

2 U.S. Helicopters Lost in Vietnam

CA MAU, Vietnam (AP)—Three troops carrying U.S. Army H-21 helicopters crashed and two of them were subsequently destroyed Saturday during military operations aimed at clearing this swampy communist-infested southern tip of the Republic of Vietnam.

Five other helicopters and a

single-engine Otter transport plane also were damaged in the operations.

There were no American casualties but one Vietnamese government soldier lost a leg in one of the helicopter crashes.

Five others were injured or wounded in the operation. Three communist Viet Cong guerrillas

were killed.

The first helicopter loaded with Vietnamese troops crashed while trying to land in a narrow swampy area hemmed in by trees and brush near the southwestern tip of the Republic of Vietnam. It tipped over, shredding its whirling rotor blades amid small

(Continued on Back Page Col. 1)

2 Helicopters Lost in Vietnam Raid

(Continued From Page 1)
mans five from the surrounding village.

The second helicopter crashed in the same area an hour later. It could not be immediately identified if the crashes occurred because of enemy fire or the terrain.

Heckled by turbine-powered H-119 helicopters destroyed the two downed aircraft with machine gun and rocket fire to prevent them from falling into enemy hands.

The third H-21 was forced down at a small airfield near My Tho, further north. It was damaged.

24 Pacific Stars & Stripes
Sunday, Dec. 10, 1962

ed that the aircraft could be repaired and flown out (UPI reported).

Four other H-21 helicopters were damaged when the single-engine Otter transport plane sliced into one of them on take off and then, trying to land again, slid into three others. The Otter itself crash landed in a paddy field at the end of the runway.

A fifth helicopter was damaged in a crash landing near My Tho in a separate operation in the same general area.

It was one of the worst days for the U.S. Army's 93d Helicopter Co., the first to arrive here a year ago.

Reports from Saigon said South

Vietnam claimed its forces had killed 18 Viet Cong and captured 24 others in the first three days of the new operation.

The operation in An Xuyen Province is aimed at opening vital navigation canals so that barges loaded with fuel charcoal can travel to Saigon.

The Vietnam press Saturday published the identification of a U.S. Army sergeant killed Thursday in what was described as a training accident.

The victim was identified as SFC Richard D. Bonzel, 30, of Appleton, Wash.

He was killed by an accidental explosion while teaching village militiamen south of Soc Trang how to use mines.

Viet Reds Lose 70 In 5 Days

SAIGON (UPI)—Thirty Viet Cong were killed and another 40 captured in a five-day operation on the Camau Peninsula which ended Sunday, military sources reported.

The operation was designed to relieve communist pressure on river and canal routes along which charcoal urgently needed in Saigon is being shipped.

Sources said that despite the Viet Cong death toll, the drive was considered a failure because the main body of guerrillas avoided battle.

No final total of government casualties was given, but at least three Republic of Vietnam soldiers were wounded, in addition to two American helicopter crewmen.

AP reported that several large government operations opened Monday, but there were no early reports of any important contact with the enemy.

Newspaper articles saved by
Payton Rowan and his family -
8 Oct 1962 / Miscellaneous / Newspaper
clips.

5 JAN 63

VIET CONG SLIP AWAY

TAN HIEP, Vietnam (AP)—Vietnamese troops and Americans dragged their dead and wounded from this bloody battlefield Thursday after a fierce 20-hour battle with communist guerrillas.

As the sun came up over the misty Mekong Delta helicopters flew wandily over the paddyfields which hours earlier had been the scene of one of the government's costliest battles.

at government forces from the beginning.

"It is a miserable performance," one senior observer declared. "Only 100 troops at a time were airlifted into the area because most helicopters were committed elsewhere. No fighter-bomber escorts were provided for same reason, this job being taken over by five armed UH-1A helicopters."

When the communists opened up heavy fire on forces nearest Ap Bac hamlet the troops just

WASHINGTON (AP)—The White House has ordered a full report on U.S. helicopter losses in the Republic of Vietnam, it was learned Thursday. The demand went to the Defense Department after officials were jolted by news dispatches saying at least eight Army-flown helicopters had been brought down by communist guerrilla ground fire while ferrying Vietnamese soldiers into battle.

and we would have won the day," another observer said.

When summoned personnel carriers were called in to relieve the position, they got bogged

over the paddyfields which hours earlier had been the scene of one of the government's costliest battles.

By early afternoon more than 100 government dead and wounded had been picked up from huts, dikes and open rice fields where they had lain all night. Among them were bodies of two Americans who had been killed the previous day. The other dead American and four American wounded were evacuated Wednesday evening.

Newsman Van Flow, in late in the morning saw smoke rolling out of the devastated hamlet of Ap Bac where guerrillas entrenched in deep fortifications had poured a withering hail of automatic weapons fire into attacking government forces.

Five American helicopters spreadeagled across the paddyfields bore testimony to the ferocity of fire.

When government forces ventured into deserted Ap Bac hamlet late Thursday morning only three guerrilla bodies could be found in the shattered ruins.

American sources assume that guerrilla casualties were high considering the huge amount of explosive poured into the hamlet from fighter bombers and artillery. But by early afternoon government patrols had found little evidence of communist losses.

As the confused picture of Wednesday's battle cleared it (Continued on Back Page, Col. 3)

Army Names Vietnam Dead

WASHINGTON (UPI)—The Army Thursday identified three Americans who were killed and three of six who were wounded in the Republic of Vietnam Wednesday.

The dead were Capt. Kenneth N. Good, 35, of Beach, Hawaii; Sgt. William L. Deal, 31, of May, Maryland; and SFC Donald L. Braham, 34, of Raleigh, N.C.

The identified wounded were Pvt. Robert H. Cole, son of Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Cole, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.; Pvt. Dale E. Moser, husband of Mrs. Sandra R. Moser, Ozark, Ala.; and Pvt. Kenneth B. Hayes, son of Mr. and Mrs. Earl E. Hayes, Quincy, Mass.

Setup Starves Armed Force

Heavy Toll in Vietnam Battle

(Continued from Page 1) to become obvious. Observers that the guerrilla victory came mainly from a chain of ill luck and disorganization that struck at government forces from the beginning.

"It is a miserable performance," one senior observer declared. "Only 100 troops at a time were airlifted into the area because most helicopters were committed elsewhere. No fighter-bomber escorts were provided for same reason, this job being taken over by five armed UH-1A helicopters."

When the communists opened up heavy fire on forces nearest Ap Bac, hampering the troops just

fall to the mud and stayed there for the remainder of the day. If only they had pushed straight into the hamlet, then losses would have been much lighter.

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and we would have won the day," another observer said.

When armored personnel carriers were called in to relieve the position, they got bogged

down in mud and had time and waste hours in arriving. When they did arrive, they could do little to stem communist fire.

Thursday morning, after a night of sporadic shooting, Vietnamese intelligence reports indicated that the whole guerrilla force which was estimated at two crack battalions and a heavy weapons company was pinned in.

During most of the morning the government concentrated on evacuating wounded. Later, when they probed guerrilla positions they found no one there.

American advisers have quick to praise the fighting qualities of guerrillas. "One senior adviser said, 'They were the best disciplined communist guerrillas we have ever met. They equaled the Germans and Japanese.'"

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WASHINGTON (AP)—The Army Thursday identified three Americans who were killed and three of six who were wounded in the Republic of Vietnam Wednesday.

The dead were Capt. Kenneth N. Good, 33, a Ranger, Hawaii; Sgt. William B. Deal, 31, a Marine, N.J.; and SPl Donald L. Bramm, 34, a Marine, Pa.

The identified wounded were Pvt. Robert E. Cline, 20, of Mt. and Mrs. Edmund Cline, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.; Pvt. John M. Wagon, husband of Mrs. Sandra M. Wagon, Ozark, Ala.; and Sgt. Kenneth E. Daves, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Daves, Quincy, Mass.

A Bright Idea—A Black Day

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (AP)—When temperatures plunged in this upstate New York city, Richard Valle put a 150-watt light bulb under the hood of his auto in the hope it would warm the engine.

It did. Valle told firemen early Wednesday that heat from the bulb ignited a blanket which also was under the hood. The blazing blanket set fire to the car, destroying it.

Death in Vietnam Paddy War— A Captain's Dream Is Cut Short

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SAIGON (AP)—A young officer who might have been a general someday bled to death of a communist bullet wound last Wednesday.

Capt. Kenneth Good of Ewa Beach, Hawaii, was on his way up. A 32-year-old West Pointer, he had been recommended to go to Malaya as representative on a guerrilla warfare team. Next year he would have gone to General Staff College.

"That man would have been a general some day," Lt. Col. John P. Vann, Good's commanding officer, said. "He was one of the most competent, knowledgeable officers in the country."

Good was senior adviser to the 2d Bn., 11th Regt. of the Republic of Vietnam's 7th Div.

Good and his unit went into battle early Wednesday about 35

miles southwest of here, leaping from their helicopters into swampy paddies.

There was no enemy fire then, and it looked like dozens of other operations in which he had participated—a quiet one.

Late in the morning a large Viet Cong unit began pouring a wall of fire from strong positions into the fourth wave of helicopters to arrive that day.

To the west was a canal, where amphibious armored personnel carriers were supposed to cross. They didn't come until hours after they were supposed to.

From the south, two units of Vietnamese troops were supposed to be moving up to attack the resisting hamlet. For some reason or other, they were not moving.

And in the east was the Viet

Cong—strongly fortified in the hamlet and behind a tree line.

Moving was painfully slow. Heavy Viet Cong machinegun fire was raking the rice fields, pinning down troops.

Good left the battalion command post with a Vietnamese captain to move closer to the fight, to see how the unit could improve its position. He was crouched down next to his counterpart looking over the front ahead when a stray Viet Cong bullet snapped into his shoulder.

Aid men began dressing the wound, two other American advisers arrived and Good managed to joke with them despite the pain.

He was evacuated to command post under fire within an hour after the Americans arrived, but desperately weakened by loss of blood and shock, he died.

Same, U.S. Says

WASHINGTON (AP)—The State Department says American military personnel in the Republic of Vietnam are advising the Vietnamese and are not giving battle orders.

Asked about reports that the Republic of Vietnam forces had shown a lack of aggressiveness in battles with communist Viet Cong guerrillas last week, Press Officer Joseph Rapp said:

"The Vietnamese are fighting with courage and determination, as they have shown in innumerable operations against the guerrillas."

"Relations between the American advisers and the Vietnamese forces on the whole are very good."

"There has been no change in U.S. policy," Rapp said. "The Americans are advising the Vietnamese and not giving orders."

Sikes Scores Viets

WASHINGTON (UPI)—Rep. Robert W. Sikes (D-Kan.) says "we cannot risk American lives" if the Vietnamese refuse to fight.

Sikes, a third-ranking Democrat on the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, said the war in Vietnam is "one of the first things Congress should look into."

He said he was shocked by the recent defeat of Republic of Vietnam units by an outnumbered force of communists.

"We apparently lost it," he said. "Because the Vietnamese refused to fight."

Viets Claim Gains

SAIGON (AP)—The Republic of Vietnam claimed Tuesday night its forces had killed or wounded more than 700 Viet Cong guerrillas in two extended operations that both ended Monday, but the claim was not confirmed by American sources.

According to Vietnamese reports, the victories were achieved in two operations north of Saigon—one near the Cambodian frontier that started Jan. 2, and the other in a "Red Enclave" known as "D" zone starting Dec. 22.

The government said both operations were planned and mounted in complete secrecy, and the results were withheld until Tuesday to insure military security.

Copter Unit's Friendly Tiger Hasn't Eaten Anyone... Yet

SOC TRANG, Vietnam (AP)—The most pampered tiger in all Vietnam parades around this area here. He was winning the war singlehanded.

Actually, all he's done so far is to settle at an American warlord's office, who now nurses six stitches in his arm and a much greater wound in his heart.

The 93d Light Helicopter Transport Co., U.S. Army, that has raised this once shy fugitive from the Laotian jungles

into an amiable monster named Tuffy claim he can do no wrong.

The fact that he now tops 200 pounds and insists on sitting on commanding officer Capt. Paul H. Brown's office table instead of in a chair has not helped to assuage, as everyone else has, that he will demand much greater liberties in the future.

Tuffy is a Bengal-type tiger and by the time he is fully grown at three years of age

he'll be in a position to demand and get nearly everything he would want.

The 93d is at present arranging great festivities for Tuffy's first birthday on March 28 when he'll be given as much of his favorite foods as can eat.

These include, not cabbage, pork and beans, eye bread and mock turtle soup.

According to St. Paul's Como Zoo, Miami, which has been advising the 93d on parental care, there is a definite possibility that Tuffy might soon prefer some meat in his diet.

If he shows signs of wanting to eat the commanding officer or the first sergeant, then he should be transferred to the states in some zoo, the Como Zoo officials advised.

Soc Trang command charged on this piece of advice.

"Wow, we were told that he'd be the most dangerous at the age of 10 months and now he is nearly 12 months old and hasn't eaten anyone," said operations officer Capt. Paul H. Brown, Soc Trang, Vietnam.

Tuffy was a gift to the 93d from a U.S. Army advisor who found him while the U.S. military were still in Laos. He has a playmate at Soc Trang, a tiny mongrel dog named "Tigger" of all things.

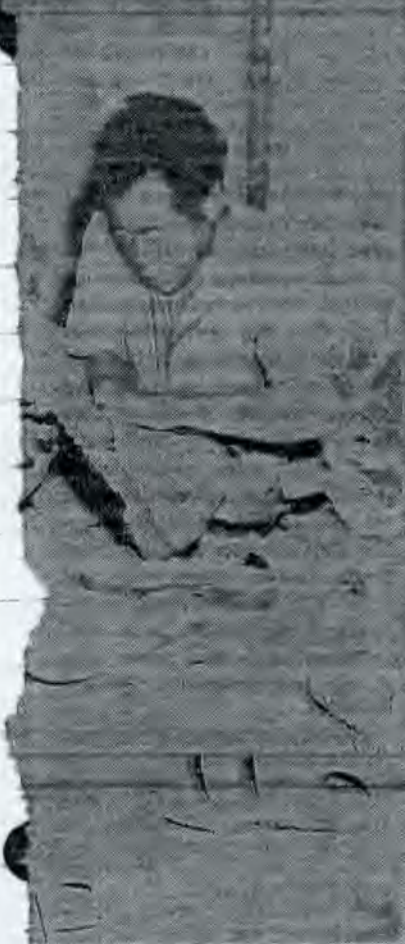
Tuffy was seen to grasp Tigger's head in his mouth three days ago, but he spat him out.

"He was either playing or getting an教训," observed an observer.

Tuffy lives at the end of a chain, but has never been in a cage and is taken for regular walks around the helicopter base.

He has been photographed with 10 U.S. Army gen. staff.

Montagnards Learn a Craft



AN LAC, Vietnam (S&S)—Montagnard mountain tribesmen are learning to become sandal-makers here, of the salvaged Vietnamese Army boots and some old inner tubes.

The tribesmen are learning how to cut the soles off the boots, leaving only the centers and rubber soles. They then use a knife to cut the salvaged inner tubes into strips and use them to make sandals.

The idea to teach the Montagnards how to make the sandals came from Capt. Nguyen Van Nhim, 633 31st Tactical Area, who enlisted the co-operation of the U.S. advisory group assigned to the 23d Div. in Ban Me Thuot and the Vietnamese Quartermaster 132nd Field Depot.

Some 7,500 Montagnards have been recruited in the An Lac area away from their ancestral mountain homes. Normally they go barefoot, but are planning to wear the new shoes. They are making and teach the sandal-making technique in their villages.

So far, Montagnards have taken the 10-day sandal-making course teaching from Vietnamese Army and civilian shoemakers.

Aid for Lepers

SANGLEY POINT, PH (S&S)—Members of the Civil Air Corps Officers' Welfare Club are collecting books, magazines, toys and clothing for distribution to patients at the Tatra Leprosarium outside Manila. Donations may be turned over to club president Lee Brinegar or deposited in a box at the CPO club.

Donors Thanked

MANILA (S&S)—The Philippine national Red Cross, in a letter to Ambassador William E. Stevenson, has expressed thanks to members of the U.S. Embassy for contributing 1,300 pesos (\$225) to the 1963 Red Cross fund drive.

Army shoe into a sandal. Van Nhim, after teaching the Montagnards how to make shoes, how to

Viet Reds Trying To Trap Copters

SAIGON, Vietnam (UPI)—The Viet Cong guerrillas, in an attempt to cope with the hard-hitting mobility provided government forces by U.S. helicopters, are trying to lure them into ambushes.

According to a communist document captured late last year, "attacks must be organized against enemy helicopters by luring them into our prepared positions."

In what U.S. advisers here believe to be a candid appraisal, the document admits: "Although we have succeeded in inflicting some losses on the enemy in his heliborne opera-

tions, he has in some places caused us fairly heavy losses."

Captured during fighting in the north-central highlands of the Republic of Vietnam, the document is addressed to all Viet Cong units throughout South Vietnam.

It is believed to have been written by a high-ranking communist military analyst and, according to U.S. advisers, it displays a highly sophisticated grasp of helicopter tactics in guerrilla warfare.

The communist analyst points out that with heliborne mobility, "the enemy can make a landing at anytime and any place in southern South Vietnam and particularly in cleared, heavily-populated areas, at which time they can inflict heavy losses on us.

"Particularly when they are landing they will fire at anything that moves to protect their landing parties.

"Therefore if we can destroy or greatly reduce the enemy's heliborne capability we will, in essence, have destroyed the mobility necessary to the U.S. raid tactics."

The document suggests one way of setting up a carefully prepared ambush against the helicopters: "Surround and attack an enemy installation and deploy the majority of our local forces to engage the heliborne reinforcements as they land.

"The target selected should be a small post far enough away from enemy supporting forces to require the use of heliborne forces to relieve it.

"In addition, because the enemy may not land their troops in cleared areas, but instead lower them by lines from helicopters to avoid our ambush, our deployments must be mobile in nature to meet enemy landings by this means.

"Moreover, the deployment of our local forces in position to attack the helicopters will provide support for the forces attacking the enemy's fixed position and support the withdrawal of those forces.

In Trouble



Pvt. Wilson Douglas Watson, a Congressional Medal of Honor winner who may face desertion charges, is being held at the Fort Sill, Okla., hospital for "rest and consultation." Watson was hospitalized after being brought to Fort Sill from Arkansas, where he had been arrested as being absent without leave from Fort Rucker, Ala. (UPI Photo)

Scouts Blaze c

HEWLETT, N.Y. (AP) — A Boy Scout is trustworthy, but he can't do the impossible.

Still, a Boy Scout is loyal, so he keeps trying.

Eighteen Boy Scout volunteers were sent out by the Hewlett-Woodmere Public Library to scout for 150 books held by delinquent adult borrowers. The boys fanned out in this Long

Island community and returned with 15 of the books.

The librarian, Mrs. Walter Thomson, who knows the problems involved in book-hunting, called the 10 per cent immediate return encouraging. The members of Troop 21 vowed to continue the hunt across the four square miles served by the library over successive weekends.

They gave Mrs. Thomson this report:

U.S. Dead Go Home

(Continued From Page 1)

Deal was a crew chief on one of the new turbine-powered HU-1B rocket-armed helicopters which was shot down in a second attempt to land and evacuate the wounded.

A burst of machine gun fire ripped up the side of the helicopter and tore through Deal. He died instantly.

Meanwhile, authorities reported two new American casualties

Saturday, both hit Friday by metal fragments from a single bullet. Both were flying in a U.S. Army turbine-powered escort helicopter about six miles south of the town of Tay Ninh, 50 miles northwest of here.

The lone bullet ripped through the floor of the craft, and metal fragments cut up the captain pilot and a sergeant crew member. Both were returned to duty after treatment.

U.S. Cites Acts of Heroism in Viet Battle

(Continued From Page 1)

areas and deprive guerrilla forces of the initiative."

The department disclosed that Army helicopters flew more than 50,000 sorties in Vietnam last year, about half of them in combat operations.

Between Jan. 1 and Nov. 30, 1962, 115 Army craft were hit by ground fire, and only 9 were shot down.

Four waves of 15 each were involved in a mass operation Wednesday, and the fourth wave was trapped. But the department said four of five helicopters shot down were being rapidly repaired and were "expected to be flying again Saturday." The fifth,

a UH-1B was a total wreck, but is being recovered and salvaged for parts.

Describing the rescue attempt, the department explained that each wave consisted of 10 CH-21 twin-rotored copters carrying a total of 120 troops, and five UH-1's for strafing operations.

As the fourth wave landed, the statement said, "heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire broke out from dug-in and camouflaged troops in a nearby wooded area.

"All helicopters were hit but all except one got away. One made a forced landing two kilometers from the battle area."

Then the rescue effort began, the army statement said, and gave this sequence:

"The first CH-21 to reach the

disabled helicopter was hit while picking up the crew and could not take off.

"A UH-1 Iroquois then attempted to rescue both downed crews. While on final approach, the Iroquois lost its blade, crashed and was demolished. The pilot was injured in the crash and a crew member was killed.

"A third rescue effort resulted in damage to a CH-21 which was able, however, to proceed to a secure area for landing."

"Throughout the engagement the five Iroquois provided steady fire support," the department said.

"The hard-core Viet Cong battalion engaged in this operation is expected to be ineffective for some time, as over 100 Viet Cong were killed," the

statement added.

(Vietnamese and American officers analyzing Wednesday's battle indicated changes in tactics were under consideration, AP reported from Saigon.)

(The consensus among American officers who participated in the fight was that inadequate intelligence, poor coordination and lack of aggressiveness on the government side were contributing factors in the Viet Cong success, AP said.

(There is the possibility air strikes against objectives might become routine to make sure enemy gunners are silenced before helicopters arrive but some commanders object to the idea on grounds that an air strike is a sure tip-off to the Viet Cong that an operation is about to open, according to AP.)

How Helicopters Chase Viet Reds Out Of Jungles

(Continued from Page One)

down, sat in a semi-circle as they were briefed by Capt. Leon Curry of Wharton, Tex.

It was simple enough, as Captain Curry outlined it. Twelve troop-carrying choppers with six heavily armed helicopter escorts would lift three Vietnamese companies into combat. They'd squeeze Viet Cong troops, believed to be a reinforced battalion, into a trap where they'd be annihilated and their base destroyed.

There were, inevitably, delays. Lunch was pushed up to 11 a. m., but noon came and we stayed on the ground. We took off at 1 p. m., picked up our soldiers and headed for war.

The ARVNs came aboard, crouching under the whirling blades, and sat squatting on the choppers metal flooring. They wore sneakers, carried cooking pots as standard equipment and not all had helmets. They looked boyish and nervous, as they sat with their carbines and rifles upright between their knees. You had the feeling they'd be obedient unto death if well led. But none seemed a hardened killer.

It was a 20th Century version of the U. S. calvary roaring out of its fort in pursuit of Indians as we took off. The whole airborne column stretched out over the delta, past peaceful villages, across snaking canals in batches of four.

You sweat on a mission like this. Ten miles ahead we saw

the smoke of battle. The air force was there ahead of us, delivering its pre-strike rain of rockets and machinegun fire.

We were 1000 yards away when we saw the Viet Cong. After that, everything happened at once. The ARVNs, no longer boyish or nervous, but soldiers with a mission, scrambled out and moved toward the village.

Our job—we were merely the taxi drivers of war—was done, our chopper much lighter and we moved away fast. But over the radio, we heard the chatter:

"Man, there must have been a million of them."

"Did you see those flaming hoe handles?"

"Those rockets. Those beautiful rockets!"

There was a second company waiting when we got back, and it loaded quickly, silently, with that vague apprehension men feel before combat. Again we saw tracers and saw smoke as we neared. It was old stuff to us, perhaps, but not to those men who would soon be on the ground.

As we unload the troops, we see two dead Viet Cong and a dead water buffalo that somehow got in the way of war. But by now, the area is tolerably safe. Back in the jungle, tracers whine, but that seems far away.

The tension is off. There's no sweat now. We head back to our base.

Captain Curry grins.

"That's what we do for a living," he says. "Only we usually do it better."

Viet Cong Lost At Ap Bac—Harkins

SAIGON (UPI)—General Paul D. Harkins, commander of U.S. Forces in the Republic of Vietnam, said Wednesday that the costly siege of Ap Bac last Wednesday was a victory against the communists despite heavy government casualties.

Harkins made the statement in a brief airport chat with Admiral Harry D. Felt, U.S. Pacific Forces commander, when Felt arrived here for a three-day visit.

Asked if he had any comment on the battle, Felt, turning to Harkins, said: "I question some of the things I read. I understand it was a South Vietnamese victory."

"I can tell you that it was," Harkins added.

Felt stressed that his visit was "routine." His trip was scheduled before the Ap Bac battle.

From the airport, Felt drove immediately to a conference

with Harkins and Lt. Gen. Le Van Ty, Vietnamese chairman of the joint general staff. He was to meet later Wednesday with President Ngo Dinh Diem and Vietnamese Defense Secretary Ngo Nguyen Dinh Thuan.

He also will meet with U.S. Ambassador Frederick Nolting Jr. and again with Harkins. He is scheduled to leave for Bangkok Friday following an airport news conference.

Felt's remarks questioning news dispatches of the last week was typical of the irritation expressed by some high ranking Vietnamese and American officials, Saigon sources said.

News stories attributed to informed witnesses sometimes differ widely from the official published version of battlefield events.

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IN 64



HEROISM IN VIET NAM . . . Maj. Gen. Harry W. O. Kinnard, commanding general, 11th Air Assault Division, presents Distinguished Flying Cross to Sp5 Payton J. Rowan at ceremonies marking 11th's first Unit Day. At left is Sgt. Maj. Chester R. Westervelt, division sergeant major.

Like Modern Cavalry Raid

How Helicopters Slam Viet Reds

[The Vietnam war has been called a helicopter war because choppers furnished by the U. S. are used to carry government troops into battle against concentrations of Communist guerrillas. Here's an eyewitness report on a recent mission of this sort into enemy areas of the Mekong Delta.]

By W. D. FRIEDENBERG
Scripps Howard Staff Writer
SOC TRANG, Feb. 11—The Viet Cong Communist guerrillas were directly below us—50 to 100 of them—in their black uniforms. They'd been waiting in that

peaceful village of maybe 20 thatched huts along a narrow canyon. Now, they were out in the open. Some fired rifles at the whirling choppers overhead. Some dived into the canal. Others just ran.

It was Payton Rowan's doing. The big crew chief from Benton, Ark., had helped smoke them out, firing from the open door of the old chopper—12 years old and obsolete by any reasonable U. S. Army standards. Chief Rowan was the daring young man on some sort of trapeze as he swung about in his baby toddler's harness and poured fire below.

We came lower, and a Viet Cong running out of a village hut falls as bullets hammer into the ground. Eight to ten of his Commie comrades are sprawled over the landscape with him. Incongruously, a chicken hut vanishes in an explosion of feathers.

Our mission was to ferry ARVN (Army of Vietnam) troops from a rear staging area into battle on the edge of this swampy jungle area. We'd met at mid-morning on this old, Japanese-built airstrip 85 miles south of Saigon. Pilots and crewmen, wearing chesty armored vests and toting sidearms to defend themselves if they were shot.

(Cont'd on Page 13, Column 1)

Viet Raid

(Continued From Page 1)

The battalion took refuge in the hamlet after it was spotted by an Army observation plane earlier Wednesday.

One of the H-21s, approaching the battle zone, flew through a hail of communist ground fire but apparently was not hit.

Other helicopters moved in, their machine guns blazing away at the guerrillas. Thirteen Viet Cong broke from cover and raced across an open paddy field as machine gun bullets slammed into the ground at their heels.

A guerrilla fired his rifle at the helicopters, then dropped his weapon and dashed for safety. He was cut in half by rockets and machine gun fire before he had gone 15 yards.

5,000 Viets Attack Reds

SAIGON (UPI)—A battalion of Vietnamese paratroopers jumped from U.S. Air Force transports Wednesday into the eastern edge of the Plain of Reeds, kicking off the biggest operation against the Viet Cong in recent months.

More than 5,000 armor-supported troops are involved in the operation, about 35 miles south of Saigon.

Simultaneously, U.S. Army H-21 helicopters airlifted infantry troops into the battle zone, while other forces moved in overland.

The operation apparently is aimed at closing a steel noose around the zone, where the Viet Cong are known to be heavily concentrated.

Government planes, meanwhile, strafed and bombed suspect guerrilla concentrations.

Several troops were wounded in scattered clashes with fleeing guerrillas, but no major contact was reported.

In other developments, the Defense Department identified an American who died in Saigon Sunday of a communist bullet wound as CWO James H. Ishikawa of San Francisco. He was hit while in a plane flying 1,500 feet over the Mekong River Delta and died later in a hospital.

STAR

AN AUTHORIZED PUBLICATION OF THE
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PACIFIC

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Friday, January 4, 1963

BIG VIET BATTLE; 3 AMERICANS DIE

SAIGON (UPI)—A U.S. Army captain and two sergeants were killed Wednesday during a furious battle in which communist gunners shot down five American helicopters in the Plain of Reeds south of Saigon.

Their deaths raised to 30 the number of Americans killed in action since the United States began aiding the Republic of Vietnam in its war with communist rebels.

The Army captain was hit while serving as an adviser to a Vietnamese Army battalion taking part in an assault. He was hit in the chest and neck by a burst of automatic weapons fire while helping lead the attack.

He was flown back to the airfield here by helicopters but died while undergoing emergency treatment.

"He was one of the best we had," said one comrade of the unidentified captain. "Like most battalion advisers he was out front trying to help move them on when he got it."

The two sergeants were helicopter crewmen.

Four other Americans, all of
(Continued on Back Page Col. 1)

19 DEC 62

A Run for His Life



Crewman of a troop-carrying U.S. helicopter (burning in background) escapes from the craft after it crashed near Ca Mau village in the southern tip of the Republic of Vietnam. This and another helicopter were downed during a

government raid on the area, which is infested with communist Viet Cong. All U.S. crewmen escaped without injury. The helicopters were destroyed to keep them from falling into enemy hands. (AP Wirephoto)

WRECKAGE OF MISSING SHIP FOUND

KEY WEST, Fla. (AP)—Flotsam lettered "Sulphur Queen" was found Wednesday by vessels searching for the missing freighter Marine Sulphur Queen. Also found, according to a radio message monitored by the Associated Press at Key West,

were six "exploder mechanisms". The Coast Guard at Miami, directing the search, said it knew nothing of this and suspected that the reference to the mechanisms was from a Navy message about an operation entirely unrelated to the search for the Marine Sulphur Queen.

Coast Guard Search and Rescue Headquarters said a

Crewmen's Wives Sue in Missing Ship Case—P. 2

search vessel was expected to reach Miami early Thursday with a life jacket, a metal oil can, and a 4-by-8 foot piece of metal, all lettered "Sulphur Queen," and a fog megaphone.

The debris was viewed as an indication that some mishap be-
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Swift Air, Ground Attack Routs Viet Cong—50 Killed

22 FEB. 63

SOCTRANG AIRFIELD, Vietnam (UPI)—At least 50 communist guerrillas were killed Wednesday in an American helicopter assault on Xom Dinh village, about 50 miles south of Saigon.

A Viet Cong battalion abandoned foxholes and trenches in the hamlet and fled in the face of advancing Vietnamese Rangers and a hail of machine gun and rocket fire from U.S. Army and Marine helicopters.

The helicopters and troops moved in after American-piloted B-26 bombers and

AD-6 fighter planes had pounded the hamlet with rockets and bombs.

By nightfall, government troops were still in hot pursuit of the fleeing guerrilla battalion.

Involved in the assault were 10 U.S. Army H-21 and six heavily armed Marine Iroquois helicopters, a Vietnamese infantry battalion and four companies of rangers.

The huge banana-shaped H-21s airlifted two of the Ranger companies into battle while the infantry and two other Ranger units closed in by land.

The Viet Cong battalion Tuesday had attacked two government militia posts in neighboring Chuong Thien Province, killing three militiamen and blowing up three blockhouses.
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Lao King Due

WASHINGTON (AP)—King Savang Vatthana of Laos, elaborately entertained during a visit to the Soviet Union, arrives Thursday for a six-day visit to the United States as the guest of President Kennedy.

Inside Today

Guerrilla leader, pompous pretender, military incompetent? Washington has been called all three. See Page 16.

Will De Gaulle block England's dream of a tunnel to Europe. Page 8.

Anyone can get a hit when a battle royal erupts on the ball field. See Red Smith's column. Page 22.

Army chaplain wins Freedoms Foundation prize. Other winners. Page 7.

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