

# THE AIR CAVALRY DIVISION

SEPTEMBER 1968



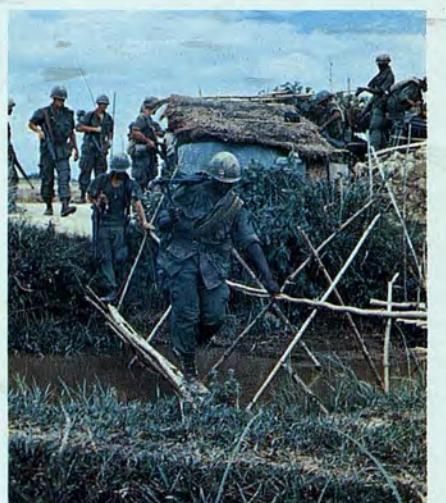
# The Air Cavalry In Action



Calling in artillery on suspected enemy positions.



A mortar crew at work.



Skytroopers crossing a narrow footbridge.



Infantryman looks over a portion of a captured enemy cache.



Company leaving a landing zone.



Machine-gunner opens fire during Operation Delaware.

**The Air Cavalry Division**



**Volume 1, Number 3**

**September, 1968**

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# A Message From General Forsythe

THE FIRST TEAM, like any other professional team, is made up of different groups of specialists who, in their particular field, are the best in the business. In past issues of this magazine, we have written proudly about the Troopers in the Brigades, in the Cav's squadrons, the Red Legs of the Artillery, and the Aviators who serve them all. In this issue we focus on some of the men who support our actions on the battlefield and make it possible for that wonderful "Grunt", and the other Troopers who go with him to the fight, to mark up THE FIRST TEAM'S long and brilliant record of victories.

It is this kind of teamwork, pros working together, doing their special jobs better, faster, and more effectively, that earns THE FIRST TEAM the reputation of being the most professional combat unit in the Army!

On the day I accepted the colors and the responsibility of command of this division, I sensed I was among professionals. Now, after serving for a time with THE FIRST TEAM—after seeing it perform on the battlefield—I know why we are called THE FIRST TEAM. The spirit and record of performance of each outfit working on the team tells the story.

The future holds much in challenge and opportunity for us all. The going will not be easy; the day and place of our next battle is unclear. But there is one thing for sure, each of you 19,000 Troopers that make the FIRST AIR CAVALRY DIVISION into THE FIRST TEAM is one of the 19,000 reasons for the folks at home to be absolutely confident of final victory. I'm glad to be on that kind of a team.



*Geo. Forsythe*

**GEORGE I FORSYTHE**  
Major General, USA  
Commanding

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Command Group: MG George I. Forsythe, Commanding General; BG Richard Irby, Assistant Division Commander; BG Oscar Davis, Assistant Division Commander; Major Fox McCarthy, Information Officer.

# A Journey Into The A Shau Valley



"The feeling the majority of the men had upon first coming into the valley was a sort of fear; distinctly different from that felt during Hue or Khe Sanh. We had heard so many stories about A Shau... the possibilities of running into large concentrations. We had a fear of the unknown. We thought that just around any corner we would run into a battalion of North Vietnamese."

Captain John W. Taylor  
CO, A Company, 5/7th

For most of the year rain clouds hover low over the A Shau Valley, a slit in the mountains 45 kilometers west of Hue. Triple-canopy jungle clings to its steep sides. Close to the Laotian border, remote and usually hidden from the air, the valley has been used as a major way-station on the Ho Chi Minh trail and a North Vietnamese army base. It was the jumping-off point for the enemy's Tet offensive against Hue. Since a Special Forces camp pulled out of the area in 1966, no Free World forces penetrated the A Shau, and the NVA began to think of it as an inviolable sanctuary.

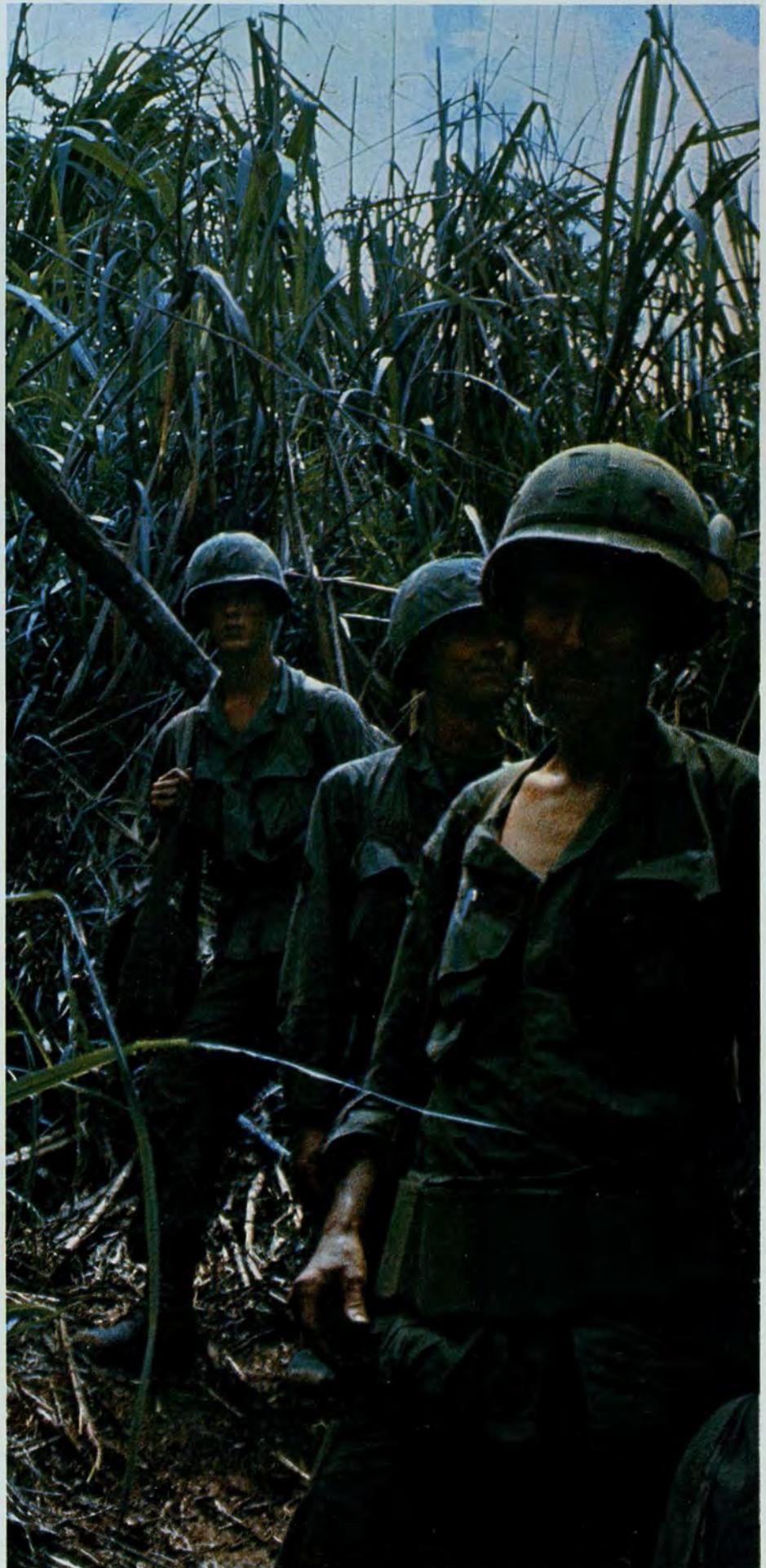
Operation Delaware-Lam Son 216, spearheaded by the airmobile 1st Cav, changed all this. The swift-moving Skytroopers, fresh from their relief of Khe Sanh earlier in the month, leaped into the A Shau without ground support on April 19 of this year, slinging artillery pieces below giant helicopters, pouring out murderous fire from rocket-carrying gunships. They showed the NVA that there was no such thing as an enemy sanctuary in South Vietnam. While administering this lesson, the men of the 1st and 3rd Brigades seized tons of abandoned supplies and equipment.

"It was as hot a place as we've ever gone into," said Maj. Gen. John J. Tolson, then 1st Cavalry Division commander, referring to the heavy anti-aircraft fire encountered by the Skytroopers during the first two days of Delaware. Most dangerous were mobile 37 mm guns camouflaged in the jungle and capable of hitting targets at an altitude of 25,000 feet. Fifty-caliber machineguns added a red wall of tracers. But, despite the heavy enemy resistance, the 3rd Brigade successfully secured landing zones in the northern end of the valley.

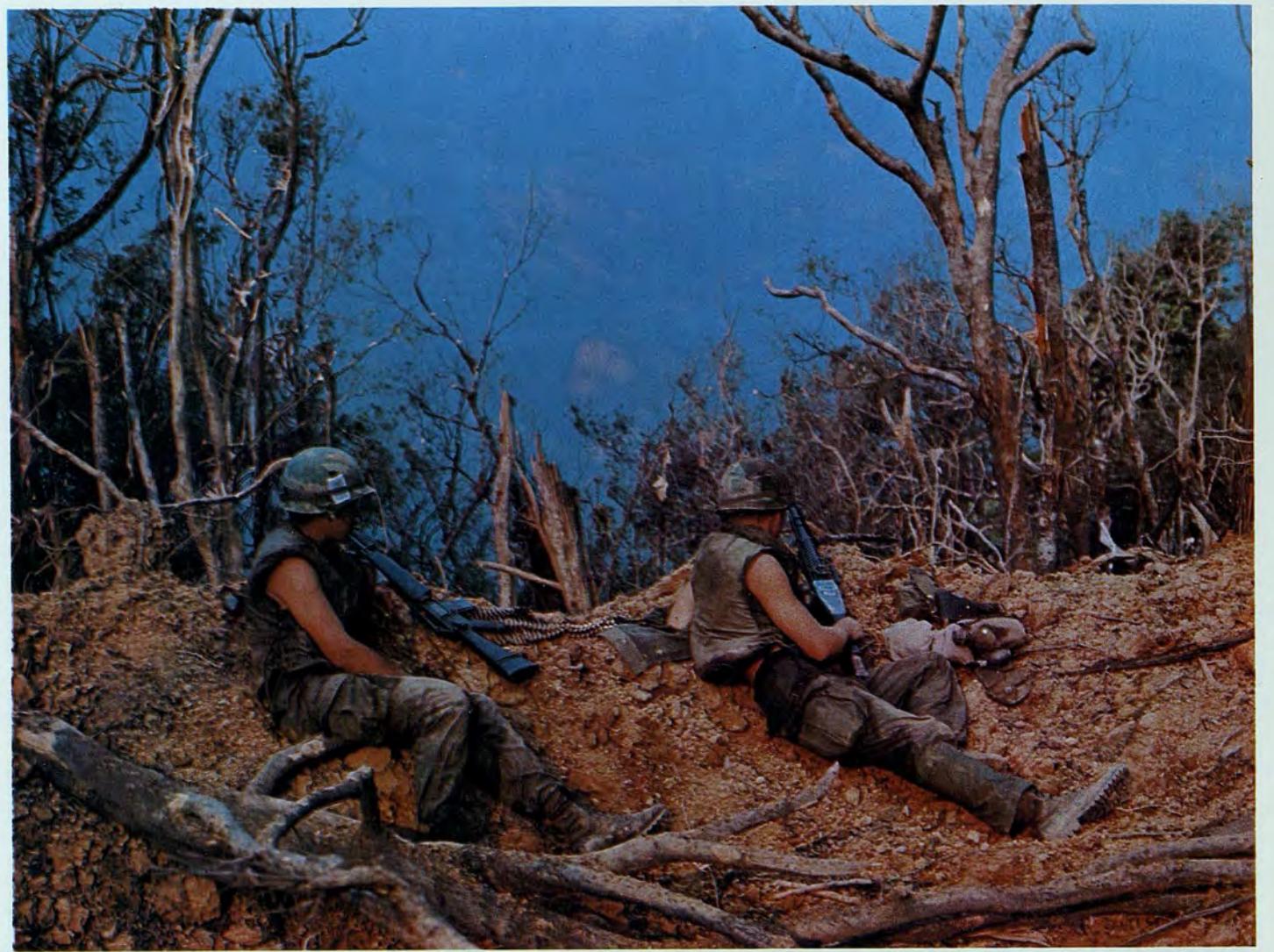
The 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry assaulted into Landing Zone Tiger, and to the northwest the 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry landed at LZ Vicki. Two days later, the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry assaulted into LZ Pepper, seven kilometers southeast of Tiger. Once on the ground, the Skytroopers found the going easier.

On April 20, Delta Company, 5/7th found an overturned truck loaded with 200 unserviceable bolt-action rifles near LZ Tiger. A blood trail led away from the vehicle. This was the first sign that Operation Delaware was going to turn into a gigantic treasure hunt, punctuated by small, sharp clashes with scattering enemy units.

Bravo Company, 5/7th spotted five NVA on Highway 992 just after securing its LZ and fired at them, killing two. It was the first ground action for the 3rd Brigade. The Skytroopers began to move south along the margins of the valley.



A patrol moves through the valley, looking for the NVA and equipment that they knew were there.



Perched on one of the many high slopes in the A Shau, a pair of Skytroopers watch for enemy movement.

On April 21st, units of the 1/7th made light contact and killed three NVA. Working east to establish a new LZ, the battalion found two enemy bulldozers, one with USSR stamped on it. It became apparent that engineer units of at least battalion size had been working in the area, building and repairing the vital road network. Some stretches of NVA highway were constructed in corduroy style, with mud chinked over a base of logs. The 1/7th took the bulldozers along as it fought toward LZ Goodman, which had been scouted by the 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry and Air Force reconnaissance.

On April 23 the NVA loosed a 60mm mortar barrage on LZ Tiger and probed the perimeter in platoon strength. With the help of aerial rocket artillery (ARA) and air support, the Skytroopers held, killing six NVA and capturing one. In the days to come other LZ's would be bombarded, but the enemy, unwilling to risk major defeat, would offer only token resistance on the ground as the Cav, joined by ARVN and Marine units, plundered the rich caches.

Concurrent with the air assaults,

elements of the 8th Engineers, the 13th Signal battalion, and the 52nd Infantry rappelled from choppers to establish the Signal Hill relay station for communication between Camp Evans and the valley.

To supply the isolated cavalrymen by ground convoy was impossible. Supply by air depended upon two things: clear skies and control of the A Luoi airstrip in the central A Shau. Accordingly, the attack was timed for early spring when fog and rain were at a minimum, and on April 24 the 1st Brigade moved to seize A Luoi.

The 2/8th Cavalry, as lead element, landed on LZ Cecile, atop a high hill overlooking the airstrip. Next came 1/12th and 1/8th Cavalry Skytroopers, who converged on the strip and set up LZ Stallion.

Long unused, A Luoi was covered with dense green foliage. PFC Lenwood Smith, Garland, N.C., a rifleman in the 1/12th, said, "We cleared out the vegetation, secured areas for demolition teams, and cut power lines. We figured that the NVA had been pretty well scattered by the heavy bombing in the area."

Toward dusk on the 25th, the hills around Stallion echoed with excited shouts and the rumble of a truck motor. From the north bounced a green vehicle, covered with waving American soldiers. Men from Delta Company, 1/8th had found five Russian trucks one kilometer north of the LZ, and were driving one back. "We had a little trouble getting supplies," said SP4 Joe McClure of the 1/8th. "When we first got into the valley we had to get water out of a bomb crater. But later we used those Russian trucks to haul supplies for us."

Logistical problems were soon eased. In two days the airstrip was in condition to receive C-7A "Caribou" aircraft, and by May 5 big Air Force C-130's were carrying their payloads to Stallion. Meanwhile Alpha Company, 1/7th had found three flatbed trucks with 37mm anti-aircraft weapons mounted on them. A 1958 Russian-Chicom adaptation of the 1939 Russian 37mm antiaircraft gun, they had been used recently. Three days later Charlie Company, 1/7th found four more in the same area. By the end of Delaware a dozen of these guns—more than a full

They  
searched  
and  
searched . . .





...and very quickly, the search began to pay off.



anti-aircraft battery—were in the hands of the 1st Cav.

More than 50 trucks which had once traveled the Ho Chi Minh Trail with impunity were destroyed by artillery and airstrikes. At times the confused NVA left their headlights blazing at night, offering perfect targets for the Cav's gunners. The 227th Aviation Battalion had landed elements of the 5/7th Cavalry on Tiger, a tiny opening which "looked like a bomb crater on a cliff" to First Lieutenant William H.W. Anderson, Jr., Raleigh, N.C., aircraft commander for the 227th's Charlie Company. The 5/7th began to interdict movement on Route 548. Enemy vehicle losses mounted. At three in the morning on April 27, Delta Company, 5/7th was attacked by an estimated enemy platoon. A ring of flame sprung up around the forward operations base as the Skytroopers zeroed in on weaving shadows. Their aim was good: the next morning 12 dead NVA were found outside the perimeter.

And the hunt continued. Tipped off by 1/9th sightings, Delta Company, 1/8th had unearthed the first of the A Shau's big caches on the 26th. Captured were 315 Soviet K-44 rifles, a 60mm mortar tube, 36 Soviet mine detectors, 30 flamethrowers, 202 Chicom protective masks, 225 pounds of medical supplies, 600 122mm rockets, 2,000 23mm antiaircraft rounds, 20,000 assorted small-arms rounds, 100 pounds of dynamite, six tons of rice, 60 cases of canned meat, 70 37mm antiaircraft rounds, and three B-40 rockets.

The next day the 1st Brigade began pushing out from LZ Stallion. 6,500 rounds of ammunition and 800 gallons of fuel were captured in scattered areas. The 1/12th found two grease pits and one rack for a truck near Stallion.

It took a while for the Skytroopers to realize that there weren't any NVA regiments waiting to ambush them around the next bend. Enemy tanks had been reported in the A Shau, and their presence was another unsettled factor.

Some of the heaviest fighting of the campaign was done by Delta Company, 1/8th, which ran into an entrenched NVA company on April 28th while exploring another large cache. Five cases of 122mm rockets, 135 cases of 57mm rounds, 35 cases of black uniforms, two tons of unhusked rice, a large quantity of diesel fuel, and 187 cases of Russian assault rifles were found by Delta Company, but not before it had penetrated stiff resistance.

Following a corduroy road, which the enemy had camouflaged by bending and tying trees into a tunnel above it, the Skytroopers found and destroyed two trucks. After exchanging fire with



Infantrymen from the Third Brigade destroy some of the equipment found in the valley.

a large NVA element and killing three of the enemy, Delta Company withdrew and let artillery and airstrikes pound the area.

The next day Delta Company again moved up the camouflaged road. When riot gas seeped through the foliage, the men had to don masks. They pushed forward and uncovered huge storage bunkers. As they were examining the contents of these bunkers, amazed at the size of the find, there was a crackle of enemy rifle fire. Delta Company returned it.

After an hour and a half of battle, a tank began firing at the cavalrymen from a camouflaged position. The situation looked grim until SGT Hillery Craig, Winter Park, Fla., wriggled forward, saw his opening, and knocked out the position with two light antitank weapon (LAW) rounds. When the NVA began to outflank Delta Company it withdrew, its count of the spoils still incomplete. ARA and tube artillery bombarded the area again.

The 2/8th Cavalry, working south from LZ Cecile, was policing up a large cache of electronics equipment, when it received orders to drive the NVA away from the cache Delta, 1/8th had discovered. Making full use of their superior firepower, the Skytroopers built up pressure against the "Punchbowl" area, crushing resistance by May 3, killing 30 NVA in the process.

During May the two brigades criss-

crossed the valley floor and searched out its corners, uncovering more supplies at every turn.

The 5/7th, manning the dominating position at Tiger, kept a stranglehold on the A Shau, hindering the enemy's efforts at both retreat and reinforcement. The 3rd ARVN Regiment entered the picture, finding a cache with 1500 grenades, 15 antitank mines, eight 140mm rockets, ten boxes of TNT, and 10,000 small-arms rounds. On May 3 the ARVN found 560 rounds of 37mm ammunition.

Skirmishes continued: on the 1st, Alpha Company, 1/7th encountered an enemy force of unknown size which blew a command-detonated mine and fired on the cavalrymen with automatic weapons from four directions. ARA and tube artillery decided the battle in favor of the Cav; three NVA were killed. Alpha, 2/7th made light contact with an estimated NVA platoon northwest of LZ Pepper, killing three more. Generally, however, the enemy preferred to remain hidden in the canopied forest, abandoning his supply areas to the 1st Cav.

On May 2, elements of the 1/7th Cavalry discovered a pair of 22-ton trucks in dense growth and a trench complex containing 500 37mm rounds. Six graves, a month old, were found nearby. As always, the artillery stood ready to fire.

(continued on page 32)

# Supporting the Cav



## 15th Transportation Corps Helps Keep the 'Air' In Airmobile

The scout team was returning from a routine scouting mission in the A Shau Valley when Specialist 5 Robert L. Grubb, a scout observer riding in the lead OH-6A observation helicopter, glanced down and saw gray smoke seeping through the floorboards under his seat.

"Our battery had burned out," Grubb explained, "so the pilot just reached over and flicked off our battery and our generator. Then, with Camp Evans in sight, he radioed ahead to the 15th TC and told them we'd be

setting down there for repairs."

Mechanics met the tiny helicopter at the 15th pad, hurried to the ship, replaced the damaged battery, and lowered the voltage regulator. "They had us ready to go again in 10 to 15 minutes," Grubb said.

Merely routine for the 15th Transportation Corps Battalion, the largest and only of its kind in the Army. Every day battalion mechanics and repairmen hustle about helicopters and parts of helicopters, fighting to keep flyable some 420 ships in the 1st Cav.

The battalion's 1,328 enlisted men

and 100 officers are spread throughout four companies—two at DaNang's Red Beach, one at Phu Bai, and another at Camp Evans.

"To show how we operate," said Captain Bruce Goddard, a direct support officer in charge of five aircraft mechanic teams, "we take a rotor blade from a chopper and bring it to the shop platoon. They repair the blade, then contact us to put it back on the ship. It's a joint operation."

"We have 100 mechanics in direct support and 100 more working in our shops," noted Major James Schrum,



A Chinook hauls an observation chopper into the 15th TC for repair.



Chopper engines receive constant maintenance checks.

Bravo Company's maintenance officer. "Our shops provide backup for direct support mechanics. Every separate shop has its function; without any one I might as well not be here."

"For instance," he continued, "the sheet metal shop repairs air frames and damage to the helicopter skin. The engine shop repairs, trouble shoots and builds up helicopter engines. They're two of our most worked shops."

Foreign objects cause most engine damage. Tape, pieces of cloth, rags, metal, and a universal socket sucked into engines have caused major damage. One mechanic found a file in the tail boom of a chopper after the object had ground through the engine.

In the past three months, Bravo Company's shops have worked on 800 aircraft, 340 of which had engine problems. Engines are expensive—\$55,000 apiece or over 20 percent of the helicopter cost—and the engine shop has changed \$6 million worth of engines since January 1.

Sheet metal repairmen have a difficult job, too. A normal repair job—cutting out damaged area, smoothing it down, fitting and forming the patch—takes one hour. The trouble is that most repair is not "normal" and takes quite a bit longer.

One OH-6A observation helicopter, on a scout mission along the Gulf of Tonkin beach some 20 kilometers east of Camp Evans, spotted several NVA soldiers. The pilot dipped his craft

toward the enemy and dived with his minigun and door gunners blazing. But as the pilot swung away, scrambling enemy took hurried shots at the small chopper and five bullets tore through the windshield, one grazing the pilot's head.

Only wounded slightly, the pilot managed to fly the craft back to Camp Evans. Once Delta Company, 15th TC

got the craft, the sheet metal shop patched up the holes and had the chopper flying again in a day and a half, extremely fast work for one of Vietnam's busiest battalions.

"First we decide whether to patch or to replace the damaged window," explained Specialist 5 Martin E. Miller, pointing to a tiny bullet hole in a Huey UH-1D. "This depends on the amount

of the hole. Two men can replace a window in four hours."

When they decide to fix a window, repairmen first use a fine drill to stop-drill all cracks. The next step is cutting out a plexiglass patch and soak it in cement glue to soften.

"We then mask off the damaged area," Miller continued, "put on the patch and try to work out as many air bubbles as possible. One man has to hold the patch in position for 30 to 45 minutes until it dries." Regular plexiglass cement takes four hours to dry, but ingenious 15th TC repairmen reworked the mixture for faster drying.

Another busy shop is Avionics, especially during the monsoons when FM radios provide a huge workload.

Prop and Rotor Shops fix tail and main rotors, nine-degree gear boxes for the tail rotor, intermediate drive shafts, rotor heads, and swash plates.

When a UH-1D pilot recently turned over his engine with the tie-down rope still hanging from the tail rotor, the rope caught on the ship's body and badly twisted the rotor. The pilot told his unit and they carried the craft to the 15th TC where mechanics tore out the rotor, the rotor's transmission, and replaced the mutilated blade. The chopper was flying again in 24 hours.

"Not many companies give that kind of service," smiled the crew chief when he got his chopper back.

Invaluable to shops and mechanics, technical supply provides parts for all 1st Cav aircraft.

"During June we sent out 20 tons of equipment," stated Captain Alan Sharkis, the battalion supply officer. "A supply request is processed by our clerks to determine if we have the part, and, if so, how many. Then we locate it and send it out. A man, if he's willing to wait, can often get his part in ten minutes."

Seventy-five civilian mechanics, many of them representatives of firms manufacturing helicopters and helicopter engines currently used in Vietnam, complete the 15th TC Battalion. They prove their worth daily.

When the AG-1G Cobras first arrived in Vietnam, the altitude indicator, as one mechanic pointed out, "wasn't worth its salt." Bell technical representatives did the initial installation of a new indicator, then trained 1st Cav personnel at Red Beach to travel forward and replace the ineffective indicators.

Mechanics and repairmen at the 15th TC realize that they will probably never make headlines, that most of their work goes unnoticed. They don't really seem to mind. As one mechanic noted, "It's enough to know you're working with a good unit. By keeping these ships ready to fly we're doing our part to keep the Cav the best division in Vietnam."



A 15th TC mechanic checks the weapons system control on an ARA ship.

**Praise The Lord and Pass the Ammunition**

# **A Day With a Cav Chaplain**



For an Army chaplain in Vietnam, every day is Sunday. For Chaplain (Major) Thomas H. Widdell, a Catholic priest who just recently completed a 22-month tour in Vietnam, each week involved services for units on remote LZ's, spending much more time in the field than he did at base camps. To "grunts" humping the hills, artillerymen waiting for fire missions, and commanders weighing decisions of life and death, Chaplain Widdell brought the word of God, a joke, and a sense of concern for the men under his spiritual charge.

At a little before seven in the morning on what was already a hot July day, Chaplain Widdell emerged from his hootch at Camp Evans and went to breakfast. After eating, he walked to the 5/7th Cavalry log pad.

"A good morning to you!" he boomed at three Skytroopers sitting on a mechanical mule at the edge of the pad. "When's the champagne flight going to leave?" They told him, and he eyed the group shrewdly. "The Lord says, where two or three are gathered in My name, it calls for a collection." He held out his steel pot and the men grinned.

Aloft, he pointed two fingers at the M-16 carried by the Skytrooper next to him, as if to say, "I'm scared. Are you riding shotgun for me?"

The chopper landed at LZ Jack, manned by Charlie Company, 5/7th. Chaplain Widdell stepped out, walked past another bird, turned suddenly, and punched the copilot in the shoulder.

"We having services here, Father?" "You bet, Big Jim," Widdell said.

He moved on to greet Chaplain (Captain) Wayne C. King of the 5/7th, who was going to conduct the Protestant service.

The chapel at LZ Jack was a long sloping trench as deep as a man's height. "It looks like the Roman catacombs," Widdell said.

The Protestants used the "church in the hole" first. To a taped background of hymns, the Skytroopers added their own strong voices. Occasionally one of the 105mm howitzers on Jack lobbed a projectile southward, and puffs of smoke appeared on the plain or the distant ridge.

When Chaplain King climbed out at the end of his service, Chaplain Widdell greeted him. "Did you praise the Lord and pass the ammunition?"

"The artillery was sabotaging me."

In the trench Chaplain Widdell set up an altar with crucifix, chalice, and sacramental wine and wafers. A head bent over the bank. "Father, how soon is Mass going to be?"

"Five minutes."

"We've got a fire mission in fifteen. Could you wait until it's over so the guys in the battery can attend?"

"Sure," Widdell said. He sat down under a shady overhang and began talking to the soldiers there, asking them about their home towns and their plans for the future. He examined a sergeant's dog tags. "What kind of blood type is VO?"

"How many Sundays you got left, Father?" the sergeant parried.

"Three. I arrived in Vietnam in October of '66 . . ." Ordained 20 years ago, Father Widdell was activated with his Reserve unit during the Berlin Crisis of 1961. "I'd been trying to get in since 1949. When I did, I was 40 years old. I must have been the oldest first lieutenant in the Army. When I get back I'm going to the Chaplain Career Course at Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn."

A native of Rock Island, Ill., Widdell told his listeners about R & R in



Another group hears another Mass.



Often a Chaplain holds as many as six services on a single day.



Skytroopers receiving communion during a Catholic service at LZ Jack.

Australia. "The first night at my hotel I had room service send me up a bucket of ice. I just set it down and looked at it. You know what I mean?"

Everyone laughed.

Finally the cannon fire stopped. The chaplain's flock, brawny and bare-chested, squatted in the trench and sat on ammo boxes. Behind the altar in his fatigues, Widdell became intensely serious. The sun beat down on his head as he conducted the symbolic Last Supper.

After Mass he disappeared into the underground command post to talk to LTC Thomas Stockton, commander of the 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry. Then he hopped an LOH for the flight to LZ Stella, a ridgeline outpost manned by Echo Company, 5/7th. Chaplain King accompanied him.

From Stella a prodigious view stretched from the Gulf of Tonkin almost to Laos. To the west were steep mountains, defoliated and marked by other LZ's. To the east the tin roofs of Camp Evans twinkled in a haze and

the green plain rolled for miles. The sky was hot and blue overhead. "What a church!" Widdell said.

This time he set up his altar on the sandbagged roof of a bunker. Chaplain King placed his tape recorder on the other side of the knob. The majority of the 50 scouts and mortarmen on Stella joined the services.

"But rather enter by the strait and narrow gate," King said, while simultaneously Widdell exhorted his congregation to avoid murder, false witness, and feeling of hatred. The Skytroopers listened amid burned stumps, poncho shelters, and piles of smoke grenades.

Again Chaplain Widdell talked with as many men as he could. "Over there where the smoke is," the lieutenant in command said, "the NVA had bunkers so deep even air strikes couldn't flush them out."

"Have you ever been hit here?"

"Not really. We know they're around our perimeter at night sometimes. They've set off a couple of trip flares.

But mostly we just sit up here with our mortars, and when the people on the floor find something, we blast it."

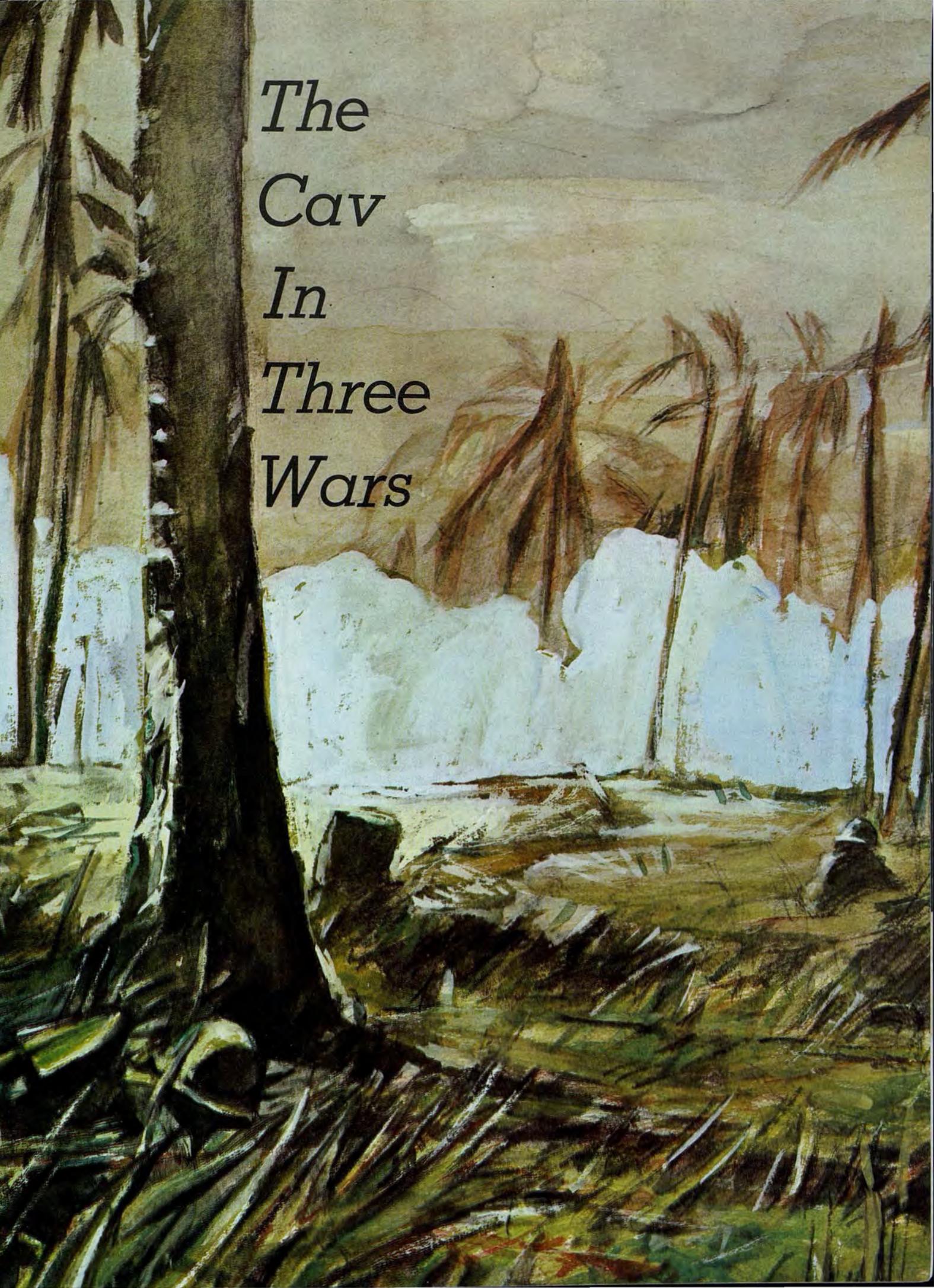
Widdell sipped warm water from a blackened canteen cup. "I hope you've been getting your beer up here."

The lieutenant nodded. "The last two nights it's even been cold."

A tanned, muscular Skytrooper approached the chaplain. "Father," he said hesitantly, "I've got a problem . . ."

Instantly serious again, Chaplain Widdell walked with the man until they were alone near a mortar. Like other priests and parishioners for centuries, the two men talked.

When he landed back at Camp Evans for lunch, Chaplain Widdell summed up what he felt about the soldiers he had visited for nearly two years on landing zones and battlefields. "I admire those grunts. We've got some awfully good kids here." He paused trying to find a supreme compliment. "They're real Skytroopers."



# The Cav In Three Wars

# World War II

In 1942, troopers of the 1st Cavalry Division were still horse soldiers. They had patrolled the Mexican border since the division was formed at Fort Bliss, Texas, in 1921, halting smugglers in the arid, rugged country along the Rio Grande. The cavalrymen who had ridden under the same regimental colors during the Indian Wars would have found little strange about their equipment or their tactics.

Two years later these same troopers were assaulting tropical beaches halfway around the globe. Now fully mechanized, they had been transformed into one of the finest combat outfits of the modern era, with a name for being in the vanguard, willing to go where no one else dared: THE FIRST TEAM.

The changeover from horses to jeeps came in February 1943, when the division received orders assigning it overseas. Under the command of Major General Innis P. Swift, it arrived in Australia on July 26 and went through six months of jungle and amphibious training at Camp Strathpine, near

Brisbane. Early in 1944, the 1st Cav moved to Oro Bay, New Guinea, where final preparations were made for an assault into the Admiralty Islands north of New Guinea and west of the Solomons.

On the morning of February 29 a shattering naval bombardment preceded the 2/5th Cavalry as it led the rest of the regiment into Hayane Harbor on Los Negros Island. Waves of landing craft filed through a dangerously narrow channel under fire. But the location of the landings had been a surprise to the Japanese; their defenses were oriented toward the larger Seeadler Harbor on the other side of the island.

Before they could shift their concentrations eastward to meet the on-rushing cavalrymen, the Momote Airstrip and much surrounding territory was in American hands. With a firm beachhead and control of the sea and air, the 5th Cavalry, joined on March 4 by the 2/7th Cavalry and on March 6 by the 12th Cavalry, advanced steadily across Los Negros.

The Japanese infiltrated the perimeter at night and launched a series of bloody, futile counterattacks. But as one prong of the American advance swept northward up the Mokerang Peninsula, the other squeezed the Japanese back against their useless defenses around Seeadler Harbor, nearly annihilating one battalion. By this time 1400 enemy dead had been

counted. A second amphibious assault on the 7th crossed the harbor and attacked the remaining Japanese stronghold at Papitalai Mission. When this fell the next day, the battle turned into a rout. By 10 March only a mopping-up operation remained.

Attention then shifted to Manus Island, a much larger land mass just west of Los Negros. At its northeast corner, near the village of Lorengau, was the only airstrip in the Admiralties still held by the Japanese. At dawn on March 15 the Second Brigade Combat Team stormed ashore well west of Lorengau, supported by two battalions of artillery emplaced on tiny Hauwei Island.

Again the 1st Cav had outflanked the main Japanese line of resistance, which in this case ran along the beach directly in front of Lorengau. There were moments of fierce jungle fighting when the enemy opened fire from camouflaged pillboxes. However, by nightfall on the 17th the 8th Cavalry had taken the airstrip. The brigade crossed the Lorengau River under fire and entered the village on the following day. The 7th Cavalry then attacked inland to the south toward Rossum, seizing it on the 24th after four days of bitter fighting. Eastern Manus Island was secure. At the same time the 1st Brigade was concluding its operations on southern Los Negros; Japanese soldiers fleeing across the narrow channel between the islands found



more cavalrymen waiting for them.

In its first fight, the 1st Cavalry Division had done outstandingly well. When the Admiralties campaign ended officially on May 18, 1944, the troopers had killed 3317 of the enemy, while suffering casualties of less than one tenth that size.

When the tide of war swept westward across the Pacific, the 1st Cav, as part of X Corps, Sixth Army, was instrumental in liberating the Philippines. On October 20 the division's LCV's landed on the east coast of Leyte, near Tacloban. On the 21st the troopers entered the city and began sheltering and feeding thousands of refugees.

After breaking out of Tacloban the division, now commanded by Major General Verne D. Mudge, moved northwest up the rich Leyte Valley in two prongs, aiming at the fishing town of Carigara on the island's northern coast. On November Carigara fell; the valley had been cleared. However, Japanese reinforcements had landed in the Ormoc Valley on the other side of a mountain range, and were now

menacing the X Corps flank from the southwest. Accordingly, the 1st Brigade advanced into the mountains.

The battle through the mountains was the outstanding achievement of the campaign. Record rains flooded the island. Supply lines were stretched to the breaking point. The Japanese were dug in on the reverse slopes of knife-edge ridges, almost immune to artillery fire. Patrols slipped behind enemy lines, were isolated for days, fought without support, and withdrew battling for each clump of jungle foliage. But in spite of all hazards the troopers of the 5th and 12th Cavalry broke through in nearly a month of sustained heavy fighting, climaxed by the capture of Hill 2348 on December 2-3.

Meanwhile, the 7th Cavalry had been knocking out Japanese strongpoints on the fringes of the Leyte Valley, and the 8th Cavalry, which had landed on the neighboring island of Samar on October 24, had been waging a brilliant campaign of its own.

At first the 8th Cav advanced slowly north toward Hinabangan, near a

junction with the east-west road connecting Wright and Taft. Hinabangan was occupied on December 7. The troopers pushed on and captured Wright on the 13th. Then they took the left-hand fork and raced westward to Catabagan, where they were halted temporarily by defenses on the Magbag River. Pressure against this line convinced the Japanese that they could not hold Catabagan, and on the 19th the cavalrymen entered the barrio unopposed. Taft fell soon afterward; by the 21st the Samar portion of the campaign was over.

Once out of the mountains, the main body of the 1st Cav once more had room to maneuver as it rolled down the Ormoc Valley. At its flanks were the 32nd and 77th Infantry Divisions. Lonoy fell on December 19th, Cananga on the 21st. On the 23rd a general drive toward the coast was begun as resistance crumbled. Intermittent fighting continued for the rest of the year, with the 7th Cavalry taking the final objective of Villaba on December 29th and beating off four last-ditch banzai charges.



When the Leyte-Samar campaign ended, the 1st Cavalry Division had eliminated 5,937 Japanese, while losing 241 of its own men.

Without pause, the now battle-tested division entered the battle for Luzon and the capital city of the Philippines, Manila. It played a key role in Sixth Army's drive to fulfill the promise General MacArthur had made three years before—to return and liberate the islands.

The 1st Cav landed in the Lingayen Gulf on January 27, 1945 and moved 30 miles inland to Guimba. On January 20, General MacArthur gave the following order to Major General Mudge: "Go to Manila. Go around the Nips, but go to Manila. Free the internees at Santo Tomas. Take Malacanan Palace and the Legislative Building."

This meant that a flying column would have to knife through 100 miles of enemy-held territory, churn through mud, ford rivers where the bridges had been blown, fight or bypass an enemy whose dispositions were largely unknown, and crash into the defenses of a major city. Under the command of Brigadier General William C. Chase, the troopers did it in 66 hours. There was fighting at Angat, the "hot corner" at Novaliches, and other places, but on February 3 the column entered Manila. 3700 people who had been imprisoned in the Santo Tomas camp for three years were freed.

With their supplies and ammunition exhausted and support elements strung

out over the whole route of their advance, the troopers were in a dangerous position. But the Japanese were too disorganized to take advantage of it. Reinforcements arrived, and General MacArthur began to oversee a XIV Corps offensive against the main Japanese defenses across the Pasing River. A sweep through the eastern suburbs, then west, completed the encirclement. The American forts, lost in 1941, were retaken. The enemy was driven into an increasingly tight perimeter; after the 16th the Intramuros district had to be subdued house by house.

"First in Manila" became one of the highlights of Cav history.

By March 3, resistance in the capital had ceased. During the latter stages of the battle, the 2nd Brigade Combat Team challenged the formidable defenses of Antipolo, with an aim of preventing Japanese reinforcements from reaching Manila. From February 20 until March 12, fighting of the most brutal and exhausting kind took place as the troopers attacked a series of fortified ridges, honeycombed with artillery emplacements.

Air support and flamethrowers helped them drive the enemy from his caves and eventually overrun the southern flank of the Shimbu Line.

General Mudge had been wounded at Antipolo, so when the division turned south on March 21 toward the Batangas peninsula it was commanded by Brigadier General Hugh F. T. Hoff-

man. The XIV Corps plan of attack called for an envelopment, with the 1st Cav and the 11th Airborne Division converging on the main north-south road at Lipa.

The towns of Santo Tomas, Tanauan, and Lipa were captured in sharp fighting by March 29. Then the cavalrymen moved east and linked up with the 43rd Infantry Division, severing all north-south communications. The Japanese holed up in strong points, fighting when attacked but otherwise remaining fairly immobile. The Bicol peninsula was cleared in April and a stronghold at Mt. Malepunyo was slowly reduced. Around the Katapalan Sawmill an Infanta in eastern Luzon the last major battle of the war was won in early May. When the campaign officially ended on June 30, the 1st Cavalry Division had accounted for 14,114 enemy dead and 1199 prisoners.

The shooting war was over for the cavalrymen. However, their outstanding services made them eligible for a final honor: that of being the first unit to enter the surrendered Japanese capital.

On the morning of September 8 the division marched into Tokyo. General MacArthur was escorted by the 2/7th Cavalry. Amid ceremonies celebrating the newly-won peace, THE FIRST TEAM, which was to remain in Japan as part of Eighth Army until 1950, staged a triumphal parade, as "First in Tokyo" was entered in the proud roll of 1st Cav achievements.

## Korea

On July 18, 1950, when the 1st Cavalry Division landed at Pohang-dong, South Korea, within the rapidly shrinking Pusan perimeter, it was one-third understrength. Supplies were scarce. But there was no time for additional preparation. The division was being deployed as part of Eighth Army in a desperate attempt to salvage a war that had been three-quarters lost. When the troopers waded ashore from their LST's, the Communist lines were only 25 miles away and moving closer day by day.

Under the command of Maj. Gen. Hobart Gay, the 1st Cav occupied the key center sector of the perimeter, straddling the main road from Pusan to Seoul, the capital of South Korea. The troopers first contacted the enemy on July 22, when a probing North Korean patrol clashed with the 1/8th Cavalry.

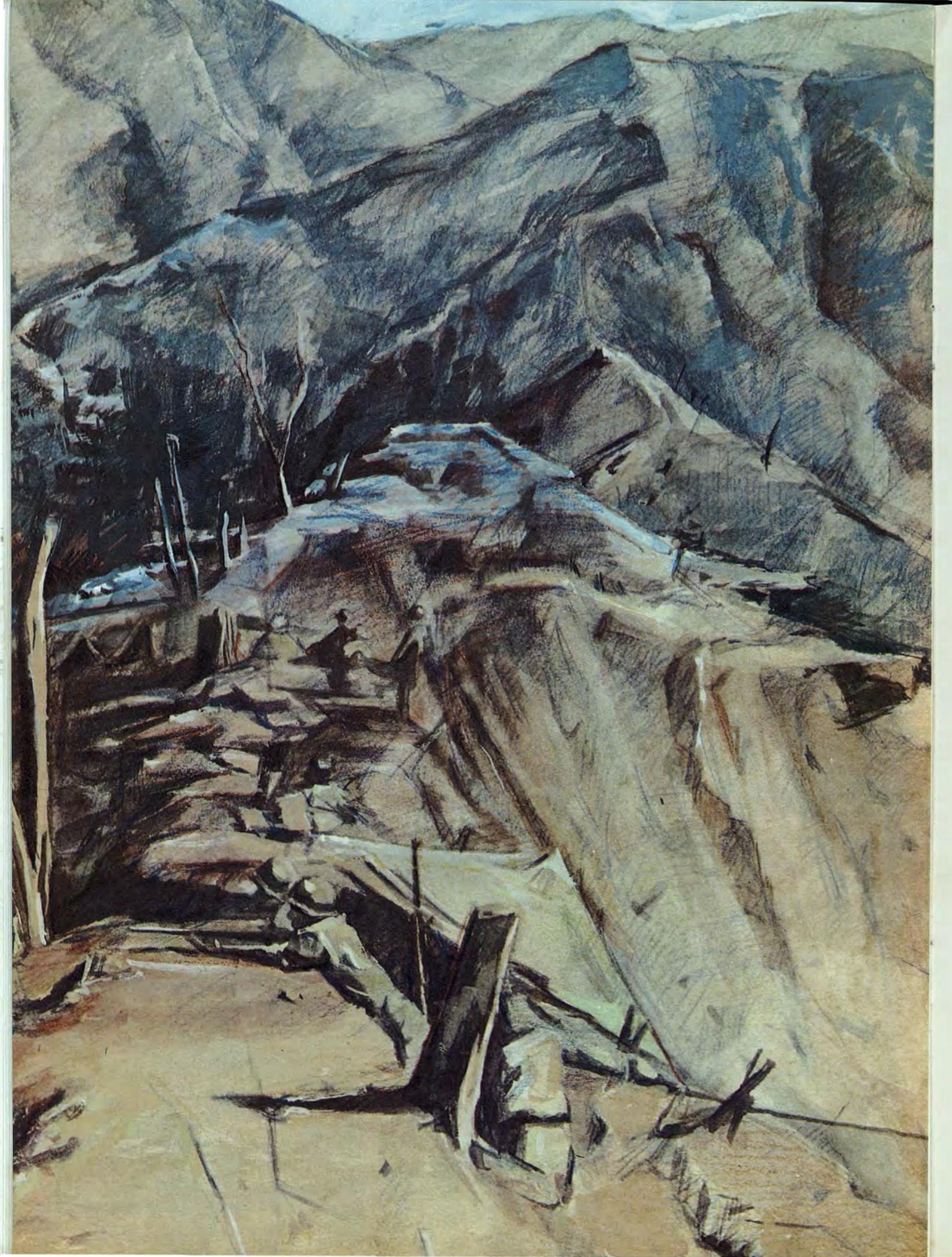
The following morning an artillery and mortar barrage heralded the first major ground attack against the Cav's positions. With unrelenting ferocity, the North Koreans hammered at the U.N. forces for the following month, forcing them to yield ground grudgingly but steadily. Lacking manpower, the division was forced to leave gaps in its front. The Communists infiltrated through the gaps, sometimes hiding themselves in the crowds of refugees: creating confusion, flanking the Allied units, and maintaining offensive momentum.

However, once the Cavalrymen took up positions behind the Nakdong River fronting the city of Taegu, the cumulative effects of heavy casualties and overtaxed supply lines began to tell on the North Koreans.

They succeeded in punching across the Nakdong, but only at suicidal cost. An attack on August 4 against the 7th Cavalry Regiment cost the enemy 1500 counted dead out of a force estimated at 1700. Reinforcements bolstered the strength of Eighth Army. Republic of Korea (ROK) units were integrated with 1st Cav units, and by August 28 the division was back to full strength.

The Eighth Army offensive began on September 17, though for the previous week units of the 1st Cav had made limited attacks to seize hills to their front. The 5th Cavalry Regiment captured several of these hills in sharp clashes. On September 20 the 7th and 8th Cavalry penetrated the North Korean lines, raced behind them, and linked up to encircle two divisions.





With this breakthrough the enemy in the south began to crumble.

September 1950, a month in which the 1st Cav had shown virtuosity in both defense and attack, ended with a quick United Nations victory apparently in sight.

Consolidating south of Seoul, the 1st Cav blocked escape routes. On October 1 the 5th Cavalry alone held over 1400 prisoners and the 8th Cavalry 1000. Soon the division began to move north, first to Seoul and then across the Imjin River to Kaesong, just below the 38th Parallel.

On October 9, the troopers received orders to continue the advance across the border. The town of Kumchon, on the road leading to the North Korean capital of Pyongyang, was captured in the face of the stiffest resistance the enemy was able to mount on the entire front. The 7th Cavalry and the 27th British Commonwealth Brigade trapped over 5000 Reds further north in the vicinity of Sariwon, and this victory assured a triumphal entry into Pyongyang.

On October 19 Pyongyang fell and the third historic "first" for THE FIRST TEAM was consummated. Pyongyang followed Manila and Tokyo in the roll of enemy capitals occupied by the 1st Cav. Elements of the 5th Cavalry made the initial penetration, and the rest of the city was occupied on the 20th. Over 2000 prisoners were taken. The 7th Cavalry seized the port of Chinnampo, Pyongyang's principal outlet to the sea.

As the cold Korean winter began to set in, the Cavalrymen remained in the Pyongyang area while the front swept northward. During this lull they refitted and mopped up the remaining pockets of resistance. On October 28, however, a I Corps order ordered them forward again. By November 1 the 5th and 8th Cavalry were in position around the town of Unsan, on the Kuryong River.

That night a probing attack was launched with sudden force against elements of the 8th Cavalry. Hardly had this been beaten back when the main Red Chinese offensive, carefully prepared and backed by inexhaustible manpower reserves, began in a barrage of rockets and mortar shells.

Blowing bugles, hordes of Red soldiers appeared out of the night, climbing over piles of their own dead. The 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry was surrounded, and only a few cavalrymen were able to escape from the pocket. Other units retreated to avoid the same fate. The division took up a temporary defense line to the south along the Chongchon River.

On November 22, after the expected Chinese follow-up attack failed to materialize, the 1st Cav went into Eighth Army reserve. On the 26th its

units were moved to the Taedong River, and renewed contact began on the 28th. The II ROK Corps, hit hard, was forced to withdraw, and the Cav moved to plug the gap. The 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry defeated an estimated reinforced regiment after crossing the river.

However, the continued disintegration of other parts of the line stretched the 1st Cav to the breaking point. Conditions of the Pusan days were duplicated as crowds of refugees and retreating Korean soldiers clogged the roads and afforded cover for infiltrating Red units. On the evening of the 29th the Chinese flung their full strength against the United Nations lines. Only a "stomewall" defensive effort by the 7th Cavalry kept the spearhead of the 42nd Chinese Army from penetrating. Orders arrived telling the Cav to hold its sector as long as possible.

During the month of December, four planned withdrawals were carried out. While supplies and reinforcements were massed in the rear, a fluid, yielding United Nations line screened major movements, inflicted casualties, and prevented an actual breakthrough. Space was traded for time. The 1st Cav crossed the 38th Parallel on December 11 and 12, and began to construct a defense in depth along the Han River, in the vicinity of Seoul.

On New Year's Eve, the forward units at the 38th Parallel were hit by the Chinese juggernaut. Crossing the frozen Imjin, ignoring fearsome losses, the Communist troops clawed fanatically through minefields and barbed wire. The United Nations forces fell back to their second line of defense on the Han, abandoning Seoul. The city was evacuated on January 3, more than a million refugees began the freezing trek south. However, the enemy drive seemed to lose momentum when it crossed the Han. After the fall of Seoul, a lull fell over the front in January 1951.

Eighth Army, wondering what the enemy's intentions were, began probing northward in late January. The 3/8th Cavalry, rebounding from its losses at Unsan, was included in Task Force Johnson, which conducted a reconnaissance on January 22 and encountered few Communist soldiers. The entire 1st Cav was ordered to probe northward through the snow toward the Han, reaching a series of phase lines; for two weeks gains were slow but steady. January ended as a company of the Greek Expeditionary Force, attached to the 7th Cavalry, defended Hill 381 against a counter-attack by an estimated 3000 Chinese, killing 800. Elements of the 5th and 8th Cavalry stormed deeply bunkered hills in equally sharp engagements.

On February 14 the 7th Cavalry seized Hill 578 in spite of heavy resistance. Phase line objectives had been

reached. The 1st Cav prepared to go back into reserve, but at that moment the long-delayed Red blow fell on X Corps, surrounding the 23rd Infantry Regiment and an attached French battalion at Chipyong-ni. The 5th Cavalry organized Task Force Crombez, painting its tanks like tigers to give the rescue dash maximum psychological effect.

The 1st Cav then took up positions north of Chipyong-ni, moving through a snowstorm on February 18 and occupying Line Yellow. It was assigned limited-objective attacks in support of an offensive by two Corps: X circling west and IX east in a double envelopment. However, torrential rains and floods in late February blunted the thrust. At this point Major General Charles D. Palmer took command of THE FIRST TEAM.

On February 27 the division was ordered to a new Main Line of Resistance. In the process of occupying this line, the 5th Cavalry captured Hill 318 in a brisk two-day fight. When March arrived, Chinese bridgeheads south of the Han had been wiped out. The enemy had been severely punished during his mid-February offensive, and the United Nations forces pushed northward toward Seoul, crossing a series of phase lines on the way to the 38th Parallel.

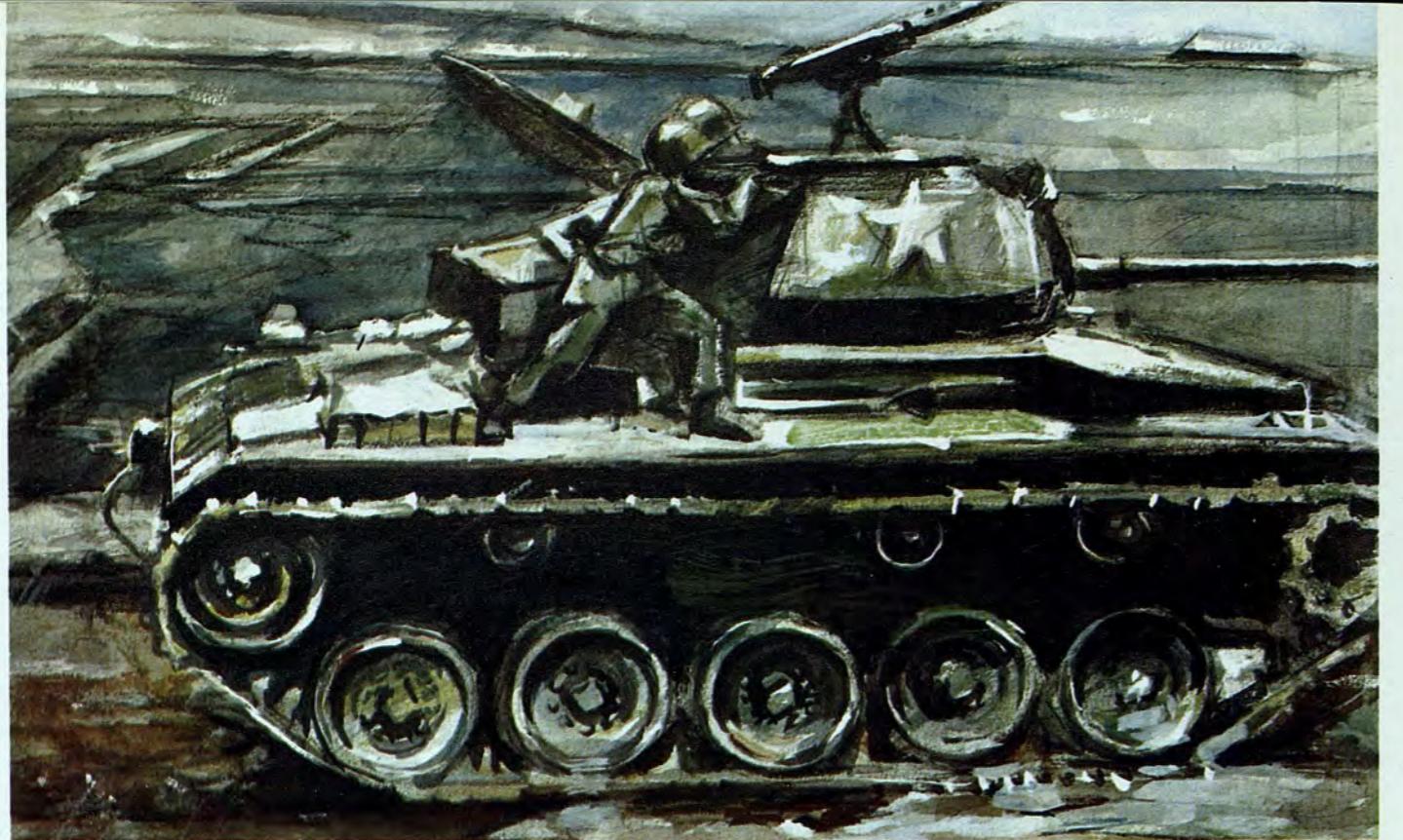
On March 14 the 3/5th Cavalry crossed the Hangchon river under fire. Enemy resistance began to melt away, and north of the Hangchon the tracks and boots of the Cavalrymen crossed one target line after another. Seoul fell in the middle of March. The Communists pulled their lines back across the whole front, abandoning the plains and trying to reorganize in the mountains.

On April 22 the offensive began. The 1st Cav troopers, who had been taking a well-deserved rest in I Corps reserve, halted the threat by committing the 5th Cavalry Regimental Combat Team in support of the 6th ROK Division.

Once more the United Nations line ebbed, but this time the retreat was limited, shrewdly gauged, and very costly to the attacking enemy. Almost from the beginning Chinese casualties soared, while the Allied forces, sliding backward behind an umbrella of firepower, suffered comparatively little. On April 28 the 1st Cav was given the mission of holding the line in front of Seoul. Despite the avalanche of manpower directed against it by the Communists, the division accepted the assignment with confidence.

With the sunshine and drying mud of May, conditions for transport improved. The line held.

During the first half of the month the Reds slackened their pressure; licking their wounds, they prepared for a "Fifth Phase" offensive which was initiated on May 18 and 19. It



smashed head-on into prepared defenses, multiple gun emplacements, and a seemingly inexhaustible barrier of lead. Brute numbers could not prevail against that kind of firepower. The assaulting masses were thrown into confusion and routed; troopers pursued them down the steep mountainsides.

On the 19th the Division, without pausing, swung into the attack and advanced to Line Topeka, 4-8 miles ahead. On the 25th a three-day drive was begun to Line Kansas, seizing commanding ground from which the Allies could overlook the lowlands of central Korea. By the 28th, the 1st Cav first harassed the railway network of the "Iron Triangle" formed by the cities of Chorwon, Kumwha, and Pyongyang, and then advanced 6-11 miles to Line Wyoming. The successful defense of Seoul had demonstrated the value of a prepared defensive line.

On July 18, one year after the 1st Cav entered the war at Pohangdong, it assumed reserve status. BG Thomas L. Harrold took over command of the division.

By August 1, the Cavalrymen had returned to the line. Beyond artillery range, the enemy was building up his forces once again. The rainy season produced floods in early August. Still, the situation remained quiet until September 5, when K Company of the 5th Cavalry Regiment received a unit citation for defending a patrol base four miles in advance of the Main Line of Resistance. At midnight an artillery and mortar barrage hit the company; a series of human wave attacks hammered each platoon in turn. By dawn, ammunition inside the base was low. But a daring resupply effort succeeded, and a relief force led by tanks broke

through to the surrounded troopers. Despite already staggering losses, the Chinese continued to throw waves of men against the position, so a withdrawal was effected under artillery cover. Fanaticism had cost the enemy an estimated 500 killed and 1000 wounded.

On the nights of September 21-22, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 7th Cavalry were attacked by waves of Communist soldiers who were driven back only after hand-to-hand fighting. However, this was just a warmup for the kind of effort that would be required of the 1st Cav during Operation Commando, part of a general Eighth Army offensive designed to drive the Chinese from their well-prepared winter line of defense. The division was given the task of rooting almost an entire Chinese Army from elaborate trench lines, caves, and reinforced bunkers carved into steep hills.

The Chinese defensive line was redesignated Line Jamestown. On October 3, the division moved out from Line Wyoming. Immediately it came under fire, and for the first two days hardly any progress was registered. When a hill was taken, counter-attacks often recaptured it. Nonetheless, by the third day the enemy line in front of the 7th Cavalry showed signs of cracking. On October 5, the 8th Cavalry took Hill 418, one of the flanking hill masses upon which the line was anchored. The Chinese flank began to be rolled up from north to south.

The southern portion of the line proved a tougher nut to crack. B-26 bombers dropped their heaviest ordnance upon the bunkers and tunnels. This did not prevent the enemy from

counterattacking against the 7th Cavalry on October 10 and 11, but it did lead to the capture of Hill 272, the central pivot of the line by the 8th Cavalry on October 13.

On the 16th, a final assault was directed against the high ground in the 5th Cavalry sector. By the 18th the troopers, crawling and slugging to the top, had completed the conquest of Line Jamestown. The Reds, unable to stand the deluge of firepower any longer, retired to the north.

The next task was to consolidate Line Jamestown and seize an outpost line several thousand meters ahead. The battle for the outposts continued for the rest of October. Fierce company actions were fought over barren knobs, and it was only with great difficulty that the patrol bases were established. Unwilling to risk a major battle, the enemy contented himself with hit-and-run tactics.

Gradually the night raids diminished in strength. Indeed, the Cavalrymen who had stormed "Old Baldy", a sheer hill mass in Line Jamestown, had seen the 1st Cav's last major combat in Korea. Artillery harassed the Reds as they tried to build a new line, but most of the sector was quiet as reconnaissance parties from the 3rd Infantry Division visited the area to prepare for a changeover. On December 16, the 1st Cav was relieved.

The battle-hardened troopers took over the defense of Hokkaido, Japan, after adding another chapter to an illustrious combat record that saw its beginning with the saber-swinging horse soldiers of the Indian Wars. Six members of the division had received their country's highest award for heroism, the Medal of Honor.



## Vietnam *Once again... once again...*

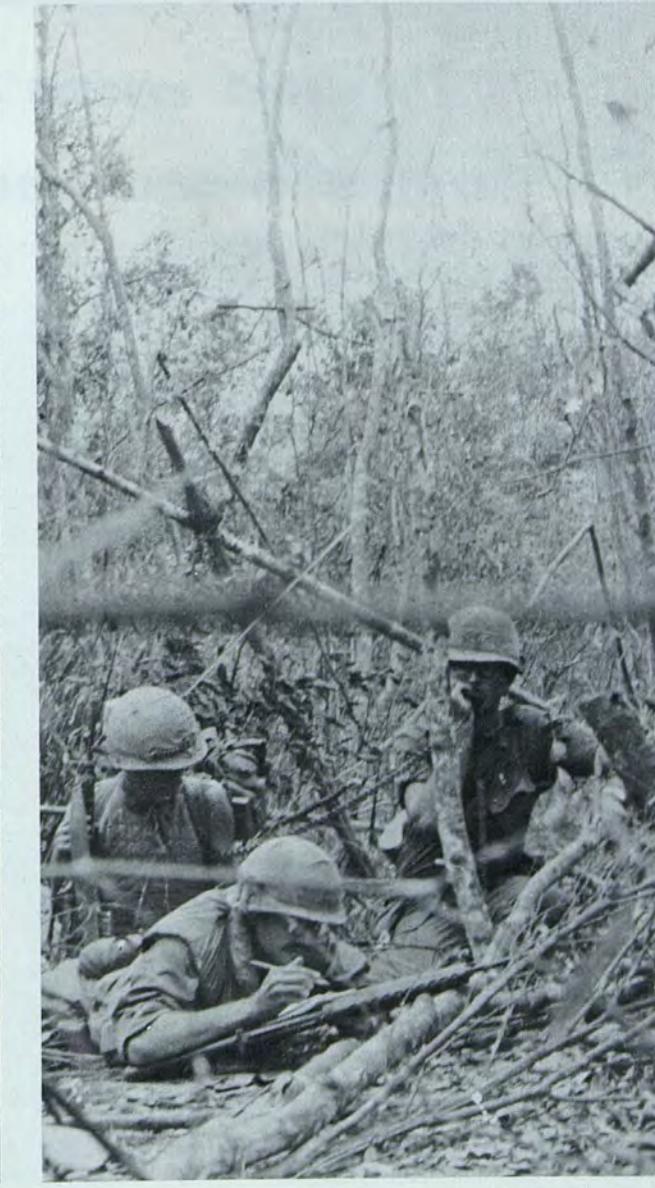




***once again  
the Cav  
moved across  
an ocean...***



***once again  
to help  
a country  
stay free...***





***again the job wasn't easy...***

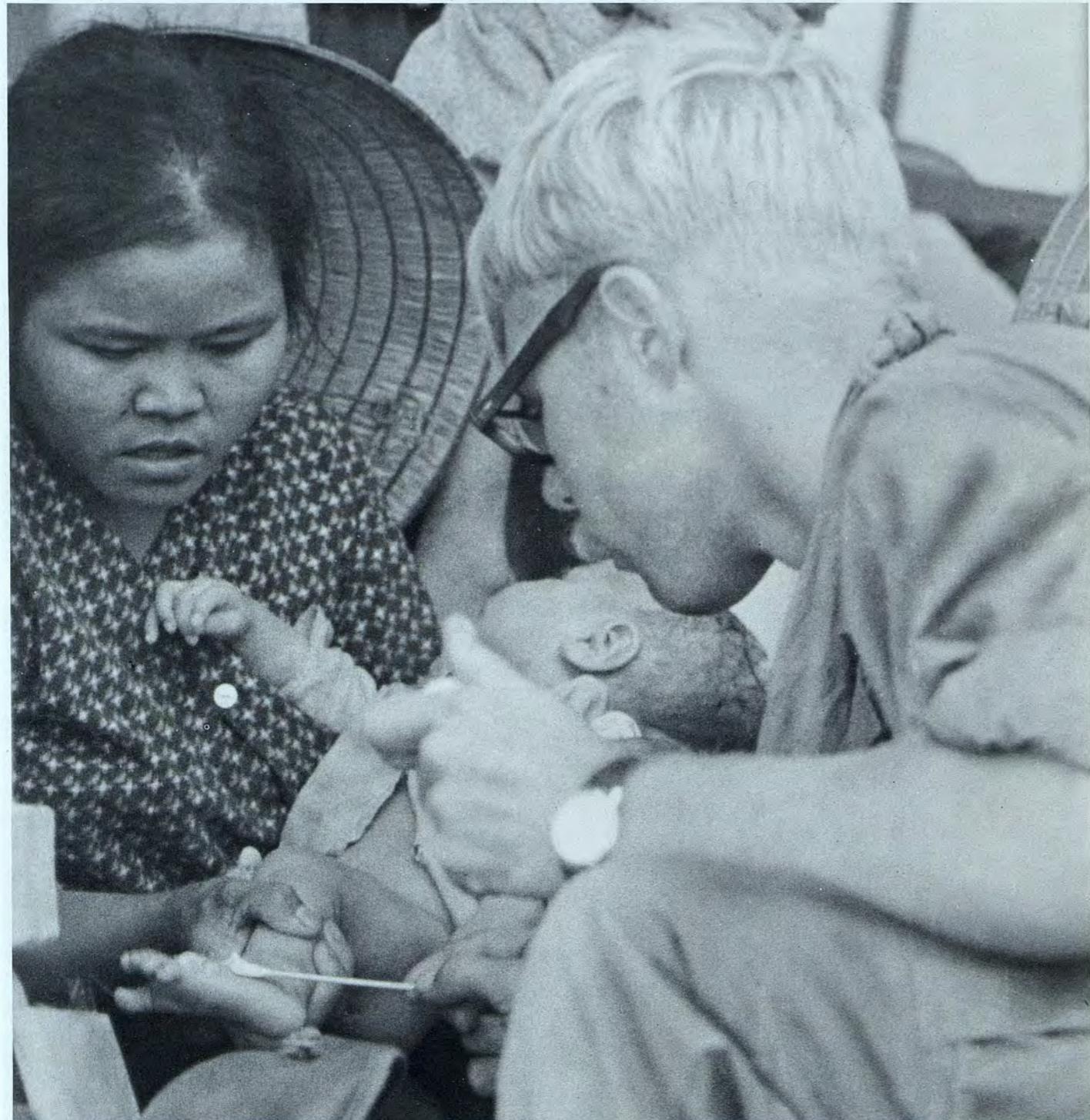
***there were sacrifices to be made...***



***again there were the  
myriad thoughts  
and feelings  
that enter into war...***



***and it was all there again...***



***...for a cause***

# THE MIRACLE OF MEDEVAC

**T**hree minutes after we receive a call we're airborne." Speaking was Warrant Officer One Arthur R. Jacobs, a chopper pilot with Charlie Company, 15th Medical Battalion. He was speaking of medevac, the quickest system of evacuation in the history of war. In the majority of cases, a wounded man arrives at a medical aid station within half an hour after the incident occurs.

Medevac. To many men in the field it may mean the difference between saving or losing a limb, the difference between life and death.

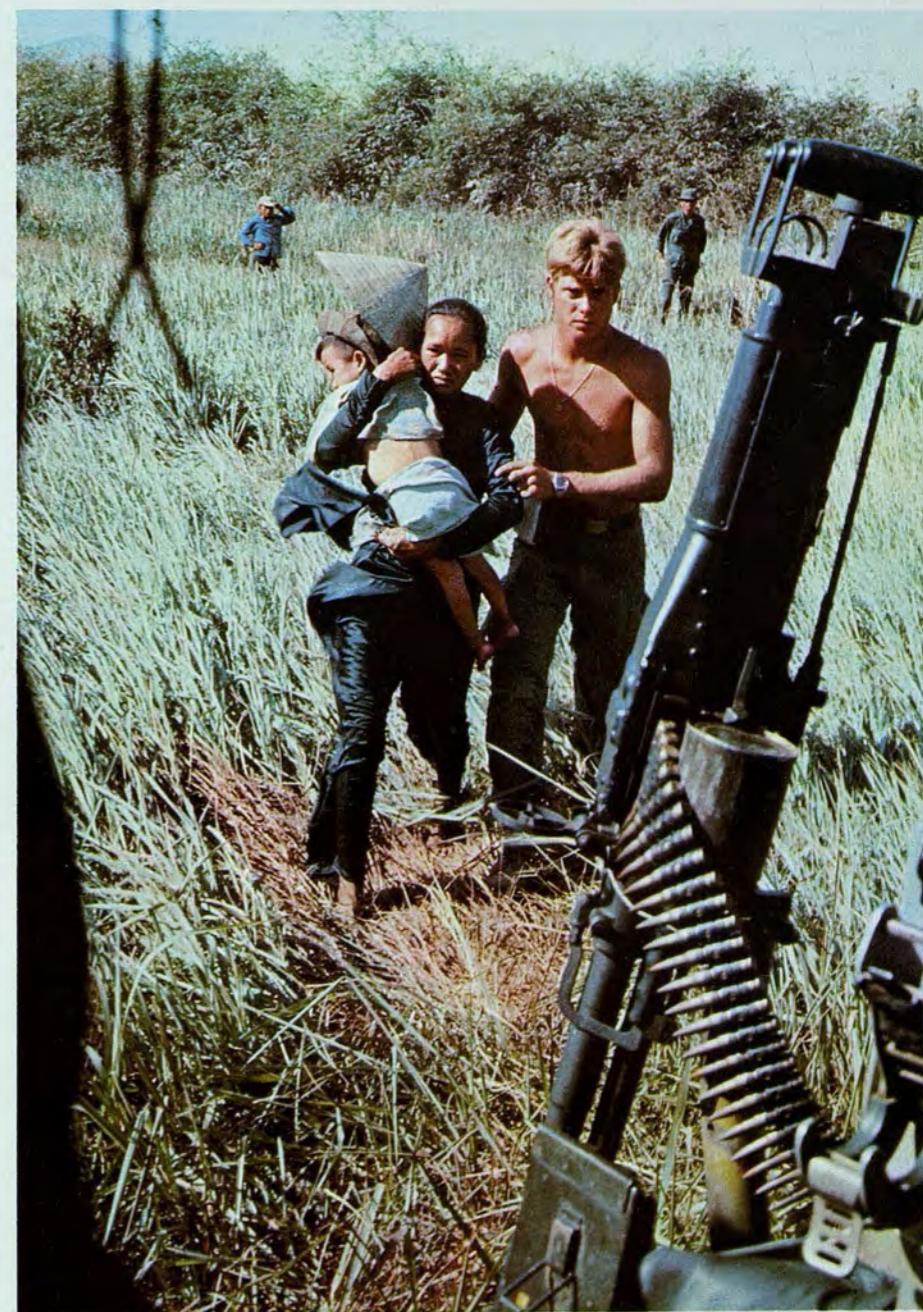
Many times the helicopters must go into hot LZ's to extract a patient, and are often relatively stationary targets for enemy fire.

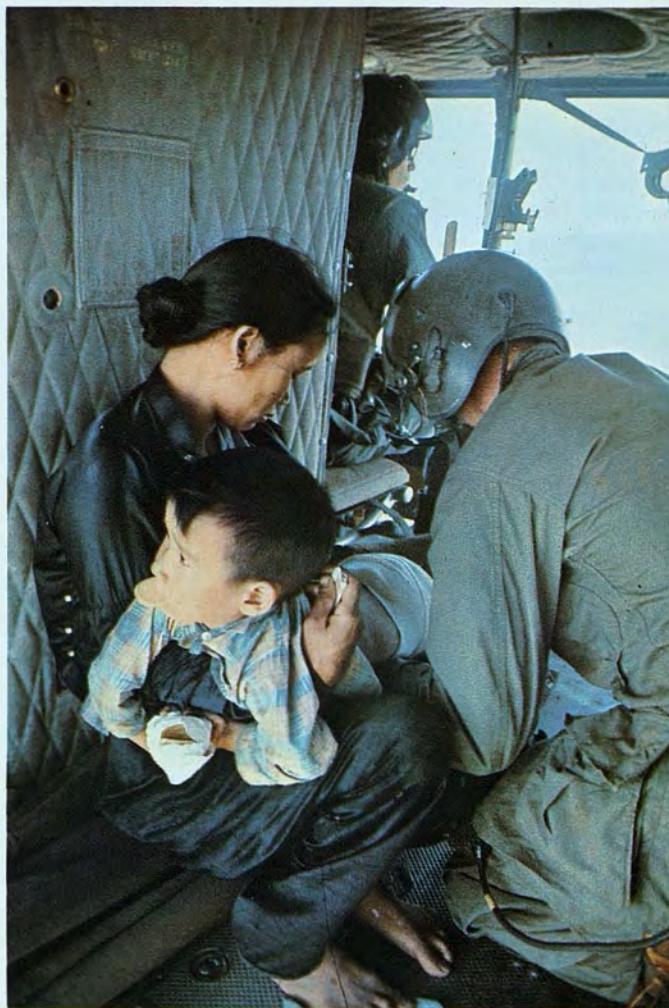
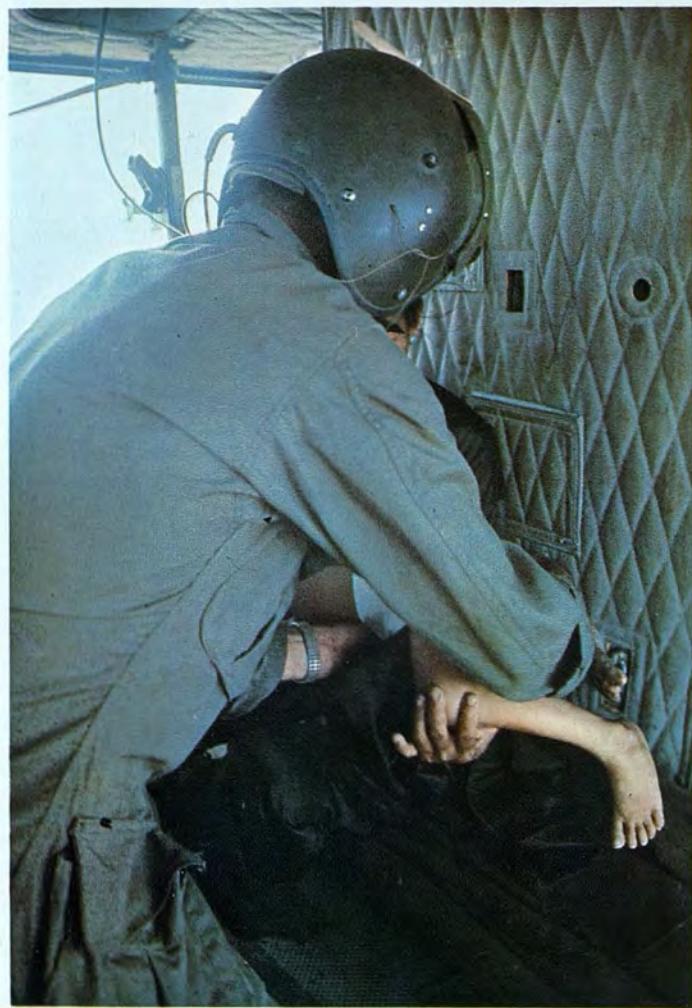
On every medevac ship, there are five men; two pilots, a crew chief, door gunner and medic. The medic's job is to keep the patient comfortable, treat him, and, most important, keep him alive. It's often a demanding job. Specialist 5 Paul Rojas, a Company medic, stated, "My biggest problem is a seriously wounded patient. I can't think of anything but keeping him alive. I try to do my best."

One of the most interesting facts regarding medevac pilots and their crews is that they are all volunteers. Why? "I understand how these men have it on the ground, because I was

---

*The following sequence of photographs follows the evacuation of a South Vietnamese child who, while playing, accidentally ignited a can of fuel. The child was burned on his legs and back, and his mother contacted Army personnel in the area, who contacted Medevac. Within minutes the child was on his way to an aid station.*





originally in the infantry," said Warrant Officer Jacobs. "During that time I was wounded and medevaced. We're here for them. That's our sole purpose."

To be effective, the men on the medevac ships must have life-saving facilities. Resuscitators, oxygen and medical supplies are common on the birds. A "jungle penetrator" and hoist are also used to lift patients from tight locations.

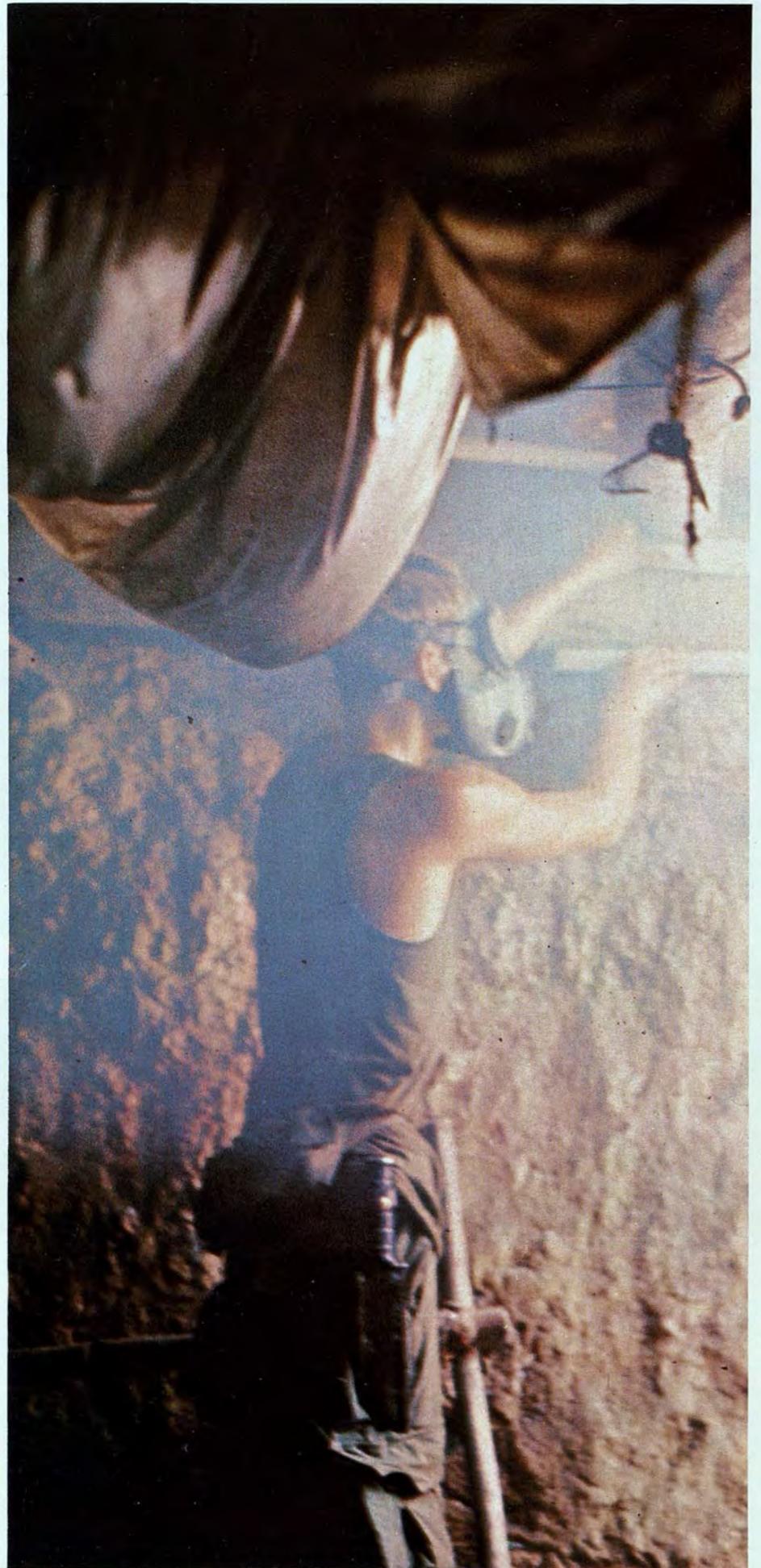
Yet there is still something else that all the medical supplies in the world couldn't instill. SP/5 Randell Brewer

summed it up. "Our morale is really high. We always get our patients out. There is no such thing as a bad attitude in our outfit."

Though the men on the ships have great confidence in themselves, they also have high regard for the men on the ground; the men who guide them, advise them and report on the enemy situation. The "Black Hat (or pathfinder) is the man who marks the LZ and informs the medevac pilots of surrounding terrain. "It's like having a pilot on the ground," remarked Jacobs.

The 12 ships flying medevac for the 1st Cav are an organic part of the division. There are no nine to five hours. The crews are on call day and night, 24 hours a day, every day.

The men at Charlie Company, 15th Medical Battalion have a unique job. Every operation is different, every location, every patient. One medic wrapped up the entire idea of medevac in one sentence. "When we get a call to pick somebody up, we go get him. It doesn't matter much where he is, or what's happening there. We get a call, we go and get him."



An 8th Engineer begins the destruction of an enemy bunker.

(continued from page 7)

For example, Bravo Battery, 2/19th Artillery, the first battery to reach LZ Stallion, had fired 4,800 rounds by May 4. When Delta Company, 1/8th was fighting for the Punchbowl cache, the Redlegs "prepped" the enemy position with 445 high-explosions, four quite large and one believed to be a detonating fuel dump.

Later that day, when Delta Company called for artillery to cover its withdrawal, Bravo Battery responded with 216 rounds. The previous day it had fired 600 rounds in support of 1st Brigade forces. "They'll shoot all day and all night for the 'grunts' without complaint," said LT Lars A. Showalter, San Francisco, the fire direction control officer.

On May 11, scouts from the 3rd Brigade observed two charred rocket sites abandoned by the enemy, and captured one rocket. These positions, from which the NVA had bombed the landing zones when the brigade initially penetrated the A Shau, were graphic proof of the success of the Skytroopers. In three weeks the Communist sanctuary had been eliminated. The NVA had lost over 300 killed, and materiel losses were enormous. The valley belonged to the 1st Cav.

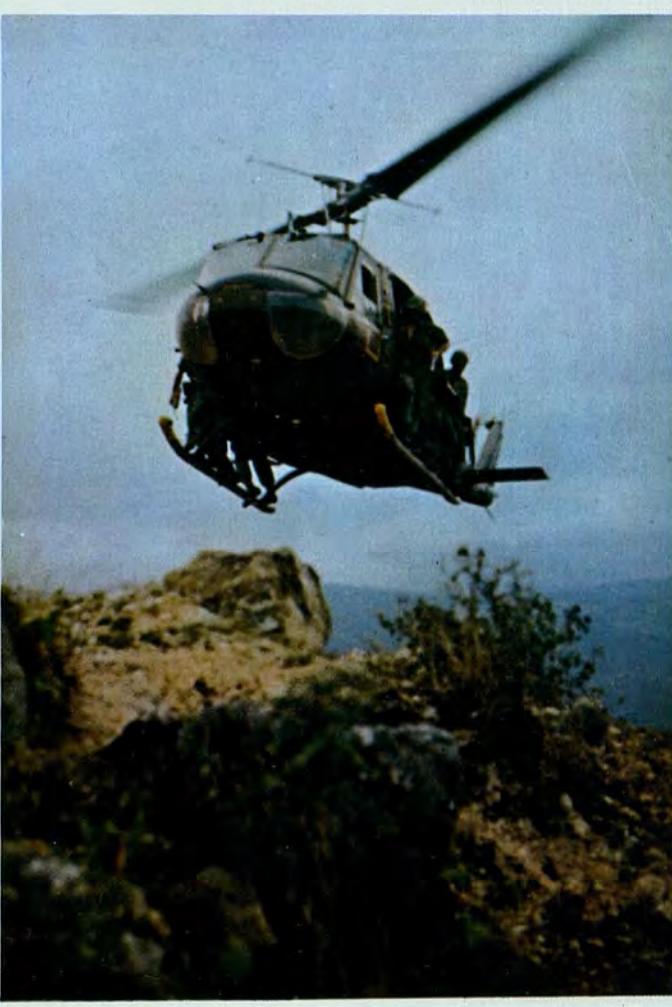
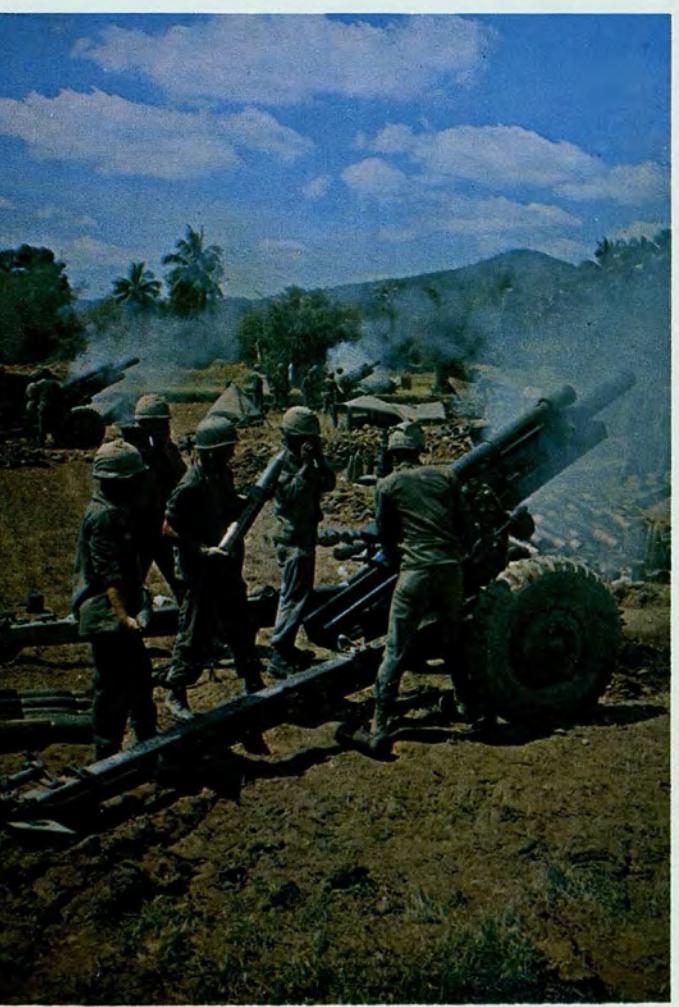
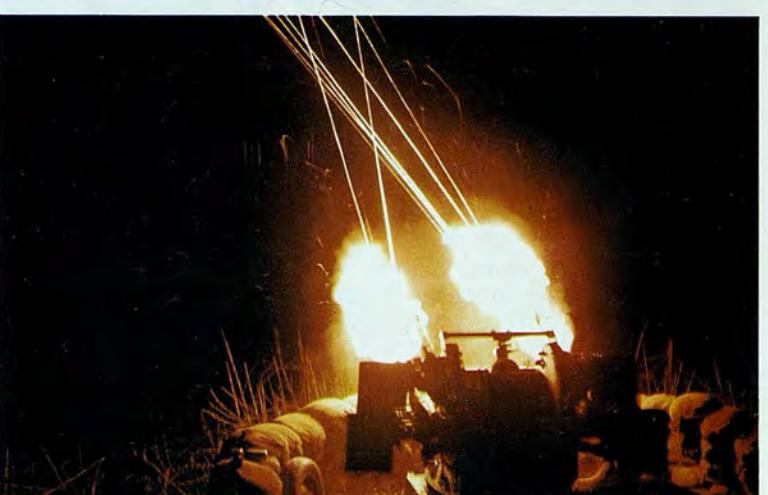
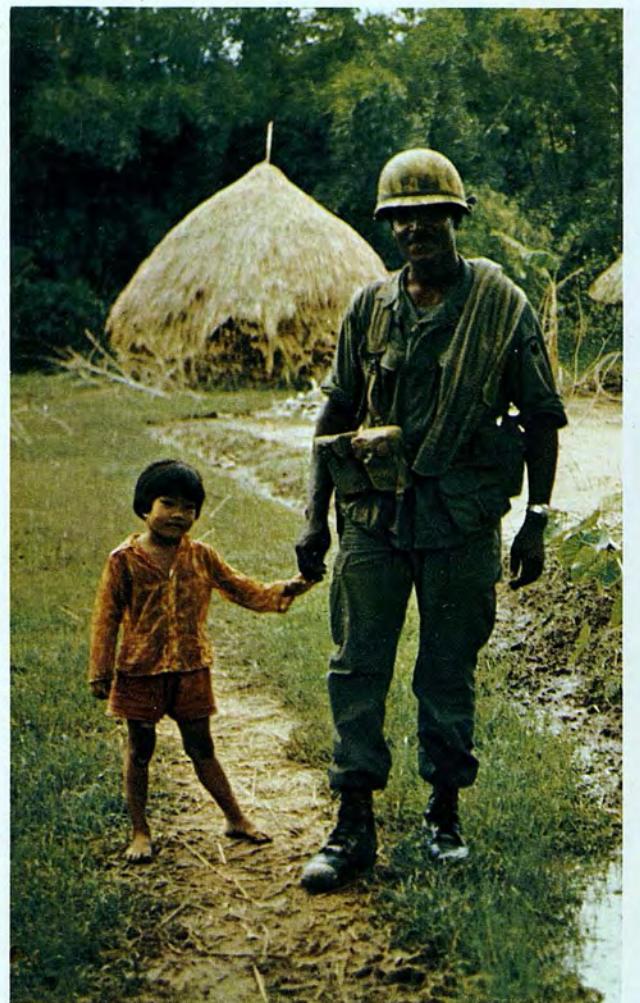
What did Operation Delaware mean? For SSG Bill Vincent, San Diego, Calif., it was a time of testing and discovery. "Going into the valley was my first action in Vietnam. We landed on a highway that ran through the floor of the valley. It impressed me. It was obvious they had heavy construction equipment for the road." His was an individual war of sweat and sinew: "These are the steepest hills I've ever had to climb. With the loose sand, it was hard to make any upward progress. We had to use ropes a couple of times to haul ourselves up."

For CPT John W. Taylor, Upper Montclair, N.J., commanding officer of Alpha Company, 5/7th, "the Delaware operation exemplified the ideal use of the 1st Air Cavalry Division. This was probably our most important mission."

Perhaps Captain Douglas L. Verdier of the 1/12th Cavalry had the last word: "The only things I worried about were the anti-aircraft guns. I was sure we could handle anything we encountered on the ground. We went in well loaded with supplies, so we didn't have much trouble with that. Ammo was no problem; everyone went in carrying at least two basic loads. The mission was intended to be a reconnaissance in force. We were supposed to search and destroy everything we could find. We destroyed a hell of a lot out there. That was the mission we were sent out to do, and we did it."

# A 1st Cavalry Division Color Pictorial







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***The Air  
Cavalry  
Division***

