the documents and the POW we captured on the 30th of Dec the 141 VC regiment was mentioned. I do not know if they were around on the 7th of Jan.. If they were involved in that base camp we do not know. We do know that the Crypto was deemed so valuable that it was evacuated from the Combined Documentation exploitation center to probable the Ntional Security Agency in the United States. I will try to Scan in and send you the read out on captured Documents. We took out over 80 lbs of documents.

MEMO; REF; PETER MEDARY STARK.

THERE ARE INCONSISTENCY AND INACCURACY IN THE AFTER ACTION REPORT, PATROL 24, 04 JAN68. THAT IS REFLECTED IN GENERAL ORDER 2681. IT MIGHT BE WHY PETE DID NOT GET THE MOH.

I SENT PETE A COPY OF THE AFTER ACTION REPORT. WE DISCUSSED IT IN DETAIL VIA TELEPHONE. ACCORDING TO STARK. THE 14 MAN PATROL INFILTRATED, MOVED IN TO THE JUNGLE AND ESTABLISHED AN AMBUSH ON A WELL-USED TRAIL. THE PATROL DID NOT ENCOUNTER BUNKERS, ECT. PETE WAS IN THE KILL ZONE AND ARMED WITH THE SILENT STEIN GUN. THREE INDIVIDUALS ENTERED THE KILL ZONE. PETE FIRED AND WOUNDED ONE. THE AFTER ACTION REPORT DESCRIBES WHAT HAPPENED TO THE REST OF THE ENEMY.

THE PRISONER WAS SECURED. PETE STARTED AN I.V. SOLUTION ON THE POW GAVE MORPHINE AND APPLIED FIRST AID TO THE WOUND. ACCORDING TO PETE THE RIGHT SECURITY WAS NOT UNDER FIRE. TABODA AND PETE WERE CARRYING THE POW AND STOPPED AT THE EDGE OF THE LZ. AS THE HELICOPTER MADE THEIR APPROCH, PETE, TABODA, THE POW AND THREE INDIG. WERE ASSIGNED THE 1ST CHOPPER. WHEN THEY GOT ALONG SIDE THE CHOPPER, PETE AND TABODA STARTED TO LOAD THE POW IN. IT WAS AROUND THIS TIME THE HELICOPTER WAS STRUCK BY A B-40. BOTH OF STARKS LEGS WERE MANGLED AND ONE FOOT WAS BLOWN OFF. PETE TIED TOURNIQUETS TO BOTH HIS LEGS AND BEGIN TO TREAT THE WOUNDED. THE HELICOPTER TRIED TO LIFT OFF BUT WENT DOWN ABOUT 30 METERS FROM PETE, TABODA, POW AND THE THREE INDIG. THE SECOND HELICOPTER ABORTED AND THE REST OF THE PATROL RETURNED TO THE WOOD LINE, ABOUT THIRY METERS FROM PETE. PETE AND HIS GROUP WERE IN THE OPEN, AT THE MERCY OF THE ENEMY AUTOMATIC, SEMI AUTOMATIC WPN FIRE.

PETE BY HIS TIME WAS WORKING ON TABODA, HAVING ALREADY TREATING THE OTHERS. CAPT DOHT (I THINK THAT'S THE SPELLING OF HIS NAME) THE HELICOPTER COMMANDER, RUSHED OVER TO ASSIST PETE AND WAS HIT IN THE EYE. STARK, ATTEMTING TO USE THE THEHEMOSTAT TO CLAMP OF AN ARTERY ON TABODA, DIRECTED THE WOUNDED CAPT TO THE REMAINDER OF THE PATROL IN THE WOOD LINE. AIELLO AND MORRISON WERE ON THE REACTION FORCE. AIELLO TOLD ME HE WASN'T IMMEDIATLEY AWARE OF HOW BADLY PETE WAS HIT. PETE WAS TELLING HIM TO GET TABODA THE POW AND DAHT OUT.ON THE FIRST MED-EVAC. PETE TOLD ME HE DID NOT REMEMBER MUCH AFTER DOHT WAS HIT.

THE AFTER ACTION REPORT UNDER d (1) HAS ONE INDIG. BEING KILLED AND TWO USSF WOUNDED. THAT IS PETE AND TABODA. UNDER PARAGRAPH F, (1), (a), THEY LIST ONE USSF KILLED AND ONE INDIG. AGAIN IN PARAGRAPH F, (1), (1,b) THEY LIST TWO USSF WOUNDED. THE ONLY WOUNDED WERE PETE AND TABODA. TABODA BLED TO DEATH ON THE LZ OR ENROUT TO THE HOSPITAL. SAME PAPARAGRAPH; THREE AIRCREW WERE WOUNDED NOT TWO.

IN GENERAL ORDER 2681, DOES NOT HAVE PETE PUTTING TOURNIQUETS ON HIS LEGS FIRST. THE GENERAL ORDERS ALSO, HAS AN OTHER SOLDIER ASSISTING PETE. THERE WAS NO OTHER SOLDIER. CAPT DOHT DID ATTEMPT TO ASSIST PETE BUT WAS WOUNDED. ~~RECORDED~~

I hope you will read it, we are awaiting your report.
I was worried about the KIA's names. At this stage

PATTERSON IS LISTED AS ADMINISTERED FIRST AID TO THE WOUNDED. PATTERSON WAS IN THE TREE LINE ALONG WITH RUIZ, HOOPER, MILLER AND THE REST OF THE INDIG. PATTERSON MIGHT HAVE ASSISTED CAPT DOHT, AFTER STARK SENT HIM OUT OF THE LINE OF FIRE TO JOIN THE REST OF THE PATROL IN THE TREE LINE. PETE WAS THE ONLY ONE, ACCORDING TO AIELLO AND MORRISON, WHO WAS ON THE OPENED L.Z. TREATING THE WOUNDED. AS YOU CAN SEE BY THE AFTER ACTION REPORT THE POW DIED AT THE HOSPITAL.

AS FAR AS PETE GETTING THE DSC AND NOT THE MOH, I BELIEVE I KNOW WHAT HAPPENED. HANDWERK'S PATROL WAS HIT JUST BEFORE PETE'S. HANDWERK HAD TWO DEAD, SIMMONS AND TAYLOR. THE ENEMY DID BRING THE FLANK SECURITY OF THIS PATROL UNDER FIRE. THE REACTION FORCE WENT IN AND PULLED THAT PATROL OUT. HANDWERK ALSO HAD A FEW WOUNDED. PETE STARKS PATROL WAS HIT DURING THE EXTRACION OF THIS PATROL. AFTER PETE'S PATROL WAS EXTRACTED THERE WERE FOUR DEBRIEFINGS TAKING PLACE. TWO PATROL AND TWO REACTIONS FORCE'S. THE REACTION FORCE DEBRIEFING FOR PETE PATROL SHOULD HAVE BEEN MISSION 24A. IT IS NOT IN THE AFTER ACTION REPORT. IF YOU NOTICE MISSION 25 TOOK PLACE, DTG. 031530, A DAY BEFORE MISSION 24. THE AFTER ACTION RPORTS ARE OUT OF ORDER.

ON 07 JAN 68, A PATROL FROM A-361 WAS INSERTED WEST OF WERE HANDWERK'S PATROL MADE CONTACT. HANDWERK ON HIS PATROL HAD AN ATTACHMENT ASSIGNED FROM THE ARMY SECURITY AGENCY,(SFC TOTEN OR TOTTEN) LATER THE ARMY RADIO RESEARCH UNIT. HE WAS TAPPING ENEMY COMMO WIRE WHEN HANDWERK'S PATROL WAS HIT. THE MISSION ON THE 07 JAN WAS TO LOCATE THE ORIGIN OF THE WIRE. ON 07JAN68 THE PATROL, LATER RENAMED PICNIC II, MADE CONTACT WITH THE 82D REAR SERVICE HQS. AND THE U-80 TRNG REGT. BY THE COMPLETION OF THE MISSION, OVER 200 MEN WERE ON THE GROUND. SGT WOLF, TEAM SGT, A-362 WAS WOUNDED. HE WENT BACK TO THE STATES. WOLF WOULD HAVE BEEN THE ONE TAKING CARE OF THE AWARDS AND DECORATIONS FOR 362. CAPT DEJOHN, REAR AREA COMMANDER WAS RELEAVED AND TET CAME ALONG. THE EYEWITNESS STATEMENTS WERE THERE FOR PETE. BUT SOMEONE THOUGHT THE ENTIRE PATROL WAS IN ONE LOCATION. THEY WERE NOT. PATTERSON WAS NOT ASSISTING PETE.

I BELIEVE WHO EVER DRAFTED THE PROPOSED CITATION DID SO FROM FRAGMENTARY STATEMENTS. ONE OTHER THING, THE WRITER OF THE DSC DOES NOT USE THE WORD KILL ZONE OR AMBUSH, BUT TRAP. THAT IS NOT A MILITARY TERM. ADDED TO ALL THIS CONFUSION; THE TET OFFENSIVE, B-36 HAS A CHANGE OF COMMAND IN LATE JAN OR EARLY FEB, GRITZ LEAVES AND WALKER TAKES OVER. ALL THESE FACTORS PLAYED A ROLL IN PETE BEING AWARDED A DSC. PETE WAS NEVER RECOMMENDED FOR THE MOH.

IN A CONVERSATION WITH MILLER, MILLER STATED THEY TRIED TO GET TO PETE, BUT THE FIRE FROM THE ENEMY WA SO INTENSE MOVEMENT WAS IMPOSSIBLE.

1. RUIZ, PATTERSON, MILLER, REST OF PATROL
2. STARK, TABODIA, POW, INDIG
3. DOWNED CHOPPER

CDEC Doc Log No.	Summary	Capture																																				
	<p>Document further reveals that the average number of patients receiving medical treatment at the Dispensary on any given day was 139 men.</p> <p><u>Item 4.</u> Patients Status Report reveals that during Dec 67, a total of 351 patients received medical treatment at the Convalescence [Camp of Boan 800] including 123 men evacuated to this Convalescence [Camp] from Units 7, 8, 10 and 11 in Dec 67 as follows:</p>																																					
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>ITEM</th><th>NUMBER OF PATIENTS EVACUATED IN DEC 67</th><th>TOTAL NUMBER OF PATIENTS RECEIVED</th><th>NUMBER OF PATIENTS RECEIVED IN DEC 67</th><th>NUMBER OF PATIENTS EVACUATED TO OTHER HOSPITALS</th><th>NUMBER OF PATIENTS UNDER MED TREATMENT AS OF THE END OF DEC 67</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>7</td><td>43</td><td>98</td><td>25</td><td></td><td>73</td></tr> <tr> <td>8</td><td>41</td><td>33</td><td>14</td><td></td><td>69</td></tr> <tr> <td>10</td><td>1</td><td>74</td><td></td><td>8</td><td>66</td></tr> <tr> <td>11</td><td>28</td><td>36</td><td>16</td><td>1</td><td>79</td></tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td><td>123</td><td>351</td><td>55</td><td>9</td><td>287</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	ITEM	NUMBER OF PATIENTS EVACUATED IN DEC 67	TOTAL NUMBER OF PATIENTS RECEIVED	NUMBER OF PATIENTS RECEIVED IN DEC 67	NUMBER OF PATIENTS EVACUATED TO OTHER HOSPITALS	NUMBER OF PATIENTS UNDER MED TREATMENT AS OF THE END OF DEC 67	7	43	98	25		73	8	41	33	14		69	10	1	74		8	66	11	28	36	16	1	79	TOTAL	123	351	55	9	287	
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	<p>Document further reports that the average number of patients receiving medical treatment at the Convalescence [Camp] on any given day was 276 men.</p> <p><u>Item 5.</u> Health Statistical Report discloses that during the period 16 Nov to 15 Dec 67, nine patients received medical treatment at the Convalescence [Camp], 10 at the Dispensary and two others at the Hospital. Document points out that 37.3% of the unit strength were treated for common diseases, 28.6% were on duty, 8.2% were treated for battle, 11.1% for training and 10.8% for other causes. Document also states that 100% of the men were fit.</p>																																					

STATEMENT

On the morning of 4 January 1968, the 188th Assault Helicopter Company was involved in operations in support of Special Forces Detachment B-36. Nine "Black Widow" aircraft were assigned TDY to Tay Ninh East to assist Detachment B-36 in counter insurgency operations which were to be conducted over a thirty day period. On 4 January 1968, Detachment B-36 had planned to insert two ambush patrols in the vicinity of coordinates XT113965 and XT088831. The "Black Widow" ships lifted off at 0620 hours from Tay Ninh East, with a full load of troops and proceeded to the two areas that had been designated for troop insertions, LZ "Rosie" and LZ "Nora". The objective of the mission was to attempt to acquire prisoners and documents.

First light found the "Black Widow" ships approaching the indicated LZ's. Two aircraft inserted their troops into LZ "Rosie" and two others inserted their troops into LZ "Nora". After completing the insertion the flight returned to Tay Ninh for refuelling. Refueling completed, the flight proceeded to Trai Be to stand by for further instructions.

The ground troops in LZ "Nora" became engaged in fierce and heavy fighting with an enemy force of unknown size. Finding themselves surrounded, the ground commander radioed for an immediate emergency insertion of reinforcements. Two "Black Widow" aircraft returned to Tay Ninh East and picked up the needed additional troops, while the rest of the flight proceeded to the embattled LZ. The three "Black Widow" gunships began assisting the ground troops, making numerous gun runs. Two aircraft orbited the area waiting to pick up wounded personnel. Still another "Black Widow" aircraft, the C & C ship, orbited immediately overhead the hard-hit patrol, directing and co-ordinating the other "Black Widow" ships. The two aircraft containing reinforcements arrived at LZ "Nora" and inserted their troops, then returned to Trai Be with the rest of the "Black Widow" flight until the area could be secured. While shut down at Trai Be, the two aircraft that had inserted troops into the LZ related to the rest of the flight that they had received small arms fire from the south side of the LZ. A radio message from the ground commander in LZ "Nora" requested two ships to extract several critically wounded men. Aircraft number 205 and aircraft number 122 responded to the ground commander's request. The crews of the two aircraft were:

A/C#205: AC WO Richard C. Rhodes	A/C#122: AC Gerald W. Doht
P WO Kjell T. Tollefsen	P WO George M. Jones
CE PFC John L. Charlebois	CE SP4 Tim M. Wingerd
G SP4 John H. Newcomer	G SP4 Robert E. Mattheiss

CAPT.

Both aircraft commanders had considered the fact that the enemy fire had been received from the southern side of the LZ and Captain Doht requested gunship suppression in the suspected enemy positions. The door gunners on the two slicks were also instructed to suppress the suspected area on departure. While approaching the LZ and while sitting on the ground on-loading casualties both aircraft received a constant barrage of small arms fire. When all casualties were aboard, both ships came to a hover, did a pedal turn then attempted to depart the LZ. Aircraft number 205 received several hits and the aircraft commander, Warrant Officer Rhodes, radioed that he was going down with partial power. Aircraft number 122, followed the aircraft down and witnessed it hit the ground and roll on its' right side. Without hesitation, Captain Doht and Warrant Officer Jones landed their aircraft near the downed aircraft and deployed all able-bodied men aboard their ship to set up a perimeter of defense around the aircraft. While on the ground, Captain Doht's crew learned that Specialist Fourth Class Newcomer, the downed aircraft's gunner, had been pinned beneath

(cont. 2)

the aircraft. Captain Doht and Warrant Officer Jones took immediate action in an attempt to free the trapped gunner. A rope was attached to the downed aircraft and aircraft 122 attempted to raise it enough to allow Specialist Fourth Class Newcomer to be pulled from beneath the aircraft. The rope broke and the first attempt was a failure. Another attempt was initiated, only this time two ropes were used. Specialist Fourth Class Wingerd and Specialist Fourth Class Matthis displayed extraordinary professionalism in guiding and directing ^{THEIR} pilots while they were attempting to raise the downed aircraft. The attempt appeared to be successful until the pinned man began to experience great pain. The attempt had to be aborted. Both crews knew that the entire area was infested with NVA soldiers and yet when ordered to leave the man beneath the aircraft until the Chinook could lift it, they refused to give up and leave him. Specialist Fourth Class Charlebois asked for five more minutes in which to free Specialist Newcomer and was granted the extra time. (While the previous attempts to lift the aircraft was in progress, another aircraft had landed and left a man on the ground before taking off again. This man, Specialist Fifth Class Demmis M. Wolfe, had requested his pilot to let him stay on the ground and assist the others in the rescue effort). The men knew they must work quickly if they were to free the pinned man in five minutes. The only hope was brute strength. Specialist Wolfe and PFC Charlebois physically lifted the aircraft enough for Warrant Officer Tollefsen, who had gotten inside the aircraft, and Warrant Officer Rhodes to pull Specialist Newcomer from beneath the aircraft. The four men had succeeded in freeing the gunner and very possibly saved his life. Assisted by Specialist Wingerd and Specialist Mattheiss the four men carried Specialist Newcomer to aircraft 122 and all those still on the ground boarded 122, and returned to the 45th Medical Evacuation Hospital in Tay Ninh West.

After refueling Captain Doht and his crew returned to the area of operation and found that the area around the downed aircraft had been secured by additional troops and that all the troops in LZ "Nora" had been extracted. The C & C ship told Captain Doht to proceed to LZ "Rosie", orbit and await further orders to extract the troops. The immediate area surrounding LZ "Rosie" was reported to be secure, however the unit had been in contact earlier which prompted their extraction. The ground commander requested his men be extracted and the "Black Widow" aircraft were told to enter the PZ, one at a time. Captain Doht and his crew were the first to enter the PZ. The approach was made to an area which at some time during the morning had burned. As the aircraft neared the ground, it became engulfed in ashes and went into IFR conditions. Skillfully Captain Doht and Warrant Officer Jones lowered their aircraft to the ground. As the ashes cleared, the friendly troops were approaching the aircraft. Without warning, the aircraft came under heavy enemy ground fire and was struck in the left rear of the fuselage by an RPG round. Both pilots went into action immediately and attempted to get the ship off the ground, only to have the RPM bleed off to 4000 before the aircraft was two feet in the air. The RPG round had caused the loss of all cyclic control and only through the skill of both pilots was the aircraft settled back down on the ground without rolling over. Although already having sustained multiple shrapnel wounds from the RPG round, Specialist Wingerd jumped from his seat and proceeded to Captain Doht's door in an attempt to get the Captain out of the ship. Just as Specialist Wingerd was about to open the door, another RPG round hit the left skid, one and one half feet aft of the forward cross tube. The explosion knocked Specialist Wingerd to the ground seriously wounding him. Captain Doht realizing the seriousness of the situation, quickly departed his seat, exited between the seats

(cont. 3)

and instructed Specialist Matthess to dismount his machine gun and take up a defensive position outside the aircraft. Captain Doht then proceeded to make his way, still under heavy fire, to the friendly position some fifty feet away where he began organizing and directing a defense. Back at the aircraft Warrant Officer Jones was attempting to get out of his door when an enemy automatic weapon pinpointed him and began to fire. Bullets flew everywhere, six bullets coming within a fraction of an inch of hitting Warrant Officer Jones. Exiting between the seats and jumping out the left cargo door, Warrant Officer Jones directed his first thoughts to his critically wounded crewchief. He knelt next to Specialist Wingerd, protected only by the suppressive fire being provided by Specialist Matthess. Warrant Officer Jones relieved Specialist Matthess on his M-60 and instructed him to apply first aid to Specialist Wingerd. The entire area still under heavy enemy ground fire, Specialist Matthess made his way back to the ship from his machine gun position and undaunted by the bullets spanking the ground all around him climbed back onboard the ship to retrieve a first aid kit. Bullet after bullet whined by Specialist Matthess as he went to the side of his fallen comrade. Specialist Matthess proceeded to apply first aid until a Special Forces man came out to their position, in the middle of the open PZ. The Special Forces soldier and Warrant Officer Jones were to provide suppressive fire while Specialist Matthess carried Specialist Wingerd to the friendly position. Picking Wingerd up was not an easy job for Matthess, for Wingerd out-weighed him by seventy pounds. Falling several times enroute to the friendly position, Matthess continually returned to his feet and pushed onward, carrying Wingerd to the safety of the tree line. After both members of his crew had made their way safely to the friendly position, Warrant Officer Jones and the Special Forces soldier halted their suppressive fire and made their way through the enemy fire, to the tree line. As soon as he had made it to the tree line, Warrant Officer Jones went to check on Wingerd's condition. He found Matthess in need of more bandages to check the bleeding. Bravely going from man to man, up and down the tree line, Warrant Officer Jones found the needed bandages. Captain Doht had in the mean time returned to the aircraft to assist the other soldiers wounded by the RPG rounds and subsequent enemy fire. While aiding the wounded men, completely unprotected from enemy fire, Captain Doht received a bullet in the left side of his head. Warrant Officer Jones not knowing about Captain Doht's wound, was inquiring as to the present situation of the ground troops and learned of Captain Doht's wound from one of the men. Warrant Officer Jones took up a position on the tree line and continually put down his machine gun to check on Wingerd's condition. Matthess applied first aid and talked to Wingerd to try to comfort him until several "Robin Hood" aircraft arrived with reinforcements. Shortly thereafter an aeromedical evacuation aircraft arrived and Warrant Officer Jones and Specialist Matthess carried Specialist Wingerd to the aircraft. The entire way to the Medical evacuation ship and back again to the tree line, Warrant Officer Jones unsuccessfully searched for Captain Doht. Another "Med Evac" aircraft arrived and Warrant Officer Jones and Specialist Matthess helped carry the wounded to the ship. The area was still very "hot" so both men took up defensive positions until more reinforcement were inserted into the area. A "Robin Hood" aircraft (containing "Robin Hood 6") picked up both Warrant Officer Jones and Specialist Matthess and took them to Katum, where Warrant Officer Jones learned that Captain Doht had been taken out of the PZ and was still alive. The valorous actions of the crews brought about the accomplishment of the evacuation of the pinned gunner and contributed immeasurably to the success of the mission.