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1st Air Cavalry Division

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Cav Takes Over Khe Sanh

Division Ousts NVA in Lang Vei



UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL RADIOPHOTO

Hands Across The Wire

Across a barbed-wire barricade, Skytrooper PFC Juan Fordendi (left) shakes hands with Marine Lance Corporal James Hellebuick as elements of the 1st Air Cavalry Division link up with Marines at Khe Sanh, ending a 78-day siege of the Leatherneck outpost. Additional photos, map on page 8.

Operation Pegasus

Airmobility Aids Khe Sanh Relief

By SP5 DON GRAHAM

LZ STUD—It was a massive operation that the 1st Air Cavalry Division kicked off against the North Vietnamese Army regulars surrounding Khe Sanh. The Army's only airmobile division launched Operation Pegasus from its base at Camp Evans near Hue to within miles of Khe Sanh on April 1. The division's mission was to spearhead the drive to relieve pressure on the Marine garrison by engaging the NVA and reopening Highway Nine, the overland road to Khe Sanh.

The division's arrival altered the balance of forces in the Khe Sanh area where some 6,000 Marines and ARVN had been defending against a large number of NVA. Estimates ran as high as 40,000 enemy surrounding Khe Sanh at one time.

The operation included:

- All three of the Cavalry's brigades, plus the 1st Marine regiment
- The division's organic artillery strength in light and medium batteries, plus two heavy howitzer batteries which will improve the effectiveness of counterfire near Khe Sanh

Cavalair Begins R And R Series

CAMP EVANS—The CAVAILAIR will begin running a weekly photo series on R and R spots, starting this week with Bangkok.

Watch subsequent issues for your favorite rest and recuperation center. Those included will be Hong Kong, Hawaii, and Australia.

- The Skytroopers' uniquely successful reconnaissance element, the 1st Squadron, 8th Cavalry, which was conducting low level recon near Khe Sanh for six days before the operation began
- And an engineer battalion which is reopening Highway Nine, closed by the enemy since last September.

The Cavalry's battle-hardened Third Brigade moved first into Pegasus, landing after a spectacular airdrop on two fire bases five to six miles from Khe Sanh.

Soldiers at Landing Zone Stud—the new division headquarters some nine miles northeast of Khe Sanh—saw the men of the Third Brigade arrive on twenty-two CH-47 Chinook helicopters in the kind of formation only the 1st Air Cavalry can put into (Continued on Back Page)

Skytroopers Pursue Withdrawing Force

LANG VEI—(Special)—Skytroopers of the 1st Air Cavalry Division have retaken the Lang Vei Special Forces camp, overrun by North Vietnamese Army regulars early in the siege of Khe Sanh.

Two companies of Cavalrymen moved into the camp after engaging heavy fire from what was estimated to be withdrawal forces holding the area while some of the NVA who had held Khe Sanh under siege moved out of the area.

Cavalry Moves In Khe Sanh

KHE SANH—(Special)—Skytroopers of the 1st Air Cavalry Division began to take over the Marine fortress at Khe Sanh last week in a dramatic windup to a drive that had freed the Leathernecks after a 78-day siege by North Vietnamese Army troops.

There was no formal ceremony as Cavalrymen from the Third Brigade began settling into trenches and peeling off packs and shirts in the stifling heat.

As the Cavalrymen were moving in, two Skytroopers began erecting a five-foot sign. The work of PFC Roger Lutz and PFC Tat Nard read: "Khe Sanh — Under New Management."

Cavalrymen had spearheaded a drive—code-named Operation Pegasus—of more than 10,000 troops that had resecured Highway Nine, opening the first overland route to the Khe Sanh base since last fall.

According to Associated Press and United Press International reports, the Cavalrymen's "Changing of the Guard" received varied comments from those involved.

One Cavalryman Specialist Four David Simms, looked around the jumbled base and said:

"This is paradise. We've been in the bush for two months and it will be great to settle down for a little while."

A battalion of Cavalrymen had moved through the camp the day before after they were part of the Operation Pegasus drive which had lifted the 78-day siege of the Marine garrison at Khe Sanh.

They had setup in an old abandoned Special Forces camp that night about 700 yards to the east of Lang Vei and only two miles from Laos according to Associated Press and United Press International reports.

When elements of the force began moving back into the Lang Vei camp the next day they encountered heavy automatic weapons fire according to

Spring Training Khe Sanh Style

KHE SANH — It was no quiet at Khe Sanh that American troops were playing baseball. Dispatches said no Communist shells had hit the base in 48 hours and Marines and 1st Air Cavalry Division troops got in some spring training.

1st Air Cavalry Division company commander Douglas Verdier.

Apparently an enemy company with some 80 to 100 men had slipped back into the camp after the Skytroopers moved through.

Artillery and air strikes were called in and the Cavalrymen finally reentered the camp the next day after receiving some counterfire that night.

ETS Benefits

The most recent additions to the list of veterans benefits tendered by a grateful nation to the men who have helped defend it are the special opportunities for Vietnam veterans to obtain priority employment with the government and further their education at the same time.

These opportunities, set forth in an Executive Order, make Vietnam veterans eligible to enter federal employment in transitional appointments at the five lowest civil service levels without taking an examination.

For those veterans who have completed less than one year of education beyond high school and who meet all other civil service standards, this program offers an incentive for them to increase their education under the GI Bill while holding a full-time job.

The individual's continued employment in a transitional appointment is contingent upon successful completion of at least one school year of full-time approved education.

The transitional appointees who successfully meet the educational conditions of their employment after one year of current, continuous employment may then be converted to career-conditional or career employment status, automatically acquiring a competitive status.

In the words of President Johnson, "America holds some of its greatest honors for the men who have stood in its defense, and kept alive its freedoms. It shows its gratitude not only in memorials...but more meaningfully in the programs which care for him..."

"For those with the necessary initiative and ability, this new program, together with the GI Bill, offers a chance for both further education and better jobs."

...For God And Country

A soldier came into a chaplain's study one day and said, "I have little use or time for this dope called religion."

"That's a bit strong," replied the chaplain. "You sound as though you are an atheist."

"I certainly am," came the response. "Not only that, I am a Communist. I know how hollow this religious stuff is."

The chaplain soon discovered that the man was well read and commented on this knowledge. "I read as much as I can, and I have read everything that Karl Marx ever wrote," boasted the young soldier.

"Have you ever read Mark's gospel?" asked the chaplain.

"I have read everything Marx wrote," came the response again.

The chaplain took a copy of Mark's gospel from his pocket, and handing it to the soldier, said, "Since you enjoy reading, take this little book. It won't take you long."

A week later, the soldier came back to the chaplain. "Padre," he said, "I am not going to apologize for what I said last week because I believed it was true. But I would like to thank you for letting me read this little book. Have you any others?"

Paul wrote to Timothy, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (II Tim. 2:15). How long has it been since you sat down to get a little bit better acquainted with God through His Book?

Chaplain Wilbur G. Peterson
Division Artillery Chaplain



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US ARMY PHOTO BY SFC RICHARD CONTRAD

Starting A Patrol

Skytroopers move out on the start of a patrol, passing a damaged VTR (Vehicle Track Retrieval) of the 1st Armored Cavalry. The track was damaged by a Viet Cong mine. The Cavalrymen are part of the 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry.

No Pilot Shortage

Skydane Just Enjoys Flying

CAMP EVANS — The Army is not so short of pilots that Skydane must fly, but he loves to ride in the CH-54A, Flying Crane of the 1st Air Cavalry Division's 478th Aviation Company.

Skydane (the Great Dane mascot of the unit), was donated to the company by Captain George Kyle who is associated with Kalmir Kennels, Stone Mountain, Georgia.

Skydane was affectionately nicknamed Igor by the officers and men of the Flying Cranes,

after Igor Sikorsky, founder of Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation, manufacturer of the CH-54A — largest operational helicopter in the free world.

Although he is a 'pup'—only eleven months old—Skydane stands three feet high and weighs more than one hundred pounds.

He is a short-timer now, having served nine months of the standard one year Vietnam tour, and is due to rotate in June of this year. His leaving is

awaited with mixed emotions by the men of the company.

Commanded by Major Kenneth E. Cardwell and attached to the 228th Assault Support Helicopter Battalion commanded by 1st Lieutenant Conrad F. B. Speedman, the unit furnishes direct heavy helicopter support to the Skytroopers of the 1st Air Cavalry Division.

During the month of February, aviators flew more than thirty percent of all missions under instrument conditions. The need for these flights in extremely hazardous weather was prompted by the division's move to another tactical area in the height of the monsoon season. The "Can Do" spirit of the 1st Cavalry Division prevailed and missions were flown as usual.

McConnell Cites U.S. Viet Gains

SAIGON — Here's what Air Force Chief of Staff, Gen. J.P. McConnell had to say about the U.S. in Vietnam:

"There is one vital fact that the critics of our strategy overlook. If it had not been for our military intervention and the effectiveness of the allied land, sea, and air forces, South Vietnam today would be a Communist satellite, with its neighbors and the rest of Southeast Asia under greatly increased pressures from the Communists. The fact that we have prevented this from happening represents a huge success for the entire Free World. Instead of belittling what has been accomplished, our people will, I hope, be eternally grateful to the brave men who fought and died to make this success possible."



US ARMY PHOTO

Skydane

Skydane, the mascot of the 478 Flying Crane Company, seems to be barking them aboard one of the unit's three Flying Crane helicopters. The dog is nicknamed Igor after Igor Sikorsky, one of the pioneers of helicopter development.

Bangkok, Emerald of the Orient

Perhaps the most beautiful of all the R&R spots, Bangkok is a photographers paradise. It is also a great place to buy silk and jewels, or just to relax.



Young Buddhist monk walks across a courtyard in the temple of the Emerald Buddha.



Testing food, haggling over price is expected by merchants in the market.



Saffron-robed Buddhist Monks are a common sight in the Thailand capital.



The floating market outside Bangkok sells produce brought from jungle farms by small boats.

Cavalry's Airmobility In Jeb Stuart



An air armada sweeps in overhead as Skytroopers of the 1st of the 12th conduct Operation Jeb Stuart. US ARMY PHOTO BY SPS JOHN WILSON



Cavalrymen of the 1st Battalion, 12th Cav pour out of a Chinook as they launch a search and destroy mission. US ARMY PHOTO BY SPS JOHN WILSON



Skytroopers in Operation Jeb Stuart leap from helicopters. US ARMY PHOTO BY SPS J. K. SMITH



Hoey liftships fly overhead as



element of the 1st Battalion, 9th Cav climb a hill. US ARMY PHOTO BY SPS J. K. SMITH



A chopper waits as artillery pounds an LZ. US ARMY PHOTO BY SPS KEVIN ROBINSON



US ARMY PHOTO BY FREDERICO STALLER

Old Swimming Hole?

1st Air Cavalry Division Skytroopers waded through a creek while on a search and destroy mission about 20 kilometers from Hue. The Skytroopers are with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry.

On Cold LZ?

Blues Wipe Out NVA Platoon

By SP4 MONTY JERNIGAN

Cavalier Staff Writer

CAMP EVANS — Men of the 1st Air Cavalry Division's 1st Squadron, 8th Cavalry, initiated the wiping out of the equivalent of an enemy platoon after air lifting their ground reaction team, the Blues, into the middle of a large North Vietnamese Army concentration.

The team's twelve infantrymen were to fly into an area a few miles southwest of the 1st Cav's Camp Evans in Tua Thien Province and check out two enemy that had been killed by helicopters just minutes before. "When they took us in it was a cold LZ," said Sergeant Vic Carter, Susanville, Calif., a squad leader with the unit, "and we moved out towards the first body."

The Skytroopers advanced along a trail which was bordered by thick underbrush lined, unknown to them, with enemy soldiers. As they paced the terrain the fourth man in line, Sergeant David D. Tryon spotted an NVA soldier carrying an AK-47 break out running from the brush to the right of the squad. SGT Tryon killed the fleeing enemy.

Ten meters farther along the

trail SGT Carter killed another enemy soldier trying to escape. Having been dropped into a cold landing zone, this was not quite what the Cavalrymen expected. Some five meters farther, SGT Lawrence Shahan dashed into the brush chasing an evading Communist, making a third killed by the U.S. ground forces.

Sergeant Robert Lackey, who was covering for Shahan, spotted and killed a fourth enemy soldier moving through the brush.

"We couldn't figure out what we were in at the time Lackey killed one," said Carter. The point man for the team, Sergeant David Werden, had moved to a trail crossing about ten meters ahead and exchanged fire with an NVA trooper, killing the enemy. "We were receiving all kinds of small arms fire by now," said Carter, "and there were about ten of them moving to our front trying to flank us on our left side."

The area of contact was covered with triple-canopy jungle growth. Prior to the NVA's offensive action the GI's had been reconning with frag grenades.

"When they tried to flank us after regrouping I knew we were in something big," commented Carter, "so I called for the choppers to pick us up." Then men drew back towards the pick-up zone but not before Lackey had killed yet another Red soldier bringing the Blue total to seven enemy KIA. As they drew back the infantrymen threw grenades at the approaching NVA.

As the infantrymen were checking out the bodies, the helicopters above them took under fire and killed four more enemy soldiers.

Artillery was called in on the area and at the end of the 30 minute engagement, a total of 22 enemy soldiers had been killed.

in the battalion said that the mortars landed approximately 200 meters from where the bugler stood.

Normally Grant's musical activities are reserved for reveille and retreat calls, flag-lowering and flag-raising ceremonies. At other times he is senior medic in the battalion aid station.

Before he switched to the medics in the early 1960's, Grant had been a trumpet player for an Army band in Germany.

He was a combat medic for the 1st Cav's Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry when he first arrived in Vietnam. In December he acquired a bugle, moved into the battalion aid station and started his dual duties.

—DENTON

Bugler Doesn't Like 'Tooting' Own Horn

LZ JANE — When the alert siren failed to sound an enemy mortar hit this 1st Air Cavalry Division fire base near the DMZ, a bugler hopped out of his tent and began to blow the staccato notes of the rallying instructions to "Assembly."

In response, troops began hurrying towards bunkers and defensive positions.

Bugler Jay M. Grant, a specialist five with the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry, explained his action this way. "I heard the mortars landing and I didn't hear a siren. We had to alert the troops. It seemed like the right thing to do."

Though Grant doesn't like to toot his own horn, other men

Gunship Rescues Downed Chopper

By SP4 MARVIN NEELY

Cavalier Staff Writer

CAMP EVANS—First Lieutenant Nelson S. Brown made a daring rescue recently, saving the lives of three fellow Skytroopers, who were pinned down by enemy fire.

Lt. Brown of the 1st Air Cav-

alry Division's 1st Squadron, 8th Cav. was preparing his gunship for a routine mission when he received a radio distress call. A sister ship had been forced down in an enemy area.

Ready To Go

"I had cranked up and all my crew was onboard," said Brown, "when I heard the call. I asked for the direction and general location," he continued. "Then we headed out that way as fast as we could."

When Lt. Brown arrived at the scene, another bird was circling the downed craft, putting out heavy suppressive fire in cover of the crew. "I made two passes over the area, and spotted the bird and the crew on the first one," said Brown. "While I made the second pass I asked the circling ship the location of the enemy position, and spotted it," he continued.

Close Landing

"I dropped in and landed about 5 yards from the crew, who had managed to evacuate their ship and set up a small perimeter of defense," Brown stated. "My crew jumped out and helped the three men aboard, and we departed the area, drawing enemy fire, and headed back to base camp and medical aid for the injured men," he concluded. Lt. Brown's ship failed to take any hits from the enemy fire.

Minutes after the extraction, an infantry unit was inserted into the area to secure the ship and search the area. They killed seven armed North Vietnamese soldiers in a bunker only 35 yards from the spot Lt. Brown had set down his ship.

Insignia For Command SGM

WASHINGTON — According to Army Chief of Staff, General Harold K. Johnson, 192 senior enlisted men have been selected to wear the new distinctive insignia of Command Sergeants Major.



US ARMY PHOTO BY SP4 TOM FRANK

Ammo Cache

Private First Class Alred Floyd displays his discovery of 640 60mm mortar rounds. The PFC discovered the enemy rounds in an NVA ammo cache while on a search and destroy mission in Huong Dien District during Operation Jeb Stuart.

Advisor Returns To Unit

LZ JANE — Back in 1968 South Vietnamese infantrymen at the 1st ARVN Division Training Center outside Hue had listened to the advice of a young American lieutenant assigned to them by the Military Assistance Command Vietnam.

During the recent Tet Offensive, the former advisor, now a captain and a 1st Air Cavalry Division battalion intelligence officer, made a hurried return visit to the training center to hear the Vietnamese's intelligence on NVA and VC activities inside and outside Hue.

Captain Robert L. Helvey's unit, the 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry, was engaged in fierce fighting during most of February with enemy soldiers attempting to defend a regimental command post located on a major route of infiltration into Hue.

Same Territory

The training center was midway between the battalion's position and the city. Captain Helvey received important intelligence on enemy location and movement from his old ARVN associates.

In addition to a stint at the ARVN Training Center during his first Vietnam tour, Captain Helvey had spent seven months in the field with the 2nd Battalion, 1st ARVN Regiment. The unit covered a lot of the same territory then that he now travels.

There were no American units in the area when he first arrived, though U.S. Marines were moving here toward the end of his tour.

Enemy units faced by the regiment, at first, were primarily Main Force battalions. "And you had to go out and look for a fight," Captain Helvey said.

324B NVA

Later 324B North Vietnamese Army Division, present foe of the 1st Air Cavalry, had started to infiltrate into the area and it was against this infiltration that the ARVN battalion fought large-scale battles.

The unit continually operated in the Ba Long Valley. The winding valley formed an ideal infiltration route. It is close to rivers and streams, begins near the Laotian border and unravels not far from Quang Tri City.

The ARVN battalion set up a fire base in the valley and the NVA made a determined effort to overrun it.

"They (NVA) hit the base with three battalions," said Captain Helvey. "And these guys stood there and took them all on."

For its actions at Ba Long, the ARVN battalion was awarded the U.S. Presidential Unit Citation.

Captain Helvey came back to Vietnam for his second tour eight months ago. He commanded Alpha Company 2/12 before becoming battalion intelligence officer.

— DENTON



PHOTO COURTESY OF COLUMBIA PICTURES

A Rose Is A Rose Is A Rose

Miss Senta Berger shows us that old poet who said "A rose is a rose is a rose" was right. There's nothing more that we can add to that except "Ole!"

For Excitement?

Future M.D. Pilots 'Ambulance'

By SP3 HERB DENTON
Cavalry Staff Writer

LZ JANE — Warrant Officer Howard P. Rifken had taken a pre-medical course of studies at Drake University in Iowa. When he volunteered for military service, he said, he wanted to put his education to use and "get a little excitement," so he asked to be trained as a medical evacuation helicopter pilot.

100 Percent In OCF Drive

CAMP EVANS — During the Combined Overseas Relief Fund drive held by the 1st Air Cavalry Division, a 100 per cent participation was displayed by the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry. The men of the battalion donated a total of \$465.00.

Coordinating the event for the battalion was Captain Oscar L. O'Connor, commanding officer of Headquarters Company.

He took training at Ft. Walters, Tex., and Ft. Rucker, Ala. Afterwards he had a special four-week course in medical techniques and first aid at Ft. Sam Houston, Tex.

Then off to Vietnam with the 1st Air Cavalry Division. After eight months of sometimes tense flying under hostile conditions Rifken will admit that he has gotten some of the excitement he bargained for.

When an Air Cavalry battalion engaged a well-armed and fortified North Vietnamese Army force just north of Hue during the Tet Offensive, Rifken often had to land under intense enemy fire to rescue wounded.

On at least one occasion rounds were popping into the air ambulance.

"We knew we were getting hit but we didn't know where, until we looked at the gas gauge and discovered that we were steadily losing fuel," Rifken said.

When the ambulance landed

down at a relatively secure South Vietnamese Army fire base minutes later, the gas tank was nearly empty.

Rifken's medical knowledge has come into play only when he has had to make a quick decision as to whether he should fly a wounded man back to the company aid station or immediately take him to a hospital. With certain injuries, the altitude that he flies plays an important role in the ultimate welfare of the patient.

Rifken relies heavily on the judgement of the combat medics who are always a part of his flight crew.

"Our medics are well trained," he said. "They have done some fantastic things, like an external heart massage and a continual mouth to mouth resuscitation while we were flying."

After the excitement of Vietnam, Rifken said that he will go back and continue to study to

Cavman Shocks Enemy

By SP4 BILL BLESSINGTON
Cavalry Staff Writer

QUANG TRI — Private First Class Harold Rife is point man for "Aztec" platoon, Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry. He surprised three North Vietnamese soldiers recently, in a heavily wooded thicket and the ground in front of him erupted into bits of flying earth.

Two other NVA soldiers had opened up on the squad and the company commander ordered the men back, allowing artillery and rockets from Cav gunships to work the area.

Thorough Pounding

After a thorough pounding, Rife and the platoon went into the brush to clear remaining enemy resistance.

There was none.

A grenadier in the squad had dispatched one of the enemy with one shot before pulling back, and a large pool of blood was found with a trail leading off toward the far end of the thicket.

Later that same day, Rife's platoon killed three NVA's and captured two weapons.

After spending a rainy night on a do-it-yourself helicopter landing zone carved out of the jungle on a mountain top, Rife was again the first man to contact the enemy.

Ambush Set

His platoon was moving to another peak to set up an ambush when they surprised an enemy element attempting to do the same thing. A burst of weapon's fire sent "Charlie" fleeing.

About noon that same day, "Aztec" platoon clashed with a platoon of North Vietnamese and heavy fighting broke out. The company command post, on an adjacent peak, could see the fighting and directed artillery and gunships toward the enemy positions. Combined with the artillery and helicopter pounding of the mountainside, "Aztec" platoon accounted for 14 enemy soldiers killed before fighting their way back to the command post.

Dud Grenade Makes Troop A 'Believer'

Sergeant Robert Lackey — an infantryman for the 1st Air Cavalry Division's 1st Squadron, 8th Cavalry — just couldn't believe it happened to him.

Lackey was on a search and destroy mission walking alongside some bushes on a trail when an enemy soldier jumped out with a high caliber weapon. "I had just gotten into country," said Lackey, "and didn't know what to think. I looked down at my feet and saw a grenade smoking and figured it was a dud."

Lackey engaged and killed the Communist.

"I was waiting to move out when a buddy told me my whole left side was wet," said the 1st Cav trooper, "and I had a small piece of shrapnel in my leg." His canteen had a hole blown out the side.

"My platoon sergeant asked me what happened and I told him I thought the grenade was a dud," said Lackey. He then took the sergeant back to the contact area and found his foot prints in the ground. "There was nothing but a hole where the grenade was," said Lackey.

— JERNIGAN

CAVALRY 7

Flying Cranes Add One More 'First'

CAMP EVANS—The first and only CH-54A "Flying Crane" Company has added another "first" to the innovations initiated by the organization since it joined the 1st Air Cavalry Division in Vietnam in September, 1969.

The gigantic "Flying Crane" was designed to carry overweight, bulky items in external sling and four-point load under

visual flight conditions. Until February 1968 the helicopter's capabilities were limited, because of the general feeling that it was unsafe to "fly blind", or fly under instrument conditions with an external load under the helicopter.

Because of the unusually long periods of poor weather experienced in the I Corps area during February 1968, other techniques of load preparation and stabilization were developed. New hook-up procedures were used for four-point loading of vehicles and similar equipment. Other cargo was loaded into general purpose "pods" or large containers that could be carried using the four point hook-up system of the Flying Crane. These methods of loading increased the stability of the helicopter and permitted flight under instrument conditions.

This new capability resulted in the carrying of 347.3 tons of cargo a distance of 13,701.5 miles under instrument flight conditions. A total of 84 missions were completed that normally could not have been performed because of prevailing weather conditions.

The arrival in March of three new massive ships brought the company up to its present full fighting strength of nine cranes.

He Asks For 5th Extension

CAMP EVANS — Staff Sergeant Douglas Burroughs, of Charlie Detachment, 27th Maintenance Battalion, has requested his fifth extension in Vietnam.

Sergeant Burroughs, of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, came to Vietnam as a PFC with the 1st Air Cavalry Division in September 1969 and has worked here since. When asked why he stayed this long, he replied that he had a good job and liked the work. Sergeant Burroughs is an electronics supervisor in charge of repairing radios.

Lang Vei—

(Continued From Page 1)

Capt. Verdier said the enemy soldiers were probably in a holding action at the camp to cover the withdrawal of larger elements of the North Vietnamese 25th Division, one of the units involved in the Khe Sanh siege.

Inside the camp were the bodies of Americans, South Vietnamese irregulars and the enemy. No one was sure how many bodies would be found in the area.

The body of one American was found in a bunker, the body of another in a smashed jeep. They could be identified only by dog tags.

Lang Vei is three miles west of Khe Sanh, four miles east of the border of Laos and about 20 miles south of the demilitarized zone.

It was overrun in vicious fighting Feb. 7. In their assault, the North Vietnamese used tanks for the first known time in the Vietnam war.

Nine Soviet-made tanks rum-

bled in over the bunkers of the camp and the U.S. "Green Berets" called in artillery fire on top of their own defenses in a desperate attempt to bend off the attack. Five of the tanks were destroyed.

There were more than 200 persons in the camp when the North Vietnamese launched the attack. Of 24 "Green Beret" Special Forces men, 15 made it to safety. More than 100 Vietnamese and Montagnard irregulars also made their way back through enemy lines.

The camp gave silent testimony to the bitterness of the battle more than two months ago. Only one concrete bunker appeared to have escaped destruction. The others were battered by artillery and bombs.

Bits of paper littered the ground. There were letters, government saving bonds, insurance policies and bank statements.

Large stocks of ammunition and weapons belonging to the defenders also were found.



ASSOCIATED PRESS RADIOPHOTO

Scratch One Tank

A Skytrooper (far left) walks past the burnt out hull of a Russian-made PT-76 light tank, destroyed by United States Air Force jets after supporting a 1st Air Cavalry Division attack on the Lang Vei Special Forces camp. The Cavalry has regained control of the camp which was overrun by North Vietnamese Army forces earlier this year.

Receives Bronze Star

General's Mess Steward Leaves

LZ STUD — Sergeant First Class Blyce Lord, has received the Bronze Star for meritorious service from Major General John J. Tolson, commanding general of the 1st Air Cavalry Division.

For one year, since April, 1967, when both he and the general arrived in Vietnam, SFC Lord was the mess steward for the 1st Cav's General's Mess.

"It was the best mess in Vietnam," Gen. Tolson told SFC

Lord as he presented the medal. "Everyone who ate here agrees with that."

Among those who ate SFC Lord's cooking during the year were Generals William C. Westmoreland, Creighton Abrams, Harold K. Johnson, and Dwight Beach, and Lieutenant Generals William H. Brown and Bruce Palmer.

SFC Lord found his job "a real challenge." He had to prepare meals for the 30 officers who regularly eat at the general's mess. Three times during his year in Vietnam the division

moved, and SFC Lord was expected to provide dinners on the day the Cavalry set down at its new base. But he fed a hot meal every night of the year.

He found his job "challenging and unusual — a great assignment." Cooking for General Tolson he found particularly enjoyable. "He's a good man to work for — not too particular about what he eats." The general's preferred meal, Lord says, is steak.

Lord's new assignment will be at the 45th Air Defense Group in Arlington Heights, Ill.

Pegasus—

(Continued From Page 1)

the air. They landed on an airstrip prepared two weeks before Pegasus began.

From Stud the Cavalrymen were carried to their fire bases by air assault of more than 30 Huey Liftships. Two artillery batteries also moved into the fire bases.

Two days later the Cav moved its Second Brigade into Landing Zones Wharton and Tom to aid in the relief operation.

Meanwhile, the 11th Marine Engineer Battalion began work on rebuilding Highway Nine between the Leatherneck outpost at Ca Lu and Khe Sanh. Some 18 bridges had been destroyed between the two posts but the Marine builders had repaired more than one third of those in the first days of the operation.

Pegasus followed on the heels of the ten weeks of Operation Jeb Stuart, which saw the FIRST TEAM deploy from the lower I Corps and Central Highlands to the Republic of Vietnam's northernmost two provinces, occupying former Marine bases and engaging in the fighting around the cities of Hue and Quang Tri during the Communist violations of the Tet truce.

The air assault of Pegasus brought back memories to veteran Skytroopers of the operations of late 1965 and early 1966 when the Air Cavalry roamed throughout the Central Highlands—from the Cambodian border to the coast of the South China Sea—using its vast aircraft power to strike whenever the enemy had built up.



US ARMY PHOTO BY SPS JOHN WILSON

Observing

A Skytrooper does a little tree climbing so that he can scan the horizon in I Corps while on a search and destroy mission in Operation Jeb Stuart.

