



MAN TO MAN—SP4 Charles R. Cole receives a Silver Star from MG William B. Rosson. Cole won the Valor decoration for action while a door gunner. (Photo by SP4 Robert Metz)

Cavalry Trooper Wins Silver Star For Action

DUC PHO — Under heavy fire from two squads of Viet Cong, a downed crew from a UH-1B reconnaissance helicopter from Trp. B, 1st Sqdn., 9th Air Cav., owe their lives to the courage and quick action of Charles R. Cole Jr., the chopper's door gunner.

For his action, SP4 Cole received the Silver Star, our nation's third highest award for valor, presented by MG William B. Rosson, commanding general of Task Force Oregon, in a ceremony at the tactical command post of the 3rd Bde., 25th Inf. Div.

Cole's ship was shot down during a low level reconnaissance mission near Duc Pho in Quang Ngai Province.

The aircraft, on impact, broke

into four pieces and caught fire engulfing the crew in smoke and flames. The 20-year old SP4 helped the pilot from the burning wreckage before the crew was separated by the smoke.

Endangering himself, Cole began an unrelenting search for the rest of the crew. He located his wounded crew chief about five feet from the chopper and dragged him to safety.

In an effort to secure protection for the wounded man, the young West Virginian ran across an open field under a hail of enemy fire to grab an M-79 grenade launcher from the burning craft.

Organizing a defensive position behind a rice paddy dike, he held off the VC for 15 minutes before more aircraft arrived to rescue the crew.