



A cloud of smoke and the rumble of rotor blades can mean only one thing to these 1st Air Cavalrymen — they're heading home for the night. These Skytroopers from Alpha Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry are about to leave their position north of Tay Ninh following a recon mission. (USA photo by SP4 Bob Borchester)

## Artillerymen Busy Watching Weather

By SP4 Robert Hackney

FSB JAMIE — It doesn't take a weatherman to know which way the wind blows.

But to be an artilleryman, you have to know the direction and speed of the wind, the temperature and density of the air, and even the speed of rotation of the earth.

Weather reports are radioed to the two Fire Direction Centers (FDC) on Fire Support Base Jamie four times each day from the weather station at Tay Ninh City.

The FDC computers of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 30th Artillery and of Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 19th Artillery, stationed at Jamie, compute the weather corrections manually using mathematical tables. They also feed the weather reports into their Field Artillery Digital

Automatic Computers (FADAC), which make automatic corrections for atmospheric conditions.

"The biggest variation is wind speed and direction. We may fire a round, expecting it to land at some specific location, only to find that it has gone 110 meters further because of a tail wind," said Specialist Five Mike Binder, chief computer for Battery A.

Other factors influencing the flight of the round include drift (the natural tendency of the round to spin to the right and curve slightly as it leaves the tube), rain, and powder temperature.

Most of the conditions which affect the round, however, can be corrected to give maximum accuracy. A good FDC can put a round right on target with only one or two adjustments by the forward observer.

## Airman Spends His R&R in Boonies

By SP4 Jerry Norton

PHUOC VINH -- Most infantrymen dream of getting out of the field for a week and going to Saigon. But not many Saigon residents volunteer to spend a week in the field.

Airman First Class Jay Tuminello traded in his Air Force fatigues for a rucksack and a rifle and took his seven-day leave with a 1st Air Cav line company — a long way from the 8th Aerial Port at Tan Son Nhut, his usual post.

"I just came out here to see my cousin," explained Airman Tuminello. His cousin, Private

First Class Ronald Tuminello, is a rifleman with the Cav's Company D, 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry.

Raised a few miles apart in Shreveport, Louisiana, the Tuminellos were close since childhood, going to the same schools, parties and dances. So Jay decided to spend some time with his cousin again during his leave time.

"I also wanted to see what was going on out here," said the airman, as he set down his pack and leaned on a tree for a moment's rest. "We don't see much action at Tan Son Nhut." After getting his commander's

## Ochs Commands 1st Bde

Colonel William V. Ochs assumed command of the 1st Air Cavalry's 1st Brigade from Colonel Joseph P. Collins in ceremonies Feb. 15 at Tay Ninh.

A 1945 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Colonel Ochs spent the first four years of his Army career in Italy. In 1949 he returned to West Point as aide to the Superintendent and later as Secretary of the General Staff.

In 1953, as a captain, Ochs went to Korea where he served as a company commander with the 32nd Infantry Regiment of the 7th Division.

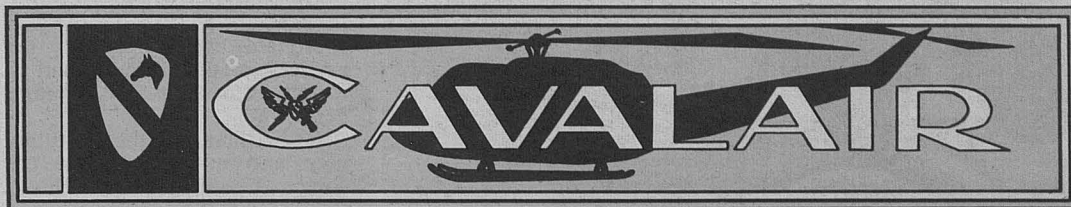
Returning in 1954, he joined the staff and faculty of the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Ga. for four years. He attended the Senior Marine

Corps School, then was assigned to Washington, D.C. where he worked in the Infantry Branch, Colonels Assignment Division and Undersecretary of the Army offices.

After a year at the Army War College, Colonel Ochs served in France at European Command Headquarters. He arrived in Vietnam in 1966 to become the senior adviser for the 2nd ARVN Division.

After commanding a Ft. Jackson training brigade and serving on a study group in the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Pentagon, Colonel Ochs assumed the 1st Brigade command with the Cav.

Colonel Collins has been assigned G1 of II Field Force in Vietnam.



Vol. 4, No. 9

1st Air Cavalry Division

March 4, 1969

## Skytroopers, Tracks Slam NVA Bunker Complex

By SP4 Jerry Norton

A three-hour firefight that raged through an enemy bunker complex and repeated contacts at two other spots in the 1st Air Cav's area of operations dominated action in the period from Feb. 7 to Feb. 14.

The firefight began on the afternoon of Feb. 14. Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry, conducting a joint operation with 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment tanks and APC's, came upon the enemy bunkers 13 miles north of Tay Ninh City at 2:45.

An initial exchange of small arms fire left two NVA dead. The Cavalrymen plunged toward the enemy positions. At 3:55 ten 60mm mortar rounds exploded near the advancing Skytroopers, but they continued forward, following strands of ammo wire.

Twenty minutes later, said SP4 Ralph Branzalli, "The tanks kept moving up and we went with them. We'd just gone around a clearing when RPG's started started flying at the tanks." At the same time, the Skytroopers were caught in a crossfire of AK-47 and automatic weapons fire.

The GI's responded with volleys from their rifles and machineguns. American and ARVN tube artillery blasted the NVA positions while Blue Max

Cobras of the 2nd Bn, 20th Arty (ARA) sliced into the enemy with rockets and miniguns.

The two forces maneuvered for advantage in clearings and thick bamboo. The battle flared sporadically until 6:40 when contact finally broke. By then, 31 North Vietnamese had been killed.

Throughout the week there were frequent contacts 10 to 12 miles northeast of Duc Phong in Phuoc Long Province and near the Cambodian border northwest of Loc Ninh in Binh Long Province.

The contacts near Loc Ninh began Feb. 7 when Bravo Troop, 1st Sqdn, 9th Cav spotted enemy in a bunker complex. Throughout the day

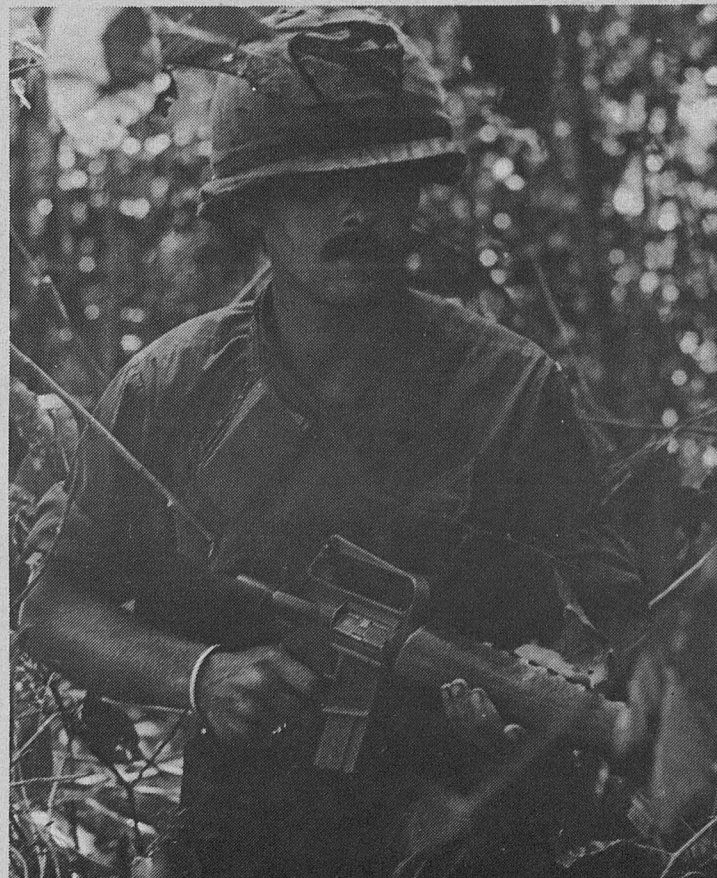
hunter-killer teams barely avoided ground-to-air fire to repeatedly pound enemy positions. Air strikes were called in for added muscle. By the end of the day, 12 NVA had been killed and 20 bunkers destroyed.

The next day Bravo's Cobras and LOH's were back. The choppers dodged enemy B-40 rockets to kill five NVA and destroy 10 huts.

After a one-day pause, action flared again Feb. 10 when a Bravo Pink Team spotted three NVA in green fatigues. The Cobra swooped down to kill two of the enemy. Half an hour later, Bravo pilots saw two green-clad NVA entering a bunker and killed both with rockets and

Continued on Page 8.

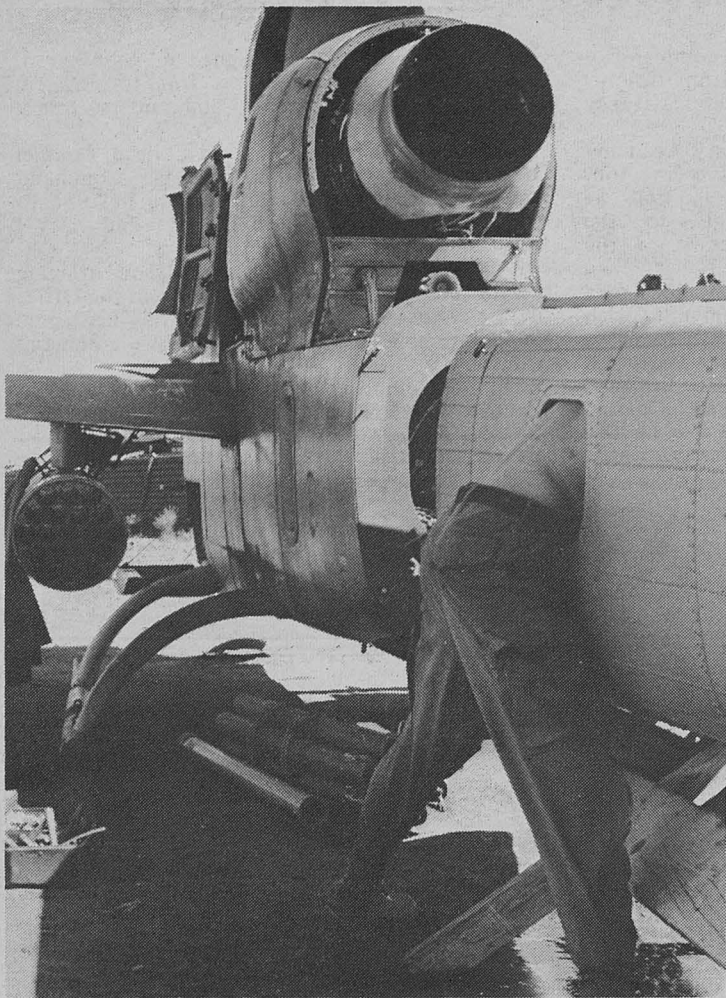
## Pointman...



Carefully edging forward through the undergrowth, 1st Cav pointman Specialist Four Larry Israel of Company C, 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry stays alert for possible enemy attack. (USA photo by SP4 Bill Ahrbeck)



## Man-eating Cobra...



Getting lost in his work, this 1st Air Cavalryman makes vital repairs on a Cobra gunship. The helicopter from the 2nd Battalion, 20th Artillery employs aerial rocket artillery in support of ground troops in contact.

(USA Photo by SP4 Bob Borchester)

# The Man Behind the Arty Prep

By SP4 Robert Hackney

FSB JAMIE - It probably didn't occur to Specialist Four John Carlson to count the number of artillery rounds exploding around the landing zone in his last combat assault - he was just happy to set foot on the ground and not be greeted by enemy fire.

Even though he didn't really think about the intricate planning involved in coordinating the artillery's Fire Direction Center (FDC), the lift ships, and the Cobra gunships, he was still glad to see the area thoroughly worked over by the artillery prep before he had to tromp into that small jungle perimeter.

Coordinating the artillery prep and making sure that a combat assault goes smoothly is the job of the artillery liaison officer (LNO).

"Timing is the key. Everyone involved is jointly responsible. If we work together, there won't be time for Charlie to do anything - if he's there," said 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry LNO Captain Douglas Benson.

Before the infantryman even begins putting his pack together, the LNO and the battalion operations officer are up in a helicopter looking for a suitable landing zone. When they pick the spot, the LNO radioes the coordinates to the FDC. Artillery adjustment begins.

The FDC calculates the gun settings after determining the distance and direction to the target. Rounds are fired until the

LNO has adjusted the explosives the way he wants them.

Using the location of the adjusted rounds as a starting point, the DC then computes adjustments for each gun to give the battery a "shot group" to saturate the area. Most often used is the "3 by 3" of nine rounds landing 100 meters apart, covering a quadrant.

To check the LNO and FDC's calculations, the rounds are fired once for effect and minor adjustments are radioed to the FDC.

Then, the combat assault is underway, lift ships setting down on the firebase to pick up the company of infantrymen. Overhead, several Cobras circle protectively. The count to H hour (time of setdown) starts.

From H-minus-7 to H-minus-1, the 105s and 155s fire their prep, the cannons blasting away at precise intervals.

At H-minus-1, a final marking round detonates near the LZ, signalling to the Cobras that it is time for them to unleash their rockets on the perimeter of the LZ. Areas the artillery didn't cover and suspicious locations nearby where enemy may still be waiting are hit hard.

"If the artillery didn't prep, the chances of having a hot landing zone would increase 75 per cent," said Benson. "If all of us do our job well, it means no ground-to-air and ground-to-ground fire in the LZ."

## Pickup Zone...



A 1st Cavalryman guides in a Huey helicopter to a tiny pickup zone so that, moments later, his fellow infantrymen from Company A, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry could scramble aboard and head for home.

(USA Photo by SP4 Bob Borchester)

# Red Cross Changes Life

By SSG Ronald Renouf

QUAN LOI - Alex Kostiuk's first experience with the Red Cross took place in a refugee camp in Austria in the waning years of World War II.

The Red Cross Field Director at the 1st Air Cavalry's Quan Loi basecamp was just a youngster at the time and greatly appreciative of the "goodie bags" passed out to the children.

Born in the Ukraine in 1941, Kostiuk moved with his family to Salzburg, Austria in 1943. For the next seven years, home was a series of refugee camps stretching from Austria to New York City.

It was in the camps in Europe that he first became acquainted with the Red Cross.

"I just couldn't believe that someone who didn't know me, never saw me before, would give me something," Kostiuk said. "That experience left me with a boyhood desire to become a member of this organization whose sole purpose is to serve others."

After arriving in the States,

the family moved to Denver, Colo. where his father, a chemist, took a position with the state of Colorado. "Locating in Denver was Dad's idea," he said. "The mountains there reminded him so much of Austria. He really loved it there."

Kostiuk joined the Red Cross two years ago. After a series of short assignments in the states he was assigned to the 1st Cav's Third Brigade.

"I think it's going to be a real fine tour here," he said. "This is certainly a vital place for the Red Cross to be."

## Chaplain Enjoys Field

By SP4 Jay Grossman

FSB BUTTONS - The church was a patch of red dirt next to a bomb crater. The congregation wore their Sunday best: dirty jungle fatigues, T-shirts and belts of M-60 ammunition.

After communion and the service had ended with the hymn "Blessed Be the Tie that Binds", half of the twenty men of B Company, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry returned silently to their work. The rest remained to talk with the chaplain, Maj. Ronald S. Bezanson.

"He's a friendly guy,"

Sergeant Myron Challenger said. "He doesn't speak to us as an officer, but as another man."

"I enjoy a field service most," he said. "Back in the rear, people tend to take religious services for granted. In the field the men are so much more responsive. They make one feel it's worth the time and effort to come out here."

The son of a preacher, Chaplain Bezanson was ordained in the spring of 1962 and joined the Army a short time later. Married in 1958, he and his wife have two children of their own and adopted two Korean orphans while they were stationed in that country.

Currently, Chaplain Bezanson's "family" is the 2nd Brigade. If he has any favorites, they are the men who hump the boonies. "They talk about contact, ambushes, and combat assaults," he said. "They say how they have been afraid. They say a prayer and it helps them get through."

"As you see the way God works in the lives of these fellows, He takes on a greater and deeper meaning."

## ... For God And Country

By Chaplain (Maj) Irving C. Njus  
Bien Hoa Army Base

The term "belong" is used in various ways. It may be in reference to possessions or it may be used of a person in reference to a place. However, I am thinking of the more personal usage which is independent of geography or material wealth. Everyone needs to belong, to be recognized, to be accepted. Loneliness and despair often fill the void where one finds rejection instead of belonging.

God also speaks of belonging. Aware of our need, He seeks to fulfill and satisfy it. To accept God at His word is to know the meaning of belonging, for through His love and mercy we are made aware of His abiding presence in our lives. Then we also discover this sense of belonging made manifest in God's community of those who share this same faith. To experience this sense of belonging which has its origin in God is to know the deepest meaning of belonging.

We may often feel we do not belong or are not accepted by those with whom we work and live. However, God in His Word leaves no doubt about His relationship to us and us to him. Through faith in Christ we know that we are not only loved and wanted, but that we do belong.



The CAVALAIR is published weekly under the supervision of the Information Office, 1st Air Cavalry Division, APO SF 96490, and is an authorized Army publication. The command newspaper is printed by Pacific Stars and Stripes, Tokyo, Japan.

Opinions expressed in the CAVALAIR are those of its editorial staff and not necessarily those of the Department of the Army.

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**AERIAL BALLET** - Troop-carrying 1st Air Cav helicopters seem to float towards a predesignated landing zone in the foothills of northern Phuoc Long Province.  
(USA Photo by SP4 James McCabe)

## Quan Loi Barber Clips You Free

By SP4 Dave Roberts

QUAN LOI -- As the time-worn cliché goes: the best things in life are free.

While some may dispute the idea that hair cuts are classified as some of the best things in life, members of the 1st Air Cav's 3rd Brigade Headquarters Company will admit that Private First Class Ramon L. Martinez is the best barber available, and his service are free.

Private Martinez, who worked two years as a professional barber before entering the Army, has opened a barber shop for the Skytroopers of the 3rd Brigade. Open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., his shop gives an average of 25 haircuts a day and trims more than 10 moustaches.

"My wife just can't believe

that I'm cutting hair in the Army. I guess she thinks that I'm just trying to make her feel good," said Private Martinez. "I imagine it's pretty hard to believe. When I joined the Army, I never thought that I'd have a chance to continue what I was doing in civilian life, especially after I got orders for Vietnam, but here I am with my own barber shop."

Born in Santa Fe, New Mexico, he moved with his family to Pagosa Springs, Colorado, several years later, where he attended barber school.

Although his facilities aren't quite as exquisite as their stateside counterparts, he does have a serviceable barber chair ingeniously built up from ammo boxes. The shop itself was constructed from a discarded shower.

Captain David E. Winchester, commander of Headquarters Company, said that the barber shop was opened because the post barber shop couldn't handle the demand.

"Since the opening of the shop we haven't had a single complaint," Captain Winchester said, "except for the field grade officers trying to get an appointment."

## C's and LRRP's Can Be Interesting

By SP4 Jay Grossman

**FSB BUTTONS** - One of the greatest conflicts fought by troops in the field is the Battle of the Palate, or, how to make "C" rations and "LRRP's" into interesting meals.

Some 1st Air Cavalrymen attack the problem by avoiding it; they rely on the weekly "CARE" package sent by a worried wife or concerned mother.

But the true gourmet grunt tackles the problem head-on, doctoring his pork and scalloped potatoes with the condiments thoughtfully provided in every meal.

Private First Class Lee Herroen is perhaps the foremost culinary specialist in the Cav's

2nd Brigade. Playing an integral part in the everyday life of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry, PFC Herroen is renowned for his field recipes.

One of his favorite meals is Spaghetti Cafe, which he discovered by accident. "I meant to make it with cocoa (Type I, Fortified, Class I), he admitted, "but I put in coffee (Instant, Type I) instead. It was pretty good after I dropped in cream and sugar."

Specialist Four Mike Rhodes, another member of the squad, commented on the dish. There was a long silence, then he said, "It was ... different."

PFC Herroen began his cooking career at home, where he was the oldest of 15 children.

"We had three shelves filled with spices, and I threw them in spaghetti, macaroni, everything."

When he left home for the Army PFC Herroen continued his experiments in the art of

cooking.

But when he leaves the Army, he plans to return to his former profession of farming, rather than open a restaurant.

"Ain't no way anybody would eat it," he explained.



**EXTRACTION** - "Hey, wait for me." Getting to the extraction bird is half the fun for these 1st Air Cavalrymen from Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry, Action occurred at the base of Nui Ba Ra near Song Be. (USA Photo by SP4 James McCabe)

## Boonie "Doc" Always In

By SP4 David Roberts

QUAN LOI - In the boonies, the doctor is always in.

"Doc" is the man in every platoon who looks like everyone else but is a doctor, nurse and walking pharmacy all wrapped into one. He makes an occasional "hootchcall" but most of his patients are already in his waiting room.

Each 1st Air Cav line battalion has one medical doctor, one medical operations officer and two medical specialists besides four combat medics per company one for each platoon and a head medic in the company command post.

"Treatment of small everyday type injuries is one of the chief functions of the combat medic," said 1st Lt. Joseph Grossman, medical operations officer for the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry.

Although most stories about medics tell of their bravery dragging badly wounded men away from hostile fire and saving lives with emergency first aid, most of their duties are the not-so-glamorous daily treatment of insect bites, athletes' foot, jungle rot and stomach aches.

"If these small hurts, scratches and fungus aren't treated as soon as possible they may result in more serious injury," Grossman explained.

Long before reaching the

boonies in Vietnam, the medic starts learning how to help his fellow soldiers. Combat medics attend a ten week intensive Combat Medic course at Ft. Sam Houston, Texas and usually spend some time in stateside dispensaries before coming to Vietnam.

The ten week school trains the medics in diagnosing and treating wounds, illnesses and injuries which are common among the grunts in the field.

"Of course, like the infantryman, much of the medic's training comes through practical experience," Grossman said. "Learning the proper diagnosis and treating with the most effective drug can best be learned through experience."

When first assigned to a Cav battalion, a combat medic goes through at least two weeks of extra training with the medical specialists of the battalion, men who have had a nine month training course and work with the battalion doctor.

Then he dons his pack, which includes a medical supply bag and medications and dressings besides the usual poncho liner, C rations and air mattress, and joins a company in the field.

Within minutes, he, too, acquires the nickname "Doc" and begins the formidable task of keeping a platoon of men healthy in a strange climate.

## Gridiron Stars Visit Cav

By SSG Ronald Renouf

QUAN LOI - "Staying 'up' for the entire season can be a real problem," commented Dan Connors of the Oakland Raiders, "but you guys have to stay up for the whole bit, and a year's a long time to keep yourself in top shape emotionally."

Connors, along with Jim Nance of the Boston Patriots; Gary Garrison, San Diego Chargers; Len Rohda, San Francisco 49ers; Norman Snead, Philadelphia Eagles; and Chris Hanburger of the Washington Redskins were talking to a group of men from the Cav's 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry at Fire Support Base Bill.

The six gridiron stars, on a USO handshake tour, spent the day with members of the division's 3rd Brigade.

Following lunch with Bravo Troop, 1st

Squadron, 9th Cavalry, the group attended an awards ceremony at which eight of the men from Bravo Troop were cited for gallantry in action against hostile forces.

They were then flown to FSB Bill where they spent several hours visiting with men from the 1st of the 8th manning the strategic firebase.

"I doubt that any of these men enjoy being here," said Len Rohda, "but the morale is unbelievably high."

Jim Nance summed up the troupe's feelings when he indicated that his tour of Vietnam provided a real education in itself.

"A lot of people get the wrong impression of what's going on here. A lot of the protesters think that they're doing these guys a favor. Boy, are they wrong. These guys deserve the support of the people back home. They're doing a helluva job and I've got a lot of respect for them."





A "scoutbird" LOH zooms across the dense jungle that camouflages the Jolley Trail as the M-60 machinegunner leans out looking intently for NVA. Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry runs "Pink Teams" on reconnaissance missions over the trail daily to check infiltration.



Story by PFC Charlie Petit

USA Photos by CPT William Burrow  
and SP4 Doug Fuller

# THE JOLLEY TRAIL



Bamboo bridges crossing the treacherous jungle terrain are a part of the Jolley Trail. The bridges are so well concealed that only low-flying helicopters can spot and destroy them. Constant surveillance is required over the often altered course of the major infiltration route.

The Jolley Trail: a complex series of paths and bridges snaking down from Cambodia, along the Dong Nai River, and eventually fragmenting into lesser arteries feeding enemy units in both II and III Corps.

It's big and it carries a lot of traffic — or at least it did until recently, when 1st Cav helicopter and ground troops undertook a major effort to stop it up.

Every 25 meters or so, the North Vietnamese have built bunkers and fighting positions. In its northern reaches, in Phuoc Long Province north of Bu Gia Map, there are stretches wide enough to carry two trucks driving abreast, hidden from the air by triple canopy jungle. Across level sections of the terrain, for click after click, it runs straight as a ruler, then twists sinuously along the foothills of the Central Highlands.

Bamboo bridges up to 100 meters long have been spotted from the air — targets for Cav

ARA, gunships, and Air Force bombs. Ground troops inserted along its length often find it covered with woven bamboo, rendering it usable even during the monsoon rains. Bicycle and motorbike tracks can be found in its rutted surface.

Stopping enemy logistics and infiltration — these are two of the big tasks facing the Cav, said Captain Ronald Kloet, a Cav intelligence officer. The enemy expends vast amounts of energy building new infiltration routes and maintaining or improving old ones. It's up to the Cav to frustrate that effort.

"It's because of the successful interdiction of infiltration in the western and central portions of the Cav's AO that the focus of enemy logistical activity has shifted east toward II Corps," stated Specialist Four John Powley, an intelligence specialist with the division's Order of Battle section.

Ground-to-air firing over the trail is common, and ground troops frequently find fierce contact. Much of the reconnaissance leading to the trail's charting was done by helicopter crews from Troop B, 1st Sq, 9th Cav. Bravo Troop's commander is Major Charles A. Jolley, hence the route's nickname.

The trail is an impressive piece of work. "I've never seen anything else quite like it," remarked Maj. Jolley.

"It's usefulness to the enemy has dropped greatly," said Captain Kloet. "He's being deprived of one of his last major supply networks through the Cav's AO. Main Force units aren't getting the supplies they need to operate effectively."

That's what the Cav is in this part of the country to get done, and the airmobile division is doing it.

Crude logs provide a bridge over a tributary of the Dong Nai River as part of the Jolley Trail a section of jungle. Aerial photos were taken by Captain William Burrow from "scout" LOHs of Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry on reconnaissance over the trail.



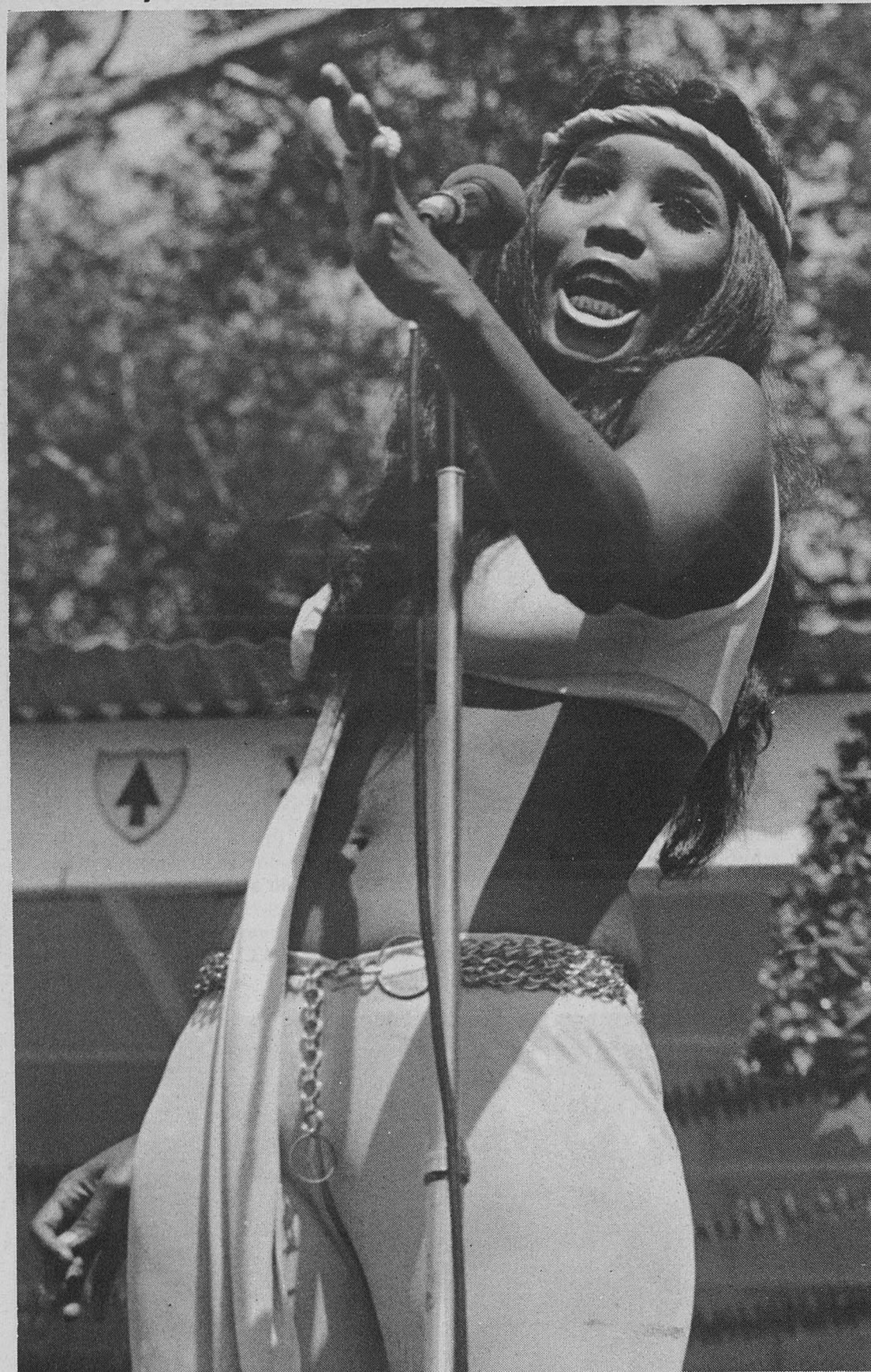
Clearing a bunker along the Jolley Trail is a two man job. PFC Gary Davis secured the rear with a M-60 machinegun while SP4 Kent Zerr takes a good look with his finger on the trigger of his .45 caliber pistol. The 1st Air Cavalrymen are members of the crack "Blue Team" of Bravo Troop, 1st of the 9th.



Inspecting motorcycle tracks found at the end of a bridge along the Jolley Trail, SP4 Gary Davis keeps an ear to his radio-telephone and a firm grasp on his M-16 rifle. The intricate enemy infiltration route runs about 80 miles from mountain hideouts in northern II and III Corps through Cav Country towards Saigon.



## Certainly Is...



Lookin' good at Lai Khe, Theresa Graves lays a little soul on the crowd during her tour of Vietnam with the Hope show. Her face has become familiar by now, and isn't she just one groovy girl? Certainly is, certainly is. (USA Photo by SP4 Len Fallscheer)

## MARS Gets You Through

By SSG Ronald Renouf

QUAN LOI — War is hell when you can't call home on weekends.

But for 1st Air Cavalrymen of the 3rd Brigade at Quan Loi, home is as close as the local MARS (Military Affiliate Radio System) station.

Operated by two Privates First Class, Gary L. Winters and Charles E. Johnson, the station has been getting nearly 150 calls per week through to the States since opening last October.

"The addition of a new linear amplifier has really boosted our reception," Winters said, "and this lets us place more calls."

For the soldier placing his first call from Vietnam to his family, MARS can be quite an experience on both ends. For

some families, the shock of hearing their son or husband calling from Vietnam is almost too much.

"I feel badly for some of these guys. We finally make contact with their party in the States and the people on the other end are so surprised that they spend almost all of their three minutes just crying," said Winters.

Technicalities, such as the "over" after each transmission to cue the station operator when to switch from "send" to "receive", are often forgotten in the excitement of the moment, causing precious delays.

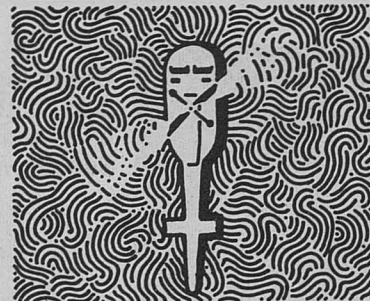
"Even so, it's always a happy three minutes for the man on this end," he said. "These guys are really appreciative of that brief but happy contact with

home."

Although the three minutes passes unbelievably quickly, Winters explained that "we have to limit calls to three minutes in order to get a greater number of calls through."

With its high percentage of completed calls, the Quan Loi station ranks first in the Cav in transmissions. A recent night's schedule showed 35 calls completed in 39 attempts.

"With the limited facilities available to troops in a forward area such as Quan Loi, the MARS station is a real morale booster to the men here," said Captain David E. Winchester, 3rd Brigade Headquarters Company commander.



## ROTOR WASH

### Incoming Rubber Ducks?

PHUOC VINH — The spot report sounded ordinary enough at first. Bravo Company, 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry, had found a cache in a bunker complex north of Phuoc Vinh that included RPG's, thirty 60mm mortar rounds, and two submachine guns.

Then the final item came over the radio, "and three inflatable rubber ducks." The RTO's at the Cav's Division Tactical Operations Center (DTC) looked at each other in disbelief, then asked for the item again ... "three inflatable rubber ducks."

For the rest of the day, Bravo Company's headquarters element at Phuoc Vinh was harassed by callers wanting to see the "rubber ducks" as soon as they were backlogged.

As it turned out, their hopes were soon deflated. One man's rubber ducks turned out to be most men's water wings.

But what was the NVA planning to do with inflatable life preservers in the middle of the jungle?

### Staff Sergeant Commissioned

FSB BUTTONS — After spending eighteen months in Vietnam, it took James Hudnell about three minutes to become an officer.

Now entering the last six months of his second tour, Second Lieutenant Hudnell recently accepted a direct commission. Lieutenant Colonel Harold Iverson, commander of the 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry, administered the oath to the former staff sergeant.

"Usually when a man receives a direct commission he is moved to another battalion," Lt. Hudnell said, "but Col. Iverson requested permission to let me stay with the 2nd of the 12th as a platoon leader."

The new officer has been awarded the Army Commendation Medal and the Bronze Star, each with V-device and one oak leaf cluster. He received a Purple Heart for action at LZ Don last January.

### Mission: Enjoy Yourself

TAY NINH — "Here's your mission for the next two days: Enjoy yourselves — and that's an order," said Sergeant First Class Ernest E. McCowan, briefing the men of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry.

To help them accomplish their mission, Sergeant McCowan, NCOIC of the new 1st Brigade VIP Center, put all the center's facilities at their disposal. After 45 days in the field, the men needed little encouragement to make good use of the steam bath, swimming pool, dayroom, and basketball and volleyball courts.

The company and battalion rear also contributed to the two-day stand-down with two floor shows, more than 100 cases of beer and soda, and steak dinners with all the trimmings. "These men deserve the best because they are the best," stated Sergeant First Class Richard Parker, Alpha's first sergeant.

### New Cav Ass'n Chapter

With plans to build the 1st Air Cavalry Division Association's largest chapter at Fort Benning, Ga., the new FOLLOW ME First Team Chapter held its organizational meeting in downtown Columbus Jan. 21.

Lieutenant General George I. Forsythe, former commander of the Cav in Vietnam and now commanding general of Combat Developments Command, Ft. Belvoir, Va., presented two plaques in recognition of outstanding service to the Association in preparing Ft. Benning for the Aug. 21-24, 1969, reunion.

General Forsythe, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Cav Association, presented the awards to Brigadier General Oscar E. Davis, former Cav assistant commander and commander of the U.S. Army Training Command, Infantry, at Ft. Benning last August, and to Lieutenant Colonel Gerald Wilson, USATCI S-1.



Lieutenant General George I. Forsythe, former commander of the 1st Air Cav in Vietnam and now commanding general of Combat Developments Command, Ft. Belvoir, Va., presented a plaque for outstanding service to Brigadier General Oscar E. Davis, former Cav assistant commander, in ceremonies in Columbus Ga.



Specialist Five Stu Galloway applies a not-much-appreciated bandage to the finger of a Song Be child while a more grateful mother soothes the babysan during a recent MEDCAP in Song Be village. (USA Photo by SP4 James McCabe)

## Making Friends Through Medicine

A picture is worth many words when you're trying to gain friends, according to Staff Sergeant John Ray. Ray, a member of the 1st Cav's 2nd Brigade staff, shows three children from Song Be a polaroid photo of themselves during a Tet band concert at FSB Buttons for local villagers.

(USA Photo by SP4 Vic Fitzwater)



A Vietnamese interpreter assists Captain Douglas Spieske, chief surgeon of the 1st Cav's 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry, to explain to a Song Be woman how and when to take a pack of pills during a MEDCAP in the village. (USA Photo by SP4 James McCabe)



# New Blackhats Taught Bird Guiding

By SP4 Dave Roberts

FSB VIVIAN - "Pop smoke," came the voice over the radio.

In a small clearing 3,000 feet below, a man wearing a black baseball cap with a silver parachute on its crown tossed a smoke grenade into the middle of the landing zone. A yellow cloud quickly drifted up through the trees.

Moments later, a tight formation of Hueys neared the clearing and were guided in by the man's hand signals. Security troops and engineers piled out to begin a new firebase.

Ground guiding helicopters into firebases with the use of correct radio procedures and proper hand signals is the vital function of the 1st Air Cavalry "blackhats" of the 11th

Pathfinder Platoon.

To give the new Pathfinders the basic knowledge they need about the Cav's helicopter landing procedures, Staff Sergeant James T. Rickman, who has spent two tours in Vietnam as a blackhat, has been conducting classes at Fire Support Base Vivian in ground guiding aircraft.

"By training the man in the

field, we always have someone who can handle the clutch situations," Rickman said. "The basic hand signals and radio transmissions are the same ones used in every airport in the world, and knowing them lets you know what information the pilot needs to land his aircraft."

Whether it's a MEDEVAC emergency or a routine log mission landing, the pilot must know the same basic facts.

"This is Vivian Control, we have negative arty at this time, winds are four gusting to five miles an hour from the north. You will be landing in lefthand traffic making a final approach from the south landing at the log pad. What is the nature of your cargo and how long will you be

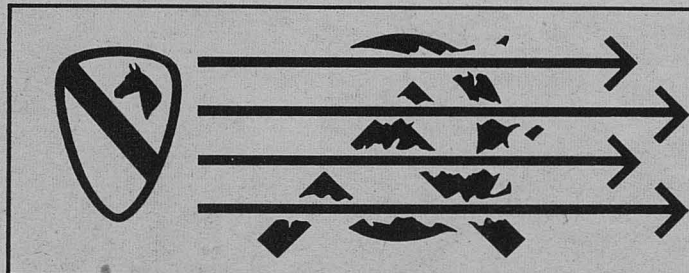
staying in our house, please?" the blackhat says over the radio.

Besides directing traffic into and out of firebases, the blackhat team at each base is responsible for bringing in aircraft on emergencies, including the dangerous duty of directing MEDEVAC helicopters safely to the ground on night missions. Two flashlights are needed, under fire or not.

Blackhats also open and close firebases to aircraft and occasionally go out in the field with a line company to guide in the aircraft. Also included in the instruction sessions are proper aircraft safety procedures and proper selection of landing zones.



Staff Sergeant James T. Rickman, who is in his second tour in Vietnam as a "blackhat," demonstrates some of the proper hand signals used to guide in helicopters to some of the new men in the 11th Pathfinder Platoon. (USA Photo by SP 4 Bill Ahrbeck)



**ACTION  
OF THE  
WEEK**

By SP4 Jerry Norton

TAY NINH - In a series of afternoon contacts 17 miles northeast of Tay Ninh City Feb. 3 near the Cambodian border, Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry combined aggressive small unit tactics with close coordination of fire support elements to kill 19 enemy soldiers.

The company of Skytroopers, participating in an action begun with a battalion-sized combat assault two days earlier, had just crossed a clearing when enemy gunners in a bunker complex opened up with AK-47's shortly after noon.

"We called in fire support to soften them up for us before we moved in," said Sergeant Larry Fink.

Artillery and Blue Max ripped into the enemy positions. A section of the 2nd Bn, 20th Arty ARA spotted 12 green-clad NVA soldiers trying to escape the Skytroopers' onslaught. The Cobras swooped down to rake the area with miniguns and rockets, killing five NVA and destroying three AK-47's.

Following the barrage, Charlie Company pressed forward. Seven minutes after the initial

contact the Cavalrymen spotted six more NVA in a treeline. According to one rifleman, the enemy soldiers headed north "at a trot" after a brief flurry of fire. The Cavalrymen cut down five of them with bursts from M-16's and captured or destroyed four more AK-47's.

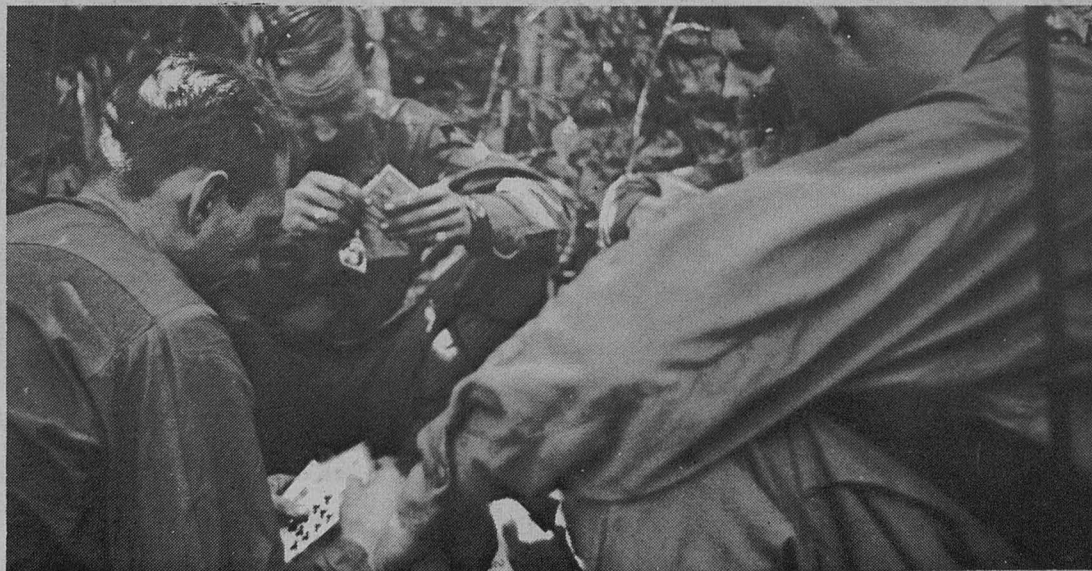
Continuing the relentless advance through the tree line, the company's lead element saw five more enemy trying to evade to the northeast. Simultaneously, AK-47's snapped fitfully from the east as several NVA tried to cover their comrades' retreat.

The company commander, Captain Robert H. Jackson, said "Our men concentrated on the source of fire while artillery was called in on the fleeing enemy." With pinpoint accuracy the artillery blasted the five escaping enemy, killing them, and the futile attempt to cover the escape cost the enemy two dead and two AK-47's captured.

Meanwhile, Charlie Company's Second Platoon set up an ambush position on one of the enemy's likely escape routes. "It was just a matter of what seemed like seconds when these two NVA came trotting up the trail. We killed them," said SP4 James Bailey.

In less than half an hour, the combination of ARA, artillery, and infantrymen had eliminated 19 communists and captured or destroyed 11 AK-47's.

## Card Club...



With security out and the resupply chopper on the way, these 1st Air Cavalrymen have found a little time for a friendly game of hearts. 2nd Lieutenant John Lockard matches his skill with several members of his platoon from Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry. (USA Photo by SP4 James McCabe)

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minigun fire. Bravo Troop blasted two more NVA at 2:40 p.m.

Two hours later a Bravo Troop LOH came under AK-47 fire. The enemy rounds failed to connect, while the Pink Team's counterfire eliminated two NVA and destroyed six huts.

The final engagement in the area came on Feb. 11. More than a score of NVA were caught milling about on a trail, their packs on the ground beside them. A Cobra rolled in with rockets and miniguns before the enemy could flee. Nine enemy were killed. In all, 35 NVA fell to Bravo Troop in the week's Loc Ninh actions.

The other hot spot during the week was northeast of Duc Phong near the II Corps-III Corps boundary. The Duc Phong action began Feb. 10 when night ambushes set up by the 1st Bn, 12th Cav killed eight NVA moving on trails. Six AK-47's were captured.

The following day, the NVA came out on the short end in a brief firefight with 1st of the 12th's Bravo Company. The communists lost four men and an AK-47. The following night, the battalion's Echo Company ambushed three NVA and captured two AK-47's.

Charlie Troop, 1st Sq, 9th Cav got a piece of the action Feb. 13, killing three NVA in scattered contacts.

The Skytroopers had killed 22

NVA in four straight days of engagements near Duc Phong.

Two individual actions highlighted combat activities in the rest of the AO. On Feb. 7 a combined force of Delta Company, 2nd Bn, 8th Cav, and Troop A, 1st Bn, 11th ACR came to a halt when they ran across a deep trenchline in northern War Zone C. Almost immediately, enemy small arms, machinegun, and RPG fire flashed out from the surrounding bunkers and trees.

The Cavalrymen and tankers turned their weapons, including the heavy machineguns on the APC's, on the enemy firing positions, while artillery, ARA, and LOH's with miniguns provided support. At 5:30 p.m. the enemy fled, leaving 14 of their dead.

At daybreak on Feb. 14 Delta Company, 1st Bn, 7th Cav aborted the rice resupply mission of six Viet Cong. The Skytroopers ambushed the VC as they moved north on a hard-packed, high-speed trail. The trail, four to six feet wide and visible from the air, was in open country just south of the Cambodian border. Five VC were killed and one female VC detained. She said the unit was going to get food for guerilla elements. The Cavalrymen also captured three AK-47's.

In the eight-day period the 1st Cav accounted for 187 NVA dead and captured 66 individual weapons and five tons of rice.