

RECONDO TEAM TROMPS AROUND FOR “CHARLIE”

An undated article from the 1st Cav's newspaper “Cavalair”

Submitted by Larry Pappert

BONG SON

Private First Class Roy A. Olson, 20, Billings, Mont., and the other five members of his 1st Air Cavalry Division recondo team were out on a mission in the Central Highlands of Vietnam when they spotted what looked like broken prints of motorcycle tires.

Olson and the other recondos knew, however, that they were impressions left by tire-treaded “Ho Chi Minh” sandals. The team turned to their Montagnard scout for his judgement on the number of people who had been in the area. The scout said “Bookoo” which the recondos know mean more than twenty.

Less than five minutes later the six recondos were battling it out with a company of the North Vietnamese Army. The battle lasted for a half hour until a helicopter came and extracted them from the area.

The 1st Air Cavalry Division’s recondo teams are out in the field almost daily. Their mission is to observe enemy activity and not to engage the enemy. Occasionally, they are cornered and have to fight their way out as Olson’s team did.

All Recondos are trained as infantrymen. They tromp around the Central Highlands in rakish “tiger” fatigues. Olson and many of the other team members are permitted to wear a triangular green patch with “Recondo” embroidered at the top and a big “V” (for valor) at the bottom.