

DASPO Films 101st Airborne Division
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During the 10,000 day war, there was little reason for paratroopers jumping into combat. HEAR-SAY has that during the entire Vietnam Era, there were only three paratroop jumps. I personally only heard of one, made by a small contingent of the 173rd Airborne Brigade. There were two main reasons for so few parachute jumps. The first, was that most fighting occurred in the jungles, not in open fields. Parachuting into the jungles would be counter-productive. Producing more casualties from the troops getting tangled in the trees, than once they were on the ground. Secondly, during Vietnam, helicopters were the preferred method of getting combat troops into combat.

Yet, preparedness for just such jumps was an integral part of the 101st Division. Jumping into combat was part of the units designation and their primary mission in war. The paratroopers had unique credentials of having completed airborne training. Not having the division at the highest state of readiness, to conduct their primary mission, would adversely affect the unit's readiness and be dereliction of duty for the commanding general.

To keep the unit's skills honed, in the early days of 1967, the 101st Airborne Division, based at Kontum, conducted three days of extensive training in airborne tactics. Teaching all members of the division how to properly wear the parachute. How to tumble correctly when landing, to reduce injuries. They were instructed in other skills the soldiers needed to know before making an actual parachute jump. The two man DASPO Team flew into Kontum and immediately began filming members of the division boarding C-130 aircraft for the actual jump from 3500 feet onto the Kontum airbase facility.

After writing, but before shipping this story to the Vietnam Archive, the History Channel confirmed two other parachute jumps had been conducted in Vietnam, by the Mike Force, 5th Special Forces Group.

William Foulke
William Foulke
DASPO Member
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