

# BLACK HORSE

— Find the Bastards — Then Pile On —

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Blackhorse

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**ROUGH GOING** — A Sheridan pushes through heavy jungle in an operation near An Loc. Terrain such as this makes maintenance of the metal

giants a 24-hour a day job. There's nothing easy about maintaining a tank. It takes time and muscle. (Photo by Giannini)

## Cav Kills 177 In Dec. Action

By David Greenlee

The 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment and supporting units killed 177 NVA during December, while Blackhorse Troopers under operational control of the 9th ARVN Regiment teamed with ARVN soldiers to kill an additional 53 enemy.

In what Major C.W. Abbey termed their best action in months, Air Cav Troop helicopters killed 49 enemy in the space of four days.

Air Cav Troop Cobra gunships killed 20 NVA on Christmas Eve near the Cambodian border west of Loc Ninh. Supporting 1st Squadron artillery and TAC Air accounted for an additional 10 enemy dead.

Early in the morning on Dec. 27, an Air Cav LOH flying near the border north of Loc Ninh drew fire from an enemy bunker complex and triggered an eight-hour battle. By day's end the Air Cav Troop had killed 29 NVA. Forty-four more enemy were killed by TAC Air and "Blue Max" aerial rocket artillery.

The action was supported by A Troop and D Company who together with a company of Vietnamese Regional Forces moved immediately into the area of contact.

Lieutenant Colonel John M. Norton, 1st Squadron commander, explained that he had planned an operation in the area before, but this was the first time it had been dry enough to run one.

"We surprised the hell out of them," he said, summing up the day's activity.

On Dec. 15, further to the east, B Troop joined F Troop of the 3rd Squadron and a company of the 9th ARVN Regiment to kill 53 NVA in a battle near the district capital of Bo Duc.

The two-hour battle began when F Troop and the ARVN

company surprised an estimated two enemy reinforced rifle companies, one already in position and the other in the process of digging in. They were supported within minutes of making contact by B Troop, led by Captain Douglas H. Starr.

F Troop and B Troop together formed "Task Force Bradin." The two troops were airlifted from the Loc Ninh area aboard C130 aircraft. Their mission was to help secure the district capital of Bo Duc and the Special Forces camp at Bu Dop.

QL 14A, the road linking Loc Ninh and Bu Dop, had been closed since January 1968. But on Dec. 6 an operation was launched with a twofold purpose: Open QL 14A to military traffic and clear an open space across the Serges Jungle Highway, a high speed trail complex used by an enemy rear support group.

Lieutenant Colonel Grail L. Brookshire, 2d Squadron commander described the operation as "typically American. If you don't like the jungle, cut it down."

To do the cutting, the 984th Land Clearing Company was called in. By Dec. 19 its Rome Plows had cut a swath 400 meters wide and 15 kilometers long. For the first time in nearly two years a ground convoy, including wheeled vehicles, pushed through to Bu Dop from the Loc Ninh area.

In separate actions in the western part of the Blackhorse AO, 3rd Squadron Troopers killed two NVA.

Lieutenant Colonel George C. Hoffmaster, the new Squadron commander, has concentrated chiefly on training Vietnamese soldiers "not only to upgrade their fighting capability, but also to get more out of our joint

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## 24G Box Sniffs for Enemy

By John Cody

The VC and the people of Los Angeles have one problem in common — air pollution. The West Coast smog is a long term health hazard, but the pollution traces left by enemy troops can cause the VC much worse health problems in the form of artillery and air strikes, if the airborne particles are detected by 11th Armored Cavalry sniffer teams.

Captain Jerry L. Self, Commander of the 33rd Chemical Detachment, explained that human beings passing through an area on foot, vehicles or gathered together in a base camp stir up dust and introduce foreign particles into the air. The sniffer equipment samples the air and detects the presence of

these particles which mark the enemy's position.

The heart of the system is the XM-3, the "Detector, Concealed Personnel, Aircraft Mounted," or more simply, the "People Sniffer." It is a stark, grey, 65-pound metal box that is split into two equal sections, loaded with switches on top and carries a recording graph. General Electric manufactures the device for \$24,000.

Air enters a metal inlet tube in the front bubble of the Huey and passes through a hose into the sniffer machine itself where a small fraction is drawn off for testing. The air sample rushes into a humidifier to be super-saturated with water vapor.

Then, five times a second, the

sample is drawn into a vacuum chamber. Here the water vapor condenses on any foreign particles present in the air, producing a cloud. A photo-cell then measures the density of the cloud and calculates the amount of "air pollution" in the sample.

"Even if there are no people or vehicles in the area, the air over a jungle will always contain some 10,000 particles per cubic centimeter. But this sniffer can detect 1/10th that concentration. So you can see, we don't miss much," Capt. Self explained.

As the Huey flies along at treetop level, Private First Class John Baumhakl of Warrensville, Ohio, hunches over the meters. Whenever he gets an unusually high reading he'll radio the Cobra gunship flying escort overhead. The Cobra pilot marks the location on his map for future reference.

The sniffer proves it can really do the job — when it passes over M Company the indicator needle tries to fly off the high end of the meter.

Capt. Self and Sergeant First Class Gail Burch of Freedonia, Ark., sit on either side as observers and stand-by trouble shooters. As a sideline they pitch out "Chieu Hoi" leaflets whenever they pass over a well-used trail.

The chopper makes a number of parallel passes over the sniffer zone and then heads back to the base camp where Capt. Self and the Cobra pilots figure out the exact coordinates of the most likely readings.

"We edit our readings before passing them to S-2," Self explained. "The machine is actually two identical detection devices and we only accept read-

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## Nations Highest Honor

Corporal Jerry W. Wickham, a Blackhorse Trooper killed in action two years ago, has been awarded the Medal of Honor for his valor in the battle which cost him his life.

Corp. Wickham was an ACAV commander with F Troop on Jan. 6, 1968 when the Troop joined with H Company to conduct reconnaissance along a narrow jungle road near Loc Ninh.

The armored column soon encountered fire from a well-entrenched enemy force along the route of march. Wickham immediately spotted an enemy bunker and dismounted his vehicle, ran forward through the enemy fire and tossed a grenade into the bunker, killing two enemy soldiers.

As Wickham and another soldier checked out the bunker after the blast, they heard the

sound of a grenade thrown from another bunker. Wickham threw himself between the grenade and his companion. Neither man was injured by the explosion.

Wickham then rushed to another bunker, killed one enemy soldier with his rifle and dragged out a second unarmed enemy soldier.

The U.S. forces then withdrew and an air strike was called into the area. Wickham volunteered to serve as point man for a squad which moved up to sweep the area after the strike.

The squad was soon pinned down by more enemy fire. Wickham charged another bunker and killed two enemy, allowing the rest of the squad to pull back and place effective fire on the bunkers. He was mortally wounded as he attempted to rejoin the squad.



**CHANGE OF COMMAND** — Colonel Donn A. Starry, 41st Blackhorse Commander, accepts the Regimental colors from General Creighton W. Abrams in Quan Loi on December 7. (Photo by Smith)

## Commander's Column

## The Road Ahead

We've said good-bye to our distinguished 40th Commander. This is an appropriate time for me as your 41st Colonel to give you some idea of what's in store for the Blackhorse in the months ahead.

First, we can expect U.S. redeployments to continue and to be speeded up. There will be more work for U.S. units remaining—including the Blackhorse, which will be among the last U.S. combat units to leave Vietnam. This means killing more enemy, helping train more RF/PFs, working more with the ARVN, running more ICAFs, and helping the provincial forces eliminate more VC informants and supporters.

So, while we have the combat power to destroy nearly everything in sight, we just can't do that—it defeats the purpose of our being here. Our destructive power must be focused on the enemy, and at the same time our tremendous resources have to be used to help the Vietnamese build their country. I like to believe we're as good at one job as we are at the other. It's a real challenge to each one of us.

Secondly, what can you expect from me—a question many of you have asked me in the last few weeks. The answer to that is simple—I believe in fundamentals—in good crew gunnery on ACAVs, tanks, Sheridans, and howitzers; in good maintenance by crews, maintenance personnel, parts clerks and commanders; in sound tactics by track commanders, crew chiefs, section, platoon, company, squadron and—yes—regimental commanders; in good leadership from crew level to the top—that means knowing your job, knowing and taking care of your men and your equipment; in every man in the Blackhorse doing his job in the right way to the best of his ability—I ask no more.

I believe in fundamentals because they are what bind together men and equipment into effective fighting outfits. They kill enemy. They save lives—yours and mine. If we do the simple, the fundamental things well, we'll continue to be the best damn outfit in the Army, and the toughest thing the bastards ever bit into.

Colonel Donn A. Starry  
41st Commander  
The Blackhorse

## Surgery Aids Child

A five-year-old Vietnamese girl will soon walk for the first time, thanks to an alert medical team and modern medical science.

The child, discovered during a recent medcap by a Blackhorse medical team, is now at the 24th Evacuation Hospital awaiting surgery to correct her hip, dislocated since birth.

Little Ngan Con Cu was seen crawling about in the village of Nui Giao. Captain Michael Hughes, a doctor, and his two-man medic team from the 37th Medical Company spotted Ngan during one of their daily medcaps in the village, located just outside An Loc.

"It looked as though the child had a dislocated hip," said Hughes, who has been in Vietnam a month and is still surprised by the medical disorders he finds in the local villages. "She couldn't stand on her left leg and had to pull herself along on the ground."

The information was passed on to the Blackhorse civil affairs office at Quan Loi. The next

day, with the aid of an interpreter, Staff Sergeant Richard Baker took the child to the 37th Med facilities at Quan Loi.

X-rays revealed that she had a congenital dislocated hip. She had never used her left leg.

Sgt. Baker returned to the village and obtained the parents' permission to have surgery performed at the 24th Evac Hospital at Long Binh.

"It's amazing how word of this spread," said Baker. "When we picked up the child for the trip to the hospital, a young man was at the child's home who had come from An Loc carrying his three-year-old daughter. She had some injury to her leg."

At the 24th Evac, further X-rays will be taken and then a specialist will perform the necessary surgery to correct the hip condition. Ngan will then be confined to a cast for at least a few weeks while doctors keep a close watch on the healing process.

But before long, little Ngan Con Cu will return to her village with a much brighter outlook for her future.

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## Cav at Home in III Corps

By Ray Waldrep

Christmas Season '69 for the fighting men of the Blackhorse turned out to be the exotic pleasures of a holding action uncomfortably near the Cambodian border. With the beginning of a new year, the prospects for more of the same are good as signs increase of a new enemy offensive soon.

The old-timers in the Regiment would probably tell you it could be a lot worse—and perhaps it could. For instance, the first Blackhorse Troopers spent some of their Christmas and New Years seasons in the Philippines, where shortly after it was formed in 1961.

That war, which won the Regiment its spurs, lasted four years. It is more than likely that those troopers enjoyed getting short, too, even without the lure of an air-conditioned jet with built-in stewardesses to make the ride home more enjoyable.

And it is also more than likely that they found the real black (or whatever color) horses as cantankerous and hard to maintain as their diesel-gulping steel descendants.

During the Christmas season of 1916, members of the 11th Cavalry again found themselves in a more-or-less tropical environment as they chased Pancho Villa and his raiders through the hills of Mexico. Less exotic perhaps, but it doubtless seemed to be just as far from home to most of them as we are this year.

And during World War I most Blackhorse Troopers spent their holidays at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia (wherever that is), probably consoling themselves with the thought that they could be in Germany or France, and very likely would be soon.

After that war the Regiment moved to California and traded its horses for armored vehicles. Those winters were probably a vast improvement, but they ended quickly with the beginning of World War II.

The holiday seasons of that war were spent by the entire Regiment (or at least the different units which eventually were joined in the Regiment) in France, Belgium and Germany. There weren't any short-timers then, as the old-timers tell it.

The next interesting new year for the Regiment turned out to be 1958, which like its six successors found the Blackhorse trudging through deep snow up and down the German-Czechoslovakian border. But at least they weren't getting shot at, you say.

The Regiment has celebrated its last three holiday seasons in parts of the III Corps area of Vietnam. So while you may not be at home this New Year, it might be said with some justice that your unit is.

## Chaplain's Corner

## On Little Things



Several years ago I ran across a newspaper report of some whales in a Japanese harbor that died as a result of chasing little fish. The schools of small fish, similar to the familiar sardine, were in shallow water along some sand bars in the harbor. The whales in their excited rush to scoop these fish into their huge mouths wound up high and dry atop the sand bars and were dying in the sun.

Can you picture that? A creature weighing several tons dying from chasing a sardine!

The strange thing about it is that I have seen men do the same type of thing and I'm sure you have also, if you think a moment. Whales I can understand doing a thing like that but men should be able to do better.

For instance, I once knew a lawyer who became a judge. The sardine he chased to his de-

struction was alcohol. Another I knew, a happily married man with three lovely children, chased a girl until he lost all he really held dear. Another young man I know, a Vietnam veteran, is addicted to heroin and, because of his crimes associated with his addiction, is in prison and will be for several more years. The examples are endless.

Men, like these whales, must be careful of the things they chase or they too may wind up aground and perishing. Fortunately, men are different from whales in that they can think ahead to the consequences and choose the things worthy of their great potential.

A soldier in the Army has many offers. The questionable ones usually are encouraged by the argument, "This is what a man does!" I agree, but add, What kind of man?

In your choices, remember the whales that wound up dying in the shallow water because they chose wrongly.

# Medics Start Nitecaps

By Mike Mang

A new twist to the daily Medcaps by 11th Cav medics and doctors throughout the Blackhorse AO came in early December with the beginning of a Nitecap program. In the Nitecaps, the usual medicine, music and movies are supplemented with an overnight stay in the village by intelligence and civil affairs officers.

"The Nitecap program gives the villagers an opportunity to see Allied troops in their midst after dark," said Captain John K. Mallory, 1st Squadron Civil Affairs Officer.

Capt. Mallory, Captain Joseph R. Buckman Jr., Squadron S-2 officer and Morale NCO (movie projectionist) Specialist Four Dave Gschwend had just spent the night in the Village of Loc Thanh, four miles north of Loc Ninh, as part of the third Nitecap by the 1st Squadron.

Usually, the only soldiers the people of Loc Thanh see in their

village after dark are Viet Cong. "Every four or five nights the local VC will come into this village to make contact with their families and friends and pick up supplies," Mallory said.

By placing Allied troops in the village after dark to show movies and then remain there to sleep overnight, it is hoped that a large psychological success can be gained with the villagers. "It's an attempt to inspire the people's confidence in the security of their village against the VC. Our presence here at night offers them an expression of our confidence in their village," Mallory said.

By operating during late afternoon and after dark, the Nitecap team is able to contact more people, many of whom are working their fields during the day.

The Nitecap program at Loc Thanh, the most successful in the opinion of the team, resembled the Nitecaps held previously at Van Hahn near An Loc and Village No. 1 near Loc Ninh.

In the middle of the afternoon a doctor, Captain Edwin Rexinger, and his team of medics entered the village and set up shop outside the large French theatre in the middle of town. While the 1st Cav Division band, on loan to the Nitecap team, rocked out to an exuberant crowd inside the theatre, the medical team treated over 150 villagers who sought help for everything from malaria to eye infections and ringworm.

After treating patients for three hours, the doctor and his medics left the village at 5:30 p.m. with Lieutenant Colonel John M. Norton, 1st Squadron commander. Lt. Col. Norton had been rated a unanimous "Numbah One" that afternoon as he passed out candy to the village children.

With the approach of darkness, it was movie time. It looked like a regular Saturday night at the movies with men, women, and mostly children gathered around the theatre, moving in to

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## New Dep. CO, 3rd Sqdn. CO

The Blackhorse has a new Deputy Regimental Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Robert L. Bradley. Lt. Col. Bradley assumed his duties with the Regiment on Dec. 15 succeeding Lieutenant Colonel George C. Hoffmaster, who has taken command of the Regiment's 3rd Squadron.

Lt. Col. Bradley came to the Regiment from USARV Headquarters in the G-3 section. It was at USARV that he gained his first impressions of the 11th Cav.

"It was part of my job at USARV to monitor operations reports," he said. "I was impressed by the Regiment and I thought it was a damned fine outfit."

Sensing the next question before it was asked, he smiled and added, "And since arriving here this opinion has been strongly reinforced. I still think this is a damned fine outfit."

A 1949 graduate of West Point and an armor officer with experience from the troop level on up, Lt. Col. Bradley suggested a close look at the history of the Blackhorse for those who doubt armor's effectiveness in Vietnam.

"It's one of the most versatile and effective units over here," he said. "We have ground mobility and built-in fire power. There's certainly no doubt about one thing, we really pack a sting and when we move, we move rapidly, even explosively."

The Deputy Commander's

wife and four children make their home in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Third Squadron welcomed its new commander, Lieutenant Colonel George C. Hoffmaster, to the Workhorse on Dec. 15. Lt. Col. Hoffmaster replaced Lieutenant Colonel David K. Doyle who was reassigned to MACV Headquarters.

George R. Fisher, the former Deputy Regimental Commander, entered the Regiment on Aug. 25 after serving in the Office of Personnel Operations in the Pentagon and as commander of the 1st Battalion, 68th Armor with the 8th Division in Germany.

Hoffmaster pointed out that the demands on a squadron commander differ greatly from those of his former position in the Regiment. He explained that a deputy regimental commander's main responsibility is coordinating the operations of the regimental headquarters while a squadron commander "has to be at the right place at the right time, and I mean where the action is."

The new Workhorse Commander seems quite pleased not only with his new duties but also

with his squadron. "I like my new job tremendously. When I came to Vietnam my goal was to command a squadron and now I have that opportunity," he said.

"I'm also very pleased with the 3rd Squadron. I'm impressed by the proficiency and attitude of the men and I'm not just saying this because I might be quoted. I really mean it."



HOFFMASTER

## Life on Gia Ray

For the men on top of Gia Ray Mountain, seven miles east of Xuan Loc, life's a drag — but it's safe.

That, at least, is the opinion of SP4 Douglas Kluth and PFC John Timko, the two troopers who man the Blackhorse Radio Relay Station, almost fifty miles from the nearest 11th ACR unit. What are they doing so far from home?

FM radios used on tanks and ACAVs operate on the line of sight principle. If an FM signal hits a natural obstacle, it stops. So a tank on one side of a hill can't send its signal directly to a tank on the other side.

Instead, it beams the signal to a relay station like the one on top of Gia Ray Mountain. The signal is then retransmitted to the receiving unit.

Kluth and Timko see to it that the relay system functions smoothly. To do this, they have to monitor the Regiment's fre-

quencies 24 hours a day, seven days a week. That means 12 hours a day by a crackling radio.

The men share the mountain with a company of the 53d Signal Battalion and a company of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade, which secures the area.

Not much happens on the mountain, but some excitement is provided by the resupply chopper that comes in three times a week.

A heavy load of supplies, high altitude, and a tiny, wind-swept chopper pad invariably make for tricky landings. Sometimes too tricky, and the landing must be aborted.

When that happens, the big Chinooks often cut loose their loads in an effort to regain airspeed. And many an excited spectator has watched tomorrow's dinner prematurely dropped — and scattered across the mountainside.



BRADLEY

# Valorous Deeds Cited

## SILVER STAR

### Major

John C. Gilbreath, 2nd Squadron Headquarters.

### Captain

Ronald G. Caldwell, D Company; James T. Tutt, I Troop.

### First Lieutenant

Edward Buening Jr., F Troop; Leray A. Dewit, B Troop.

### First Sergeant

William R. Chambers, C Troop.

### Sergeant First Class

Wilson B. Fields, 919th Engineers.

### Staff Sergeant

John J. Sinclair, 2nd Squadron Headquarters.

### Specialists Four

Daniel Reid, G Troop; Roger B. Schaefer, 3rd Squadron Headquarters.

## DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

### Chief Warrant Officers

Clarence P. Burkett Jr., Aviation Platoon John L. Enticknap, 3rd Squadron Headquarters.

### Warrant Officer

Gerald C. Strange, 3rd Squadron Headquarters.

## BRONZE STAR FOR VALOR

### Majors

James L. Dozier, former Regimental S-3; John H. Sloan, 3rd Squadron Headquarters.

### Captains

George R. Fisher, 2nd Squadron Headquarters; Robert D. Hurt, H Company; Douglas H. Starr, B Troop.

### First Lieutenants

James C. Crowley, H Company; Leray A. Dewit, B Troop; Charles T. Dodge, I Troop; Stephen H. Linthwaite, D Company; William P. Matthews, G Troop; John C. Slater, I Troop; Mark J. Wilson, E Troop.

### First Sergeants

Willie Johnson (2nd), F Troop; Joe H. Strickland, D Company

### Platoon Sergeants

Roland Hightower, D Company; Jerome E. Kekel, Charles R. Smith, F Troop.

### Sergeant First Class

Thomas McGuinn, H Company.

### Staff Sergeants

Bobby R. Allen, 3rd Squadron Headquarters; Michael Hoey, H Company; Amos Morgan, F Troop; Alan D. Mutchler, I Troop; Randolph Nichaib, Edward Sandobal, H Company; Neil O. Warner, E Troop.

### Sergeants

Timothy K. Adams, H Company; Donald E. Callahan, F Troop; Kenneth R. Caporale, B Troop; Joseph E. Chandley, D Company; Stanley D. Garland, Billie M. Hilliker, I Troop; Billy B. Jarvis, F Troop; Darrell J. Marsh, H Company; Patrick N. Miller, 2nd Squadron Headquarters; Ray F. Moore, Charles E. Morrow, I Troop; William H. Seffens, H Company; Seleses Tausili, B Troop.

### Specialists Five

Barry J. Beaven, C Troop; Darrell Denning, H Company; Charles D. Hatley, F Troop; Richard J. McDonald, I Troop; Guillermo Pacheco, Ralph Powers, D Company; Edward T. Stallworth, C Troop; William F. Standley, John F. Totten Jr., F Troop.

### Specialists Four

Jackie L. Adkins, Arnold G. Frote, H Company; William F. Collins, F Troop; Douglas J. Beeck (2nd), Daryl J. Carrson, Benjamin Daniel, Oliver L. Guiforum, Garry D. Hall, Jerald D. Johnson, I Troop; Johnny C. Jones, 3rd Squadron Headquarters; Gary D. Lembi, 2nd Squadron Howitzer Battery; Jimmie L. Owens, Jack B. Walters, B Troop, Michael Smalley, H Company; Robert J. Wilkinson, 1st Squadron Headquarters.

### Privates First Class

Brian L. Davis, H Company; Steve L. Goodspeed, Juvenal Gutierrez Jr., I Troop; Oscar L. Handy, B Troop; William J. Horan, Air Cav Troop; John W. Jordan, Dennis L. Lablue, E Troop, William M. Maks, 2nd Squadron Headquarters; Donald W. McGregor, I Troop; Cleo P. Odom, Aaron M. Robinson, Benny L. Whittier Jr., B Troop; Ronald M. Woodrum, E Troop.

## AIR MEDAL FOR VALOR

### Warrant Officers

Thomas J. Cushman, David N. Hutchinson, 3rd Squadron Headquarters; Larry M. Parsons, Air Cav Troop.

### Command Sergeant Major

Frank S. Ziobec, 1st Squadron Headquarters.

### Specialists Five

David D. Burt, Donny L. Risenhoover, 3rd Squadron Headquarters.

### Specialists Four

Dennis J. Campbell, 2nd Squadron Headquarters; Claude G. Horton, 1st Squadron Headquarters; Marlin R. Wittwer, Aviation Platoon.

## ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL FOR VALOR

### Chief Warrant Officer

Thomas A. Mandelke, 1st Squadron Headquarters.

### Warrant Officers

John J. Amore, 1st Squadron Headquarters; Vito Bubell, Air Cav Troop.

# Rome Plows Brave Hostile Enemy and Nature



Rome Plow crashes steadily forward toward Bu Dop



Rome Plow attacks a giant hardwood



Flame track follows and burns the tangled vegetation

The Blackhorse Regiment's 2nd Squadron tanks and tracks teamed up with Rome Plows in December in an ambitious land-clearing operation which opened the road to the Bu Dop Special Forces Camp and the District Capital of Bo Due in neighboring Phuoc Long Province.

Second Squadron armor escorted 9th ARVN Regiment resupply vehicles into Bu Dop on Dec. 30—the first major convoy to travel the previously enemy-controlled road in nearly two years.

The 984th Engineering Company (Land Clearing) started up QI 14A at Fire Support Base Del on Dec. 6. The operation was to clear 6,073 acres of double canopy jungle, including 200 meters on each side of the road and a 100-meter-wide swath around the Bo Due-Bu Dop complex.

The operation started out better than expected, according to Captain Richard A. Burlingame of Lompoc, Calif., commander of the 984th Engineers. The plows were scheduled to clear 150 acres the first day, but managed to finish 215 acres before dark.

"The opened road will permit heavy convoy resupply to the Bu Dop outpost, and the 400-meter clear zone will put a cramp on enemy ambushes," explained Lieutenant Colonel Grail Brookshire, 2nd Squadron commander.

The cleared zone also cuts a major enemy infiltration route the Serges jungle highway which extends from the Cambodian border south toward Saigon. Armored and airborne patrols are now able to keep the route under surveillance to thwart enemy movement toward the capital.

Lt. Col. Brookshire faced a massive command and coordination job during the operation. In addition to the armor and Rome Plows, he also controlled several 1st Cavalry Division companies of infantrymen which

moved parallel to the route providing flank security.

Blackhorse tanks from H Company pushed out in front of the plows to locate mines and break up ambush attempts. ACAVs and Sheridans from E Troop stayed with the plows while helicopters searched for enemy movement and flame tracks burned off some of the vegetation after the plows picked it down.

At one end of the operation were the enormous coordination problems. At the other were the men of the 984th Engineers, who had their own problems. They moved out every day at first light, lined up behind the plow (which was directed in the air), and pushed forward regardless of the obstacles.

If small arms fire broke out, plow drivers were instructed to keep going and let the security forces handle the problem. In event of RPG fire the drivers were trained to raise their track cutting blades, head for source of the fire and cut away the enemy's cover. The natural hazards were as bad as the potentialities. Heat in the cockpit of a Rome Plow can reach 120 degrees and the continual vibration pounded the drivers' bodies, felling trees — hardwoods which often reach 150 feet in height — dented the overhead shields, but thick steel "adache bars" prevented anyious injury.

Loads of fiery, stinging red fire dropped from the falling trees onto the drivers, who dove with one hand and sprayed DDT with the other. Bamboo splinters crept under flak jackets, leaving their red and raw. Despite the hazards of war nature, the men of the 984th engineers and 2nd Squadron moved into Bu Dop by the end of month to end a successful operation.

# Enemy and Nature, Clear Way to Bu Dop



Rome Plow attacks a giant hardwood

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At one end of the operation were the enormous coordination dilemmas. At the other were the men of the 984th Engineers, who had their own problems.

They moved out every day at first light, lined up behind the lead plow (which was directed in the air), and pushed forward regardless of the obstacles.

If small arms fire broke out, plow drivers were instructed to keep going and let the security forces handle the problem. In event of RPG fire the drivers were trained to raise their lead cutting blades, head for the source of the fire and cut by the enemy's cover.

The natural hazards were as bad as the potential tics. Heat in the cockpit of a Rome Plow can reach 120 degrees and the continual vibration pounded the drivers' bodies, felling trees—hardwood trees which often reach 150 feet height—dented the overhead shields, but thick steel "adache bars" prevented anyious injury.

Clouds of fiery, stinging red is dropped from the falling bombs onto the drivers, who drive with one hand and spray DDT with the other. Bamboo splinters crept under their flak jackets, leaving their skin red and raw.

Despite the hazards of war and nature, the men of the 984th engineers and 2nd Squadron cleared into Bu Dop by the end of the month to end a successful operation.



H Company tank provides forward security for the plows



2nd Squadron vehicles accompany plows on the grueling mission

# Register Trophies Before Going Home

Are you planning to take war trophies home with you from Vietnam? If you've been here any time at all, you probably already know that you can take home almost anything except automatic weapons and explosives. What you may not know is that every trophy has to be registered.

Weapons are probably the most common trophies. In addition to being registered, they require an Export License to leave Vietnam.

Both weapons and other items are registered by means of the USARV Form 603. To register a trophy, take it to the Regimental S-2 office at either Quan Loi or Bien Hoa. S-2 personnel will check the item and fill out the forms for you.

If the item is a weapon, the forms should then be taken with the weapon to the MP station at II Field Force in Long Binh. The MPs will begin paperwork for the export license, which will be mailed to you later.

The weapon should be registered at least 60 days before you leave country. If you cannot reg-

ister the weapon before the last minute, however, you may obtain a temporary export license which will allow you to take the weapon home. The permanent license will be mailed later.

All war trophies should be hand-carried home. Weapons cannot be mailed or shipped in hold baggage except for personnel who have been medevaced from Vietnam.

After leaving the out-processing center in the States, it is advisable to purchase a gun case for your weapon. Also, guard against theft on the way home.

When you get home, check the local gun laws to make sure you can legally keep the weapon and whether it must be registered locally. You must keep the registration forms and licenses for all war trophies.

Weapons are limited to one per individual. However, you are allowed to take as many other trophies as you can reasonably carry.

Legal items include SKS and CKC Chinese-made rifles, French, German and other foreign-made rifles, as well as 9mm Chinese-made and other foreign-made pistols.

Also legal are gas masks, bayonets, knives, field gear and practically any clothing.

Illegal items include automatic weapons, rocket-propelled grenades, indirect fire weapons such as mortars, hand grenades and ammunition. Also illegal are documents, maps and anything else having intelligence value, as well as U.S.-manufactured weapons and all U.S. government property.

Certain automatic weapons may be exported for donation to organizations such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Details on these exceptions are available from S-2.



A TANGO?—We noticed this lovely young lady a few weeks ago while watching elements of 2nd Squadron secure the Rome Plows on their way to Bu Dop. She claimed she was a Tango with the Blackhorse but one of the plow drivers grabbed her and headed off into the jungle. Neither has been seen since (we're really not worried about the driver).

## Give a Guy Enough Rope...

By Dan Davis

It all began one night at the ARP hootch when we were discussing the fine art of rappelling over our third or fourth beer. I had somehow let slip that I had taken the nickle course in rappelling at Jungle School in Panama.

"Have you ever tried it out of a helicopter?" asked First Lieutenant Douglas Rich, the ARP platoon Leader. "No, but it sounds pretty easy," I replied, my courage bolstered by the beer.

"We're going out tomorrow. How would you like to come along?"

"Fine," I replied. "It should make a couple of good pictures for the paper."

"Come on over early in the morning and we'll teach you the commands and let you be the right door gunner and watch how it's done," Rich said.

I had confidently memorized the commands I was to give by the time the first man stepped on the skids the next morning. Lt. Rich was first. He wrapped his line around the D-ring, a clasp that attaches to the Swiss seat.

The Swiss seat is a rope wrapped around your waist, between your legs and tied in front with a square knot. The important thing here is to get it around and beside but not over certain vulnerable parts of your body.

"Man on the skids," I called as Rich stepped onto the Huey's skids. "Man on the rope," Rich stepped off the skids, slipped

down the rope and landed feet-first on the ground.

"Man on the ground," I relayed to the pilot. Rich ran backward off the end of the rope. "Man off the rope," I said to the pilot. "It doesn't look that hard," I added to the ARP sitting beside me.

The helicopter landed and picked up the rappellers for the second run. Rich stepped into the chopper and said those three little words that totally ruined my day. "Wanna try it?"

"What will I do with my camera?" I asked evasively. The sweat started beading on my forehead and hands.

"I'll take care of it," he answered, with all the sincerity of a spider talking to a fly.

"Might as well," I croaked.

"Don't mean nothing."

"Man on the skids," said Rich, as he shoved me feet-first out the door.

"Wait a second," I said, grabbing everything on the side of the chopper. "What am I going to do with the 10 feet of slack in the rope?"

"It will take care of itself," was the answer.

"Man on the rope," Rich said, stepping on my fingers.

I jumped backward. The 10 feet of slack did take care of itself.

My troubles just started with the snap of that rope. I hurdled down the rope sideways, upside-down and face-first. I braked and was snapped upright. By the time I reached the ground I was moving just under 100 mph.

I hit the ground feet-first and set a record getting off the rope. I also kept on going over the rice paddy toward An Loc. VC and NVA don't mean nothing. There was no way I was going to get up in that helicopter again.

It took half the ARP platoon to persuade me differently. But after I had calmed down, they told me about another means of extracting troops from an area where a helicopter couldn't land.

"You take the rope and tie a bowline in the end," Rich said as he tied the end of the rope around me. "Make sure you don't hit the other guy when the helicopter pulls you up."

I felt a tug on the rope and rapidly came out of shock. The rope was tied to the helicopter. I ran toward the chopper to keep from being dragged to death. The chopper pulled me off the ground and I began a 50-foot swing that ended when I crashed into the sucker on the end of the other rope. We locked arms and he said, "First time you ever swung from a helicopter at 300 feet?"

Ropes do funny things at 300 feet in the wind. They spin, twist and go through other contortions to get rid of you. As the chopper neared the landing zone to drop us off we were swinging in 50-foot arcs.

We hit the ground on the downswing of the rope. I made, at best, a 15-foot dash and a 50-foot furrow.

"You okay?" Rich asked as I picked myself up off the ground.

"Nothing a year in the hospital won't cure," I groaned.



SATURDAY BATH—It's getting so a guy can't even monkey around a little without being told he'd better clean up. They could at least let me use the NCO shower.

# Tanker's Job Big As His Vehicle

By John Cody

A heavy tank is 52 tons of cold steel designed for the sole purpose of moving fast enough to catch the enemy and hitting him hard enough to take the fight out of him.

With a 750-horsepower engine, top speed of 30 miles per hour, and an awesome array of weapons including a 90mm main gun with a range of 4400 meters, the M48A3s of the Blackhorse Regiment are every bit as effective as they are designed to be.

The main reason for the tank's effectiveness is not its technological superiority but its main driving force — a four-man crew with the skill and courage necessary to make the tank a definite liability to the enemy.

Captain Malcolm S. Gilchrist of Columbia, Tenn., is the man who provides this moving spirit to the Regiment's H Company. As the company commander, he decides how to best use his three platoons of behemoths against an elusive enemy who can wipe out a tank with one well-placed rocket-propelled grenade (RPG).

"I came over here with the 11th Cav when the Regiment first entered Vietnam in 1966," said Capt. Gilchrist, now in the middle of his second tour. "We were the first armor over here, and a lot of veteran armor men said the tanks just wouldn't work in these jungles and swamps. They were obviously wrong."

The tanks' normal job is using their superior fire power against the enemy, but there are other tasks dictated by circumstances of the peculiar requirements of this war. They sometimes even fire at each other, one tank popping cannister rounds at another which is being overrun by enemy troops and has been "buttoned down" to protect its crew.

They often provide security for convoys, infantry troops and Rome Plows. They are used to "walk point" for lighter armored vehicles, to knock down heavy jungle or sweep for mines the hard way.

And they guard night defensive positions. In one instance at Fire Support Base Deb, an alert tank commander heard enemy mortar rounds leaving their tubes and fired his main gun back at the enemy before the first round landed. All but the first round completely missed the NDP.

In addition to the danger of rocket-propelled grenades, tanks are susceptible to heavy damage from enemy mines. But the most constant problems encountered by tank crews are the natural enemies — dirt, insects, heat, noise and terrain.

Terrain for the tank crew can be fast rolling highways, open rubber, nearly impassable bogs of dense jungle. "We've moved as slowly as 50 meters in an hour through the most dense jungle," Capt. Gilchrist noted. This type of vegetation also presents the dangers of falling trees, slashing bamboo and thorny vines strong enough to drag a man out of his hatch.

The tanks, big as they are, have to be pampered more than their crews. "Maintenance is our biggest problem," said Capt. Gilchrist. "If we worked 24 hours a day we couldn't finish it all. And there are no small, quick jobs on the tanks. Everything takes time and muscle."

The problems of maintenance are rough on a crew but not nearly as rough as the rigors of normal operation. After the fighting begins, the noise and heat make a dizzying combination which is compounded by the fear and nervousness of combat.

This type of pressure is probably heaviest on the loader, who has to hump about a dozen heavy shells a minute in heavy contact, get rid of the spent casings without scorching his hands, and worry about the battle he cannot see.

"He can't personally fire back at the enemy," said Staff Sergeant James C. Daigle of Hull, Mass., a tank commander. "He can only load the gun for others. And he can't tell when the RPG aimed at the turret will hit the mark."



PLAYGROUND — Children of the Montagnard hamlet of Lich Loc enjoy the playground constructed for them by the 919th Engineers. The project was the result of an idea by one of the

engineers to do a little something extra for the Vietnamese people during the Christmas season. The engineers also collected candy and cookies and distributed them on Christmas Eve.

(Photo by Stuppy)

## Engineers Build Playground

The children of the Montagnard hamlet of Lich Loc, southwest of Quan Loi, received a new playground for Christmas due to the combined efforts of the 919th Engineer Company and Regimental S-5.

The project had its beginnings shortly before Christmas when the engineers decided to build a playground for one of the nearby hamlets. With the help of S-5, Lich Loc was chosen and work started immediately.

The area was first cleaned off and leveled. Engineers then constructed playground equipment from whatever material they could scrounge at Quan Loi.

The effort did not stop there, despite the happiness of the children at the new toys. Cookies and candy were collected and bundled into packages which were presented to the children by the hamlet chief on Christmas Eve.

Despite the speed and coordination of the project, it was almost impossible to get anyone to take credit for the idea. "The S-5 section was just the coordinator. The 919th did all the work," explained Major Michael V. Barnes, Regimental civil affairs officer.

The engineers pointed to one man, Sergeant First Class R. A. White of Milton, Fla. When asked whether he was the man, White said, "No, I just helped."

When pressed he admitted, "Well, I guess you could say it was my idea. I always figured it was better to give than to receive."

But he quickly added, "It wasn't me who actually did it. It was the men and they deserve all the credit."

The engineers are planning to paint the small Montagnard school as a finishing touch.

## Blackhorse Has Own Hope Christmas Show

By Mike Mang

While thousands of U.S. troops including many "Blackhorse" troopers cheered the Bob Hope Christmas show, 1st Squadron men had their own Hope Christmas show at Fire Support Base Marge.

The 11th Cav's Hope is Captain Barry C. Hope of Shreveport, La., Commo Officer with the Squadron. Although he's no relation to the famous Bob, this 28-year-old entertainer began his professional career 12 years ago in Shreveport summer theatre productions.

Hope produced the "Bengal Players" Christmas show following a request by the Squadron Commander, Lieutenant Colonel John M. Norton, who hoped to present his troops with something special on Christmas.

"I didn't want Christmas to be just another day for the men with nothing to do," said Lt. Col. Norton. "As a matter of fact, the troops did such a fine job of putting together their Christmas show that I hope we can keep the idea going and present our 'Bengal Players' show on a continuing basis, perhaps once a month."

The Christmas show consisted of five acts including Capt. Hope, the "3 Aces" of A Troop, a guitar duo from Headquarters Company, a comedy skit by the medical section, and the "Cretus Grant Singers," a foursome from 1st How Battery, C Troop and D Company.

The troop of entertainers travelled extensively to present the

show to everyone in the Squadron. They started on Christmas Eve by presenting the show to the Squadron FSA and D Company and they were on the move all day Christmas giving the show at FSB Marge, at Bo Duc for C Troop, and out in the boonies for B Troop. They gave their final performance on the morning of the 26th for A Troop.

"These guys deserve a lot of credit," said Hope. "They even missed the traditional turkey dinner so everyone could see the show. The cooperation was great. The aviation guys really worked out carrying us all around."

For Capt. Hope, the Bengal Players is another in a long line of credits in the entertainment field. He was completing work on his master's thesis in Drama at the Dallas Theatre Center when he received his "Greetings" from Uncle Sam in 1967.

Hope never did get into making Army movies but he did pull an 18-month tour in Heidelberg, Germany, with STRATCOM Europe where he had the opportunity to work with the German Cultural Center there and an Army Special Services Company playing King Arthur in "Camelot," John in "The Subject Was Roses" and Captain Tarnish in "The Student Prince."

His film career climaxed when he appeared in "This Proud Land," an ABC Television Films production starring Robert Preston. The film was aired on ABC during the 1966 TV season.



EASY DOES IT—An ARP demonstrates the correct way to rappel from a helicopter. The technique is used to insert troops into areas where landing

is impossible. Although the ARPs make it look easy, our correspondent found that it involves a certain amount of skill too. (Photo by Davis)



**FIRE**—A 3rd Squadron mortar track conducts a fire mission which brings welcome support to other 3rd Squadron elements. They work for one goal, the radio message—"That's right where we wanted it." (Photo by Giannini)

## Nighthawk Heli Crew Throws Light on Enemy

By Ned Stupny

A lone helicopter flying over the Vietnam jungle at night is probably no particular concern to the enemy troops hiding below.

But one Blackhorse chopper has a unique feature which can bring unpleasant surprises to the confident enemy. The Nighthawk is an ordinary Huey with two miniguns, a starlight scope and a large beacon.

When a crewman manning the \$6,000 starlight scope spots enemy troops on the ground, the beacon comes on and the miniguns open up with 4,000 rounds per minute. That's when the light begins to dawn on Charlie.

Warrant Officer Joseph D. Clark of Pittsburgh, Pa., has been project officer of the unique ship since its introduction in the Air Cavalry Troop last November.

Clark said the early missions were hampered by the need to get firing clearance. "To be a success you have to be able to fire as soon as you see something," he said. "That's also why you have to have a good crew. You have to be able to tell

at first look just what's on the ground and once that light comes on the gunners have to open up instantly."

The Nighthawk now works "free fire" boxes in which the gunners may fire at anything that moves. This makes navigation extremely important. And since the ship flies an irregular pattern at very low altitude, a Cobra is assigned to escort the ship and keep it from leaving the box.

The Cobra gunship also provides welcome firepower in the event of a contact.

The flight pattern of the Nighthawk looks like an unplanned wandering through the sky, but in reality it isn't. "You come over the area at about 2,000 feet and then drop down to about 300 to check the open areas," said Clark. "We like to keep the speed down to about 50 knots because it keeps the vibration at a minimum and makes it easier for the man on the starlight."

No data is available on how effective the flights have been, at least in regard to enemy killed. The terrain makes it almost impossible to confirm kills from the air at night.

The Nighthawk has made contact with the enemy, however, and everyone involved seems to agree that the idea of such flights is a good one.

### 24G Sniffer Box

(Continued From Page 1) ing which are the same on both meters.

"I'm convinced that the sniffer is doing a good job. Just a short time ago we got a high reading a few miles from the Cambodian border and called in artillery. We got a secondary explosion and destroyed a number of bunkers and three .51 caliber machine gun positions," Self concluded.

### BLACKHORSE SCRAPBOOKS

Free copies of a scrapbook containing newspaper clippings on the 11th Cav are available to all Blackhorse Troopers.

To obtain your copy, write to the U.S. Army Command Information Unit, Washington, D.C., 20315. Include the dates of your Vietnam tour to receive clippings from that period.

Be sure to include your name, rank, service number, former unit and state-side address.

## Cav Mortarmen on Target

"Hang it!" — "Fire!" The heavy cylindrical projectile slides down the tilted tube. In a split second comes a whomp and a flash. The process is repeated again and again. Nearly a minute later a rumbling starts in the distance and short flashes pierce the night. Over the radio a Troop commander says: "Great! That's right where I wanted it."

And so it goes, day in and day out, for the mortarmen of the 11th Armored Cavalry.

"We can usually adjust onto a target within three rounds," said Sergeant John S. Mebane of Atlanta, Ga., E Troop mortar section sergeant. "All we need to know is the grid coordinates, the type of target and the direction from the observer to the target."

Once locked on target, the 81 mortars rain hot shrapnel on the enemy throughout a 25-meter killing radius.

The 2nd Squadron uses 81mm mortars, while the 1st and 3rd Squadrons are equipped with the much larger 4.2 inch tubes.

Each line Troop in the 1st and 2nd Squadrons has three mortar tracks which set up with the troop command post. The 3rd Squadron's mortars have been combined into a provisional mortar battery which sets up at night along with one troop to form a small fire support base.

The brains behind the mortar section is the Fire Direction Control center which is responsible for guiding the round to its target. The FDC keeps track of villages and friendly troop locations within the area of operation. Even when firing illumination rounds, these must be considered because the solid metal cannister that falls away from an illumination round can be deadly.

The FDC men not only figure distance, azimuth, windage and charge size, but they must also account for terrain features. An enemy unit dug in on the far side of a steep hill may actually be very close to the fire team in terms of point-to-point distance. In this case, the FDC will call for high angle fire and a large charge load to make sure the shell passes over the obstacle and comes down on the enemy on the other side.

The FDC also determines mis-

sion priorities. Each forward observer may think his target is extremely important. But, the FDC will shoot first in defense of troops under attack, and then turn to less critical targets.

The computation for harassment and interdiction fire can be done in a leisurely manner. The FDC often has several hours prior notice for this type of job.

"But during a contact mission, the data must be computed and relayed to the tubes in a matter of seconds. One man may have to compute the data for four or five fire missions at one time," said Private First Class John W. Bennett of Waverly, N.Y., who works in 3rd Squadron's FDC.

The Blackhorse Armored mortarmen are proud of their equipment and the job they do. "We

can be up for a fire mission twice as fast as How Battery and we can fire three shells to their one. Of course, we do work with somewhat lighter equipment," explained Private First Class Charles Bower of Seattle, Wash., "Our 4.2mm illum round is the best available. It's just as bright as the 155 round and we can shift our aiming point a lot faster than the big guns."

Sergeant Danny Nauton of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is one mortarmen man who's very happy with his assignment, partly because he has only a few days left in country. He likes working the tubes because they're secured by the big guns and tracks of the Blackhorse. But he did predict, "I'll probably be hearing 'Hang it!' in my sleep for the next year."

## Chopper Mechanics Go Back to School

Each weekday night at the Bien Hoa Education Center 18 helicopter mechanics from the 398th Maintenance Detachment who perform all maintenance and repairs on Blackhorse choppers gather for two hours of classroom instruction under a program instituted in early December.

The program was enacted to enable the mechanics to gain an Airframe and Powerplant (A&P) license. This license is granted by the Federal Aviation Agency and is required before a mechanic can perform certified maintenance and repair on commercial aircraft.

Under the direction of Warrant Officer Wayne J. Cichello, test pilot for the 398th, and Lieutenant Carl T. Swanson of the Bien Hoa Education Center, the program provides transition training for those mechanics planning to work in the aircraft maintenance field as civilians.

Air Force Staff Sergeant Leroy D. Richardson, instructor for the course, has been an aircraft mechanic for 17 years and holds an A&P instructors license. He is leading the class

through 80 hours of classroom instruction utilizing texts and materials from the Fort Rucker MOS related courses as well as civilian material relating to the FAA test.

In addition to the classroom phase, the mechanics will receive 65 hours of practical "hands on" instruction utilizing numerous aircraft parts and engines gathered for the course.

According to FAA regulations a mechanic must complete a formal course of instruction in addition to accumulating 30 months of on-the-job experience before he is eligible to take the A&P exam.

### Cav Kills 177 . . .

(Continued From Page 1) effort."

Part of that joint effort is the security of the population center in the western part of the An Loc District. Recently, things have been relatively quiet.

"Everything depends on what the enemy wants to do," Hoffmaster says. "When he feels like hiding, we can't kill him. When he comes out and fights — that's when we've got him."



**LONELY VIGIL** — A 1st Squadron Trooper is silhouetted against the darkening sky as he mans his ACAV's .50-caliber machine gun at Fire Sup- port Base Marge near Loc Ninh. This is another of the jobs which renders the Blackhorse ready 24 hours a day. (Photo by Davis)