

FIRST TEAM SKIES UP



Cavalair
final issue

Skytrooper reflects ...



The 1st Air Cavalry Division is going home. Going home after almost six years of combat duty in the Republic of Vietnam.

The First Team, having served in combat longer than any other U.S. division, can now look back with a great deal of satisfaction on its many accomplishments.

Maj. Gen. George W. Putnam, Jr., commanding general of the 1st Cav, has pointed out that Skytroopers have served with unequalled gallantry, devotion and skill.

Let us reflect how many times have we reflected this past year Vietnam half-way around the world 365 days long Bien Hoa Mace Phuoc Vinh Snuffy Dragonhead Silver Buttons Cambodia! the "bush" you've gone a long way baby! Airmobility hooks, hueys cobras LOHs you went a long way, brother, and you came back!

People blood sweat tears love brotherhood sharing together we've gone a long way, brother, and we've made it!

Action we've seen a lot not towards an end of destruction, but rather in the pursuit of a goal of permitting the South Vietnamese to manage their own affairs and live in peace

ARVNs they've come a long way baby!

First you are, brother first full division in Vietnam first division to have served in all four military regions first division-size unit to win the Presidential Unit Citation in Vietnam first airmobile division first into Cambodia!

A Year In The 'Nam a long year yet a short year a 365 day race towards DEROs an extension with an ETS at the end waiting for that mail listening to those "war stories" a year will I ever make it? a two-diget midget monsoon rice paddies together with my buddies (when you can't be with the one you love, love the one you're with) a year how I've changed no more hassles single-diget midget thoughts of that Freedom Bird it's almost over!

Vietnam papa san you bic 300 P tee tee beaucoup the village rice rice rice your hoochmaid a beautiful people!

Vietnam the U.S. Army the 1st Air Cavalry Division we've seen a lot experienced a lot and have learned even more! experienced a lot and have learned even more! Vietnam it don't mean nothin' yet it has meant everything it is an experience none will forget!

The effort in Vietnam has been highly controversial and may not be seen in proper perspective for many decades, when the younger generation of today is the older generation.

It has been an effort to preserve, not destroy, and has faced squarely the reality of man in the international environment.

Each in his own heart knows the depth of his contribution, the extent of his service. To those who have fallen, we owe an unpayable debt. Those who depart the Cav for home have much to remember. Those who remain have much to defend.

But the one important thing is the fact that we've been through it together, in the cause of freedom, and we have made it. We've made it, and because of us, others will also make it. Vietnam will make it.

There is much on which we can look with pride. Thank you, Skytroopers!

Stand DOWN? I thought you said ...

For God and country

Gratitude is key

"Not that I complain of want; for I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content." Philippians 4:11

A young soldier in Vietnam once said that he would not be content until he got home again. There is in man a nostalgia for home, family and friends.

The word "nostalgia" comes from two Greek words: nostos, meaning "return home", and algos, meaning "pain." Originally nostalgia meant an incurable sickness - incurable by everything except home.

Men overseas are glad when they can return home, but during their tours they learn the value of relationships which they had once taken for granted. They also learn to adjust to new surroundings and to content themselves with their work.

One way to content yourself is to develop the art of gratitude. But what do we have to be grateful for? Anyone who has learned to cultivate the art of gratitude will find contentment and happiness in every situation in life, and will make the most of his opportunities. Even in prison Paul was content because he was grateful for the chance to serve the churches he had established by writing letters to them. He did not fuss and fume about his sad plight, and he did not complain about his unjust treatment.

Paul learned to be content with his surroundings and make the most of them. The secret of his success was his gratitude. Gratitude is the key to contentment. Be grateful, and your life will be specially blessed and enriched.

For the young soldier during these days, there will be many changes and many new opportunities. It is well to thank God for past experiences and past opportunities to serve. Every burden borne, every heavy trial endured and every difficult experience lived can deepen and enlarge the human personality. Thank God for it all. Every single human made a little better through experience and trial makes all humanity a little better. Thank God for it all.



Vol 5 No 15 1st Air Cav Division, RVN April 14, 1971

The CAVALAIR is published weekly under the supervision of the Information Office, 1st Air Cavalry Division, APO 96490, Phone: 5289, and is an authorized unofficial publication. The command newspaper is printed by Pacific Stars and Stripes, Tokyo, Japan.

Opinions expressed in the CAVALAIR are those of its editorial staff and are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army. The CAVALAIR is printed in the offset tabloid process.

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Bi-weekly
for 3d Bde



LEGALLY
SPEAKING

By Capt. James Linebarger

The Cav is going home! For those of you who are actually getting on that DEROs or ETS flight, the best legal advice that you can receive is, "Don't blow it now!"

As the time grows nearer, it is very easy to allow yourself to get into trouble. Drug violations, haircut and uniform violations and disrespect to officers and NCOs are offenses that occur most frequently as the "Short-timer's Syndrome" strikes. Such offenses can cause you to spend an extended tour in Vietnam.

For example, the day before your ETS, you may be picked up for possession of a drug. This would cause your records to be flagged which means that you could neither DEROs or ETS. Since it takes from three to four weeks for laboratory reports to be returned, the trial would be at least a month away. This is a long time to wait when you could have been out of the Army.

Other violations to watch out for are customs violations. As you process through 90th Replacement Battalion and at the arrival point in CONUS, very detailed customs inspections are conducted. Articles like poncho liners, fatigues, parts of weapons, and other government issue are contraband items. If found at 90th Replacement Battalion, that may give cause for you to be returned to your old unit for disciplinary action.

Many of us would like to take certain items home with us but

the resulting trouble makes the cost very high. Another point to remember is that the customs inspectors know all the tricks.

Be sure when you are taking war trophies home that they are properly registered and that you have the necessary paperwork showing possession.

As you go to your new units, remember that JAG officers are available to help you. While our primary interest is military justice, our greatest contact with most of you is in the field of legal assistance. But in whatever field we are working, our primary interest is in helping you solve those legal problems. So we ask you, if these problems do exist, see a legal officer.

For those remaining behind, legal officers will also be here to help you when legal problems arise. During standdowns it is very common for personal items either to be lost or stolen. In these situations, it is proper for you to file claims through your JAG office. Processing time for this type of claim normally takes from two to four weeks. Right now a point of interest is income tax. This is due to be filed on April 15; however by virtue of your being in a combat zone, filing income tax is not required until 180 days after you arrive home. For those who would like help in filing, Captain Truscott, of our office, is the tax expert.

For those who will remain with the 3d Bde. (Separate), the JAG offices will be located in Buildings 3107 and 3110. These are in the old 15th Administration Co. area.

This Standdown issue contains quite a few features. Pages 3-5 provide coverage of the March 26 Standdown Ceremony, and explains how a Division reacted on the spur of the moment, even to the last; pages 6-7 illustrate an artist's concept of the Cav's airmobility. Don Chapman drew this while with the Cav in 1970. On page 8 you will find the staff's election for Standdown Gal. Who else but Raquel?

Page 9 relates the story of a Cav pilot who found himself downed in Cambodia and fought for his survival for four days and three nights. Pages 10 and 11 include articles on the Cav's history, and page 12 shows the progress the Cav has made.

Read up and be merry!

The Cavalair



CAV COUNTRY all the way. Skytroopers board a C-123 to make wherever they land home. For Skytroopers of the 1st Air Cav, Cav country has been all four tactical regions in Vietnam and Cambodia too (U.S. Army Photo).

From West to Far East

PHUOC VINH - The helicopter and M-16 have replaced the horse, saber and breech-loaded Springfield rifle, but the Cavalryman still responds to the cry "Saddle up!"

104 yrs. of History
Across 104 years of recorded history the core of the 1st Air Cavalry Division - the individual soldier - has changed little. The man who drove the communists out of Vietnam's Central Highlands is the same rugged, determined, and professionally qualified soldier that opened the American West in the 1880s.

It was these same Cavalry Regiments that settled the Old West - the 1st, 5th, 7th and 8th - that originally made up the 1st Cavalry Division when the unit was activated on September 13, 1921, making it almost 50 years old.

These units brought with them a proud military history written on the battlefields of the Indian Wars.

Probably the most publicized of these regiments was the 7th Cavalry. Activated in 1866 at Ft. Riley, Kan., this is the unit that General George A. Custer immortalized when he and his "Garry Owen" troopers fought to the death against the Sioux in the Battle of the Little Big Horn.

Also in 1866, the 8th Cavalry and 9th Cavalry Regiments were formed and elements of those fighting units are still with the division today.

The 8th Cav Regiment was organized to fill the need for a mounted fighting force to repel the hostile Indians of the Southwest. Among the legendary feats accomplished by the 8th was a 2,000 mile march by horseback from Ft. Concho, Tex., to Montana and South Dakota. Today this unit is the 1st Bde's 1st and 2d Battalions.

The 9th Cav Regiment, famous for its unique reconnaissance mission with the Division, also had Indian War exploits in its heritage. This was the unit that led to the defeat of the rebellious Apache and Comanche tribes of the Southwest. The 9th Cav, however, did not join the division's rolls until 1957.

Lt. Col. Robert E. Lee
The oldest of the 1st Air Cav's elements was formed in 1855 when Congress redesignated the 2d Cavalry Regiment and

formed the 5th Cav. At the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, the unit's first commander resigned to lead the armies of the South. He was Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Lee. In later years, the 5th would distinguish itself in such battles as *Vickburg, Bull Run, and the Shenandoah Valley.* Members of the unit also watched at Appomattox when Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant. The 5th is currently represented by the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 5th Cav under the 2d Brigade.

From such a heritage the 1st Cavalry Division was molded. But 22 years would pass from that September 13, 1921, Organization Day before the Division would get a chance to prove itself in combat.

In February of 1943 the division received alert orders and began turning in its horses and changed over to a dismounted unit.

The Division's first operation in the Pacific came on February 29th, 1944, when it made an amphibious landing on Los Negros Island, part of the Admiralty Islands of the Bismarck Archipelago.

More than 7,000 Japanese fell before the 1st Cav's guns, and the unit could look with pride on its first taste of combat in World War II.

The cry was "Saddle up!" and the division moved north toward its next target - the Philippines.

The Pacific commander, General Douglas MacArthur, gave the division this message:

"Go to Manila; free the prisoners at Santo Tomas; take Malacanang Place and the Legislative Building."

The order was brief but big. At 0001 hours on February 1, 1945, a "Flying Column" from the Division jumped off on a 100-mile lightning thrust to Manila. Sixty-six hours later it crashed into surprised Japanese defenders on the outskirts of the city and freed the Santo Tomas prisoners. The remainder of the division followed in the wake of the task force and Manila was under Allied control.

The price of defeat for the Japanese was high, as 14,114 Sons of Nippon died in the battle.

Second "First"
The division scored its second "first" at the end of the war when General MacArthur

ordered it to accompany him to the Japanese capital, Tokyo, and serve as part of the Eighth Army's occupation force.

The Cav performed that mission until early July of 1950. In late June the North Koreans started attacking South Korea and the division was ordered to the immediate assistance of the South Korean government.

The First Team was first again as it scored an impressive victory. It rolled into the North Korean capital at Pyongyang.

The First Team was to score yet another first when President Lyndon B. Johnson issued these words:

"I have today ordered to Vietnam the Airmobile Division."

It was the first time an American President has publicly announced the deployment of an Army division to a combat zone before the actual departure of the unit.

The Division, now designated the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), was the first full division committed to the South Vietnamese fight against Communism. Five years later the First Team would again be first, this time into Cambodia.

Colors still stand

PHUOC VINH - Ask any member of that certain airborne division up north somewhere. He'll tell you all about it - how the Cav lost its colors in some little-known battle during the Korean Conflict, and how it can never return to the States.

The scene is set just south of Unsan, Korea, near the "Camel's Head Bend" on the Nammyon River. It is the 1st of November, 1950.

The 1st, 2d, and 3d Bns. of the 8th Cavalry Regiment had been providing security to the north, west and south for the regimental CP located at Unsan. Elements of the 115th and 116th Divisions of the Chinese Communist Forces had been battering the ROK 15th Regiment protecting the east and north-east approaches to the city.

With the 1st and 2d Bns. in heavy contact, the 8th Cav Regiment CO ordered a withdrawal to the south. The plan was for the 3d Bn. to cover the withdrawal.

The morning of Nov. 2 found the 3/8th Cav formed into two islands of resistance.

The 1st and 2d Bns. of the 5th Cav tried to break through to them from the south, but the dug-in Chinese on "Bugle Hill" held and the 5th Cav pulled back

The night brought a heavy bombardment of 120mm mortar fire and a mass attack. During the lull that followed, the men of the 3d Bn. crawled out to retrieve weapons and ammunition from the enemy dead. Their own ammo was spent.

The following morning nearly 1000 Chinese were found dead outside the perimeter.

The night of Nov. 3 was the same: another barrage, a mass attack and then more groping in the dark, policing up the desperately-needed ammunition.

By the afternoon of the 6th the action of the 3d Bn, 8th Cav, as an organized force, had come to an end.

This unit, disgraced according to rumor, was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation in Korea. It also received the Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation and the Chryssoun Aristion Andrias (Bravery Gold Medal of Greece) for its accomplishments in Korea.

The 3d of the 8th Cav was not a color-bearing unit during the Korean Conflict. Colors were kept at regimental-level, making it impossible for it to have "lost its colors."

So, let him know how it really was.

Cav patch symbolic

PHUOC VINH - "The 1st Cav - that's where you sew the jacket onto the patch."

The remark was prompted by the size of the 1st Air Cavalry Division's gold and black unit patch, the largest and most striking in the United States Army.

Mrs. Ben H. Dorcey and her late husband Col. Dorcey, then commanding the 7th Cavalry Regiment, designed the now-famous patch in 1921.

The Dorceys had at first toyed with the idea of differently-colored patches for each regiment - the original had been made from the gold and light blue of one of the colonel's old caps - but that meant too many colors.

Finally they decided upon gold, as the most precious metal, for the shield, which was to be formed like the Norman shield

to fit the shoulders. Black was chosen because it traditionally represented headquarters, "which makes every man tops, whether he's a private or a general," said Mrs. Dorcey.

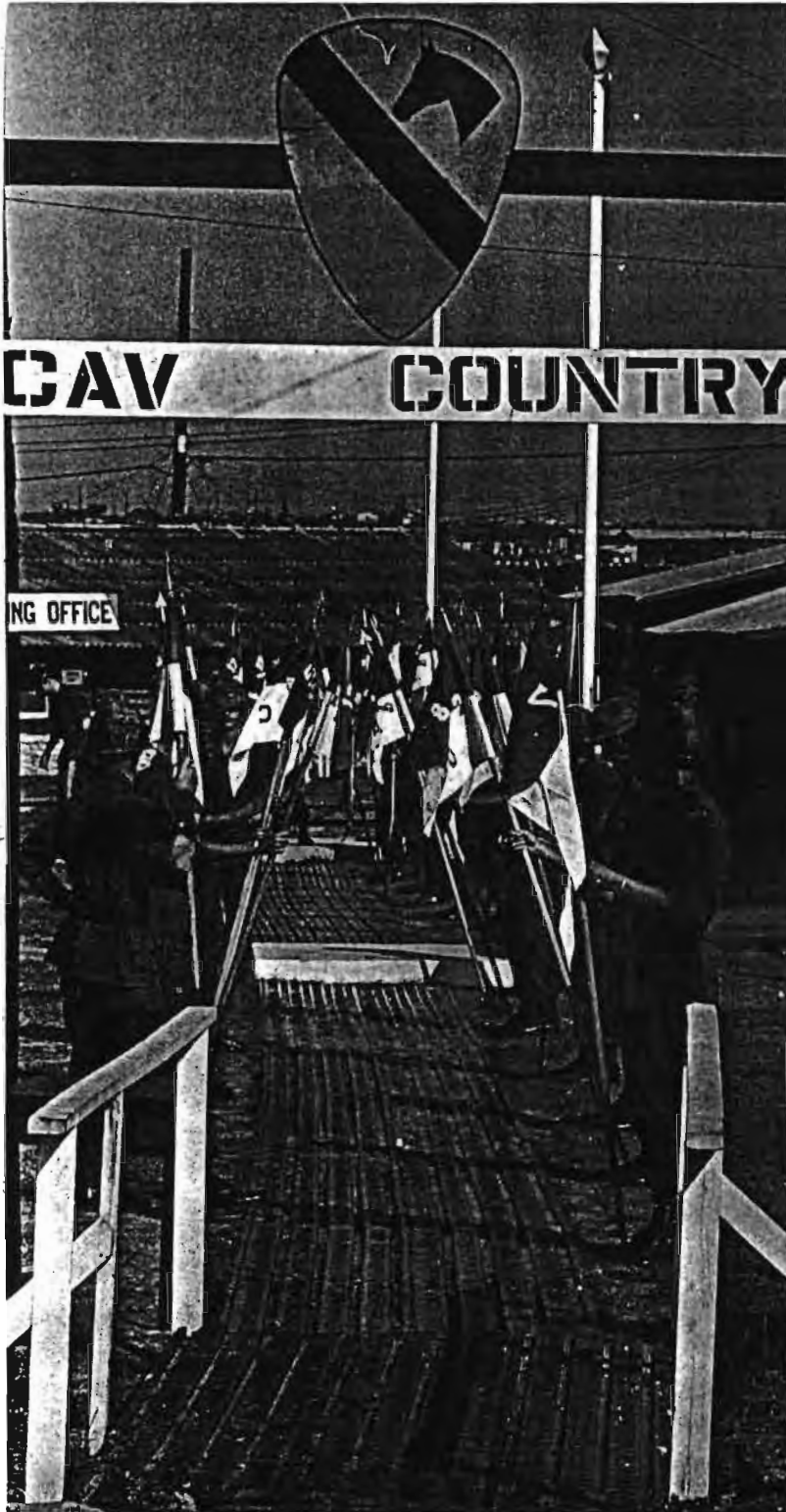
Col. Dorcey had long studied heraldry as a hobby, and Mrs. Dorcey shared her husband's interest. Their special knowledge proved useful. The shield's diagonal stripe, called a "bend" in heraldry, was familiar in the Army as the service or wound stripe, but further symbolized the leaning ladder used in days of yore to scale castle walls. It evoked the ancient battle cry of "On to Victory."

For her creative efforts and the interest she has shown in the Cav's progress, Skytroopers have bestowed upon the 86 year old Mrs. Dorcey the title of Honorary Mother of the 1st Air Cavalry Division.



TEAM WORK is necessary to get the job done when the going gets rough. Skytroopers of the 1st Air Cavalry Division operating near Song Be give each other a helping hand (U.S. Army Photo).

Standdown ceremony typifies First Team



1st Cav Guidon Bearers (top) form a greeting line for visitors to the Division's farewell ceremony. The ceremony took place Mar. 26 at the Cav's Rear Headquarter's area. Prior to the ceremony, Brig. Gen. Jonathan R. Burton, commander of troops, and his staff stand at parade rest (upper right); and at 10:30 in the morning, although the site had been moved 40 miles with only six and a half hours' notice, Generals Abrams and Putnam (lower right) walked onto the field to commence the ceremony at the scheduled time.



BIEN HOA - The ceremony was brief and simple, and it was held at a different site than the one planned six and a half hours earlier, but went off in the usual splendid tradition of the 1st Air Cavalry Division.

Simplicity was the order of the day here Mar. 26, as American and Vietnamese commanders gathered around the Cav's Rear Headquarter's area to mark the standdown of the Division. Among those in attendance were Gen. Creighton Abrams, commander of U.S. troops in Vietnam; Lt. Gen. Michael Davison, II Field Force commander; Lt. Gen. Nguyen Van Minh, commanding general of III Military Region; and MG George W. Putnam, Jr., division commander. Except for the brass sounds of the 1st Cav Band and the bright colors of the many flags, there was no big fanfare.

That the ceremony went off was remarkable in itself. Plans had been laid out for weeks to hold it in Phuoc Vinh. At four in the morning of the big day, all involved were told of the switch in sites. Reacting in the typical 1st Cav style, chopper after chopper flew workers, props, dignitaries and news media to Bien Hoa, and at exactly 10:30 that morning - the time scheduled for the ceremony to begin - Generals Abrams and Putnam walked onto the field.

Brig. Gen. Jonathan R. Burton, who assumes command of 3d Bde., 1st Cavalry Division (AM), escorted Gen. Abrams as he reviewed the troops. (cont pg. 5)



*Front page photo and photos on this page by Spec. 4 Larry Buehner.

*Freedom Bird on front page by 1Lt John Launder

Without a shot

Cav's 1st victory

PHUOC VINH — The 1st Air Cavalry Division won its first battle in Vietnam without firing a shot.

Approximately six years ago some 900 1st Cav advance party troops moved out from their temporary pup-tent city near the old An Khe airstrip to begin an hour-long march to the jungle-covered area now known as the "Golf Course."

Carrying their weapons and whatever brush-clearing tools they could muster — bowie knives, machetes, bayonets, entrenching tools and an occasional axe — the men marched in close-ordered double files down the narrow, muddy streets of An Khe. Silent, hard-eyed Vietnamese villagers along the street watched the suspicious intruders.

The Skytroopers made the one-hour march along a rudimentary cattle path, and then started cutting through the dense jungle with their hand tools.

At lunchtime, the men carefully packed all uneaten items from their C-rations for

the return trip. Darkness was rapidly approaching as the sweat-covered Skytroopers again marched through the village, this time handing out left-over candy, gum, cigarettes, and other items from their noon meal.

Adult villagers, still silent and still suspicious, accepted the gifts and left, leaving the crowd of soldiers and three and four-year-old youngsters.

The following morning, the men of the First Team again set out. This time as they marched through An Khe they were greeted by smiles and waves from the adults and youngsters.

Several Viet Cong informers were soon pointed out to Vietnamese Government Police; one VC suspect was overcome by two farmers who dragged him to the police station. Many other Viet Cong informers fled town during the afternoon siesta, and the afternoon walk through An Khe had all the aspects of a liberation parade.

The 1st Air Cavalry Division had won its first battle.



CAV PATCH on the shoulder of a plateau that serves as a Fire Support Base in the 1st Air Cavalry Division's AO is a sign of distinction; a welcoming from the air and a warning 1st Cav has moved in (U.S. Army Photo).

Garry Owen tradition

PHUOC VINH — The 1st Air Cavalry Division's 3d "Garry Owen" Bde., owner of a proud history, has taken part in some of the toughest fighting in the Vietnam conflict.

After spending four months battling the 2d North Vietnamese Army Division and killing 2,454 enemy in the Que Son Valley, 3d Bde. moved to Camp Evans, a Marine post 15 miles northwest of Hue, and a former 1st Cav Base Camp. Almost immediately upon moving there the Brigade was thrust into the Battle of Hue.

The 2d Bn., 12th Cav (under operational control of the 3d) made first contact with an estimated NVA battalion plus, at Thon La Chu, a suspected NVA Regimental headquarters four kilometers northwest of Hue. Bolstered by the 1st Bn., 7th Cav and the 5th Bn., 7th Cav and the 2/12th, the unit swept through the hamlet and pressed on toward Hue.

Hue
By the end of February, 1966, the three battalions had sealed off the city to the northwest, west and southwest, preventing the NVA from resupplying or reinforcing soldiers in Hue and forcing the

enemy collapse of resistance inside the ancient imperial capital. The battle included some of the most intense fighting the 1st Cav had ever seen.

"If we hadn't gone into the battle when we did," said one high 1st Cav official, "the NVA might have been able to reinforce inside the city and we would have had a much harder fight on our hands."

Following the Battle of Hue, the 3d Bde. spearheaded the 1st Cav's drive — Operation Pegasus — to relieve the 77-day siege of Marines at Khe Sanh. The 2d Bn., 7th Cav was the first unit to move through the gates and walk into the camp while Marines lined the road and watched.

"The Marines seemed pretty happy to see us," said MSgt. Jack E. Shroyer, 2d Bn., 7th Cav. "They were standing on top of their bunkers, waving at us, taking our pictures and throwing us C-rations." The relief of Khe Sanh freed the Marines for patrols in the surrounding hills in an attempt to flush the remaining NVA units from the area.

When the 1st Cav began Operation Delaware-Lamson 216, designed to sever a major NVA supply route through the communist-dominated A Shau Valley, it was again the 3d Bde. that led the way. The brigade moved into the valley with such speed that the NVA often fled, leaving behind valuable equipment.

Before the operation was one week old, 3d Bde. had captured a dozen 37mm Russian-made antiaircraft weapons, the first ever found by any unit in Vietnam. Only days before these weapons filled the skies above the valley with the greatest volume of antiaircraft fire 1st Air Cavalry pilots had ever seen.

"We've been very effective," said LTC Alfred E. Spry, 1st Cav G-2 officer. "We've caused him some severe difficulties with infiltration and the moving of heavy equipment."

Westward

The 7th Cavalry Regiment, "Garry Owen," was organized July 28, 1866, at Ft. Riley, Kan. One of the regiment's first missions was the protection of the dauntless settlers winding their way westward to new homes after the Civil War.

Among the earliest leaders was Brevet Major General George A. Custer, who for ten years led the regiment into combat against the Sioux, Cheyennes and Nez Perce Indians.

"Garry Owen," the regiment's marching song, selected by Custer, sounded out in sub-zero weather as the 7th Cavalry charged in an attack on Black Kettles' band of Indians during the Battle of Washita in November of 1868.

Then came the Battle of the Little Big Horn. Deploying his regiment into three columns, Custer led 264 men down the river. There he was surprised by an overwhelming force of Indians concealed in the ravine, and he and his followers were annihilated.

Despite the outcome, the Battle of the Little Big Horn distinguished the 7th Cavalry in setting a pattern for fighting men in courage and devotion to their country beyond the call of duty. Fourteen troopers from this battle were awarded the Medal of Honor.

The "Garry Owen" unit upheld that pattern during World War II and during the Korean War; the 3d Bde. is upholding it now, as it continues to produce courageous men devoted to their country; men who fight in jungles, mountain and the rice paddies of Vietnam.

"Owen's garden"
Author and date of the marching song are unknown. It first became popular in a pantomime called "Harlequin Amulet" which played in 1800 in Ireland. The title is derived from the location "Garryowen," a suburb of Limerick in Ireland. In Gaelic, Garryowen means "Owen's garden." The Fifth Royal Irish Lancers, who once sang the song at drinking bouts, were stationed at Garryowen.

Thomas Moore, the poet who wrote "The Last Rose of Summer," wrote the poem circa 1807 called "The Daughters of Erin," and it was sung to the tune of "Garryowen." The tune was first printed, as far as it is known, in a collection of Scottish dance tunes, "Gow's Repository of Original Scotch Dances" in 1802.

Since the song has been associated with the 7th Cavalry for so many years, the soldiers have come to be called "Garry Owens."



LOW BIRD, high bird team up in Vietnam skies. LOH doorgunner, with M-60 across his lap, searches for enemy as the Cobra gunship comes in on a dive (U.S. Army Photo).



NAV-CAV operations are under way as Skytroopers from CO. A, 2d Bn., 12th Cav move down a river near Saigon. The watermobile operation adds yet another dimension to the Air Cav Division (U.S. Army Photo by Spec. 5 DJ. Meyers).

Pilot fights for survival for 4 days

by 1Lt Ben Garcia

PHUOC VINH — The Light Observation Helicopter was flying treetop level at about 80 knots. It was about 2:30 in the afternoon of Mar. 10, and WO1 Craig Jeffrey Houser, a pilot from the 1st Air Cav Division, along with his gunner and observer, carefully scanned the Cambodian countryside for NVA.

For these men, as well as for the Cobra crew that was flying highbird for them, it was actually a routine visual recon mission — although no aerial flight of this sort is ever routine.

Suddenly the jungle below opened up with fire, and the LOH crew found itself plummeting to the ground.

This marked the beginning of a four-day leg journey for Houser, one he swears he'll never forget.

The Crash

"We were working north of a river and were going to work another location," related Houser as he recollected the crash, "when I heard an explosion and felt a jolt in the aircraft. I believe we took a B-40 rocket right in the engine. I remember looking at my instruments, which were falling as fast as the bird. There wasn't even enough time for communication between myself and my crew. I remember thinking to myself, 'I'm hit! I'm hit!'"

The LOH crashed on the bank of the river and went right into the water, exploding on impact.



WO1 Craig Jeffrey Houser, LOH pilot with the 1st Air Cav Div, again takes stock of his 'survival equipment' as he recalls his four-day trek to safety (U.S. Army Photo by 1Lt John Crockrell)

Although underwater, the 21 year old warrant officer realized he was surrounded by fire, so he managed to get his helmet and his shoulder harness off, get out of the cockpit and float to the surface. He swam to the bank, crawled out of the water, and saw the river and part of the bank immersed in fire.

Houser believes his life was saved in part by his Nomex flight suit and gloves, which are made of synthetic material that chars before it burns. "I'm sold on this Nomex gear, believe me," he stated. "It probably gave me a few more seconds to avoid getting totally cooked."

As it was, his face and left wrist did sustain burns, and he was temporarily blinded in the left eye. Houser was aware of these injuries as he made his way into the bush, stopping about fifty meters from the bank.

Drawing Fire

He was safe for a while at least, since fortunately he was on the south side of the river. The north side was infested with NVA, who were still firing at the accompanying Cobra, manned by CW2 Paul Foti. Foti's actions were heroic and he was able to distract the NVA from the fallen bird, in hopes of allowing the crew to escape from the enemy.

"I thought of shooting up a flare," asserted Houser, "but I was afraid Foti would take it as just another tracer, and I knew the flare would reveal my position. Another Cobra came in a little later, but did not see me, either."

Soon after the skirmish had ended, the pilot realized he was in enemy territory, alone and with no distinct idea of his location. He took stock of his possessions, and found he had his .38 pistol, a flare gun and a Buck knife that his father had given him. He also had his survival compass ("I once thought it looked like a Mickey Mouse watch...now I know better."), which eventually proved instrumental in bringing him back to safety.

"I knew that I was about 20 to 30 klicks north northwest of Snuol," he recalled, "if I could find Highway 13 and follow it all the way to that city, I'd be alright."

Day 1

So, utilizing the compass and the sun, Houser began his trek to freedom. He traveled about 1000 meters the first day and then found refuge for the night. He was up and moving at the crack of dawn and didn't stop until midday. He rested a bit and then started moving again until he found a stream bed with a small pool of stagnant water, which he drank anyway. Up to then, except for the first day when crossed the river, Houser had had nothing to drink or eat. He decided to bed down about 75 meters away from the water.

That night was traumatic in itself. "I had no idea how far I'd traveled," he remembered. "since all this time I had to zigzag because of the terrain. My face was one entire scab from the burns, and flies kept circling it like vultures."

"Physically, I was not in good shape, but mentally I kept telling myself, 'You lived through the crash.... you have to go on.' I just knew that if I kept a south southeasterly course, I'd be alright."

Day 3

The third day rolled around, and Houser continued

the march. That day he started finding hootches and rice caches (one cache contained over a ton of rice). "I tried to eat some of it shelled, but it was just too gross for me," he stated.

He walked through sparse trees, open clearings and jungles, and at the close of day found another small stream bed. He climbed to a knoll about 50 meters away, camouflaged himself well and prepared to sack out for the night. That night he heard what appeared to be about three NVA walking by. They apparently did not spot him, and Houser did not make any attempt to distract them.

"All this time I'd been thinking about a lot of things," the Connerville, Indiana native related, "I thought about my crew, my family, my friends...I had been traveling more and more each day, so I knew I was holding out. So on the fourth day I decided I would keep going until I found help."

Thoroughly psyched up, Houser proceeded. He encountered rice paddies, friendly hootches, NVA hootches ("I was on the lookout, but those NVA hootches are so well - camouflaged that I almost stumbled upon them. Lucky for me they were unoccupied."), and wild roosters. His stomach implored him to shoot at them, but he had gone too long to take that risk.

Pay Day

That morning he hit Highway 13. "I knew it was the highway because of its black top. I didn't know where I was, but I felt great. I decided to walk along the road."

Dangerous?

"Yes, it was dangerous, but I was extremely tired. Anyway, half a mile later I hit a rubber plantation...by now I was ecstatic...and a dirt road which paralleled Highway 13, so I took it."

A quarter of a mile later, he spotted two Cambodian males on bikes coming in his direction. He stopped them, and after a few minutes of totally useless attempts at communication, Houser managed to 'borrow' one of their bikes, confident now that he would soon reach Snuol.

He had been riding about a quarter of a mile when he saw a jeep approaching. Unsure of whether it was friendly or not, Houser rode his bike off the road and hid. As the jeep passed him, he thought they were ARVNs, but he still wasn't taking any chances.

Finally, after four days and three nights of fighting for his survival, Houser saw another ARVN, who understood enough to take him to the compound and to the proper authorities. Minutes later, he saw what he later described as the most beautiful sight in the world.

"I saw this chopper land, and it had two crossed sabres on the front. Then Capt. Kurtz, a 1st Cav platoon leader, jumped out of the bird and grabbed me. Boy, was I happy!"

Houser was flown straight to 15th Med, examined and showered. He talked to his mother and father via long-distance telephone, who were about to be told that their son was MIA and assured them he was alright.

He was nourished and sent to his unit, where his overjoyed flying buddies heard the story of the pilot who turned grunt and lived to tell about it.

Citation the first for VN division

PHUOC VINH — On Sept. 14, 1967, President Lyndon B. Johnson awarded a Presidential Unit Citation to the 1st Air Cavalry Division.

The award was the first for a division-size unit in Vietnam.

The 1st Cav won the citation for its performance from October 23 to November 26, 1965, during the Pleiku Campaign. During the campaign, Skytroopers defeated a Viet Cong attack on the Plei Me Special Forces Camp and spoiled an enemy plan to attack Pleiku. In heavy fighting at Pleiku and in the Ia Drang Valley, the men of the First Team killed an estimated 3,561 enemy, and captured 895 individual and 126 crew-served weapons.

The citation emphasized the civic action successes of the 1st Cav. "While engaged in combat," the White House said, "the 1st Cavalry evacuated 3,300 refugees from the battle areas; provided almost 16 tons of foodstuffs for the hungry; distributed more than two tons of clothing and medical supplies to the needy; provided medical treatment to some 450 Vietnamese civilians and immunized another 2,000 against disease and contributed more than \$2,600 for construction of a school and improvement of a native dispensary."

All members of the 1st Cav are authorized to wear the Presidential Unit Citation while serving with the division. However, only those who served with the division during the period for which the award was presented may wear the citation after leaving the Cav.



Ever Ready

Packed and ready to go, Skytroopers prepare to board hueys that will carry them to a suspected enemy location. (U.S. Army Photo by Spec. 4 James McCabe).

"Real spirit, style and dash"

(con't from pg. 3)

Gen. Minh then placed the Vietnamese Fourragere Cross of Gallantry cord on Gen. Putnam, symbolizing the presentation of this coveted award to the entire Division. The Cav was previously awarded a Presidential Unit Citation and the Vietnamese Civic Action Medal with Palm, for its service in Vietnam.

Gen. Abrams then spoke, and called the 1st Cav "a great Division," one that has "real spirit, style and dash." A member of the 1st Cav once himself, Gen. Abrams noted that the Division had progressed tremendously through the years.

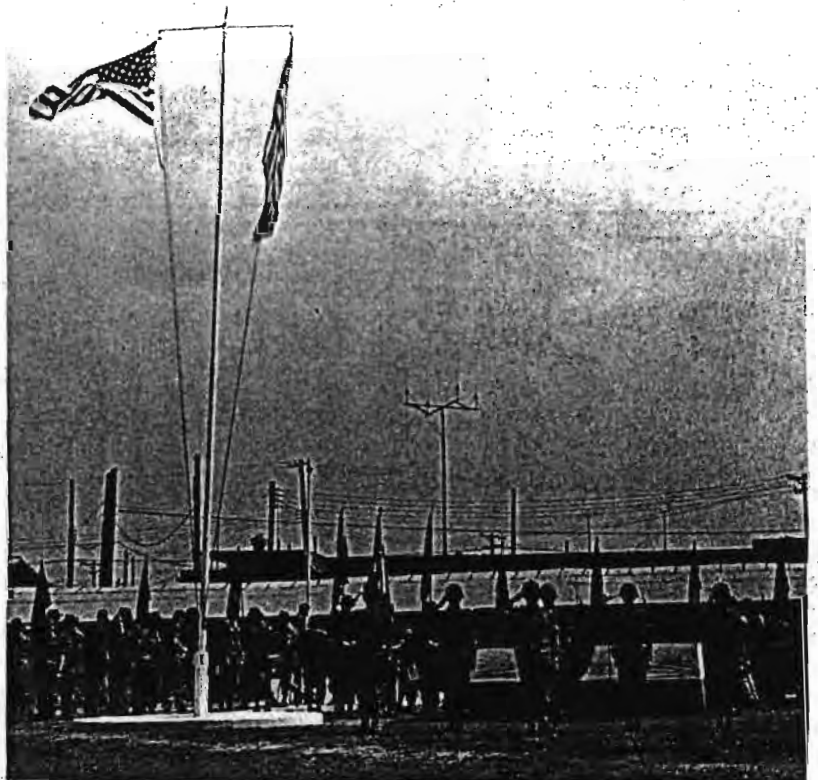
The posting of the Division's colors concluded the ceremony. Many of these colors will now be shipped to Ft. Hood, Texas, and will be flown for the 1st Cavalry Division (Tricap). The newly-designated Division will assume the assets of the 1st Armored Division.

The ceremony closed another chapter in the famous history of the First Team. The Army's first airmobile division, the Cav landed in Vietnam in September of 1965 and quickly asserted itself to the Viet Cong and NVA as a fearsome unit to contend with. In fact, in mid-November of last year an NVA unit operating in the Cav AO testified to the Division's toughness when it left a warning note for its comrades. The message read: "Beware of an American unit somewhere in this area. It is doing much damage to us."

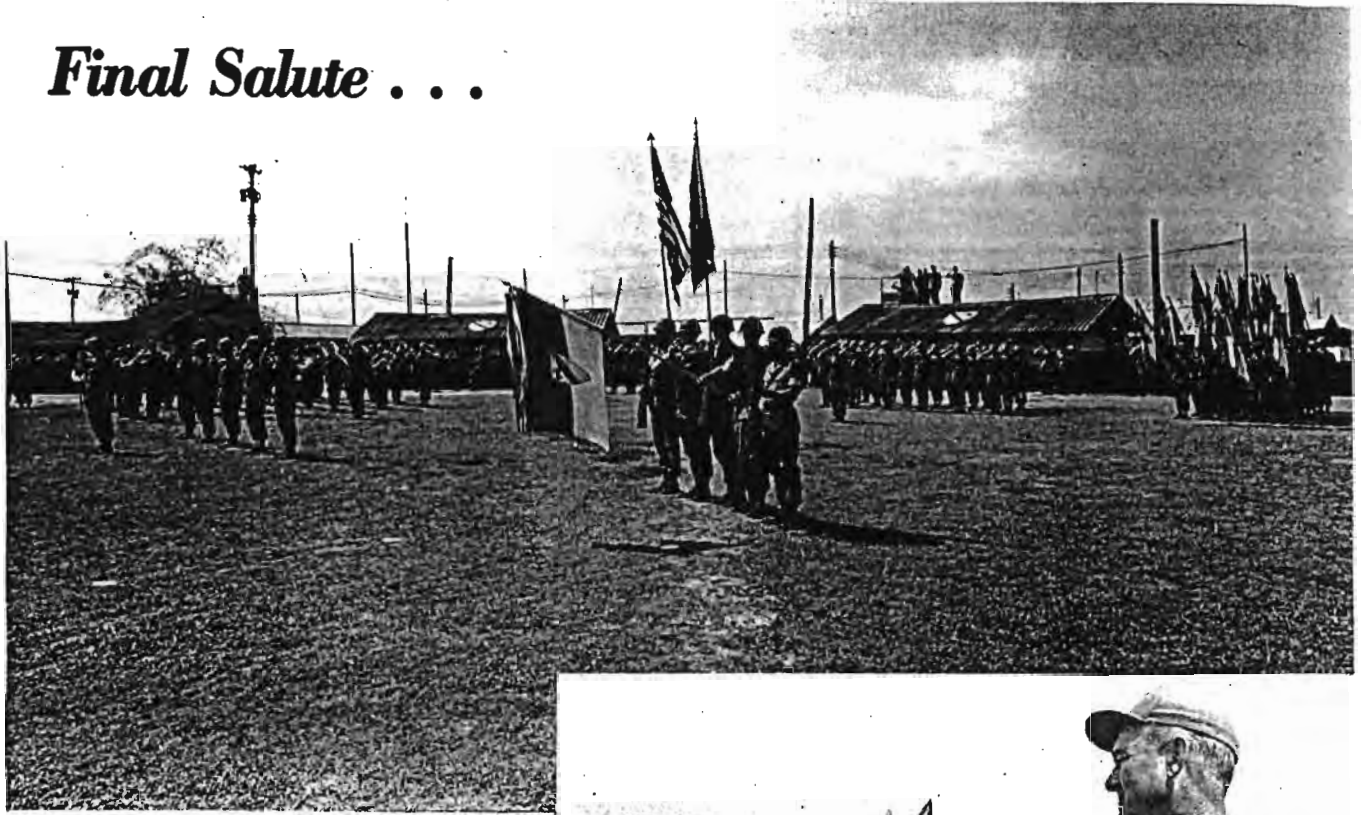


Skytroopers bearing the Cav units' colors (left) marched off the field during the ceremony, signifying their standdown. Towards the end of the proceedings, Division Command Sgt. Major Gerald R. Lewis ordered the color guard to post, and then he cased the colors (top); and, to close the ceremony, Gen. Burton and his staff rendered a final salute (bottom).

Photos on this and opposite page by 1Lt Ben Garcia



Final Salute . . .



The Cav's colors are dipped, the color guard stands rigidly at attention and the troops salute (top) as the Vietnamese and American National Anthems are played. After Gen. Putnam received the Vietnamese Fourragere Cross of Gallantry cord (on his left shoulder - at middle right), Gen. Abrams addressed the troops (1 to r, bottom left), as LTC Maury Edmonds, C-3; Col. George Newman, chief of staff; and LTC John Kizirian, G-2, listen to him call the First Team "a great Division". The ceremony was short and simple, with only this trombone player (bottom right) and his band colleagues providing the fanfare.



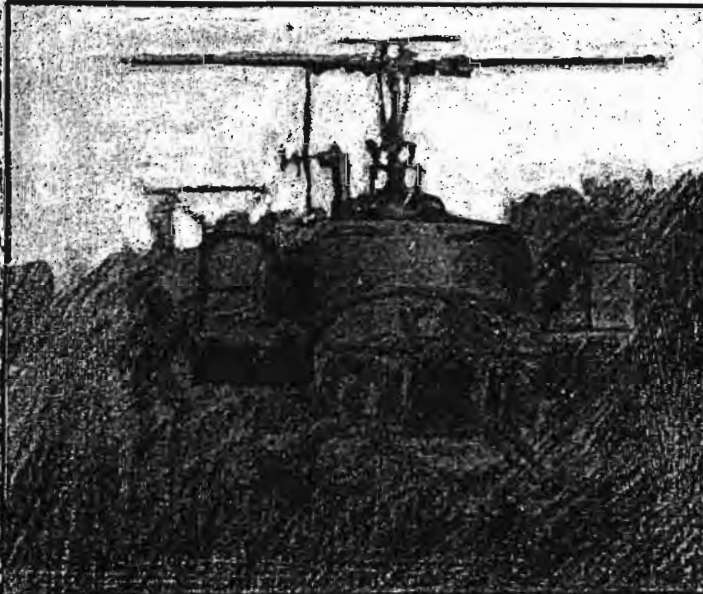
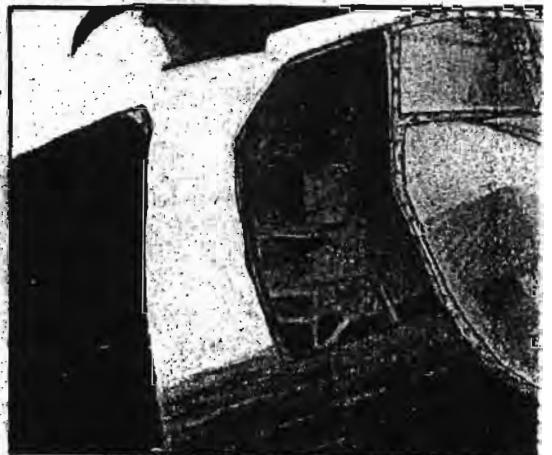
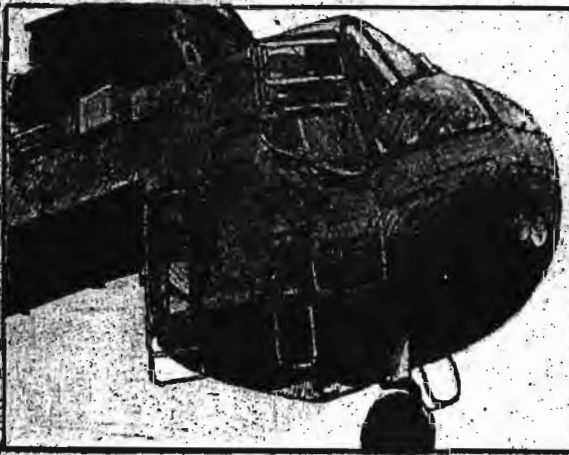
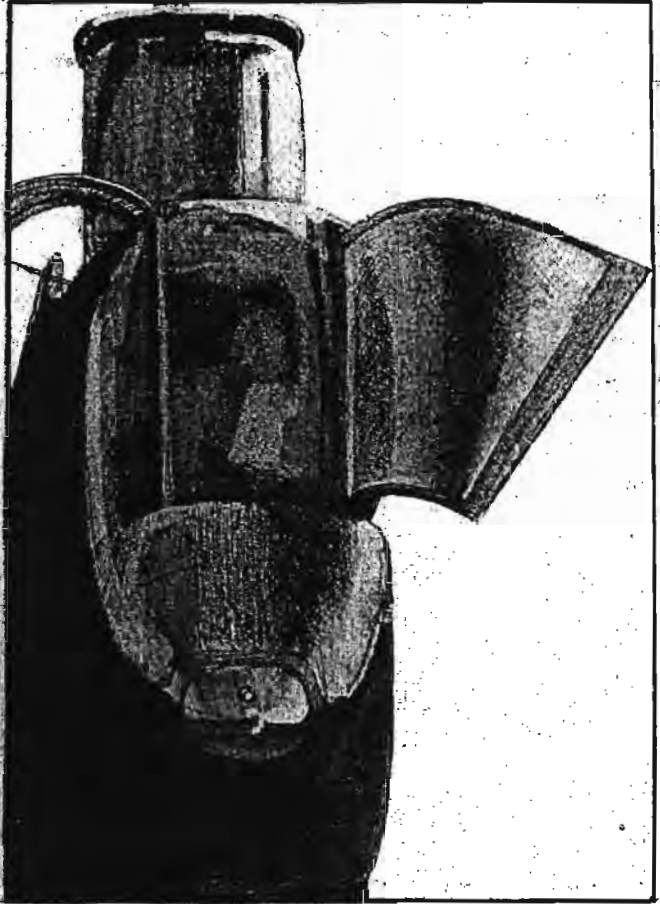
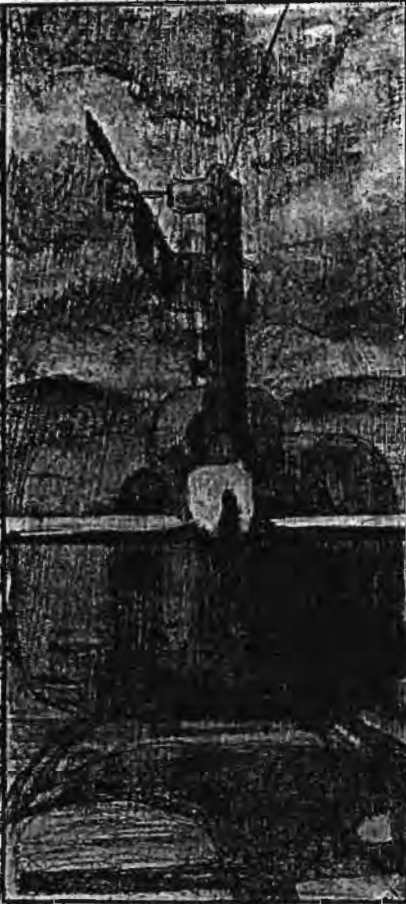


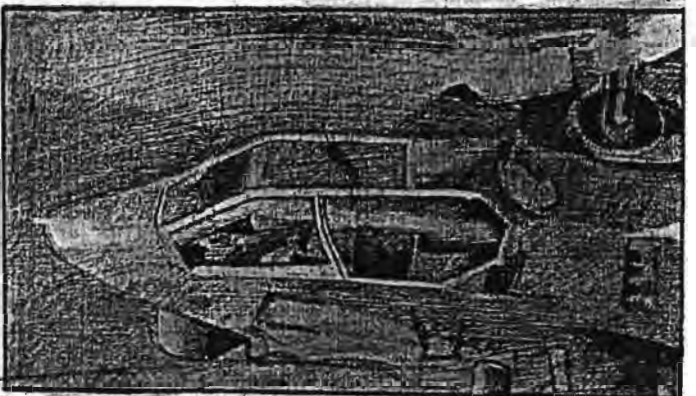
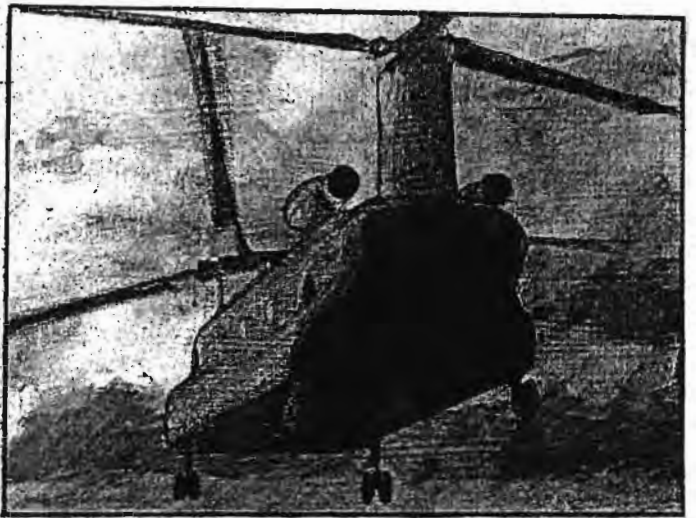
Standdown Stand-out Gal

Standing down, up, or any other position you can think of, Raquel Welch still has it where it counts the most. Despite MYRA

BRECKINRIDGE, Raquel still stands out as one of the best things to look forward to upon returning to the World.

AIRMOBILITY VIA ARTIST





Art by Don Chaffin



We've Come a Long Way

"What we had in F Troop in those days were horses and mules," remarked General Creighton Abrams, commander of U.S. Forces in Vietnam, and a former member of the 1st Cav (F-Troop, 7th Cav) - October, 1936. "I thought I knew quite a bit then - and sometimes I think I knew more then than I do now - but I couldn't visualize the day F Troop would be going around in helicopters."

About the only things that haven't changed in the Cav over the decades are the patch and the individual soldier.

The horse was the Cav's beginning, and is now the Cav's past. The helicopter, "The" vehicle of the Vietnam Conflict, is the Cav's present, and has won for it acclamation as the most effective fighting unit in Vietnam.

"It would be difficult today to visualize what the Cav will be like in another 30 years," Gen. Abrams commented to Skytroopers at the recent Vietnam Departure Ceremony. And it is hard to visualize what the future will hold for the Cav, if its previous progress and accomplishments are any indication of the future.

