



Vol. 3, No. 40

1st Air Cavalry Division

2770  
October 1, 1969

## Birthday Card . . .



(U.S. Army Photo by SP5 Terry Moon)  
Red Cross girl Miss Mary Clare McEneny presents Division Commander Major General E.B. Roberts with a 48th Cav Birthday Card from the Red Cross staff serving the division.

## LZ Shows Highlight Anniversary Events

The 48th anniversary was a welcome one day change of pace for the men of the 1st Air Cavalry Division.

Division Commander Major General E.B. Roberts wanted this anniversary to be for the troops. Special efforts were made to improve menus in the field and reduce the work schedule to only the necessary tasks.

The war, however, didn't stop for the festivities. One of the touring groups survived a mortar attack at LZ Eagle I near Quan Loi.

"Guess they caught our last act," quipped Sergeant Bill McGroarty, a Providence, Rhode Island, disc jockey now serving with the Cav.

McGroarty MC'd a troop of 1st Cav performers featuring Sergeant Bill Ellis, a former infantryman who recently recorded a record about the Cav. Folk singer Captain James Ryan, information officer of the 3rd Brigade, and violinist Specialist Four Phil Blackmarr, photographer turned entertainer, rounded out the program.

The most elaborate presentation was the Vietnamese Touring Show which included two rock groups, magicians, and female singers and dancers. Several acts in the show have performed world-wide.

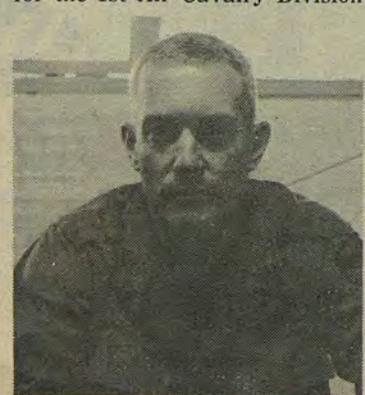
The division band played at

three fire bases and the Third Brigade base camp at Quan Loi. The Cav's Red Cross girls accompanied both the band and the 1st Cav performers on their tour.

## LTC Troubleshooter Stays on the Move

PHUOC VINH—Got a position open for a quick moving lieutenant colonel?

Then you might want to check with Lieutenant Colonel Edward B. Covington III. He's been G-1 for the 1st Air Cavalry Division



LTC Covington

for a month and he's probably getting restless.

LTC Covington has become a roving troubleshooter for the division, switching duty assignments five times since arriving in country in November, 1968.

It all started when he stepped off the plane.

His orders had assigned him as commander of the 227th Air Assault Helicopter Battalion, but the division was lacking an Assistant Aviation Officer.

After a month in the job, he moved to his original assignment with the 227th and stayed for six months.

The G-1 spot opened up again in June and LTC Covington was again tapped for the assignment. With barely enough time to warm his desk chair, he found himself moving again — this time to take over command of the 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry.

## Company Commander Earns Silver Stars

PHUOC VINH—The daring rescue of a downed helicopter and initiating the counterattack against an attacking ground force earned two silver stars for Captain William Lacey Jr.

The two actions came within 12 days of each other.

While commanding Company D, 2nd Battalion of the 7th Cavalry, Captain Lacey was ambushed leading his men toward a downed chopper. After rescuing the crew from the burning aircraft, he quickly organized his men into a hasty defensive perimeter and took the initiative away from the enemy.

The second action came when LZ Jamie came under ground attack. With two bunkers in the possession of the enemy attackers and more crossing the perimeter, he organized a counterattack and personally led five volunteers.

Maneuvering against the enemy held bunkers, Captain Lacey and his men overpowered the enemy on the bunker line and drove them from the fire base.

"His actions were a major factor in the success of defending the landing zone," said Colonel Robert M. Shoemaker, division Chief of Staff at the time of the action.

The silver stars were presented by Brigadier General Frank Meszar, former Deputy Division Commander.

Captain Lacey, a former company commander and battalion operations officer, is presently serving as G-3 briefing officer.

Now on his second Vietnam tour, his decorations include three bronze stars for valor, the air medal, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry, the Vietnamese Medal of Honor, and two Purple Hearts.

# ...For God And Country

By Chaplain (MAJ) Irving C. Njus

1st Brigade Chaplain

Consciously or unconsciously each of us assigns priorities to the things we would like to do; we feel we should do; and we must do.

Usually, the priorities are determined by the tasks and obligations, which because of our position or job, we feel are most necessary to our immediate situation.

God speaks of priorities also, and in so doing seeks to direct us in our approach to the tasks and responsibilities we are continually confronted with. In the First Commandment we are made aware of God before all things.

He is the source and sustainer of our lives, both physical and spiritual. God requires and teaches that we must have sincere confidence in Him in all things. This awareness is necessary lest our labors become an end in themselves rather than a means whereby we continue to give expression to our faith.

In the Gospel according to St. Matthew (6:25-34) Christ challenges our priorities in that they often do not begin with God but rather have their beginning and end in anxiety and dissatisfaction.

God, if allowed to be the first priority in life, will give meaning to other priorities. "... Give first place to His kingdom and to what he requires and He will provide you with all these other things." (Matthew 6:33, TEV)

## Extension Offers 150 Days 'Early-Out'

Members of the FIRST TEAM, particularly inductees and first-term enlistees, should be aware of the advantages of extending their tour of duty in the Republic of Vietnam.

In accordance with DA Message 870626, dated July 1968, an individual may extend his for-

### FIRST TEAM Magazine Keeps Wife Informed

If the other wives of the men in the 1st Air Cavalry Division are like me, they prefer reading FIRST TEAM than Vogue magazine.

My husband is a Cobra pilot with Battery B, 2nd Squadron, 20th Artillery. He sends me your magazine quarterly and even those published before he arrived in Vietnam.

Through reading FIRST TEAM, I have a much better idea of what our men are trying to accomplish in Vietnam. I also see how well integrated each aspect of a fighting team is and must be.

Thank you for bringing my husband a little closer to me through your very excellent magazine.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Greg Snigrove  
Liberty, Texas

### Awards

**SILVER STAR**  
BURCH, SP4 Kenneth E.  
Co H (Ranger), 75th Inf  
SOLOMON, SP4 Robert G.  
Co C, 1st Bn, 8th Cav  
RUTHVEN, CPT ARLIN C.  
Co A, 1st Bn, 12th Cav  
BUXTON, PFC Delos R.  
Co A, 1st Bn, 12th Cav  
BASS, PFC Jackie D.  
Co C, 2nd Bn, 8th Cav  
**DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS**  
CHURAN, 1LT Ronald B.  
Trp B, 1st Sqdn, 9th Cav  
MARTIN, SGT Richard V.  
Trp A, 1st Sqdn, 9th Cav  
DEFFULL, SP4 Edward M.  
Trp C, 1st Sqdn, 9th Cav  
ANDERSON, WO1 John E.  
Trp C, 1st Sqdn, 9th Cav

## Good Daily Health Care Prevents Foot Problems

Care of the feet in the hot, humid tropical Vietnamese climate is one of the soldier's most important health concerns. A few days of neglect and wet, dirty feet can turn into a painful infection and loss of duty time, so vital to any combat unit's strength.

The best way to avoid difficulties with immersion foot is to change the wet boots for dry ones if this is possible. Socks are not really necessary because

without them, the boot dries faster. The really important thing is to take time to dry the feet. If nothing else, wipe them off with a towel and massage them, but preferable they should be dried out in the sun. Foot powder is excellent for daily use.

The second problem common to this part of the world is fungus infection. Ordinary "athlete's foot" which appears between the toes is the most familiar example of a fungus infection. The best defense against

this ailment is a change of socks daily and the use of foot powder.

Above all, the problem of athlete's foot should not be ignored because it can quickly develop into something much worse over here should a bacterial infection, the third major problem, result as a side effect.

The important thing is to take care of the feet, keep them dry, use foot powder and seek early treatment at the unit aid station or dispensary before the problem becomes disabling.

### Instant Chowline . . .



(U.S. Army Photo by Sp4 Tom Benic)

Skytroopers and members of the 9th ARVN Regiment gather around an improvised chowline at Nui Ba Ra. The Americans and Vietnamese have joined forces to guard a vital communications outpost at the top of Nui Ba Ra mountain. Skytroopers are part of the 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry.

### Carrying the Load . . .



(U.S. Army Photo by SP4 Tom Benic)  
Troopers from the 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry take boxes of ammunition out to their bunkers atop Nui Ba Ra after the long bird brought in the day's supply.

## Life Members Enjoy Association Benefits

One of the biggest bargains in Vietnam is offered right here in the 1st Cav Division. It's a lifetime membership to good fellowship in the 1st Air Cav Association.

For only \$11, Skytroopers can join a distinguished roster of present and former cavalrymen now enjoying the benefits of Cav Association membership.

Being a "lifetime member" offers Skytroopers a perfect way in keeping up with the Cav's ac-

tivities and keeping in touch with buddies after your tour with the Cav is over. Included in the \$11 life membership are quarterly copies of the Saber News sent to your home, a copy of the division history, lapel pin and lifetime membership card.

So, keep up with the Cav, join the Association today by contacting your Skytrooper Chapter representative or stop by the Division Information Office in Phuoc Vinh.

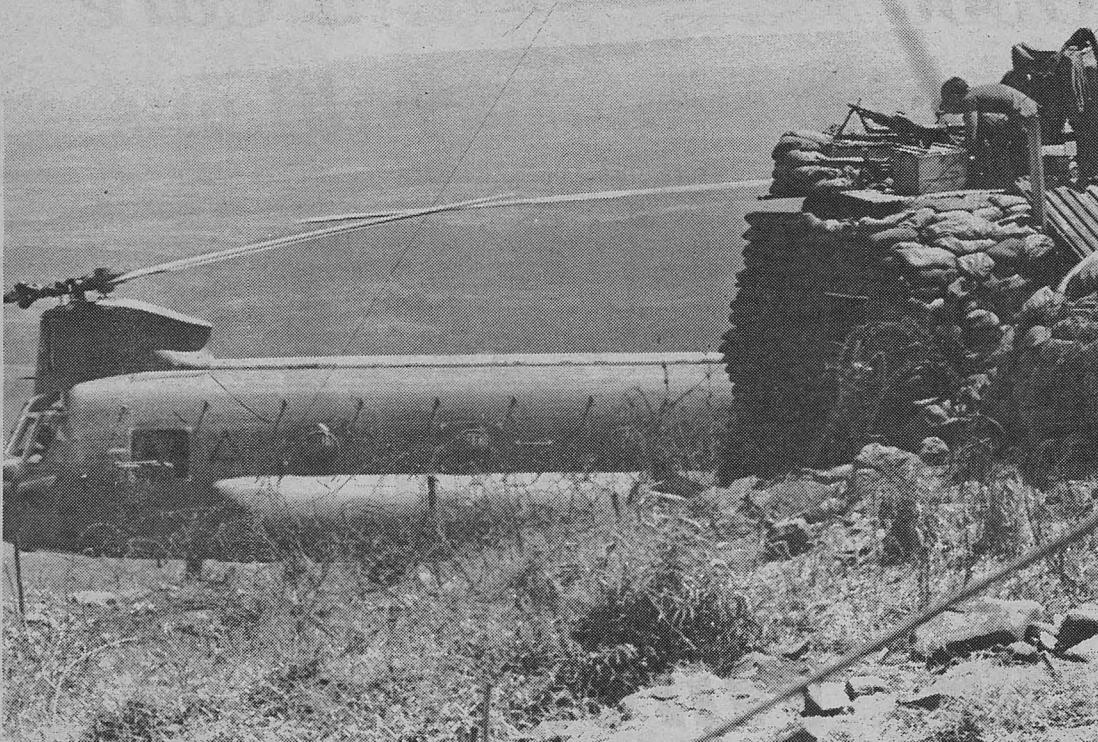


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## Perched Bird . . .



(U.S. Army Photo by SP4 Tom Benic)  
On top of Nui Ba Ra, a Chinook lands on a narrow ledge pad for resupply of the strategic outpost which overlooks Nui Ba Ra 2,000 feet below. All supply to the rugged firebase is done by helicopter.

## Four Day Battle Rages

TAY NINH — It was a small but fatal mistake when one NVA tried to get a good look at a night defensive position of Company C, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry. He was spotted, along with his unit, and four days of hard fighting followed, resulting in 65 enemy deaths.

The first day's contact began soon after the company, operating in War Zone C about 18 miles northeast of Tay Ninh, reached its night defensive position and began setting up perimeter defenses.

"Three of us went out to set up the claymore mines when I saw an NVA soldier pop his head out of thick bamboo to take a good look around," said Private First Class Andy Grant. "I reported seeing him and the company returned by fire. Then everything broke loose."

"They threw in 'Chicom' grenades, B-40 rockets and used AK47 and SKS rifles along with at least one machine gun," added Specialist Four Donavon Holdread. "The enemy covered the whole western side of our perimeter."

The firefight continued until well after dark. Airborne lighting guided bright red streams of lead from Huey Cobra minigun support overhead.

After a lull in the early morning hours, the enemy again attacked the Skytrooper's position with hand grenades. While Company C remained behind cover, artillery pounded the enemy positions and two light observation helicopters (LOH) dived in with mini-gun fire.

The fight continued after scout birds assessed enemy damage, calling in more artillery on the area. The artillery barrage was adjusted onto the target by Staff Sergeant David W. Osborne, one of the closest men to the enemy positions.

As he and the third platoon started out of the perimeter to check out the area, they were pinned down by AK-47 small arms fire. Howitzers shelled the area again and the enemy was silenced.

Ammunition was flown into the company area. Machetes made quick work of downing nearby trees, providing overhead cover for foxholes.

The cover was put to good use

after dark when automatic weapons fire was traded back and forth between friendly and enemy positions.

The third day in the area, Charlie Company moved 700 meters to the southeast and dug in again for a fight.

On the morning of the fourth day, the company's resupply helicopter drew sniper fire and prevented the company from moving to another position for the night. Again overhead cover was constructed and more air strikes were called in.

"Just about dark," said Sergeant Rupert Holleman, "we were told to stay by our holes. Moments later we heard mortar tubes. They walked rounds

right around the perimeter. Then they fired automatic weapons for about an hour from all sides."

"They popped most of our trip flares and cut some of our claymore mine wires. We kept the return fire going, threw plenty of grenades and marked our position for two Huey Cobras and a flareship. The next morning, all that was left of the enemy were bodies and blood trails."

Two days later, a weary Charlie Company was happy to see the barbed wire and bunkers of LZ Grant. They had inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy and had captured a light machine gun, two AK-47 automatic rifles and two SKS assault rifles.

## Grand Opening . . .



(U.S. Army Photo by 1LT Darrell Matz)  
Red Cross girl Ann Copeland (left) checks the schedule of events with Major General E.B. Roberts, division commander, for the opening of the new Red Cross Recreation Center at Bien Hoa. Helping in the grand opening are "Donut Dollys" Karen Long and Judy Nichols. The center is equipped with game rooms and ping-pong and billiard tables. It is open from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. and is located in front of the 15th Medical Battalion in the Consolidated Supply area.

Mountain Top Post  
Links Communication

LZ BUTTONS — The men who run the 1st Air Cavalry Division's 2nd Brigade radio relay station have a great perspective on the war.

The station is atop 2,200 foot Nui Ba Ra mountain which rises majestically above Song Be and nearby LZ Buttons, the base camp of the Blackhorse Brigade.

These men from the Brigade Communication Platoon spend their days and nights on top of the mountain. Working for two days before a replacement arrives, the men live and work inside a conex container which, through the door, has a spectacular view of the entire brigade area of operation.

According to Sergeant Mark W. Taylor, "With the battalions of the brigade right in the area, we are needed for relay only to contact helicopters and to call in MEDEVAC's."

Meanwhile, the bank of radios inside the cone keep up a constant chatter — even if there is no business for the relay, they must monitor the radios in case there is traffic. To do this, the men on the mountain work eight hour shifts, although the shifts actually amount to 16 hours when there is heavy radio traffic.

The scenery from the top of the mountain is spectacular. The area around the brigade relay is less picturesque. A forest of radio antennas clutters the sky.

During the hours of darkness, cots are set up in the cone, while one man takes care of the radios. Television reception, despite the interference from the many pieces of radio equipment is good, and although the relay team has nothing but C-rations for food, life on the top of the mountain is not bad.

Lost Major Scouts  
Trail Back to Camp

By PFC Dennis F. Herrick

QUAN LOI — A point walking Major, who wandered through the jungle around Quan Loi for three weeks, finally found his way back to his unit's basecamp and was greeted with a bowl of chow and a pat on the head from a sergeant.

Major is a scout dog.

"I had really given up hope that Major would get back on his own after all those weeks," said Sergeant Richard Taylor, the dog's handler.

SGT Taylor and Major have been working together since November when Taylor came in-country. They became separated during a combat patrol about three miles north of Quan Loi, where the 34th Infantry Platoon (Scout Dog) is located with the 1st Air Cavalry Division.

A few days later, a 1st Cav helicopter pilot reported spotting a dog, apparently Major, about three miles south of Quan Loi.

Three weeks later, Major was found sitting in a jeep in the middle of Quan Loi — figuring it was time to ride for awhile.

The dog's weight had dropped from 75 to 50 pounds during the three week trek.

Weeds Fall  
To Airmobile  
Spray Killer

LZ BUTTONS — When weeds sprout around a firebase of the 1st Air Cavalry Division, the division chemical platoon has a solution. Diesel fuel spread by a "mighty mite" or by truck will, in a few days, kill the offending undergrowth and clear fields of observation around a perimeter.

A recent request for weed removal from the headquarters of the 1st Battalion, 7th ARVN Regiment, located near Song Be, did not have such a simple solution.

Elephant grass and bamboo had grown to a height of eight feet around parts of the ARVN perimeter. An uncharted minefield lay beneath the weeds — thus the usual method of removal was impossible.

From the 1st Bn, 7th ARVN Reg the request went to Colonel Bryon D. Greene Jr, commanding officer of the Cav's Blackhorse Brigade and was passed on to the 2nd Brigade Chemical Contact Team. Constructing a special spray rig for a Company A, 227th Aviation Battalion helicopter, the team operated the helicopter at weed level dropping the Diesel fuel.

The airmobile spray system was so successful that the same method was later used to clear the area around the Brigade Headquarters at LZ Buttons.



Former NVA sapper Nguyen Von Luong sneaks up to assault perimeter defenses. The NVA turned Kit Carson Scout is a veteran of four years as a sapper.

## Sappers in the Wire!

QUAN LOI — Caked with red clay and clad only in shorts, the sapper crawled forward on his fingertips and toes through three rows of concertina and razor wire. There was no sound from the American soldiers, not a shot fired.

Beyond the wire he quickly and silently disconnected two claymore mines and tied off two trip flares. He picked up his AK-47 and dynamite charges and

trotted upright into Quan Loi. The sapper was in.

It was the second time that Sergeant Nguyen Van Phenh had penetrated the defenses of Quan Loi. The first was on August 12. That night he was the lone survivor of four sappers who tried the sharp and thick wire. His three comrades, discovered and exposed, were killed. SGT Phenh didn't like the percentages. He surrendered at

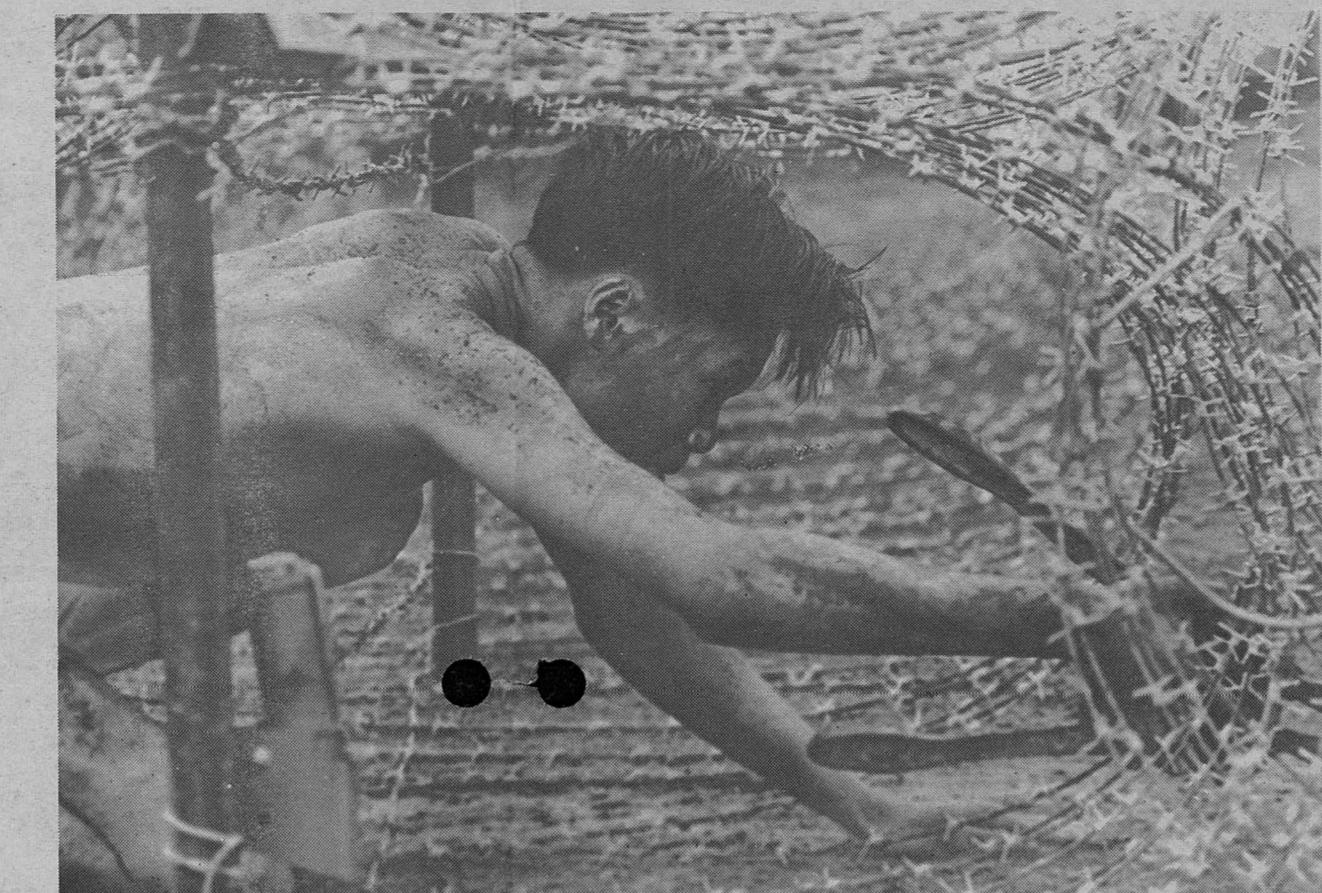
day break. They did see that the sappers are skilled and patient. Their allies are darkness, confusion and unwary defenders.

And they learned that the sapper can be stopped.

"An alert trooper with all his sophisticated equipment can spot him easily as he works through the wire," said Captain William Baicum, an intelligence officer with the Cav's 3rd Brigade.



In the wire, former NVA platoon leader Nguyen Von Luong shows how he used hooks to make a tunnel through a maze of concertina wire in several sapper attacks during the past four years.



Ex-Viet Cong platoon leader Do Von Ba cuts a path through a row of concertina wire after disarming trip flare. Do Von Ba worked with the VC as a sapper for five years before rallying to the South Vietnamese government.

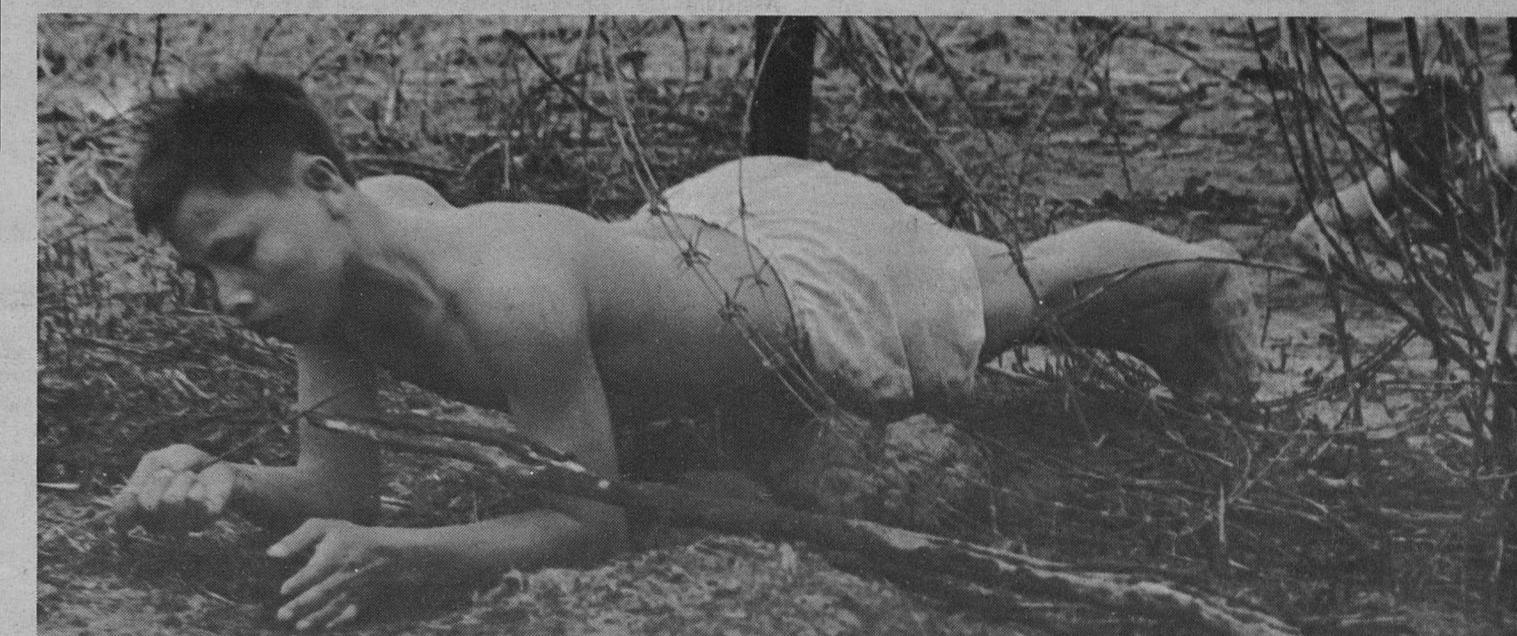
Photos By  
SP5 P. Sgroi and SP4 Bill Ahrbeck



Through the wire without a scratch, the sapper races toward his target with his AK-47 rifle.



Do Von Ba silently disarms a claymore mine with his bolt cutters in the perimeter defense demonstration of sapper techniques conducted at Camp Gorvard.



Sergeant Nguyen Van Phenh crawls through tunnel in the barbed wire on elbows and toes while probing for trip wires guarding the inner section of defensive barbed wire.



Ex-sapper Do Von Ba reaches through tangle of wire to disarm a trip flare.

# Skytroopers Find Munitions Caches

By PFC William K. Block Jr.

TAY NINH — In order for the enemy to initiate any action he must be supplied with the essentials of food supply and ammunition. In a one-week period, elements of the 1st Cavalry Division's first Brigade were finding NVA caches as soon as Charlie could put them in the area.

The most lucrative site was

## Water Team Serves LZs

LAI KHE — There's more to potable water than finding a clean stream — often an impossibility in Vietnam.

"Usually it takes everything we have in the way of chemical and filtering processes to make stream water potable," said Specialist Four Melvin Thomas, a member of a three-man water purification team supporting 1st Air Cavalry Division fire bases in the Song Be area.

The team set up shop on a tributary of the Song Be river on a temporary basis. They've handled the mounting demand for water when permanent equipment installation was delayed.

"We're been hitting 7,000 gallons a day since the troops moved into the area," said SP4 Hunt. "And, we're still not being pushed that hard. We haven't kept anyone waiting for water."

The 8th Engineers have three teams in the 1st Cav's area of operation supporting isolated fire bases and occasionally large base camps when regular equipment is being repaired.

"We're airmobile," said Specialist Four Perry Watkins, the third member of the team. "When someone needs water in a hurry, we just put the two 500 gallon tanks, the hoses, pumps, filter and chemicals in the back of a three-quarter ton truck and sling the whole works out on a Chinook helicopter."

"The process itself is fast and rather simple," said Hunt. "Our water is just as pure as that of the elaborate operations and we think it tastes a lot better than most."

uncovered by Company C, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry, commanded by First Lieutenant Arthur P. Zeller.

On a morning recon mission about six miles north of Landing Zone Grant, Private First Class Randy Nelson spotted a small munitions cache of B-40 rockets and 82mm mortar rounds. Then two bicycle repair shop, with assorted tools, were uncovered.

"We were following a trail later that day," recalled Private First Class Robert R. Cheesmond, "when I walked right up on what looked like a pile of boxes on logs. They were right next to the trail and had good overhead cover. We took the cloth wrappers off the trail were two more log pallets full of rice. They looked like they had been there for about a month."

There were 31 250-pound bags of rice totaling almost four tons.

The rice find culminated two days of digging which had also yielded three munitions caches. Included were 276 B-40 rocket rounds, 315 mortar rounds, 17-300 AK-47 rounds, 1,020 51 caliber machine gun rounds, 60 75mm recoilless rifle rounds and 565 Chicom hand grenades.

During the same period, elements of the 2nd Bn, 8th Cav, uncovered 3½ tons of rice. The 2nd Bn, 7th Cav, near Landing Zone Jamie, reported finding 24 rockets, all 107mm and larger.

"Our troops were enthusiastic about finding these caches," said Captain David Milton, 1st Brigade intelligence officer (S-2). "They know that everything they find is one less round that can be fired at them later. For the enemy to push into central and southern War Zone C, Charlie must be able to pick up these supplies."

"There are a number of reasons why we are doing such a good job of rounding up this gear before the enemy can get to it," CPT Milton said. "We are systematically probing the same general areas where we're used to finding his stuff. It's easier now, I think, because the NVA can no longer provide security for their rear service elements, bunker sites and caches."

## Artillery Fire Class Given to Infantrymen

LZ ELLEN—How much does the average infantryman know about artillery? Plenty, if he's with Company C, 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry.

Captain John Knapp, company commander, believes in thorough and realistic training for his troops. So, he went to the local Redleg authority; Battery A, 1st Battalion, 21st Artillery, and arranged for a class and demonstration in calling in artillery support.

When Charlie Company is in the field, the men are usually too busy doing their own jobs to pick up pointers from their Forward Observer (FO), Sergeant Bob Paul, an artilleryman with 18 months experience in Vietnam. When the "blues" came back to LZ Ellen recently, there was an opportunity to make up for lost time and make each man an expert in being a FO.

First Lieutenant Charles Cruse, executive officer Battery A, gave the class to the Skytroopers, explaining the role of a direct support 105mm howitzer battery to them. He outlined the process of a fire mission from the initial call from the FO to the adjustment of rounds.

The troopers also heard of the many safety checks with the Artillery Liaison Officer, at the battery Fire Direction Center, and on the howitzers.

Using infantrymen as demonstrators, 1LT Cruse went through the necessary elements of the initial call for fire, defining each term by positioning his demonstrators.

By then, Company C had a good idea of the important differences between adjusting tube artillery and Cobra gunships.

Highlight of the firing demonstration were the air-bursts "walked" back in toward the perimeter from an initial range of 600 meters. When the smoke had cleared, Redleg had definitely made a favorable impression.

CPT Knapp said he felt that the demonstration and class would give his men greater confidence and aggressiveness in the field, knowing artillery hardware and how to control it.



Lovely model Margot Galbraith, 24, is determined to see the world. She worked in Zurich for seven months before arriving in London. She's pretty busy on her days off—and her hobbies are swimming, tennis, dancing and oil painting.

# Anniversary Day Shows Tour 1st Cav Firebases



A lucky Skytrooper gets serenaded with a popular Vietnamese song from a petite Vietnamese singer.

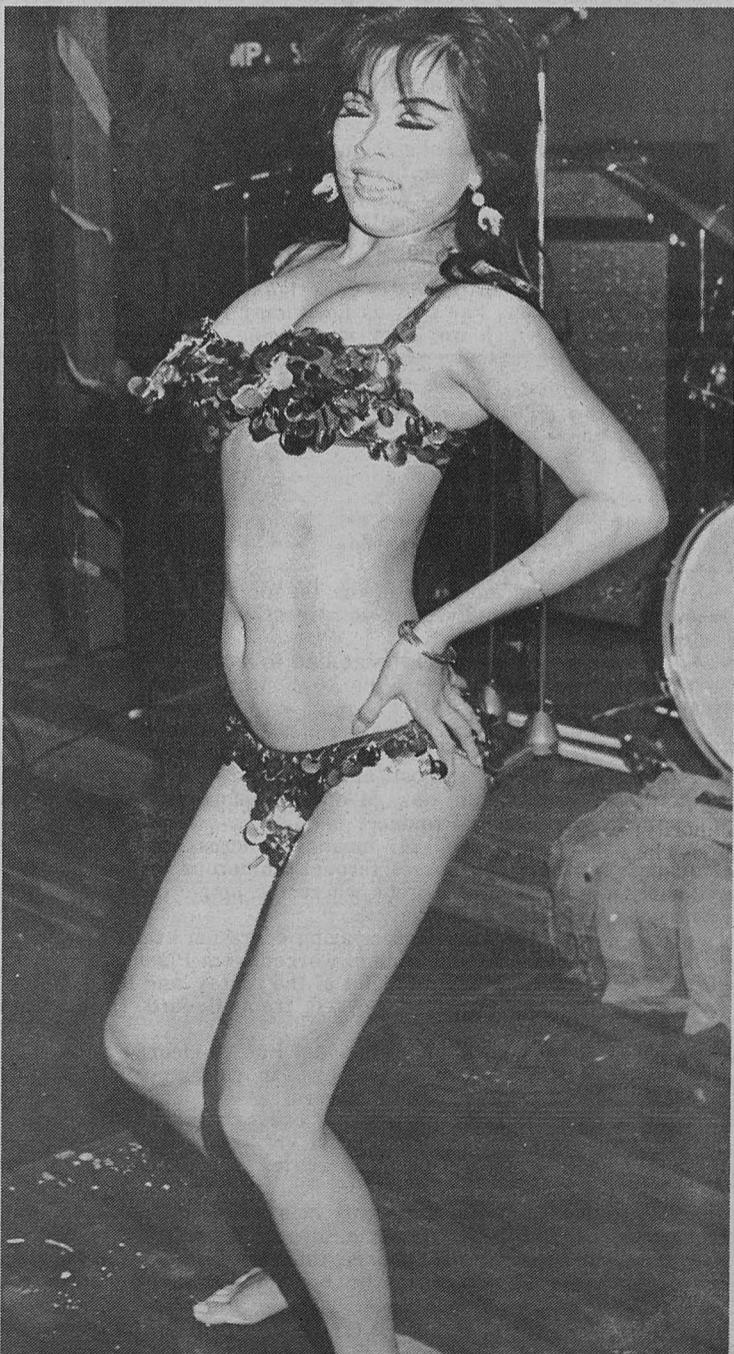


Troopers from the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry, gather around Cav balladeer for an impromptu concert at landing zone Eagle I. Ellis was part of an all-Cav troupe which entertained Skytroopers at four firebases.



The 48th Anniversary of the 1st Cav's organization turned into a swinging show at the Phuoc Vinh Service Club when troopers at the division headquarters were entertained by a Vietnamese rock group from Saigon.

## Cavalair Staff Photos



A "traditional" Vietnamese girl swings out Saigon style for Skytroopers who wanted to see some action during the Phuoc Vinh Service Club's 48th Cav Anniversary Show.

UPI Reporter . . .



(U.S. Army Photo by SP4 Joe Kamalick)  
United Press International reporter Dave Lamb (left) questions a Vietnamese while researching a story in Saigon. Lamb has said that the GIs in Vietnam are "the memorable and the magnificent."

## Call Him Papasan

## Kit Carson Tracks Enemy

QUAN LOI—His name is Ri, but they just call him papasan.

The only time his deadpan expression changes to a smile is when Troop B, 1st Squadron of the 9th Cavalry, makes contact.

Ri is a 42-year-old Kit Carson scout with Bravo Troop. The men who work with him have nothing but the highest praise for his contribution to the unit.

"We walked into a bunker complex early one morning and figured it was deserted," said First Lieutenant Don Mitchell. "But papasan said no. We caught about five NVA eating breakfast. If it hadn't been for him, well . . . we don't know what might have happened."

"By looking at the trails," said Private First Class Daryle Foster, "he tells us how many NVA there were and which way they were going. He

can usually tell us how long ago they were on the trail. He a smart man and has kept us out of a lot of trouble."

Ri speaks very little English but always manages to get his point across. His senses are so keen that he can tell what's in can of C-rations by shaking them.

Specialist Four Joseph "Doc" Gatoe recalls the night papasan took over.

"We had a perimeter set up about dusk when we started getting fire. Papasan went charging toward the fire with a grenade in one hand and his M-16 in the other. We didn't get any more fire after that."

Bravo Troop was in Quan Loi on green line duty, which gave Ri an opportunity to see his son, who is also a Kit Carson scout with another unit in the Squadron.

## Security Keeps Road Clear for Convoy

LAI KHE—The air cover of the 1st Air Cavalry Division made a 50-mile trip by a 519-vehicle convoy as uneventful as a Sunday afternoon stateside drive.

The convoy, escorted on the ground by two armored regiments, made its way from Phuoc Vinh to Song Be and back without incident.

Planned and operated under the direction of the Light Forward Command Post of the 5th ARVN Division, it carried supplies to the Vietnamese-American outpost at Song Be. The cargo included material to construct a new MACV compound in Song Be, the capital of Phuoc Long Province.

The route, along QL 14, meanders across flat countryside. Although the dirt road passes through numerous towns and small villages, it winds through areas where the jungle crowds road and offers excellent ambush locations.

At 6:30 a.m. the first road clearing operation began as the 15th ARVN Armored Cavalry Regiment worked from Phuoc Vinh toward Bunard (the approximate midpoint of the route), and the 1st ARVN Armored Cavalry Regiment worked from Bunard to within 10 kilometers of Song Be.

The Phuoc Vinh Province Regional Forces cleared the remaining area. The 519 vehicle convoy began moving at 10:10 a.m.

Although the enemy tried several small harassing attacks, there was no major slowdown of the convoy's movement. In fact, quick reaction on the part of the ARVN units resulted in a total of 16 NVA killed along the convoy route. The convoy reached its destination by 3 p.m.

Cav gunships were not the only helicopters in the air. A Huey containing Colonel Byron D. Greene, 2nd Brigade Commander, and Lieutenant Colonel Yem, Province Chief of Phuoc Vinh Province, hovered over the convoy in the brigade command and control helicopter.

Their presence on the scene precluded any delay in reacting to enemy attack.

The trucks were unloaded during the late afternoon and through the night, and they were ready for the return trip by morning.

The road, long considered insecure, belonged to the Army of the Republic of Vietnam and the 1st Air Cavalry Division.



## From Ben Het To Dong Ap Bia

By SP4 Joe Kamalick

In July 1968 the then 28-year-old David Lamb exchanged the hills, trolleys and Golden Gate of San Francisco for a life among rice paddies, helicopters and jungle. He came to Vietnam for United Press International to cover the war.

Few soldiers in the field would be willing to trade San Francisco for Vietnam. But as a writer and as an individual, Dave Lamb is glad he did. "This year in Vietnam has been the most challenging and rewarding year of my life, both professionally and personally," he said.

"It's taught me not to take anything for granted, and I've gained more perspective towards myself."

As a reporter looking for the "hard news" in Vietnam—the progress of the conflict—Lamb has been exposed to the business of war, the fighting. The "perspective" gained from that exposure has shown him something else: "I see now how insignificant I am as an individual, that my life is just as fragile as anybody's."

At 29 years of age, Lamb still has the look of the kid next door, softspoken and with a good sense of humor. Though not at all the John Wayne type, he gets even more than a soldier's share of combat.

The troops who lived the ordeal of Dong Ap Bia Mountain did not have to then go through the siege of Ben Het as well. But Dave Lamb and many other newsmen were in both battles.

Sitting in the air conditioned comfort of the UPI office in Saigon, Lamb recalled, under prompting, what it was like during the long hours at Dong Ap Bia, Ben Het and other hills and valleys whose names and numbers are now famous—or infamous.

"The impression I have from those fights and battles is engraved indelibly on my mind," he said. "And I think every one would have the same reaction, no matter what their age or experience."

What impressed him most was "the resiliency and dedication of the GIs who do a dirty job and do it well."

"Regardless of your feelings about the war, you have to separate the war itself from the men who fight it. And those men come under a category that ranges from the memorable to the magnificent."

Lamb last visited the 1st Cav in mid-June to do a story on the role of helicopters in the war. That role, one of the single great innovations in military tactics, is often a favorite subject for reporters.

## Flying Crane . . .



(U.S. Army Photo by SP5 Terry Moon)  
A Flying Crane drops a bulldozer to 8th Engineers for quick clearing operations at the site of air strip construction at Bu Dop.

## 'Cav' Scouts Fly Patrols

QUAN LOI — "We scramble for anyone and anything!"

That's the motto of the "The Real Cav," the 1st Squadron of the 9th Cavalry, with complete armability in three of its troops.

Squadron operations usually start with the Scout Platoon — pilots, observers and crew chiefs who fly the Light Observation Helicopters (LOH).

Once the enemy's position is detected, it's marked with smoke and the firepower of the accompanying Cobra is summoned. The Scouts return to the area after the Cobra run and check the damage done by the air strike.

"You really appreciate these guys when you're on the ground," said Sergeant Robert Jella, who spent his first tour in Vietnam with the Rangers and was wounded while on a reconnaissance mission. "They called MEDEVAC, but within two minutes a LOH landed and took me back."

SGT Jella was recently notified that he will receive a direct commission to second lieutenant.

"This means I will have to leave the Scouts," he said. "I'd like to stay. This is a very unique platoon. Everyone is here because he volunteered to fly."