

# BLACKHORSE

— Find the Bastards — Then Pile On —

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Blackhorse

February 1970

## Cobra Crew Rescues LOH Pilot



**BACK TO WORK**—Captain Carl B. Marshall waits anxiously as his Cobra gunship is reloaded for another strike against enemy forces near Bo Duc.

Marshall and his copilot-gunner, First Lieutenant Arthur E. Smith, had just completed the daring rescue of a downed pilot. (Photo by Stuppy)

Cobra commander Captain Carl B. Marshall and his copilot-gunner First Lieutenant Arthur E. Smith used their gunship to perform a daring rescue of a downed Aero Scout LOH pilot amid a hail of enemy mortar, AK-47 and .51 caliber fire on 20 January.

Capt. Marshall and Lt. Smith were eating lunch at Quan Loi when they learned the LOH had been downed. They scrambled their Cobra to the crash site, a grassy meadow nine miles southwest of Bu Dop, and spotted the flaming wreckage.

They passed over the wreckage once, made a 180-degree turn and came back. "I thought I had seen movement near the wreckage on the first pass," Capt. Marshall said. "As I made the second pass, I saw the pilot waving to me from a bomb crater near the wreckage. I noticed that he was pointing out the enemy positions."

Lt. Smith fired into the gun positions and Capt. Marshall instructed the other gunships to pound the enemy while he went down to pick up the pilot.

"I made a low-level pass, came around to the LZ and immediately came under heavy .51 caliber and small arms fire," recalls Capt. Marshall. "I maneuvered the ship around the bomb crater, trying to get as close as possible to the downed pilot. While doing this, the automatic fire continued and mortar rounds began exploding within the LZ just to the west of us. I maneuvered away from them and toward the pilot. By this time we were also receiving fire from the woodline to the north and west."

Capt. Marshall attempted to suppress the enemy fire by doing pedal turns through 360, then 180 degrees while Lt. Smith fired the mini-gun.

Though the fire continued unabated, Lt. Smith opened his forward cockpit door and prepared to jump out and pick up the stranded pilot. But, the pilot didn't need help — he ran from the crater to the ship, firing his .45 pistol all the while.

"He jumped up a step on the side of the ship and fell backwards into my lap with one leg hanging over the side," Lt. Smith said. "I grabbed him around the neck with my left hand and kept my right on the gun triggers. The pilot was shouting into my microphone trying to tell us the location of the gun positions."

"We pulled pitch with my hatch halfway open and the rescued pilot only half in," Lt. Smith related. "A cobra isn't supposed to fly over 40 knots with the hatch open but we were doing between 80 and 100 knots."

The Cobra was carrying a full fuel load and over 80 percent of its 17-pound rockets when Capt. Marshall began to takeoff. "I started toward the west to get out of the fire, but I realized then that I couldn't make it because we were so heavy," Capt. Marshall said. "I looped back around to pick up air speed, reversed course twice and came out to the east. We managed to clear the trees."

## Blackhorse Units Get Citations

By John Cody

Elements of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment received two Presidential Unit Citations during a ceremony at Quan Loi on 15 January.

Lieutenant General Frank T. Mildren, USARV deputy commander, presented the first award to the Blackhorse Regiment's B Troop and 1st Platoon, C Troop, 1st Squadron, for successful defensive operations in late 1966 during the construction of the Regiment's Blackhorse Basecamp near Xuan Loc.

One battle cited in the award took place Nov. 21, 1966, while ACAVs of C Troop's 1st Platoon were escorting a convoy from Long Binh to the basecamp on Highway 2.

The C Troop ACAVs quickly reacted to a violent enemy ambush, maneuvering between burning trucks to bring suppressive fire on the entrenched enemy. The platoon held out until relief forces moved in to cut off escape routes and devastate the enemy.

The Regiment's B Troop was cited for its actions during an enemy ambush of a convoy in the same area on December 22. Suicide squads with satchel charges moved near the vehicles, but the small armored escort gained fire superiority and held out until the remainder of B Troop was able to reinforce them.

The relief force remained in contact with the enemy force

throughout the night, and launched a counter-attack at first light on Dec. 23. More than 100 enemy soldiers were killed in the encounter.

The second Presidential Citation went to the Regiment's 3rd (Continued on Back Page)

## Fighting Increases

By David Greenlee

Three major conflicts and a dramatic rescue of a downed helicopter pilot highlighted 11th ACR activities last month, as enemy activity increased sharply throughout the Blackhorse area of operation.

On Jan. 21, armored cavalrymen from 2nd Squadron killed at least 27 enemy in a day-long battle near the Cambodian Border.

The action began at daybreak

when FSB Ruth, a mile and a half south of the Special Forces Camp at Bu Dop, took approximately 30 rounds of enemy mortar fire.

Shortly after noon, an Air Cav Troop LOH flying a visual reconnaissance mission was downed by enemy .51 caliber fire in a clearing west of Ruth. Braving fire from an estimated two NVA battalions, Captain Carl B. Marshall and First Lieu- (Continued on Back Page)



**PRESIDENTIAL CITATION**—Lieutenant General Frank T. Mildren, USARV deputy commander, congratulates Captain Douglas H. Starr, B Troop

commander, after presenting the unit with a Presidential Citation recognizing its successful operations in late 1966. (Photo by Smith)

## Commander's Column

# No Substitute For Youth, Experience



There's always talk about what's wrong with the Army. Today a lot of this conversation centers on shortcomings in leadership at various levels—mostly at the lower levels. Old soldiers say that the trouble with the Army today is that we've spread the NCO corps so thin that there's not enough experience left where it's needed—at crew, squad and platoon level. Older officers say that the trouble with the Army today is that the Lieutenants and Captains aren't what they used to

be—they're promoted too fast and have too little experience.

It's true that there is a shortage, both in numbers and experience in NCO ranks—especially in grades E-6 and E-7.

It's true that officers are promoted faster than they were several years ago, and that as a result lieutenants and captains today may be less experienced than at some time in the past.

These are signs of the times—they reflect the personnel turbulence that results from having half a million men serving one-year tours thousands of miles from home.

It's also true, however, that both our younger soldiers and younger officers today are better educated, more adaptable, better oriented, and probably better motivated than any I have seen in more than 20 years of service. This is why we find good E-4's and E-5's as track commanders and crew chiefs, making up in hustle, drive and enthusiasm for what they might lack in experience. This is why we find outstanding young lieutenants and captains leading fighting troops, companies, and batteries better and more effectively than their predecessors of ten years ago. Furthermore, we build more experience faster in this regiment, in this war, than ever before.

In both World War II and Korea, periods of rest and rear area activity were interspersed with combat. It was a rare occurrence to spend a hundred days on the line. Here in Vietnam every day in the Blackhorse is a day on the line. In the first hundred days we build as much experience as we used to get out of a whole war.

In addition to all this we have more complex equipment to maintain than we have ever had in the past. This puts an added strain on experience levels all along the line.

So, the only trouble with the Army is that old guys don't always give the new guys credit for being as good as they are. Those of us who have been around a few years just have to get in and give the benefit of our experience to those who have joined us more recently. There's no substitute for a little experience and a lot of youth. We have both and together we'll get the job done—better than it's ever been done before.

Colonel Donn A. Starry  
41st Commander  
The Blackhorse

## Chaplain's Corner

## 'Track' on the Proper Trail

By Chaplain (LTC)

William P. Trobaugh

If there is one thing armored cavalymen like to do, it is to track the vehicle ahead. And, it makes good sense because it helps avoid mines and the going is easier. Trees, bamboo, "wait-a-minute vines" and other obstacles have already been knocked down or pushed aside. Then too, you can see where you are going because there is a "bust" to follow.

The lead track of the troop I was with today turned over because the crew was unable to

see through the underbrush. Fortunately, no one was hurt, nor was the vehicle seriously damaged.

In life, much the same is true if you pick the right kind of person to "track." The obstacles have been pushed aside and the trail has been marked.

None of us wants to be exactly like anyone we know and I'm not advocating that. There are those who avoid decency claiming they wish to be unique and do their own "thing" without copying anyone. They overlook the fact that there was only one

first hippy. All the others were just "tracking" him.

When I look around for a good trail to follow, I ask myself if the one who went that way found what I consider most important. Happiness. And I find that all too



few find happiness.

Those who do have at least these qualities; self-respect, and a working relationship with their God. Both these qualities are easily had and pay high dividends in contentment. The surprising thing is that there are those who go through life with neither quality.

Self-respect is had simply by doing those things of which you approve and avoiding doing those things of which you disapprove.

The working relationship with one's God is had by acknowledging His existence and having fellowship with Him at worship, however that is done.

Now might be a good time and place to take a good long look at the "bust" your life is in to see if it ends in true happiness or something less than that. You may even want to find someone else to "track," someone whose trail leads to God Himself because if you look closely, you'll see these are the truly happy people.



THE SEARCH—Blackhorse ACAVs from A Troop search of enemy bunker complexes. The rubber rumble through the rubber near Tay Ninh is a favorite hiding place of the NVA forces. (Photo by Giannini)

# Armored Stomach Conditioning

By Mike Mang

The Blackhorse has learned from usually unreliable sources that the Army, recognizing the somewhat exotic, if not outlandish, dietary customs of its armor personnel, is contemplating an addition to the training program given all men before they go out to the field.

The proposed new block of instruction, tentatively called the Armor Field Expedition Diet Training Program (AFEDTP) takes into consideration that a generation of young men, raised on pizza and beer, will not long be content with the bland diet

necessarily associated with institutional food.

Unfortunately, the example of the four men from Echo Troop who headed out from FSB Eunice early one morning last month is not untypical. Before they had gone very far, a large box was pulled out of the Sheridan and placed on the busel rack (food distribution point).

When snack time came, a large can of barbecue-flavored corn fritters was served as the entree. Next came a massive rope of hot Italian sausage, washed down by warm orange soda. The main course consisted of sardines drowned in oil along with crackers smeared with gobs of tuna covered with hot sauce. (We apologize, but for reasons of his own health and physical well-being, our reporter was either unable or unwilling — we are not sure which — to find out what the men had for dessert.)

The Army, of course, knows all this, and some commanders are beginning to feel that it is unfair to send a man to the field who has had nothing more ex-

otic than your average peanut butter and chili sandwich.

The way it looks now, the AFEDTP would be a 21-hour block of instruction incorporated in the basic Armor AIT program.

Tentatively, the first seven hours of training would consist of the consumption of vast quantities of food combinations generally disapproved of by society at large.

Trainees failing this initial block of instruction would be immediately recycled and given intensified training. Those passing move on to more advanced training, during which they are called upon to down several armor snacks seasoned with large doses of red dust and black smoke.

At the conclusion of this last phase, the trainee must take the Gastric Endurance Proficiency Test (GEPT), which basically consists of more of the same treatment. Those failing the exam are either recycled or mercifully given a medical profile.



T-BONE ANYONE—People who've never spent any time on an ACAV just don't know what they're missing. Where else could you have Italian sausage, tuna, sardines and warm soda for breakfast? (Photo by Giannini)

# BLACKHORSE

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# A Blackhorse New Zealander

By John Cody

"These GIs are good troopers. They seem to be spoiling for a fight. I know I wouldn't want to face the 11th Armored Cav," said Corporal David Seaton Harrison of the Royal New Zealand Armored Corps after spending six months with 2nd Squadron's E Troop.

Corporal Harrison had served a 12-month tour with the New Zealand 161 Battery of 155 Howitzers at Nui Dat before extending his tour for a chance to work with an American armored unit.

No stranger to combat, Cpl. Harrison spent six months fighting Indonesian guerrillas in the jungles of Borneo in 1966. He served as a medic with his country's elite Special Services, a force similar to American LRP or Rangers.

New Zealand's troopers are all volunteers and usually spend considerably more time in training than their American counterparts; but according to Harrison the American field troops are more than equal to their mission. "About two weeks on line with this unit seems to

equal many, many weeks of garrison education back home," Cpl. Harrison said.

Harrison's respect for the 11th Armored Cav is exceeded only by the fine impression he has made on the Blackhorse. Second Squadron commander, Lieutenant Colonel Grail Brookshire termed Harrison a "mighty fine man who did an excellent job both as a gunner and a TC."

Echo Troop's 3rd Platoon leader, First Lieutenant Joel Crissman said, "He's an outstanding soldier and extremely professional. I never had to tell him to do anything more than once — usually I'd turn around with a job for him and find he'd already done it. I could use ten more like him."

## New CO, S-3

In ceremonies on Jan. 31 Lieutenant Colonel James B. Reed, former Regimental operations officer, assumed command of the 11th Cav's 1st Squadron

"The old Blackhorse has never been better and 1st Squadron is certainly a good example of its flexibility. We had the change of command ceremony at eight o'clock and a few hours later we moved out."

Filling the slot vacated by Lt. Col. Reed, Lieutenant Colonel B.F. Griffin was appointed Regimental operations officer late last month.

Lt. Col. Griffin received his armor commission through OCS in 1953 and since then has served in Korea, Germany and the U.S. He has directed armor units from the platoon to the company level and eventually hopes to command one of the Blackhorse Squadrons.

"I'm a field trooper from way



REED

from Lieutenant Colonel John M. Norton.

"I feel that the knowledge gained as the Regimental operations officer will be beneficial to me as a squadron commander," Lt. Col. Reed said. "I was able to watch closely all three squadrons and learn from the new ideas generated by their commanders."

The squadron commander seemed pleased with his new assignment. "I've been working 18½ years for a command like this and I'm proud to be given the opportunity," Lt. Col. Reed said. "Every career officer works for a command such as this, but only a few are given the chance."

When asked about the 11th Cav, he smiled and quickly said,



GRIFFIN

back," Lt. Col. Griffin says. "I like getting out there and working with the troops because that's what it's all about."

(Continued on Page 7)

## Which Way's State Street?

A pair of official Chicago street signs which read "43rd Street" and "Union Avenue" have been posted above the red soil of Quan Loi.

The signs, which would ordinarily stand amid multi-family dwellings, sidewalks, automobiles and the gray smog of Chicago, are surrounded by 12-man tents, unpaved track-torn roads, battle-scarred armored vehicles and a permanent haze of red dust.

Specialist Five Bernard L. Malnarick of 4211 S. Union St., Chicago, said the signs were a gift from a fellow Chicagoan, Mayor Richard J. Daley, who had the signs produced in the city's sign shop at his request. Malnarick explained that the display not only reminds him of "life back on the block," but also gives him a fixed point to call home as his unit, the 919th Engineer Company, moves throughout III Corps.

Malnarick, a tanker gunner, received the gift while the engineers were busting jungle dangerously close to the Cambodian border. Displaying the bright yellow signs on the tank turret didn't seem tactically sound, so he deferred the official unveiling until he returned to Quan Loi.

A Chicago City Flag, also a gift from the Mayor, brightens the inside of Malnarick's olive-drab tent.



# Valorous Deeds Cited

## DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS

Specialist Four Ronald E. Pongratz, A Troop.

## SILVER STAR

Lieutenant Colonel David K. Doyle, Headquarters, 3rd Squadron. Captains Robert D. Hurt, H. Company, James T. Tutt, I Troop. First Lieutenants Eldridge G. Fish II, Headquarters 2nd Squadron, Douglas P. Rich, Air Cav Troop.

Chief Warrant Officer Michael Huff, 1st Squadron Headquarters. Platoon Sergeant Allen R. Aliman, E Troop. Staff Sergeant Arthur J. Rambe, 3rd Squadron How Btry. Specialists Four James A. Clark, John G. Near, 2nd Squadron Headquarters. Privates First Class Stephen Maks, Michael B. Nosera, 2nd Squadron Headquarters.

## DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS

Warrant Officer Chris A. Brinsen, Air Cav Troop.

## BRONZE STAR

Major John M. Sloan, 3rd Squadron Headquarters. Captains William K. Emerson, 3rd Squadron Headquarters, Charles R. Gill, Troop C.

First Lieutenants David L. Avery, Jr., D Company, David P. Gallman, 3rd Squadron Headquarters, Harry T. Hardin, B Troop, William K. Sturley, James M. Usher, Jr., C Troop. First Sergeant Russell R. Crowley, Jr., H Company.

Platoon Sergeant Jerry J. D. Howerton, B Troop. Sergeant First Class Steffen S. Tomsinski, I Troop. Staff Sergeants Oren L. Alford(2), B Troop, George W. Greiner, C Troop, Robert M. Rawson, F Troop, Larry D. Sherrill, 1st Squadron How Btry, Daniel Tyszkiewicz, C Troop Lloyd J. Vandenheuvel, B Troop.

Sergeants Paul W. Brennen, 919th Engineers, Kenneth R. Caporale, B Troop, Dwayne L. Cole, C Troop, Robert M. Dinsmore, D Company, Norman Harris, B Troop, Swanson, N. Hudson, Air Cav Troop.

Specialists Five Martin P. Balzarin, C Troop, Douglas C. Haines, 541st MI, Robert L. Miner, D Company.

Specialists Four Lonnie R. Ferguson, C Troop, David H. Fuller, K Troop, Russel P. Jones, C Troop, Benjamin Martinez, I Troop, Bary M. Sawvell, C Troop, Barry F. Scott, 3rd Squadron Headquarters, Ronald E. Stephens, D Company, Samuel E. Telesco, Air Cav Troop, Patrick M. Wagner, Regimental Headquarters.

Privates First Class James E. Bond, C Troop, Robert L. Harvey, I Troop, Darley Z. Lebew, D Company, Daniel Salazar, C Troop, William D. Weaver, G Troop, Kit Carson Scouts H Van Phong, B Troop, Nguyen, Van Trong, D Company.

## AIR MEDAL

Specialist Five Terry L. Lupton, 3rd Squadron Headquarters.

## ARMY COMMENDATION MEDAL

First Lieutenant Douglas P. Rich, Air Cav Troop, Stephen W. Vince, B Troop.

Warrant Officer Steven L. Eldridge, Air Cav Troop. Staff Sergeants Richard C. Brewster, 1st Squadron How Btry, Ronald Rondeau, B Troop, Robert Schrader, D Company, Wilbert Watkins, B Troop.

Sergeants James R. Ball, Norman Harris, James C. Hendrix, Joseph A. Repin, James F. Sferazza, Craig W. Westedt, Richard C. Williams, B Troop.

Specialists Four Phillip P. Carrol, 919th Engineers, John A. Harbut, 1st Squadron How Btry, John R. Humbert, 919th Engineers, Ellis D. Lee, Jimmie L. Owens, B Troop, William J. Templin, C Troop, Bobbie R. West, B Troop.

Privates First Class Darrell L. Bommarito, Buster R. Fouts, Terry S. Fowler, B Troop, Geoffrey M. Harrington, 1st Squadron How Btry, Cleo P. Odom, B Troop, James E. Tolbert, 919th Engineers.

# Money for Ibos

When the Nigerian Civil War ended recently with the fall of Biafra, many were saddened by the prospect of widespread starvation among the Ibo people. But Specialist Four Francis Cabral of the 919th Engineers, decided to try and do something about it.

Cabral got the idea of taking up a collection for the Ibos while watching a TV newscast one night. He talked it over with some men in his company, and they agreed to help. The question was how to get the money to Nigeria.

Cabral asked the First Sergeant. The Army couldn't spon-

sor such a project, he said, but maybe the chaplain could help.

The chaplain thought it was an excellent idea and referred him to the Red Cross.

Mr. Oleh Kostiuik, a Red Cross representative at Quan Loi, did some checking and told Cabral that if he could get some money together, the Red Cross would arrange to have it transferred to their office in Nigeria.

So Cabral got to work. In a few hours he collected \$260.

Not a large sum, when you consider the magnitude of the problem, Cabral concedes. "But it might help save some lives and that makes you feel good."

THE BLOCK—Bernard Malnarick of the 919th

Engineers received two Chicago street signs from fellow Chicagoan Mayor Richard Daley. The signs denote Malnarick's 'block' in the Windy City. (Photo by Cody)

# *Everyday Life of a Trooper in His*





# *His Mobile Home—Blackhorse Style*



Photos  
By SP4  
John Giannini



# Binh Long Aided By Civic Action

By Mike Mang

"It's a long, slow process with no spectacular frontpage battles, but slow, steady improvement and growth." Major Michael T. Barnes, civil affairs officer, was describing the work of his office, which in the past eight months has helped make Binh Long Province a safer and happier place for its Vietnamese residents.

When the Blackhorse set up its headquarters at Quan Loi and began operations in the An Loc-Loc Ninh area last June, at least 40 percent of the province's hamlets were in a contested status between government control and Viet Cong influence.

Enemy influence was particularly strong in the small hamlets far away from the population centers, An Loc to the west and Loc Ninh further to the north.

Security in the area was poor and many of the roads running through the rubber plantations were closed. Consequently, the Vietnamese could work only small portions of the plantations. With economic decline, health and educational opportunities decreased.

Now, eight months later, there are no contested hamlets. The villages are secured by Vietnamese Regional and Popular Forces. Roads have been opened and much more of the rubber can be worked to provide a living for the area's residents.

And most of the improvements are a result of work by the Vietnamese, said Barnes. "Our work has been a complement to the action of the Vietnamese Army; a sort of sharing of the wealth with them."

Major Barnes explained that the 11th Cav has taken the pressure off the ARVN so they could give more attention to the civilian populace. The S-5 section undertakes projects only when requested by the Vietnamese.

"We are not here to do their job or tell them what to do," Barnes added, "but to assist them and work with them."

The first step of the pacification program took the form of constructing security outposts around Loc Ninh. Then, to gain the confidence and trust of the people, medical and psychological operations were aimed at the hamlets.

Since June, the Regiment has conducted more than 375 medical and dental action programs, treating more than 22,000 people. The Regiment's 37th Medical Company personnel have provided sanitation and health advice particularly to the Montagnard tribesmen of the area, who have not had the advantages of improved living conditions provided to those who worked the French plantations.

Psyops missions, which were almost nonexistent when the Blackhorse moved in, are now daily affairs. These have proved particularly successful in weakening enemy strength in the area by revealing arms caches and enemy mine positions.

Intelligence gathered through the many programs is turned over to ARVN authorities to aid them in their efforts to weaken the VC infrastructure.

Maj. Barnes says he has seen all village and hamlet officials become elected rather than appointed, schools being built and Regional and Popular Force units used to a much greater degree.

All programs have been conducted with an eye toward eventually turning them over to the ARVN. Vietnamese soldiers have participated in the psyops and civil actions program, and the 15th Armored Cavalry Regiment (ARVN) has conducted joint mine sweeping operations with 11th Cav forces.

(Continued on Page 7)



**PUSHING FORWARD** — A Troop ACAVs push their way through scrub jungle near Tay Ninh. It's the constant pushing forward that makes life on a Blackhorse ACAV a rugged one.

(Photo by Giannini)

## End Rome Plow

The 11th Cav's 2nd Squadron and the 984th Engineering Company (Land Clearing) have finished slashing their security cordon through the jungle around the Bo Duc-Bu Dop complex, and traffic is flowing smoothly north from Loc Ninh along Highway 14A.

The security cordon is expected to disrupt enemy infiltration along the Serpes jungle highway which extends from the Cambodian border south toward Saigon. "We're now in a much better position to observe and therefore halt enemy infiltration across the zone," said Lieutenant Colonel Grail Brookshire, 2nd Squadron commander.

Lt. Col. Brookshire said that he had expected much more

enemy contact during the road-opening operation and was also surprised by the relative low level of maintenance problems encountered while pushing through the thick jungle.

Captain Richard A. Burlingame, commander of the 984th Engineers, said it was the most difficult assignment his Rome Plows ever had. "We have never faced such dense vegetation before and the jungle created some new problems for us. Many of my Rome Plows tumbled into bomb craters which were concealed by the undergrowth. And we had a rough time guiding the men through the first trace because many times we couldn't spot the lead plow under the double canopy jungle."

## Cav Arrives in RVN

On Sept 8, 1966, a Marine LST hit the beach at Vung Tau and disgorged the first of 4,000 Blackhorse troopers to arrive in Vietnam.

The LST shuttled ashore from the USNS Uphire, which had carried the troopers from Oakland. The trip over took three weeks.

"After all that time at sea, I was more than ready to leave the ship," recalls Specialist Four David Deblander, of Media, Pennsylvania, now on his second tour with the regiment. "But we had to sit in port twenty-four hours because the Vietnamese

were holding elections when we arrived."

During the week two other troop ships arrived at Vung Tau, carrying the rest of the regiment. At the same time, close to a dozen cargo ships bringing armored vehicles and supplies were in route from ports in Maryland, Texas, Alabama, Virginia, and California.

The cargo ships docked at Saigon Port, where Blackhorse men met Blackhorse materiel. "It was midnight when we picked up our track, Deblander remembers. 'People knew that

(Continued on Page 7)



# 1st Sqd. Artillery Knocks NVA Fort

A long-forgotten French fort, recently resurrected by the NVA, was blasted by 1st Squadron artillery December 22. The heavy barrage silenced enemy activity at the fort, located near the Cambodian border.

When the 1st Squadron moved into its new area of operations near Loc Ninh in early December, they began monitoring unidentified radio signals. Radar determined apparent enemy activity in the area.

Constant electronic surveillance of the area indicated a definite pattern centered at a small point a few hundred meters from the Cambodian Border, 10 miles west of Loc Ninh.

It was suspected that the 165th NVA Regiment had taken over the old French fort there as its headquarters.

The area's heavily-vegetated, soggy terrain made armored trafficability difficult, and its proximity to the Cambodian Border ruled out the possibility of air strikes. So, artillery was called on to destroy the enemy position.

In discussing the strategy used against the old fort, Captain Wade Genthner, 1st Squadron Artillery Officer, explained, "We wanted to give the enemy a chance to gather his forces and equipment in one location. We

did nothing for five days, not even harassment and interdiction fire."

On the sixth day Captain Genthner moved two 155 Howitzers west of FSB Marge to a hill site almost 10 miles from the target. Trajectories for a triangle 40 by 40 by 60 meters were plotted, the approximate size of the fort.

According to Captain Genthner, 25 percent of the rounds landed inside the fort and another 18 percent hit the bunkered walls. White Phosphorous shells produced two secondary explosions.

The mission was apparently successful: Electronic surveillance by squadron intelligence later revealed no trace of enemy activity.



**HEAVY CONTACT**—An I Troop ACAV engages the enemy in heavy fighting west of An Loc.

Cobra gunships, artillery and tactical air strikes aided the ground elements during the encounter. (Photo by Giannini)

## Civil Affairs...

(Continued From Page 6)

And where a few years ago U.S. forces were undertaking large village projects, the villagers are doing it themselves with funds from the Vietnamese Government's Village Self Development Program.

## Cav Landina...

(Continued From Page 6)

something big and mean had arrived with all those machines churning and roaring through the darkness."

Shortly afterward precombat training began. Operational maintenance was performed and weapons test fired and zeroed.

Then, on October 7, a month after arriving, Blackhorse troopers set out on their first combat operation.



**BEFORE THE CEREMONY**—A herd of cattle opened the 919th Engineers' "Shortimers" bridge before the official ceremony. The bridge, which

will serve as a shortcut for rubber workers, will also provide access to the area for even the heaviest Blackhorse armored vehicle.

(Photo by Cody)

## Cattle Slow Engineers

A herd of cattle decreed business before ceremony Jan. 9. The 2nd Platoon, 919th Engineers had scheduled the formal opening of the bridge they had built west of Loc Ninh but the herd bulled its way across the wooden span before Regimental Commander Colonel Donn A. Starry had arrived to oversee the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The span was appropriately dubbed the "Shortimers" bridge since it is the last major construction project for many of the Red Devils before that long awaited trip on a "Freedom Bird."

The bridge, which spans a stream running through a rubber plantation, replaces a rickety wood and metal structure which had annually been threatened by the monsoon swollen current. It not only provides a safe, permanent shortcut for the rubber workers but also guarantees access to the area for the heaviest Blackhorse vehicle.

Section leader of the 20-man crew which constructed the bridge, Staff Sergeant Delbert A. Cotton of Chicago, Ill., pointed with pride to the finishing touch, one seldom found on a strictly functional structure—a solid Teak handrail.



**FIRING PROCEDURE**—An 11th Cav trooper instructs a member of the 19th Popular Forces in

the proper firing procedures of the M-16 at a firing range set up near Loc Thanh by 1st Squadron. (Photo by Mang)

## Train VN Forces

# Cav Rifle Range

First Squadron's Headquarters Troop conducted a rifle training program outside the village of Loc Thanh in northern Binh Long Province early last month to teach the 19th Popular Forces Group the proper maintenance and firing procedures of the M-16 rifle.

The Popular Forces' M-1s and carbines were replaced with M-16s nearly three months ago, but lack of instructors and ammunition made proper familiarization impossible.

"This is an excellent program," said Major Nguyen Van Thinh, Loc Ninh District Chief. "It gives the men the training they must have if we expect them to operate effectively with the M-16."

This was the first such training exercise by 1st Squadron, but Captain John K. Mallory, Squadron S-5 officer, envisioned it as the beginning of a continuing program.

"Eventually we hope to run the firing range exercises in conjunction with our daily

ICAPs," he explained. "By doing this we'll be able to train the Popular Forces in each village we visit and thus have a greater effect on the fighting ability of the Popular Forces."

## OFFICERS...

(Continued From Page 3)

Armor has its place in Vietnam just as it has had in other wars Lt. Col. Griffin explains. "Armor is more than piece of equipment. It's a concept and a way of doing things, and there's a place for it even in the deepest jungles of Vietnam. You seldom see a job that can be done the best possible way by one type of force."

The Blackhorse, the only independent armor unit in Vietnam, is a "damned fine outfit and there's no doubt about it," Lt. Col. Griffin points out. "If you look back you'll see that when someone got his tail in a crack, he called on the Blackhorse and its fire power to pull him out."



MEDEVAC CHOPPER TOUCHES DOWN TO EVACUATE WOUNDED FOLLOWING HEAVY FIGHTING NEAR TAY NINH

## Medevac Crew Ready For Action

By John Cody

The firefight is over and two men lie wounded. For the men on the ground the action is over — at least for a while.

But for the Medevac crew it has just begun. A chopper team of the First Air Cav, which provides support for the Blackhorse Regiment, will be out to pick up the wounded in as little as ten minutes.

A dustoff mission for the 11th Cav is usually much different from one for an infantry unit. "We seldom pull a hoist mission for the Blackhorse," said Warrant Officer Christopher N. Wickland of Pasadena, Calif. "Usually they're working along a road or out of an NDP with a big landing zone. And even if they're in the boonies, they manage to run a tank around in cir-

cles and make an LZ for us."

But there's another side to the story. "When we pick up during an 11th Cav contact," says Warrant Officer Jon S. Richards of Kalamazoo, Mich., "We know Charlie has been firing .51 cal and RPGs which can really do a job on our chopper. When we're picking up grunts we don't have to worry about much except AK-47 fire."

The medics are not only trained for any emergency but also are tremendously proud of their work. "It's a rewarding job," said Specialist Four DeWayne Sparkman of Oakland, Calif. "When you go out and pick up some guy who looks like he's had it, and then have him come up to you three or four months later to say 'thanks' — that makes everything worthwhile."

## Fighting Increases in AO...

(Continued From Page 1) tenant Arthur E. Smith brought their Cobra gunship into the clearing to perform a daring rescue of the downed pilot.

Meantime, F and C Troops maneuvered on line to the south of the clearing, while tanks from D Company moved into blocking positions to the north. The eastern and western portions of the enemy location were sealed by combined 11th ACR and ARVN artillery and Air Force tactical air strikes.

The ensuing firefight exacted a heavy enemy toll. "They're still dying from that battle — and they'll be dying six months from now," one Blackhorse officer was later overheard to say.

Next day, 1st Squadron's B and C Troops, on a reconnaissance mission north of Loc Ninh, broke up an enemy "L" shaped ambush and killed 32 NVA soldiers. The enemy unit was identified as part of the 141st NVA Regiment.

Earlier in the month, A Troop turned back a sapper attack on FSB Caroline in an area north of Tay Ninh, killing 10 enemy sol-

diers. The action occurred while A Troop was providing security for a Rome Plow operation similar to one that opened QL 14A last December.

In scattered actions Blackhorse units killed an additional 35 NVA soldiers during January.

## Unit Awards

(Continued From Page 1) Squadron, the 2nd Platoon of the Regiment's 919th Engineer Company, a platoon of Air Cavalry Troop gunships, and a tactical air control party of the 19th Tactical Air Support Squadron.

The units were cited for "extraordinary heroism" in actions against hostile forces from Mar. 12 to Apr. 1, 1968. During this period the 3rd Squadron conducted continuous offensive operations near Duc Hoa in Hau Nghia Province.

The cited units fought a total of seven major battles during the 20-day period, killing 473 enemy soldiers and causing an almost total withdrawal of enemy forces from the province.



MOVE OUT—Air Cav Troop ARPs move out of an LZ at first light to check an area west of An Loc

for possible enemy movement. The operation coincided with a similar effort by ARVN forces. (Photo by Smith)

## Why Volunteer for Point?

He walks ahead of the squad through jungle that can make 10 meters seem like miles. He breaks the trail while shouldering the responsibility for the lives of the others and knowing that an ambush may be two steps or two miles ahead. Why does he want to be the pointman?

"I really can't explain it. Maybe it's because you trust yourself a little more than you do anyone else," said Private First Class Stephen E. Murry of West Jefferson, Ohio, newest of the Aero Rifle Platoon's pointmen. "Of course you know that if something happens you're responsible."

A man advances to the pointman position from the back-up slot. The back-up man usually

walks five meters behind the pointman and provides welcome aid in tough situations in addition to learning the lead position's responsibilities. As the pointman nears the end of his tour he trades places with the back-up man and gives him some added tips.

The pointman is like everyone else in that he likes to sit around and ease the pressure by talking and laughing about the last mission. "But I'll tell you one thing," said Specialist Four Philip W. Massengill, ARP pointman who is now concentrating on getting short. "There have been some times out there when I've been scared to death and would have gladly traded places with just about anyone."

Extremely poor visibility or the complete lack of it makes night movement one of the most demanding tasks for the pointman.

"I can remember one night I was walking point and we knew we were only about 100 meters from a basecamp," said Specialist Four Jack Miller of Jasper, Ala. "I had that 'all by myself' feeling and even the ant hills looked like bunkers. It's 10 times worse at night."

None of the ARP pointmen seem quite sure why they walk point — and like it at that. They all agree, however, that the job "sort of grows on you."

Massengill was the only one who voiced a strong complaint. "When you're out there breaking the trail it's just too darn hot to chew tobacco."