

# BLACK HORSE



— Find the Bastards — Then Pile On —

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BLACKHORSE

December 1969



**SPITTING FIRE**—An I Troop ACAV directs .50-caliber machine gun fire at enemy position west of An Loc. Third Squadron troopers killed 11 enemy soldiers and captured two detainees during the four-hour battle. (Photo by Giannini)

## ARVNs Join Cav in Seal

By David Greenlee

At H minus 45 hours the artillery started, and K and L Troops, 3rd Squadron, cranked up the engines on the ACAVs and Sheridans. As they moved out into an area southwest of Quan Loi, it began to rain. The tracks sloshed and wallowed in mud, and the pungent odor of rubber trees permeated the air.

Their mission seemed ordinary enough: Move to seal the village of Minh Duc, four miles southwest of An Loc. And yet there was a difference — one that reflects the growing trend of the Vietnam war.

This time K and L Troops were supporting an essentially Vietnamese operation. They were to seal only half the village. The other half was cordoned off by elements of the 15th ARVN Cavalry and the 9th ARVN Infantry Division. The search was carried out by a contingent of Regional Forces and National Field Police.

Such combined US-Vietnamese efforts are the substance of the Allons-Dong Tien — "Let's go Forward Together" — program initiated in the 11th ACR by Colonel James H. Leach last August. The purpose of the program is to train Vietnamese forces so that eventually they can replace American troops in combat.

There are many training techniques. One of the most effective is swapping troops. That's what 1st Squadron has been doing with the 15th ARVN Cavalry recently on the convoy run between FSB Thunder III and Quan Loi.

In the past a Blackhorse troop has been charged with escort duty, while the road and Thunder III have been secured by the

15th ARVN Cav. But now a Blackhorse platoon and an ARVN platoon might change off — Americans helping to secure the road while the Vietnamese learn to handle the convoy.

At present the trucks in the convoy are American, but in the future they will probably be Vietnamese. As First Lieutenant Robert Wiseman, C Troop executive officer says: "We are training with them so they may eventually escort their own convoys easier."

First Squadron has also been teaching Regional Forces in An Loc the basics of armor tactics. Blackhorse troopers familiarize the Vietnamese with their vehicles, then take them out on actual operations.

A command and control chopper is provided, an LZ selected and prepped, and the RFs, accompanied by MAT advisors, are air-inserted into an area. They then link up with 11th Cav tracks.

The dividends pay both ways, says Captain Ronald G. Cladwell, 1st Squadron executive officer: "The training helps us as much as it helps them. It gives us trained infantry on mounted sweeps. They can go into areas we can't, such as swamps."

Someday the RFs will be sweeping with ARVN tracks. To make sure those tracks will run smoothly, 3rd Squadron's Maintenance Section teaches a 10-day course in Quan Loi. (Continued on Back Page)

## Documents Returned

"I am most grateful for the opportunity to assist in the restoration of these documents to the city." With these words, Colonel James H. Leach, Blackhorse commander, handed a packet of Phu Lac Hamlet's civic records to Major Truong Van Phuoc, Binh Long Province chief.

The hamlet, one mile north of An Loc, lost the documents to Viet Cong soldiers who raided the hamlet early in the morning of Nov. 4. They were recovered the following day by the 11th Cav's Acro Rifle Platoon while it was checking out a bunker complex near Phu Mieng.

Col. Leach returned the documents during a ceremony on Nov. 7. The ceremony was attended by Mr. John Sylvester, senior advisor for the province, and Major Phan Van My, An

Loc District Chief.

When Col. Leach arrived for the ceremony, trumpets blared and a platoon of Regional Force troops snapped to attention. About 50 school children, each with a small Vietnamese flag in hand, waved and cheered. The children sang the Vietnamese national anthem after the dignitaries had taken their places.

In his speech Col. Leach stressed the need for cooperation. "My regiment is powerful, but I am helpless without the assistance of the people," he said. He added that several VC in the surrounding area had been killed or captured as a result of such cooperation.

Col. Leach was later presented an enemy pistol which had been taken from an NVA company commander.

West Pointer

# New Cav CO Is Armor Pro

By Ray Waldrep

Colonel Donn A. Starry, a native of Kansas City and an armor officer since 1948, assumed command of the Blackhorse Regiment from Colonel James H. Leach on Dec. 7.

The 44-year-old colonel comes to the Blackhorse from MACV Headquarters J-3, where he has served as deputy chief of Operational Plans and Requirements since last February.

Col. Leach, who has commanded the Regiment since April, has been assigned as chief of the Armor Branch, Office of Personnel Operations at Department of the Army in Washington.

"I am very happy to be taking over the 11th Armored Cav. I've always admired the Regiment and the dedication of its fighting men," Col. Starry said in an interview before assuming command.

The new commander, who served with Col. Leach in the 3rd Armored Division in Europe five years ago, got a chance to watch the Blackhorse in action during an earlier tour of Vietnam.

During the 1966-67 tour, he served as USARV Operations Plans officer and also served on a Mechanized and Armor Combat Operations Study Team which evaluated the effectiveness of armor in this war.

"The team consisted of about 100 men and studied armor use over here for four months, including both U.S. and ARVN forces," he said. "We visited the 11th Cav and all other armored units to see how they did things. Our findings and recommendations for changes and improvements filled up seven volumes in a classified report."

"Most of what we recommended was based on a comparison between the way the 11th Cav

operated and the way other units with armor were operating," he added.

Col. Starry, a West Point graduate, started his career in armor with the 63rd Tank Battalion, 1st Infantry Division in Germany. He later served five years with the 3rd Armored Division, a tour in Korea with the 8th Army Staff, and a tour at the Pentagon as a military assistant on the staff of the Secretary of Defense.

During his 10-month tour with MACV, he has been in charge of a series of task forces charged with planning U.S. troop redeployments from Vietnam.

He is a graduate of the Armed Forces Staff College and the Army War College, and holds a degree of Master of Science in International Affairs from George Washington University.

Col. Starry's wife and four children reside in Springfield, Va.



COL STARRY



**CIVIC RECORDS**—Maj. Phuoc accepts documents of Phu Lac captured by VC agents and recaptured by Blackhorse Troopers.

(Photo by Greenlee)

## Commander's Column

## A Sad Farewell To Blackhorse



The saddest time in the career of any commander is the day he has to say goodbye to the troops he has led and lived with for so long. These past eight months have been an indescribably meaningful experience for me, and it is my fervent hope that these months will be favorably remembered by all of you who have served the Regiment so valourously.

The command of any fighting unit is somewhat like being the pilot of a large ship. The actions

of the enemy are like the pounding of hostile waves, and sometimes the direction and progress of the ship takes a good deal of careful steering and control by the pilot. During my own period at the helm of the Blackhorse, I am proud to say, the opposite has been true. The crew I have had to work with has been so quick and able in dealing with the enemy that I have only needed the lightest of touches on the tiller.

Having been a tanker for 31 years, and in that time being fortunate to watch some of the best of the breed in action, I can say without fear of overstatement that of all the tankers and troopers I have served with over the years, you of the Blackhorse are the best. I believe you to be more intelligent, more professional, more tenacious, and certainly as heroic as your predecessors who made their marks during World War II and the Korean Conflict. This in no way detracts from the earlier descendants of "Old Bill," but when war stories are traded between the generations, those who have made their contribution to this war will be more than able to hold their own.

I am confident that you men of the Blackhorse will ever be able and proud to do your part to preserve freedom in the world at whatever price it takes. I cannot really find words adequate to express my gratitude for the loyal, courageous and selfless support you have given me as Regimental Commander and our nation in the accomplishment of our mission. I am proud and honored to have served with you, the finest of our American manhood and the real hope for America's future.

May God bless you always. Allons!

Colonel James H. Leach  
40th Commander  
The Blackhorse

## Chaplain's Corner

## Season of Joy, Peace

By Chaplain (LTC)  
William P. Trobaugh

In 90-degree weather with the hot sun cooking us browner every day, it's hard to realize that this is the season of Christmas. That is unless your home is in the tropics somewhere.

But Christmas season it is. What does it mean to us? First of all, it is a season of joy. Joy is a good word and a better experience. It's the "Man-it's-good-to-be-alive" feeling that Christmas brings. The only thing that can rob a person of joy is self-pity, and this is a good place to get self-pity if you allow it to happen.

The Christmas

season means peace also. Unfortunately we have the idea that peace is the opposite of war and therefore we don't have peace now. But in my travels through the Regiment, I see a lot of peace. Peace is a personal quality, too, that comes primarily from a sense of satisfaction with one's self. The man who lives up to the standards he knows has peace with himself. And, conversely, the man who fails to live up to his own



standards never experiences peace.

Christmas brings thoughts of love. Also, family becomes important—friends, children, brotherhood, giving, and receiving gifts. All these are related to the idea of Christmas. The greatest expression of love (a four-letter word, incidentally) is the birth of Jesus into this world. Whatever your faith may be, this event has had much to do with your life. The primary feeling this event has given to the world is the sense of worth of the human person.

Christmas means different things to all people, of course. But whatever its meaning may be for you, I wish you a Very Merry Christmas! May you have joy, peace, and love; and any other "bennies" the season can bring.

## Christmas Packages

The Blackhorse office of the American Red Cross has received nearly 4,000 gift packs from volunteer agencies and groups throughout the United States.

Officials stated that nearly 4,000 additional packages are expected before Christmas.

The Red Cross plans to distribute the packs to each member of the Regiment on Christmas Day.

## Medics: Dedicated Pros

By Mike Mang

Two words describe the medics of the 11th Cav: dedication and professionalism. To list their individual virtues and heroic actions would take a book. To understand the medic at work you must look to their two outstanding traits of dedication and professionalism.

Many times during the 11th Cav's three years in Vietnam, numerous unnamed troopers have been faced with a situation where heroic and valorous effort was called for, where self-sacrifice was needed to save a fellow trooper.

But such a challenge awaits the medic each and every day he spends out on the line. It is his job to be where the action is and in the middle of it.

The challenge may not arise every day, but when it does the man we call a medic is ready to minister to the wounded while forgetting his own instinct for survival and protection.

This is where dedication carries him through. Hopping from track to track during a firefight, scampering from one wounded man to another in the heat of battle, a man is either dedicated or a fool. Search as you will, you won't find any fools in the Medical Corps.

You will find men who believe in what they're doing, men who take a deep satisfaction and pride in the fact that they're doing something positive and constructive, often in the midst of destruction.

A medic newly arriving at the Blackhorse can figure on spending at least six months on the line and probably longer. When he gets here he may have little time to adjust to the responsibility before he is called upon to render medical service in action.

Specialist Four Clifford Mit-

chell of Nacogdoches, Tex., found this to be true when he arrived in Vietnam in June. He had been with M Company for three days when the tank company made contact. Several tracks hit mines almost simultaneously with the first enemy fire, and a call for the medic was very quick in coming.

Amid confusion, Mitchell finally found the ACAV with the wounded men, including a veteran medic who had been wounded in the initial fire. Mitchell went into action and did a job. Twenty-four hours later he was a seasoned veteran and a holder of the Combat Medic's Badge.

Amid the confusion and fear of a firefight, a medic's dedication quiets his fear and allows him to think only of the job to be done. Specialist Four Ronald E. Stephens has been in Vietnam since May. A conscientious objector, he carries no weapon and is armed only with his medic's badge.

In the action which earned Stephens his CMB, D Company was moving through the jungle when it ran onto an NVA base camp. With bunkers on all sides, a tank took a rocket-propelled grenade round. Soon there was RPG and small arms fire all around, and then Stephens heard the cry of "Medic!" over the radio.

"There is lots of confusion in a firefight," says Stephens. "Everybody is on the radio, rounds flying all around you, but you don't think about being scared then. You just react to the call for a medic."

On that occasion, he jumped off his track and without realizing it ran right in front of another tank as it blasted away. He found his man, who had been shot in the chest and shoulder. While the tanks were knocking down a bunker, Stephens, for reinforcements, he put a tourniquet on the wounded man, started a transfusion, put the man on a litter and pulled him back to a LOH when it landed.

"You realize you must help an injured man and once you jump off the tank you don't realize what you're doing until it's all over. You have just one thought in mind — to help an injured man," Stephens explained.

Many medics are awarded valor medals, but a medal doesn't mean as much to them as the knowledge that someone's life has been saved.

Specialist Four Ray Rudolph, a 3rd Squadron medic from Houston, Tex., explained that to him being a medic in Vietnam means that he can go to bed at night with one good thought among all the bad scenes which sometimes crowd his mind. The thought is that maybe a handful of people are walking around alive because of something he or another medic did.

A holder of the CMB, Rudolph also holds the Soldier's Medal for heroism in a non-combat situation. He earned the medal for helping to rescue casualties from Gia Ray Mountain by helicopter in heavy mist.

The medics' professionalism shows through in their pride in their position and work. Each man knows his job, knows what has to be done and how. And he does it. Rudolph calls it coordination: "Everybody knows his job, so everything meshes together smoothly."



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"SHORT!"



# Valorous Deeds Cited

## DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Lieutenant Colonel James H. Asrestad, 2nd Squadron Headquarters.  
Majors James W. Bradin, Air Cavalry Troops, John C. Glibbreath, 2nd Squadron Headquarters.  
Captain Fred O. Jackson Jr., Air Cavalry Troop.  
First Lieutenants George H. Adams, Stephen Moushegjan, Fred P. Van Orden, Robin K. Wetzler, Air Cavalry Troop.  
Second Lieutenant Michael D. Bates, Air Cavalry Troop.  
Chief Warrant Officers James T. Hall, Air Cavalry Troop, Michael Huff, 1st Squadron Headquarters, Randall L. Willer, 2nd Squadron Headquarters.  
Warrant Officers Ortha D. Brooks, Thomas F. Clifton, Stephen E. Gofadise, Air Cavalry Troop, Dean K. Klackner, 1st Squadron Headquarters, Jonathan D. Kurtz, Terrance E. Ledden, Horace F. Morton, Air Cavalry Troop, Dewey W. Rewe, 2nd Squadron Headquarters, Frederick R. Schlimke, Air Cavalry Troop, Robert D. Strawbridge, Headquarters Aviation Platoon.  
Specialist Four William J. Carrara, Headquarters Aviation Platoon.

## SILVER STAR

Majors John C. Bohnsen, 1st Squadron Headquarters, James W. Bradin, Air Cavalry Troop, John C. Glibbreath, 2nd Squadron Headquarters.  
Captains Robert L. Harris, 1st Troop, Robert D. Hurl, H Company, Frederick E. Palmer, A Troop.  
First Lieutenants George A. Greene, 919th Engineers, Edward L. Horton, 1st Squadron Headquarters, Michael G. Kuehn, 919th Engineers, Stephen Moushegjan, Air Cavalry Troop, Dennis E. Newman, G Troop.  
Second Lieutenants Martin Amestoy III, G Troop, Michael D. Bates, 1st Squadron Headquarters.  
First Sergeant Ronald B. Osborne, I Troop.  
Platoon Sergeant Eugene Paradiso, G Troop.  
Staff Sergeants Willis R. Embree, D Company, Don D. Riltcher, H Company, Wayne J. Sanders, C Troop, Ashby W. Tyree, B Troop.  
Sergeants Donald E. Anderson, A Troop, William H. Cone, A Troop, Edward M. Cook, Air Cavalry Troop, Leo F. Hartzutt, 3rd Squadron Headquarters, Walter R. Hostings, H Company, Isaac A. Miller, F Troop, James W. Leathers, I Troop, Thomas B. McGee, A Troop, Charles I. Wigton, E Troop.  
Specialists Four Daniel J. Back, Air Cavalry Troop, Kenneth L. Brooks, H Company, Robert E. Coventry, B Troop, Arister A. Dennis, 919th Engineers, Danny L. Douglas, 919th Engineers, Selby E. Eckenrodt Jr., L Troop, William K. Ferganstrom, Air Cavalry Troop, Amos L. Hissam, L Troop, Gilbert Holder, A Troop, Dennis A. Isallo, G Troop, John S. Montgomery, Air Cavalry Troop, Allan C. Wharfield III, G Troop, Privates First Class J. B. Griffin, E Troop, Russel R. Hires Jr., E Troop, Robert B. Lambdin, Air Cavalry Troop, Bruce J. Stephens, Air Cavalry Troop.

## BRONZE STAR

Lieutenant Colonel William P. Trobaugh, Regimental Chaplain, James T. Tuberty, Former Regimental Executive Officer.  
Majors Louis J. Anlier, Regimental Headquarters Troop, John C. Bohnsen, Former 1st Squadron Commander, James W. Bradin, Former Air Cavalry Troop Commander, James L. Dobler, Former Regimental 53, Don Snow, Former Regimental 55.  
Captains Max F. Bailey III, F Troop, Richard A. Corradini, 919th Engineers, Dennis E. Firestone, M Company, Russell V. Hansen, 2nd How Btry, Elmer B. Ratcliff, 37th Med Company, Jerry R. Rutherford, Regimental Headquarters Troop, Douglas H. Starr, B Troop, Arthur L. West III, C Troop.  
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Second Lieutenants William R. Crane, I Troop, John P. Ryan, G Troop.  
Command Sergeant Major Frank S. Zibac, 1st Squadron.  
First Sergeant William R. Chambers, C Troop, Jimmie M. Cherry, 2nd How Btry.  
Staff Sergeant David Marcum, 2nd Squadron.  
Master Sergeant David I. Wall, 1st Squadron.  
Sergeants First Class Otis Bradley and Wilson B. Fields, 919th Engineers, Walter R. Hoad, 2nd How Btry, Melvin B. Hayes, M Company.  
Platoon Sergeant Dale H. Hollabaugh, C Troop.  
Staff Sergeants George T. Adkins, M Company, Richard L. Bach, 919th Engineers, Bill Bathe, C Troop, Daniel A. Garza, C Troop, Jerry L. Carter, E Troop, Levandrew Gray, C Troop, John R. Gutschalk, I Troop (Two Awards), Aron Hernandez, G Troop, Randall L. Hunter, L Troop (Two Awards), William H. Listered, Air Cavalry Troop, Caleb B. Miracle, C Troop, James L. Pettiford, 919th Engineers (Two Awards), Mark E. Relyea, G Troop, Dennis R. Richey, A Troop, William Setfens, H Company, Earl O. Sizemore, C Troop, Douglas J. Taylor, A Troop, Carl E. Tedeas, I Troop, Monte B. Thacker, E Troop, Kurt J. Wall, C Troop.  
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Specialist Four John J. Adduci, L Troop, Stephen H. Arsenault, D Company, Eugene Back, First Squadron, Donald R. Barger, E Troop, Michael R. Barnell, C Troop, Carl Bortig, 2nd How Btry, Frederick L. Bellisle, E Troop, Larry D. Beaber, C Troop, Christopher C. Bestfenn, A Troop, Roger Brogan, A Troop, William Chorbeneau, F Troop, Gene A. Chetovsky, C Troop (Two Awards), Glenn M. Clark, D Company, Brian D. Corbin, B Troop, Larry A. Crouch, A Troop, Rudy Contreras, A Troop, Gerald Curtis, E Troop, Matthew J. Davis, I Troop, Francisco Deleon, H Company, Donald W. Dickerson, A Troop, Robert B. Freerick, C Troop, Robert M. Fuller, C Troop, Gary D. Green, 2nd How Btry, Cloriano Gutierrez, E Troop, Gary L. Henson, I Troop, Amador Hernandez Jr., C Troop, Bruce B. Huber, L Troop, Donny L. Hunt, E Troop, Nick A. Jensen, A Troop, Ronald Johnson, E Troop, Joe P. Joslin, C Troop, Kevin J. LaFranchi, C Troop, Keith W. Lape, First Squadron, Aldred R. Lewis, E Troop, Bobby O. Lewis, E Troop, Dennis McDonald, A Troop, Michael T. McGuire, I Troop, Tobor A. Malczam, 919th Engineers, Douglas D. Meeteet, A Troop, Caleb B. Miracle, C Troop, Cyril J. Miranda, C Troop, Davis Montez, E Troop, Allen R. Mrozinski, P Troop, Kenneth L. Rines, A Troop, Larry R. Seaton, G Troop, Frederick Shultz, 919th Engineers, Timothy W. Shultz, C Troop, John D. Soliz, M Company, Donald P. Southwell, Air Cavalry Troop, Vernon E. Stahl, C Troop, Delbert R. Stephenson, A Troop, Robert Stokes, Regimental Headquarters, Robert E. Stokes, G Troop, Robert J. Sunssiman, A Troop, Raymond N. Szymanski, H Company, Jack L. Traylor, 2nd How Btry, Donald C. Walstein, 2nd Squadron, George D. Ward, L Troop, William D. Weaver, G Troop, Allen C. Wharfield III, C Troop, Allen J. Zicon, 919th Engineers.  
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Privates Jack E. Schroder, G Troop, Gilbert Alvarez, C Troop.

# Cav Tracks Get 'R&R'

Blackhorse armored vehicles are getting a lot more tender loving care from their crews since the recent beginning of a vehicle 'R&R' program.

Under the program, (technically known as Vehicle Repair and Return) six armored vehicles are sent to Long Binh each week for complete quarterly service and overhaul at the 185th Maintenance Battalion.

In essence, the aim of the program is to catch trouble and repair it before the vehicle becomes inoperative and has to be deadlined. Preventive maintenance is standard operating procedure for every 11th Cav track crew, but the new program removes the liabilities of constant movement, lack of spare parts, enemy harassment and the other problems encountered under field conditions.

Under the R&R program, older vehicles and those with suspected or chronic malfunctions are pulled off the line at the rate of two per squadron each week. They are trucked to Long Binh and go through a week of inspection, cleaning and overall repair. Between Aug. 20, when the program started, and Nov. 13, 52 vehicles passed through

the R&R center.

Each squadron has one mechanic on TDY to the 185th for the program. These three men work with five mechanics supplied by the 185th. Their work is coordinated by Chief Warrant Officer Dwight Riley, regimental maintenance technician.

"We haven't had a break since we arrived here in August," said Mr. Riley. "The tracks have been rolling in just as fast as we can turn loose a like number in good condition. We figure we can run every vehicle in the Regiment through R&R in 30 weeks."

The Blackhorse mechanics working in the program are Specialist Five Bernie Urrea of Colton, Calif., Specialist Four Gary Baxter of Van Wert, Ohio; and Specialist Four Larry Chaskey of Onaway, Mich.

"The tracks don't leave here until they're in perfect condition," Urrea explained. "If it takes longer than the six days, no sweat. We keep them here until the mechanics and the

track crew themselves are fully satisfied that the track is in excellent condition."

The track crews also get a sort of R&R while their vehicles are in maintenance. After working on their tracks during the day, the men are free to enjoy hot showers, hot meals and the other bennies of Long Binh Post.

But the main benefit of the program is improved maintenance. "While the tracks are at Long Binh, the suspension system is replaced, each track receives quarterly lubrication, all filters are replaced and the vehicle is completely cleaned," said Captain John Graber, regimental maintenance officer.

"The really good part of the whole program is that the men have access to complete repair facilities," he added. "They're working with the best equipment and tools at clean, fixed facilities with qualified inspectors to point out trouble. It beats sloshing around in the mud trying to replace parts that may not be readily available."

## LTC New Arty Dep.

Lieutenant Colonel Alva W. Hayes, a native Texas and career artillery officer, recently assumed the duties of Deputy for Regimental Artillery for the Regiment. Lt. Col. Hayes comes to the "Blackhorse" from his previous assignment at II Field Force Artillery.

As Deputy for Regimental Artillery, he will serve as a special advisor to the regimental commander, advising him in the capabilities and employment of his artillery. "A large part of the job," said Hayes, "is carrying on liaison work with II Field Force Artillery, 6/27 Artillery, 1st Cav Division and the squadron commanders of the 11th Cav.

Born in El Paso, Tex., Lt. Col. Hayes began his military career with the Texas National Guard back in 1947. He began his officer career in 1953 with a Regular Army Commission upon graduating the University of Texas at El Paso where he received his degree in history and education.

He also completed the Officers Career Course at Ft. Sill, Okla., and the Command and General Staff College at Ft. Leavenworth, Kan.

He gained his first acquaintance and experience in armor during his first Army assignment in Germany where he served as a battery executive officer and battery commander with the 2nd Armored Division.

Returning to the United States in 1958, he commanded Hercules Missile Batteries in Los Angeles and Thule, Greenland until 1962 when he became an ROTC instructor at The University of Santa Clara, Calif. He served with Special Forces at Ft. Bragg, N.C. from 1964 through 1968.

"I consider it a privilege to serve with the self-propelled artillery of the 11th Cav," said Col. Hayes. "I've always considered the time I've spent with armor to be the most challenging and rewarding of my career."



**BELLY ARMOR** — First Squadron mechanics demonstrate the "book" method of securing protective armor on an ACAV. Innovations in the installation of the 3/4-inch plates which afford added protection against damage from enemy mines, have made it possible to cut installation time in half. (Photo by Cody)

## ACAV Belly Armor Is Security Blanket

A security blanket protects Linus from the hobgoblins of everyday life. Blackhorse ACAV crews are now getting their own 750-pound security blankets to protect them from the hobgoblins of enemy mines.

The new additions are 3/4-inch thick sheets of belly armor bolted to the bottom front of the ACAV and extending back four feet — covering the area struck by 95 per cent of all enemy mines. Eventually all fighting ACAVs of the Regiment are scheduled to receive belly armor units and none too soon.

The complete conversion kit includes a flotation unit designed to offset the weight of the additional armor while the ACAV is on the amphibious runs for which it is also designed. The amphibious capability means little in Vietnam operations, but the styrofoam-filled buoyancy panels have proven themselves to be excellent RPG screens — just like the side panels of the Sheridan.

Department of Defense installation manuals specify 40 man-hours for installation of the complete conversion kit under ideal conditions in an indoor workshop with perfect lighting, concrete floors and unlimited power tools and lift capabilities. First Squadron mechanics need

a total of 21 man-hours to finish the job in the powdery dust of the unit's Quan Loi motor pool.

Sergeant Victor J. Klemann of Rogers, Ohio, explained the "book" installation procedure which required the ACAV's track to be broken and the belly armor slid on with a fork lift. Sgt. Klemann originated the new time-saving procedure in which a heavy tank recovery vehicle lifts the fully loaded ACAV onto a timber crib. The plate is then slid under the ACAV with the track still linked — resulting in a saving of many hours.

Reaction to the installation is completely positive from the highest to the lowest echelons. In a letter to the commanding officer of USARV, the 11th Cav's logistics office reported: "a notable increase in aggressiveness of those crews whose vehicles are now equipped with belly armor."

Warrant Officer Billie Hodges of Aberdeen, Md., 1st Squadron maintenance officer says, "The men are really enthusiastic about the kits."

And Private First Class William Wilsey of Pekin, Ill., a K Troop ACAV driver said, "I feel a lot safer knowing that extra armor is down there between me and anything Charlie might have planted in the road."

# Colonel Leach Ends 8-Month Tour Praises 11th Cav Troopers

By Ray Waldrep

When Colonel James H. Leach took over the reins of the Blackhorse Regiment on an Easter Sunday morning eight months ago, he brought to the Cav the kind of old-time tanker knowledge which made armor a feared and effective weapon in Europe and North Africa during World War II.

"I think I knew much of what there was to know about traditional use of armor, but it didn't take me long to discover that there were many challenges to armor I hadn't seen before," said the 47-year-old colonel, reminiscing on his tour as 40th commander of the 11th Cav.

The Blackhorse Regiment had been in Vietnam almost three years when Col. Leach took over. It had convinced the skeptics that armor could operate here, and had become adept at the longrange lightning moves for which armor was renowned in earlier wars.

A large amount of time was spent by the Regiment guarding pacified villages, sweeping and holding captured territory, and conducting the other repetitious chores of containing enemy guerilla activities.

But when the Cav got the word to move, it did so with speed and decisiveness which often caught enemy units off guard and contributed heavily to their confusion and ultimate defeat. One such operation was Montana Raider, which commenced

shortly after Col. Leach took ended 32 days, 1000 miles enemy dead later.

The operation entailed movement of the Regiment from Lam Son area to Dau Tieng, to Quan Loi and other parts of War Zone C, some 80 miles from Saigon.

This operation demonstrated Col. Leach likes to call the use of armor, its ability to react to bring heavy punishment on the enemy almost anywhere. The colonel is also fond of pointing out this ability depends at least as much on people as it does on machines.

"That's another discovery over here," he says. "Despite skepticism of some of the old armor men, today's armor man, as exemplified by the men of the Blackhorse, is a soldier as any there ever has been. He's even better, because he has many things the soldier of World War II didn't have."

In addition to the demand of guiding such combat operations, Col. Leach has to work continuously at the arduous and difficult task of preparing the war effort over to the forces of the Republic of Vietnam.

The success of the Regiment in the past eight months has owed much to the untiring efforts of its commander. Normally a soft-spoken, gentle man, Col. Leach is always alert and short-tempered at any time of vigilance or devotion to duty. His working hours are a familiar sight to the often bleary-eyed members of his staff.



Col. Leach assumes command of the Blackhorse Regiment.



Commander in battle near Dau Tieng.



Blackhorse commander addressing 1st Sqdn.



# ...nure as Blackhorse Commander

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A typical day would see the colonel up at dawn, attending two or more briefings before 9 a.m., and flying out to visit the fighting troops and watch over their operations for most of the day. He would often eat with squadron or troop commanders wherever he found himself at lunch time, and the evening meal would usually wait for the end of the inevitable and comprehensive staff briefing at 6 p.m. or later.

Sandwiched into these routine chores were the occasional forays into the actual world of battle—flying low over a battlefield to direct the movement of tracks on the ground, landing to assist in the capture of an enemy base camp, or providing covering fire for ground elements from his Command and Control helicopter's two machine guns.

These actions earned Col. Leach three Silver Stars while he was with the Regiment. More important, they helped to earn him the respect of his men.

The colonel is leaving the Blackhorse to serve with the Office of Personnel Operations, Department of the Army, as the Chief of the Armor Branch. His work there will probably not be as exciting as the past eight months have been for him but he is amply qualified for the important task of guiding the careers of Armor officers.

He can leave with the satisfaction of knowing he has done his best for the 4,000 men fighting under him, and with the warm knowledge that they are grateful for his leadership and example.



Col. Leach receives second Silver Star from Gen. Abrams.



opers in the field.



Maj. Bahnsen briefs Col. Leach on 1st Sqdn. river crossing.

# Cav Patch Born in RVN

By Ned Stuppy

The Blackhorse patch, symbol of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, is not an insignia which has represented the regiment throughout its glorious existence. It is, rather, a symbol which was adopted only three years ago.

The movement to obtain a patch symbolic of the Blackhorse Regiment began at Ft. Meade, Md., in 1965. At that time the 11th Cav was a "skeleton" regiment composed of staff officers, squadron commanders and senior NCOs. It was then involved in training troopers for the Regiment's move to Vietnam.

At Ft. Meade the men of the Regiment were required to wear the 1st Army patch because armored cavalry regiments were considered "Army troops." The only identifying insignia worn by the Regiment's personnel was a patch depicting the familiar "Alions" crest on the left breast pocket.

As the date for deployment to Vietnam approached a question was being asked more and more frequently: "We're an individual TOE unit heading for war. Why can't we have our own patch?"

Department of the Army regulations at the time stated that only separate brigade-size and larger units were allowed to have an individual patch. A regiment, which is considered a smaller unit, was thus restrained from acquiring a unit insignia. Nevertheless, the feeling which supported adoption of a patch continued to become stronger.

It was decided that an attempt should be made to design a suitable patch with the hope that when the unit proved itself in the "un-armor" country of South Vietnam authorization for a unit patch might be obtained.

Lieutenant Colonel Palmer A.

Peterson, then the 3rd Squadron commander, ordered Captain John M. Casterman, now 1st Squadron motor officer but then a second lieutenant and M Company's 1st platoon leader, to begin designing a patch.

Casterman, who received his degree in graphic design from the University of Kansas, began his task in a library at Ft. Meade with only a vague idea of exactly what type of patch was desired. He consulted books on heraldry in order to gain some understanding of the symbolism involved.

Unable to devote much time to the project because of his other duties, Casterman had progressed very little when the orders to move out came down.

A few months later Casterman drew six sketches of proposed patches and submitted them to the regimental commander. He tried to incorporate colors representing the major branches of the army into various designs. "There was only one thing I was sure of and that was the horse. When I was looking through those books at Ft. Meade and I saw this fantastic horse, I knew that was the one for the patch," Casterman explained.

The red and white in the background of the patch are the traditional cavalry guidon colors. The slash separating the two seas of color has no particular symbolic significance and is simply employed as a divider on the black and green combat patch.

"This is a proud Regiment and it always has been. I felt that the proud warhorse perfectly represented the spirit of the Regiment," Casterman said.

The patch was chosen by vote from the six submitted. The group of sketches was approved by the regimental commander and then passed through the Regiment. The present patch was chosen almost unanimously.

Although the Regiment had decided on a patch it still had no authorization to wear it. The importance of the patch was explained by Lieutenant Colonel David K. Doyle, 3rd Squadron commander, then the 3rd Squadron S-3 officer. "The patch was a big thing with the men. They constantly asked about it. Even when we would go to a hospital to visit a wounded trooper he would always want to know if we had a patch yet."

(Continued on Page 7)

## 3rd Squadron Adds 2-Man Sniper Team

After spending three weeks at a special marksmanship school in Bien Hoa, Specialist Five Donald Roark and Sergeant Bruce A. Hinman arrived back at Quan Loi with their camouflaged, experimental M-14s and reported to 3rd Squadron to begin their duties as snipers for the 11th Cav.

As snipers, Roark and Hinman

will be operating as a two-man team equipped only with their sniper rifles and sufficient food and water for up to three days. Their mission: wait for Charlie to walk by and then — put his lights out. Using binoculars by day and Starlight scopes at night, the snipers look out for the enemy up to 900 meters away and beyond.

Both men volunteered for the assignment. Hinman, on his second tour, was a track commander with K Troop before becoming a sniper. Roark came from L Troop where he was a track commander since arriving in country three months ago. The requirement for acceptance into sniper school was an army Sharpshooter or Expert marksmanship badge.

On Nov. 3, both men began their special marksmanship training at Bien Hoa in a sniper school conducted by the 1st Cav Division. "I thought I knew something about rifles," said Hinman, "but at Bien Hoa they taught us things about the weapon that I had never heard of before."

"There is a hell of a lot more to it than just zeroing the rifle," said Roark. "It's really a good school. We learned absolutely everything there is to know about a rifle."

The men attended school eight hours a day for three weeks. Their instructors were all Army sharpshooters with many years of rifle competition behind them. Five hours of the day were spent on the firing range with the specially constructed M-14.

The rifles cost approximately \$500 apiece. The sniper M-14 is an experimental model of the standard M-14 utilizing a fiber glass hand guard. The weapon must be sent back to Bien Hoa for all adjustments and internal cleaning. Heavier than the standard model, the sniper rifle has a variable ratio, 3 to 9 power scope which gives pinpoint aiming accuracy at up to 900 meters.

Hinman and Roark have now joined the other 11th Cav snipers on assignment somewhere out in the boonies with their sharp eyes and sharper rifles just waiting for "Charles" to trip on by.



SANTA?—Weren't you always told that Santa was a fat old man? I was, too! And I'll bet you always went to bed early on Christmas Eve. After all, who wants to see a fat old man. This year . . .

## Baseball Celebrities Take to the Field

By Ned Stuppy

Baseball Commissioner Bowie Kuhn. Hall of Fame great Joe DiMaggio and three present day baseball stars visited the Blackhorse on Nov. 13.

Kuhn and DiMaggio were accompanied by Ron Swoboda of the World Champion New York Mets, Jim Mudecat Grant of the St. Louis Cardinals and Milt Pappas of the Atlanta Braves.

The celebrities were greeted by a gathering of Blackhorse Troopers at the "White House." At first everyone was a little hesitant to talk to the stars but that didn't seem to dampen the enthusiasm of the guests, especially Mudecat. He proceeded to carry on a one-man night club act. The affable pitching star did everything from reciting poetry and confessing that he threw a "detergent" ball to directing wisecracks to Kuhn.

The group traveled to FSB Debbie and arrived just in time to endure the ear-shattering experience of a 2nd How Battery fire mission. At Debbie they received their warmest welcome of the day as troopers set aside whatever they happened to be doing to welcome the visitors to their jungle home.

The reception took DiMaggio somewhat by surprise, but after returning the greeting he separated from the group and moved around the FSB talking to those who were unable to leave their defensive positions. He carried a Polaroid camera and posed for picture after picture with the troopers, always leaving the print behind as a souvenir.

Their departure from Debbie varied slightly from their arrival. As they were heading toward the berm the How battery opened up again. This time, however, it caught them completely by surprise. Mudecat, who was slightly shaken by his initial exposure to the big guns, headed over the berm at a rather fast pace muttering, "I'm getting out of here, man. This place is too much."

Grant tended to dominate the conversation but Ron Swoboda had his moment when a trooper muttered a derogatory remark about the Mets. Swoboda quickly turned and asked in a rather subdued tone, "Where are you from, man?" The somewhat shaken trooper replied, "Philadelphia." "Oh, yeah," Swoboda remarked, "I heard about a contest they had a few months ago in the states. First prize was a week in Philadelphia. Second prize was two weeks in Philadelphia."

After visiting all three squadrons the guests expressed satisfaction with their trip to the Blackhorse, the first fighting unit they visited on their tour. Mudecat, the clown and self-appointed spokesman of the group, turned serious for a moment. "These are the guys we came over here to see. They're the ones doing the fighting," he said.

"I feel that coming over here is the least we can do. If they appreciate our visit one-tenth as much as we appreciate what they're doing, then our trip is certainly worth while."



By John P. Giannini

In the last few issues of this column the main topic of discussion has been equipment. Often people just starting out in photography become dazzled by the mechanics and material, but neglect the really important aspect — composition.

Thousands of dollars worth of equipment hanging around one's neck can be very impressive, but it is only machinery and machines don't make good pictures; people do. Unfortunately, most amateurs think that if they read the photo magazines and learn about all the different types of equipment, they are learning photography. These people have lost sight of the purpose of photography, which is to make pictures that tell a story.

All stories have a subject, be it a person or an object. Everything in the picture must help describe the subject to the viewer. This is usually done by relating the subject to another object or by relating the subject to some activity.

Another basic principle of composition is commonly called the Law of Thirds. This means dividing a rectangle into thirds from left to right and from top to bottom. When a picture is framed instead of placing the

subject in the center it is placed at or around one of the intersecting points. This technique has a more natural, eye-catching affect and other items in the picture seem to relate more meaningfully to the subject. Of course, as with all hard and fast rules there are always exceptions.

When framing a picture, a good rule to follow is to try and keep it as simple as possible. Many objects or people in a picture tend to draw away from the subject rather than enhance the meaning.

A good photographer never worries about how his pictures are going to turn out. He knows how the pictures will look when he shoots them. This comes from experience and from thinking photographically. This means that he has taken all the circumstances into account when he shoots and has figured out his final picture.

Theories and rules on composition are all fine for gaining a basis for taking well composed pictures, but they can't be taken for more than they are, just guidelines. With this in mind the most important aspect of photography then becomes practice, experience and personal preference.



## ARVN Dependent Housing

# Where a Bunker is Home

By John Cody

Home to the family of an ARVN soldier may be a bunker, a three-room house, a communal barracks or a hut built from rocket crates and howitzer powder cans. Over the years of the conflict the families have adapted to a life where father leaves in the morning for war and comes back a day, a week or maybe a month later; a life where the late show may be either a TV re-run from Saigon or possibly a few rounds of incoming.

Corporal Truong Song Nhut lives at the 9th ARVN Regiment headquarters near Chon Ton with his wife, Tran Thi Thu Cuc, and their three children. Corp. Nhut conducted orientation classes for Hoi Chanh before he was drafted. Now he works in the Regimental S-1.

During the day his wife tends the children, shops at the local market and cleans their ammo crate home which is built into the side of the perimeter berm. Inside is a low table, a little stove, a cushioned sheet of wood that serves as a bed for the whole family, and about 12 square feet of floor space.

Mrs. Nhut says she and the children stay with her husband in the compound rather than back home in Kien Phong Province because "it is best if the family stays together and also because I love him and don't want to be where I see him only once every two or three months."

Mrs. Nhut said the house isn't really a home. "It's just a hut where we stay because the war is on. When the war ends we'll return to Kien Phong province and build a real house where I know the children can play without running into barbed wire."

Her oldest son, Truong Thanh Kiem, is six years old. Mrs. Nhut says she hopes he will go to college and become a teacher. Corp. Nhut says he hopes to buy a farm and raise chickens when peace returns to the country.

Mrs. Nhut said she has seen magazine pictures of American life and that she would like to have some of the labor saving

gadgets when she is settled in her home. However, she doesn't think she would like to live in the United States. She prefers what she called "the Asian way of life where the children are raised quite strictly and the entire family sticks together."

Captain Le Van Tam, the commander of seven Regional Force and Popular Force companies in Binh Long Province, lives in a three-room house in An Loc with his wife and six children.

A combination bird cage and zoo enlivens the small patio outside the front door. A hyperactive squirrel shares the cage with a pigeon and several finches.

The living room features a red and white checked tile floor, a set of blue contemporary furniture and a coffee table. On the wall hangs a blackboard where the captain teaches his children English and math.

In the kitchen is a charcoal stove, sink, cupboard, table and the baby's crib which is draped with yellow mosquito netting.

Capt. Tam's wife, Lin Thin Than, wore a pink silk blouse and pants as she served tea in white china rimmed in gold. Capt. Thanh has been in the Army 16 years. Whenever he gets movement orders, he rents a truck, packs up his household goods, puts the family on a bus and sets up a new home if the area is safe enough.

Capt. Thanh noted one advantage of having his family with him is that his oldest son spit shines his boots for him.

Mrs. Thanh says she has become used to military life and the constant change of location. She says the one thing she will never get used to is the fear for her husband's safety every time he goes out on an operation. She says the large family is a real help in keeping her busy so she won't sit around and worry while her husband is out with the troops.

Mrs. Thanh does her own shopping at the An Loc market and sometimes makes a special dish for her husband to take along on an operation to give him a break from the ARVN's

usual C-ration rice and canned fish or pork.

Does Mrs. Thanh want her sons to become soldiers? She said that if the war is still going when her oldest son comes of age she hopes he will be an officer. But if peace comes she says she hopes he will attend college and enter a comfortable profession.

Staff Sergeant Huynh Ngoc An lives with his wife Nguyen Thi Xe and their five-year-old son Hung Ngoc Hai at the 257th Regional Forces Company at Tan Khai. An ammo crate bunker built into the berm serves as their house. The floor is hard-packed laterite, three walls are wooden and the fourth is more laterite. A woman's touch is obvious. A little floral centerpiece brightens up the table and there are pictures hung on the wall. The table, a board bed and one small chest are the only furniture in the single room.

The remainder of Sgt. An's family, eight children, stay at his mother's house in My Tho where they attend school. Mrs. An is used to the military life after 19 years during which time the sergeant served 10 years with the infantry, three with the rangers and six years with the RF. She has stayed with him all that time.

Sgt. and Mrs. An both eat with RF troops in the company mess hall. She cooks only as a special treat on holidays. She says prices in the An Loc area are much higher than back home in the My Tho area in IV Corps. She is on a tight budget: the sergeant's salary isn't large and they have to support and pay school expenses for their eight children.

Mrs. An says life is difficult at the RF compound. Their bunker is poor in comparison with their My Tho home, and living with a group of soldiers in such a small compound is not like living in a village. But she says she won't mind the discomfort if the sacrifice she and her husband and children have made ends in peace and safety for their family. She says her biggest hope is that the war ends in time so none of her sons will become soldiers.



ARVN DEPENDENTS—These children, members of an ARVN soldier's family, accompany their father wherever he is assigned. Their homes may be a communal barracks or a hut made of ammo crates wedged into a defensive perimeter berm. These families would rather endure the hardships of a transient life than those of separation. (Photo by Giannini)

## All Aliens Must Report Addresses in January

WASHINGTON (AFPS)—With few exceptions all aliens in the United States and its possessions must report their addresses to the Attorney General during January.

Aliens temporarily absent from the United States during January should not report their addresses but must do so within ten (10) days of return to the U.S.

The Immigration and Nationality Act provides serious penalties for willful failure to submit the report.

aliens for willful failure to submit the report.

Cards with which the report can be made are available at any United States Post Office and at offices of the Immigration and Naturalization Service during the month of January. The cards should be filled out and returned to the clerk from whom received.

Compliance with the alien registration requirement is of vital importance to all aliens in the U.S. Armed Forces as well as members of the armed forces who have relatives that are not citizens of the U.S. but residents of the U.S.

## Patch...

(Continued From Page 6)

General Harold K. Johnson, then Army Chief of Staff, visited the Regiment during the Christmas season of 1966 at Xuan Loc. A dinner was held which was attended by Blackhorse troopers. They naturally talked about only one thing, the patch. Lt. Col. Doyle also wrote a letter to the Chief of Staff asking for authorization to wear the patch. The combination of these efforts proved successful. The Blackhorse Regiment had its own distinctive patch.

Asked how he liked the patch from a designer's point of view, Casterman hesitated and then thoughtfully replied, "I guess I'm satisfied. You see, I really didn't have much time to work on or think about it. It was just sort of a rush type project. The only thing I don't like is the horse. That fantastic warhorse I chose for the patch has been lost in reproduction. I guess this can be attributed to the fact that the patch is produced by so many different companies. Overall though, yes, I'm satisfied."

## New Program Aids Soldiers

WASHINGTON (AFPS) — A new Army's retirement service program is in effect providing assistance to nearly half a million active duty and retired Army personnel.

The program, outlined in AR 608-25, features education and counseling of in-service career personnel and increased assistance to retired soldiers and their dependents.

Those eligible for the services include all active duty members with at least 18 years active service, retired personnel, and members scheduled for disability retirement, regardless of their length of service.

To support the program, each Army installation has been told to select a Retirement Services Officer, and, if necessary establish a Retirement Services Office.



BASEBALL STAR—Jim Mudcat Grant, ace right-hander of the St. Louis Cardinals, poses with an M-60 machine gun at FSB Jake. Grant and other baseball personalities stopped at 11th Cav support bases early last month on their tour of Vietnam. Grant's unending line of jokes kept everyone entertained, including his fellow visitors. (Photo by Stuppy)



**TOO HOT TO HANDLE**—Blackhorse Troopers of 3rd Squadron's 1 Troop stop firing during heavy contact to change the barrel on an M-60 machine gun. The barrels must be changed when excessive firing causes them to overheat. Asbestos gloves sure come in handy. (Photo by Giannini)

## 10 'Go' Choppers

# Avn Platoon Ready Anytime, Anywhere

Ready to go at a moment's notice, Warrant Officer Gary Gingrich, aviator with Headquarters Aviation Platoon, can never be sure just where his mission will take him or what he may be flying into. When the regimental commander says "Let's go", Gingrich does just that and has "Traveller" or "Jamie II" whirling, warmed up and ready to go when the colonel arrives at the pad. Transporting the colonel is one of the main functions of the Aviation Platoon but only one of the many jobs they perform.

The Aviation Platoon has the primary mission of providing air support to the regimental staff.

The platoon consists of two sections; the Command and Control (C&C) section which provides transportation for the regimental commander, and the Transportation section, which handles everything from mail delivery to Psyops missions.

It does the job with 10 choppers; two Hueys and a pair of LOHs for the C&C section and six Hueys in the Transportation section. The platoon has a manpower of 45 men.

The colonel's crew is a permanent one with Mr. Gingrich of New Brunswick, N.J., aircraft commander; Specialist Five Alan Bradford, crew chief; and Specialist Four Edward Turner, door gunner. The pilot position rotates to train prospective aircraft commanders for the future. Until a month ago, Warrant Officer Robert D. Strawbridge commanded the colonel's ship and Gingrich sat in the pilot's seat.

Being the colonel's crew may sound prestigious but it's not all cake. The pilots must be among the very best and always know what's happening.

"When you're flying the colonel," said Mr. Gingrich, "you have to keep one ear tuned to the communication the colonel is carrying on with the ground so you can anticipate the next move. At the same time, you're monitoring your own VIII and FM radios and yet you must be ready to catch any directives the colonel gives you over the intercom."

Flying the C&C also means that the aircraft commander must be able to change destination and flight plans at a moment's notice with quick precision. The pilots may be called upon to fly to a destination that is new and unknown to them, but they must be able to change course and get there with such smoothness that it looks as if they've done it a hundred times before.

While flying the C&C ship is a demanding occupation, the rest of the Aviation Platoon is just as much in demand as it carries out its multitude of assignments.

Mail and distribution travels to and from the 11th Cav on the daily courier ship. Every Sunday morning, the Regimental Chaplain has use of a Huey. And there is at least one, and sometimes three Psyops missions a day.

The Psyops missions provide an answer to those who might feel that Headquarters Aviation does little in the way of dangerous missions.

"A Psyops mission can be considered among the most dangerous of air missions in Vietnam," said Captain Donald E. Eaton, Aviation Platoon leader.

A Psyops ship flies in a circle, breaking the commandment never to fly continuously over the same area. Secondly, the ship flies at 1500 feet. The most dangerous altitude is between 500 and 2500 feet. And a Psyops ship flies at a low air speed. High speed should be maintained for maximum safety.

"We're violating the three prime principles of Vietnam flying," said Capt. Eaton, "and we do it every day on our Psyops missions in ships equipped with loudspeakers instead of mini-guns and rockets."

# Cav Aero-Scouts Fly Low, Slow to Root Out Enemy

By John Cody

Aero-Scout pilot to observer (who has just handed pilot a bamboo blossom): "Damn it, Gill! You're suppose to be looking for Charlie, not picking flowers."

Observer to pilot: "Sir, with all due respect, you were the one who flew us down into this bamboo patch. I was just picking the stuff out of my M-60."

The 11th Armored Cav's Aero-Scout Platoon claims it flies lower and slower than any other chopper group. Intercom exchanges like the one above, and patched-up cheek bubbles on most of the Scout Platoon's nine LOHs suggest this may be true.

Captain Jerome A. Koss of Detroit, Mich., commands the volunteer platoon of 10 pilots, nine crew chiefs and nine observers. The pilots fly 10 hours training to get the feeling of the LOH and then spend from six to eight weeks learning the techniques and tricks of scouting.

Most of the observers extended their tours in Vietnam for the opportunity to fly with the Scouts. They also have a break-in period which they spend in the left seat alongside an experienced Scout pilot.

The Scout's usual mission is

detailed visual reconnaissance (VR) over areas of suspected enemy activity. However, the tiny maneuverable LOHs have also been used for medivac, resupply and troop extraction in spots too tight to permit Huey landings.

For a normal mission, the LOH is fueled with 300 pounds of JP-4 and armed with a mini-gun, an M-60 machine gun which is slung in the door of the observer's seat, and an M-29 grenade launcher.

The LOH usually links up with a Cobra gunship to form a Hunter-Killer team. While the LOH combs the ground the Cobra circles overhead never more than five seconds away from the deck, ready to roll in with rockets and chunkers to protect the little birds which present tempting targets to enemy machine gun and small arms fire.

Sergeant Michael B. Gill of Clark, N.J., explained some of the signs observers and pilots try to pick up. "Trails and footprints are hard to spot, but when you do, you can often follow them to an enemy fighting position or base camp. You can tell from the sharpness of the print, the number of prints, and the direction the vegetation is bent,

just how many troops have used the trail and how recently and where they were headed."

The Aero-Scouts senior pilot is Warrant Officer Stephen E. Gardipee of Miami, Fla. He explained that the Scouts never fly parallel to a ridgeline or a woodline where the enemy can have a long time to aim .51 caliber machine guns as the LOH passes across their field of view.

"The hardest thing to learn is never to fly a straight line or continuous hover or any other pattern the enemy can spot and predict," Mr. Gardipee added.

"If you do, he'll be waiting right ahead of you with those tracers already on the way up. You have to learn to cover areas completely and systematically while continually ziz-zagging, changing altitude and shifting speed."

This is the first aspect of VR flying the inexperienced observer notices — sometimes rather uncomfortably. The Scout pilot usually prescribes two dramatic pills for motion sickness before he'll permit a passenger on the reconnaissance mission.

After the initial direct flight to the area of observation, the pilot drops the ship to tree-top level or below and begins flying in every direction except forward. He'll make lazy sweeping eights and tight circles, change altitude, spin on the chopper's rotor axis, send the ship backward and down, hover or slide off to one side or the other — all the while keeping his eyes open for enemy signs and tree branches which are liable to be anywhere in his field of vision: below, to one side, in front, behind or even above in some cases.

## Cav Trains ARVN...

(Continued From Page 1)

There ARVNs are taught everything from periodic and preventive maintenance to troubleshooting the intricacies of the electrical system.

As Vietnamese forces receive new and more sophisticated weapons, they need to be taught how to use them. Second Squadron has recently begun marksmanship training on the M16 rifle for Regional Forces and

Popular Self Defense Force groups.

All three squadrons have begun combined MEDCAPs and ICAPs in the villages and hamlets of their areas of operation.

On all levels throughout the Blackhorse AO, Vietnamese forces are phasing-in as American forces prepare to phase-out. Allons-Dong Tien the program is called, "Go Forward Together" — so that one day the Vietnamese can go it alone.

## Troopers Kill 37

The first three weeks of November marked the beginning of the Communist winter offensive in Vietnam. Battle action increased throughout most of the Blackhorse area of operations.

Increased enemy pressure in the Bo Duc area sent 2nd Squadron's F Troop packing aboard giant C130 aircraft. The troop was airlifted from Loc Ninh to the airstrip of the Special Forces camp at Bu Dop. From there F Troop went on combined operations with CIDG and ARVN forces.

At the same time G Troop headed up QL 14A — a road that has not been open for nearly two years — in an effort to reach FSB Jerri, but they were hampered by a profusion of enemy mines.

F Troop and G Troop together accounted for 11 NVA and VC

KIA. An additional three KIA were attributed to the Aero Rifle Platoon of Air Cav Troop.

Later this month in a three-day operation southwest of Quan Loi 3rd Squadron killed 16 enemy soldiers, captured one and detained one Hoi Chanh.

Continuing the Allons-Dong Tien program initiated in the 11th Cav last August, 1st and 3rd Squadrons placed increased emphasis on combined operations with, and training of, Vietnamese Troops.

Third Squadron also supported the 9th ARVN Division and the 15th ARVN Cavalry on successive weeks in the search and seal of villages of An Phu and Minh Duc. First Squadron provided similar support for Vietnamese forces in the search and seal of Hoa My and Hoa Lac, an area southwest of Quan Loi.