

Cav Pilots Find Huge NVA Base

An elaborate NVA staging area was discovered by helicopter crewmen from Troop A, 1st Squadron of the 9th Cav during a week in which Alpha Troop killed 74 enemy soldiers.

The unit's kills during the week ending Oct. 24 accounted for one-third of the 1st Cav's total which exceeded 200 enemy deaths for the second straight week. Skyrooper casualties continued to reflect the months-long low level of ground action.

The staging area was spotted 22 miles northwest of Tay Ninh, near the Cambodian border (Oct. 23). It included a barbed wire and trench line perimeter encircling the 1,000 meter staging area.

"We still can't quite figure out what it was," said Warrant Officer Ordan Iverson, pilot of the LOH that first spotted the complex. "One thing's for certain, it's the largest, most sophisticated complex that anyone in this troop has ever seen."

The scout bird and Cobra gunship team opened up with machine guns and rockets after spotting several

15 by 20-foot hootches made of sheet metal, ten similar-size canvas tents, 3 kitchens with stoves and numerous chickens and pigs. Two jet air strikes were called in and artillery pounded the area throughout the day.

The remains of 40 NVA were discovered 10 miles northeast of Quan Loi by Company A, 1st Battalion of the 7th Cav. Also found was an empty plasma bottle with a note that read: "One man from the North, killed 19 Aug."

On Oct. 22, Alpha Troop hunter-killer teams killed 22 enemy in a day-long series of encounters north of Tay Ninh. The largest action occurred at 11 a.m. when the team spotted four enemy and killed them with rockets and mini-gun fire.

Helicopters from the Squadron's Bravo and Charlie Troop were also active during the week, killing 25. The largest action for Bravo Troop came (Oct. 23) when they killed 16 NVA in a four-hour long afternoon reconnaissance 20 miles north of Quan Loi. The helicopters did not receive any ground fire.

In ground action Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry killed eight enemy with small arms fire then called in artillery to kill two more. The brief firefight erupted when a squad ambushed a small NVA force 12 miles northeast of Song Be shortly after 10 p.m.

In a bitter battle Company A, 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry killed 14 enemy, 13 miles northeast of Song Be (Oct. 20). After more than 20 mortar rounds pounded a pick-up zone where the Air Cavalrymen were waiting for a lift home, the infantrymen returned fire, then called artillery, helicopter gunships and Air Force jets onto the enemy position.

A Hoi Chanh scout led men of Company B, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry into an NVA basecamp 12 miles northeast of Quan Loi (Oct. 18). Uncovered were 12 bunkers with beds, a kitchen, documents and an arms cache.

In the week's action, 207 enemy were killed, not counting the 40 bodies found in graves. During the week, eight Air Cavalrymen were killed and 43 wounded.

Logging . . .



(U.S. Army Photo by SP4 Bob Borchester)

1st Air Cavalrymen of Company D, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry unload a supply helicopter during an operation near FSB Grant. Daily resupply operations are possible through the airmobility of the FIRST TEAM.

ARVN Paratroopers Jump into Cav AO

By CPT William R. Shelton
TAY NINH — The establishment of two ARVN fire bases near Tay Ninh marked the beginning of joint operations involving the FIRST TEAM's 1st Brigade and the 2nd ARVN Airborne Brigade.

Fire Support Bases Jackie and Carolyn were constructed with 1st Cav engineer and air support, but the ARVN paratroopers did most of the work and manned both bases when they were completed.

In excess of 60 Chinook and Flying Crane sorties were used to bring in troops and equipment from Tay Ninh during the construction of FSB Jackie, the first base to be established. The 1st Platoon, Company A, 8th Engineers built the TOC, medical aid

station and the berm, while the ARVN paratroopers filled sandbags, built bunkers and secured the perimeter with barbed wire.

It was the first fire support base that the ARVN's 3rd Airborne Battalion had constructed.

"The tactical airlift support was really outstanding," said Captain Jack Woods, senior artillery advisor for the battalion. "Our battery was in position four hours after the first bird left Tay Ninh."

The 1st Brigade Operations Officer, Major Harold Darden, Jr., was impressed by the ARVN's progress on the fire base. "The battalion now has as much airmobility as any Cav unit," he said. "It will be a definite asset to 1st Brigade operations."



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Cav Safety Record Set: One Year Accident-Free

By PFC Charlie Petit

BEARCAT—Can you imagine flying a 1st Cav Chinook helicopter 12 hours every day, under combat conditions, for 1012 consecutive days without a single accident or major breakdown?

That would be the equivalent of the safety record established by Alpha Company of the 228th Aviation Battalion. It's the best record ever in the division.

In recognition of the remarkable achievement, Assistant Division Commander, Colonel Robert M. Shoemaker presented the 164 men of the company with a special plaque.

The record established is 12,165 accident-free flying hours. This mark was achieved during the year Oct. 3, 1968 to Oct. 3, 1969. In addition, they haven't had any accidents since then either, so

the record continues to increase each time a 'hook' of the Wildcat Company takes to the air.

Present at the October 25 presentation of the plaque, in addition to COL Shoemaker, were Lieutenant Colonel Leo F. Soucek, commanding officer of the 11th Aviation Group; Lieutenant Colonel Emery W. Bush, commander of the 228th Aviation Battalion, and, of course, the men of Alpha Company assembled in ranks.

The award was accepted by Major William A. Siegling, the company commander. He said later, "I'm just as proud as can be. This company is here to provide the 1st Cav with the best, most reliable support possible. The pilots, maintenance men, and the crews deserve all the credit. I'm honored to be able to serve with them."

LTC Bush, the battalion commander, added, "This is the best, most professional group of pilots I've ever been associated with. The end result of professionalism is just such a safety record as this."

Close . . .



(U.S. Army Photo by SP4 Bob Borchester)

SGT Robert Hawkinson uses his field knife to give PFC Fred Bell a close morning shave. Both are members of Company D, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry.

Editorial

Same Old Stuff Keeps Crews Edgy

CAV COUNTRY—How many times have you flown in a Chinook back to the rear for R&R, leave or some other reason, and were told by the flight engineer or crew chief to "Take that magazine out of your weapon," "Point it to the floor," "Roll your sleeves down" or "Button your shirt?"

How many times in a combat assault has the crew screamed at you to hurry up loading at the PZ or practically pushed you out at the LZ? Or when they see a man try to get aboard with a PRC-25 antenna waving? Well, if you think about it, you'll realize there are logical reasons for all this.

No, it's not because crew members are descendants of the Red Baron and have nothing better to do than harass the troops. To start with, the crew encounters the same problems day after day, mission after mission, and grows old saying the same things over and over.

Don't be the first on your block to down a \$1.3 million Chinook or an expensive Huey—and kill 30 or 40 people at the same time. Be smart, pay attention and return home to your family, friends and to "the good life."

...For God And Country

By Chaplain (CPT) Charles E. Voelker
1st Bn., 8th Cav. Chaplain

In combat, the soldier's constant companion is his weapon. It is an extension of his ability and strength. With his weapon, he makes contact with the enemy. It is the best means to secure victory in war.

The Army maintains many types and sizes of weapons, from guided missiles to small arms. These weapons are the result of many years of research and experience. When better weapons are discovered they will no doubt replace those presently used.

Because of the great advance in their field, it would be utterly ridiculous to send a company of men into battle today with weapons that were designed and constructed a century ago.

Only a fool would lead an organization armed with spears or crossbows against a modern military unit. One squad of men armed with a machine gun could repel any attack of such a group. Obsolete weapons are a definite handicap in fighting a war.

But in the spiritual realm, ancient weapons can be used for modern warfare. The weapons that God has authorized have not grown old. They are our best hope for victory, not against human beings, "but against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." We need to put on "the whole armor of God."

St. Paul goes on to list the weapons that we need to wage spiritual warfare: "Truth, breastplate of righteousness, shield of faith, helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit."

Spiritual weapons, like military weapons, need to be maintained or they become worthless. This comes by personally practicing our faith each day and by public worship when chapel services are available. Will we see you at chapel this week?

Talking Shop . . .



(U.S. Army Photo by SP4 Ron Doss)

Three ammo laden machine gunners from Company C, 1st Battalion, 7th Cav hold a trail side conference during a break in a patrol outside of Fire Support Base Wescott.

Slinging Z Z Zs . . .



(U.S. Army Photo by PFC Robert Sharpe)

SP5 Chris Miller, a crew chief with Troop C, 1st Squadron of the 9th Cavalry, uses his ingenuity to "take ten" under the tail of a Cobra.

Weapons Control

MPs Check "Pink Slips"

The control and accounting of weapons is vital to all units within the FIRST TEAM. This includes all military weapons, captured and foreign and personally owned.

Army Regulation 735-35 requires that commanding officers insure the property of their command is properly safeguarded, accounted for and administered. The proper administration of supply, and supply accounting are functions of command. In the area of individual weapons accountability the commander at each level is the primary source of enforcement procedures established for the command.

Direct responsibility applies to an individual to whom the property has been entrusted and who

is specifically charged with its proper care and safekeeping, whether such property is in his possession, in use or in storage.

Each individual of this command is charged with the direct responsibility for the proper care and safekeeping of his individual weapon while that weapon is assigned to him.

The use of copy 3, the "pink copy" of DA Form 3122 is intended to provide control of weapons in the hands of the individual. CAV Reg 735-12 requires

each Skytrooper to maintain the "pink copy" for the weapon assigned to him in his possession at all times. In this manner a Skytrooper has evidence of possession of the weapon he is carrying.

Make sure you have your "pink copy" with you all the time. Military Police are enforcing this through spot checks at congested areas throughout the FIRST TEAM area of operation: PX's, aerial ports, service clubs, etc.

BA with Pay Offered To Career Officers

Qualified career-oriented officers may now spend up to two years in gaining a baccalaureate degree at an accredited college or university while continuing to receive full pay and allowances.

Basic requirements for applicants are that they have had at least two years and not more than seven years active commissioned service when they enter the college, be Regular Army or Voluntary Indefinite category and be able to gain their degree in two years. The degree sought

must relate to branch-associated duties.

Those participating must pay all college expenses, and accept an active duty commitment for each year or fraction thereof spent in school.

Full details will be given in a forthcoming DA Circular. Those interested may write their branch, and OPO career branches will invite individual officers to participate. Military performance and service potential are carefully considered.



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Gifts for Villagers . . .



(U.S. Army Photo by SP4 Vic Fitzwater)
SP4 Ronald Weakley (left) and 1LT Michael Olenczuk of the 2nd Brigade Civil Affairs Section examine 230 ducklings presented to the hamlets of An Loung and Thuan Kheim, as an added boost to their economies.

2nd Bde Donates Ducks To Build Hamlet Economy

FSB BUTTONS — The only sound to come from 230 passengers taking their first ride on a 1st Air Cav helicopter was a series of muffled quacks.

The 230 fuzzy ducklings flew—though not under their own power — from Phuoc Vinh to Fire Support Base (FSB) Buttons where they were delivered to the Civil Affairs (S-5) Section of the Cav's 2nd Brigade.

Helping the economy of Phuoc Long Province is one of the aims of the Brigade as part of the pacification effort around Song Be, the provincial capital.

"The best type of project is one which will have a lasting impact," said Captain Michael W. Griffith, Blackhorse Brigade S-5 Officer. "The ducks are an excellent example."

Several months ago the then Senior District Advisor for Phuoc Binh District (in which Song Be is located) traveled to Hong Korg, where he saw a number of duck farms built

along the city's waterways. Recalling the Phuoc Binh area, he reasoned, the land along the Song Be River might have similar possibilities.

When the Cav's 2nd Brigade moved into FSB Buttons and began to help in the local pacification program, one of the requests was for ducks to be given to two hamlets, An Loung and Thuan Kheim 4, both bordering the river. Both hamlets had been recently relocated from outlying areas in the province, and as a result they had few native economic resources.

As the villagers from those hamlets set to work building the necessary duck pens, Captain Griffith and his section tried to locate ducks. Through Division Civil Affairs 230 ducklings were purchased and delivered in three large bamboo cages to FSB Buttons. The feathery bundles were passed along to the District Advisor and presented to the hamlets.

Skytroopers Carry Own Mobile Homes

TAY NINH—Are you interested in mobile homes? Every 1st Air Cavalryman has one that he has been using for quite some time. It's called a rucksack.

The rucksack is a completely portable unit in which the infantryman carries all his worldly goods.

"It's my home away from home," smiled Specialist Four Armand Delgrosso of B Company, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry. "I only wish they'd make it a little lighter."

When it is fully loaded, SP4 Delgrosso carries the following, either in or tied on his rucksack: food for three days, four canteens of water, one claymore mine, two trip flares, one gas mask, two fragmentation grenades, two smoke grenades, sleeping gear (consisting of poncho, poncho liner and air mattress), writing gear and shaving gear. It's quite a load.

When it is time for the Skytroopers to shoulder their packs and be on the move, the command "saddle up" is given. Grunts and groans are heard as they strain to lift their burdens.

"I feel like a pack mule," said Specialist Four Ron South.

"At the end of the day, I feel like I've got complete freedom of movement after getting rid of that house on my back," stated Specialist Four Larry Darmour, also of B Company.

"The program is intended to be self-supporting," said Captain Griffith. "The District Chief requires that the villages, over a period of time, return to him 230 ducklings which he will pass on to other villages. This is one of the conditions of the original gift. If everything works right, the area will soon have a new source of income."

Securing Burst . . .



(U.S. Army Photo by SP4 Ron Merrill)
With a burst from his M-60, SGT Dave Shores sprays the jungle while on a patrol with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry near firebase Ike.

Cav Efforts Aid Family Reunion

By PFC Barry Bjornson

FSB BUTTONS—Eyes widened with surprise, then burst into tears of joy. It was a family reunion at the Song Be Chieu Hoi Center. Through the efforts of the S-5 of the Blackhorse Brigade a teenaged boy was reunited with his family.

The boy was separated from his parents at the village of Phu Vang, six miles northeast of Fire Support Base Buttons. The villagers are virtual prisoners of the VC, who have guards in the village ensuring that the people work to produce food for the Communists.

Intensive Psychological Operations around the village have been instructing the local inhabitants in Chieu Hoi procedures. After years of VC control several of the villagers, including the boy's family, managed to escape into the jungle and later turned themselves into FSB Judie, home of the 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry.

The villagers were taken to the Song Be Chieu Hoi Center, already overflowing with the stream of refugees in Phuoc Long Province returning to the government of South Vietnam.

The boy could not escape with his family and remained behind in the village. He had slight hope of ever seeing his family again.

On the following night, however, the opportunity arose and the youth was able to escape the VC guards along with ten other villagers. They, too, rallied at FSB Judie.

When the boy jumped off the truck at the Song Be Chieu Hoi Center, he immediately saw his mother, who ran and hugged him, tears of joy in her eyes. The family was once again together, but this time free from the terrorism of the VC.

LZ Home: A Unique Experience after Nam

By SGT Ronald J. Miller

Picture our hero, a 1st Cav Skytrooper, returning home after a 12 month tour of duty in Vietnam. The guy has developed forms of speech and habits that are hard to shake loose. Let's follow his progress.

Here's Hero in a department store, looking for a T-shirt for his young son.

"What size would you like,

young man?" asks the middle aged sales lady kindly.

"T-T," says Hero, making motions with his hands, indicating something small.

"Yes, I know you want a T-shirt. But what size?"

"A T-T T-shirt," says Hero, beginning to get flustered.

"Don't stutter, young man," says the lady sternly. "Now, how large is your son?"

Hero looks around the store and spots a freckle-faced little boy, who is about the same size as his son. "Same same, him," says Hero, pointing at the boy.

"You're going to have to do something about that speech defect," says the sales lady.

Let's leave Hero at this point and go to his shapely, blonde, sweet young wife. Here she is, talking over the fence to her neighbor. "No, Sally, I didn't get much sleep last night. I had third guard."

"Third guard?" says Sally, her face twisting in puzzlement. "What're you talking about?"

"Well, Hero insists on having a guard up all night," says Wife, shaking her head. "It makes him feel safer. He gave little Donnie first guard. He said Donnie should have first guard because he's an FNG."

"What's an FNG?" "I don't know." Wife stares blankly at the ground. "It must be something top secret because he won't tell me what it stands for. He says all I need to know is that it's someone inexperienced and new."

"I guess you could call my husband, Al, an FNG then," says Sally with a smile. "How was your night otherwise?"

"Everything was fine until about 3 a.m."

"Yeah, then what happened?" "Well, the clock was sitting close to the edge of the shelf, and it fell off with a bang. Hero jumped up, screamed 'incoming,' grabbed the popcorn bowl, stuck it on his head and dived into the closet."

Could there be a moral to Hero's story? Maybe it's this: Don't mean nothin'. Hero is home. There it is.

Air Cavalrymen Aid ARVN's In Building Firebase

PHUOC VINH—Airmobility was just a vague concept to a battalion of men from the 2nd ARVN Airborne Brigade when they were airlifted to an isolated clearing 22 miles northeast of Tay Ninh.

Within 48 hours they had established a firebase and moved against the enemy with the same ground tactics and air support used by every line company in the airmobile 1st Cav.

"This is completely new to us," said Major Dudley McIver, senior advisor to the 3rd ARVN Airborne Battalion. "Previously we had to move in a mass. When you don't have much artillery and air support you need large numbers of troops for firepower. Of course, you lose the element of surprise."

The paratroopers now have that support. An ARVN 105mm battery at the battalion's firebase, 1st Cav helicopter gunships and 1st Cav artillery at nearby firebases are committed to the battalion's ground activity.

After taking 82mm mortar fire the first night at FSB Jackie, four line companies moved out at dawn in the four cardinal directions to seek out the enemy. Headquarters company cleared fields of fire, completed stringing the concertina wire, built bunkers and in other ways secured the base.

1st Cav Huey's and Chinook's brought in food, water and building machines. The division's 8th Engineers arrived the first day with bulldozers and other heavy equipment.

"We're here to build the TOC, the aid station and the berm," said PFC George Coles, one of the 50 combat engineers at the firebase. "After that it's their baby. We're showing them how to set up the wire and clear the area, but they're doing most of the work. The next time they'll be on their own."

At times the new firebase looked like an outdoor classroom. Infantry, artillery, logistics, communication and engineer officers from the Cav's 1st Brigade met their ARVN counterparts in informal discussions throughout the first day.

1st Cav commander, Major General E.B. Roberts, and 1st Brigade commander, Colonel Joseph Collins, had extensive discussions with 2nd ARVN Airborne Brigade Commander Colonel Tram Quoc Lich and 3rd Battalion Commander Lieutenant Colonel Le Van Phat.

The ARVN paratroopers got some individual instruction from the men of Company A, 8th Engineers.

"These guys can really work," said PFC Wayne Boss, who was demonstrating to several ARVN's the proper way to set up concertina wire. "All you have to do is get them started, then get out of the way."

Beyond the perimeter ARVN A-6 Skyraider planes began bombing an enemy bunker complex a mile away. Artillery from the firebase opened up as an ARVN unit radioed for support. Cav gunships went on station.

Vietnamization of the war, at least in this part of the 1st Cav's area of operation, is proceeding smoothly.



Clearing fields of fire at FSB Jackie, these ARVN paratroopers became proficient with the chain saw the first afternoon.



Senior battalion advisor Major Dudley McIver (left) and 1st Brigade Commander Colonel Joseph Collins confer with 3rd ARVN Airborne Battalion Commander Lieutenant Colonel Le Van Phat. Discussions between 1st Brigade officers and their ARVN counterparts took place throughout the first day of construction of FSB Jackie.

Story & Photos
By SP4 Tom Benic



An ARVN battery of 105mm howitzers provide the fire support necessary for the Airborne troopers to operate in company size units. Prior to working out of a firebase, the 3rd Airborne Battalion operated en masse, gaining firepower but forfeiting the element of surprise.



PFC Wayne Boss leads an ARVN work detail in setting up perimeter wire at FSB Jackie. Fifty combat engineers from Alpha Company, 8th Engineers helped the ARVN paratroopers establish their first fire support base.



Building a perimeter "night gate" takes muscle as well as knowhow. SP4 Robert McFall assists ARVN counterpart in this project. "They're learning fast" SP4 McFall said. "The next time they're on their own."

Our Choice . . .



Raquel Welch's picture appears nearly everywhere, and we figure it's got to be good for morale, a most important asset to Skytroopers in III Corps. So here she is again, men. Cut her out and nail her to the wall for posterity.

Miniature Choppers

Appear at Firebases

FSB BUTTONS — Helicopter construction at 1st Cav firebases is soaring, even if the choppers are not.

The Cobra gunships, Huey's and Chinook cargo helicopters taking shape in the boonies these days are, of course, plastic models—part of a USARV Special Services pilot project.

"This is really the first time we've taken the craft activities beyond the confines of a basecamp," said William Doherty, USARV Crafts Director for III and IV Corps. "We have some more projects in mind but want to see the reaction from the men in the field first."

1st Cav Special Services personnel at Bien Hoa delivered 270 boxes containing 5,400 kits in a life-size Chinook. Nine firebases, scattered throughout the Cav's 4,000 square mile area of operation were reached within a matter of hours.

The plastic models are packaged with elaborate instructions and take between three to six hours to construct, depending on the skill of the builder. Models

of B-52's, C-130's, various river craft, jeeps and trucks are also available.

But it's not surprising in the Army's first airmobile division that helicopters are by far the most popular.

Top Thinks

He's a PFC

By SP4 William Block

TAY NINH — First Sergeant William A. Allen hasn't changed much since he manned a machine gun in the Battle of the Bulge in 1944.

"He still thinks he's a PFC," insisted Captain Douglas A. Young, Commander of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry. "Whenever we hit contact he always goes up on point."

Take, for example, a series of actions for which he was awarded the Silver Star. When an enemy soldier was observed to the front of the 2nd platoon, Sergeant Allen fired at and chased the hostile into an ambush set by the 3rd platoon. The result was one enemy killed.

The next day he attempted to persuade two NVA regulars in a bunker to surrender. When no reply was heard, he crawled up to the bunker and eliminated its occupants with hand grenades.

That night the company's defensive position was attacked by sappers. Sergeant Allen left the security of his foxhole to encourage his men to throw hand grenades instead of giving away their positions with rifle fire. As a result few friendlies were hit, and the enemy was repelled.

On another occasion, Company C's 3rd platoon was pinned down in a bunker complex northeast of Fire Support Base Ike. "Most of the trouble," recounted Private First Class John P. Denk, "came from one bamboo-covered enemy position. Top joined us up front, figured out where the problem was, and said, 'I'm going to get this one.'"

"Then he disappeared into the bamboo. He spotted one NVA hiding behind a berm and shot him, then picked off two others. As he reached for another clip for his M-16, he took a round in his shoulder and had to return to the rear."

Upon being presented the Purple Heart, his fifth, by Colonel Joseph E. Collins, 1st Brigade Commander, the folksy sergeant responded, "It was a regular old show-down, just like in Dodge City."

Lt Desires

To See Sea

PHUOC VINH — An infantry officer who spent a year in the jungles of Vietnam plans to spend his next tour at sea.

"Sailing around the world is an adventure I've dreamt about all my life," said First Lieutenant David Spingath of Delta Company, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry. "I have the boat and my family is all for it. We should be at sea by Christmas."

LT Spingath plans to spend at least two years on his voyage. His parents, other members of the family and friends are expected to share various portions of the adventure.

The 1st Cav lieutenant took an early interest in sailing. He was helping his father build small pleasure craft when most boys are learning to ride bicycles.

"I formulated plans for the voyage while at the Marine Ecology Station at San Diego State College," he said, "but three months after graduation I was in the Army."

Recently his family acquired a fifty-one foot ketch equipped with a stateroom, three sleeping compartments, work shop, bar, head and shower facilities.

"Mexico and Australia have the highest priority on my intended stays," the lieutenant said. "After that, the ports I hit will depend on the wind, the tides, and the mood I'm in."

Lightning Assault Bolts into Basecamp

FSB BUTTONS — Hostile forces mounted a night air assault against the basecamp of the Cav's 2nd Brigade, but the camp's defenders failed to take a single enemy casualty.

The air "strike" was an electrical storm that sent brilliant bolts of lightning into the attack. One incoming "round" struck the camp's perimeter, causing an explosion that sent Skytroopers diving for cover. Ten claymore mines went off simultaneously as baffled defenders readied their weapons, not yet sure of their enemy's nature.

Upon realization of the non-human character of the adversary, it took several minutes to recover from the initial shock of thunderous, flashing onslaught.

No counter-lightning artillery rounds could be found in stock, and Fire Support Base Buttons settled back to normal. The remainder of the night passed without incident.

Skytrooper Finds Old Well—The Hard Way



Water streams off SP4 Edward Belec of the 1st Bn, 5th Cav, as he emerges with a little help from the mouth of an overgrown well. Despite the 20-foot fall, he was unhurt and soon continued on his mission.

QUAN LOI—Specialist Four Edward Belec jumped from the 1st Air Cavalry helicopter and scrambled after his platoon, expecting the unexpected. He got it.

Racing across the grass-covered ground he pulled an unintentional disappearing act.

"I jumped out of the chopper and started running," he said later. "After about four or five steps the ground under my feet disappeared."

Specialist Belec had fallen into an overgrown well, but he wasn't alone in his misery. As he struggled to keep afloat in the 20-foot deep well, he made the acquaintance of the well's other occupant, a rather perturbed three-foot-long snake.

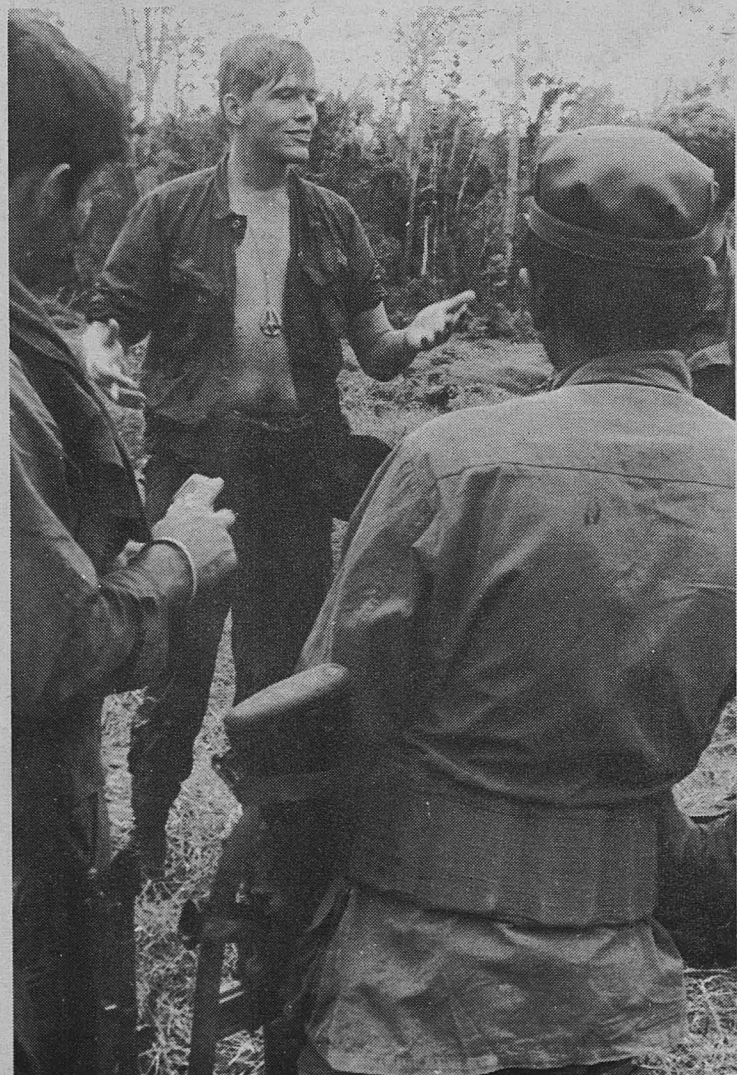
"Keep swimming, only 99 days left," someone shouted to him as he frantically treaded water. Quickly gathered fellow Skytroopers from Company E, 1st Battalion of the 5th Cavalry tried vainly to pull him up with a tree branch, but it was too short.

Soon his ingenious buddies laced three ponchos into a rope and pulled SP4 Belec to safety, retrieving his equipment with a grappling hook.

The snake? He elected to remain behind in the well . . . alone.



With fellow Skytrooper Belec suddenly 20 feet down a concealed well, members of Company E frantically try to fish him out.



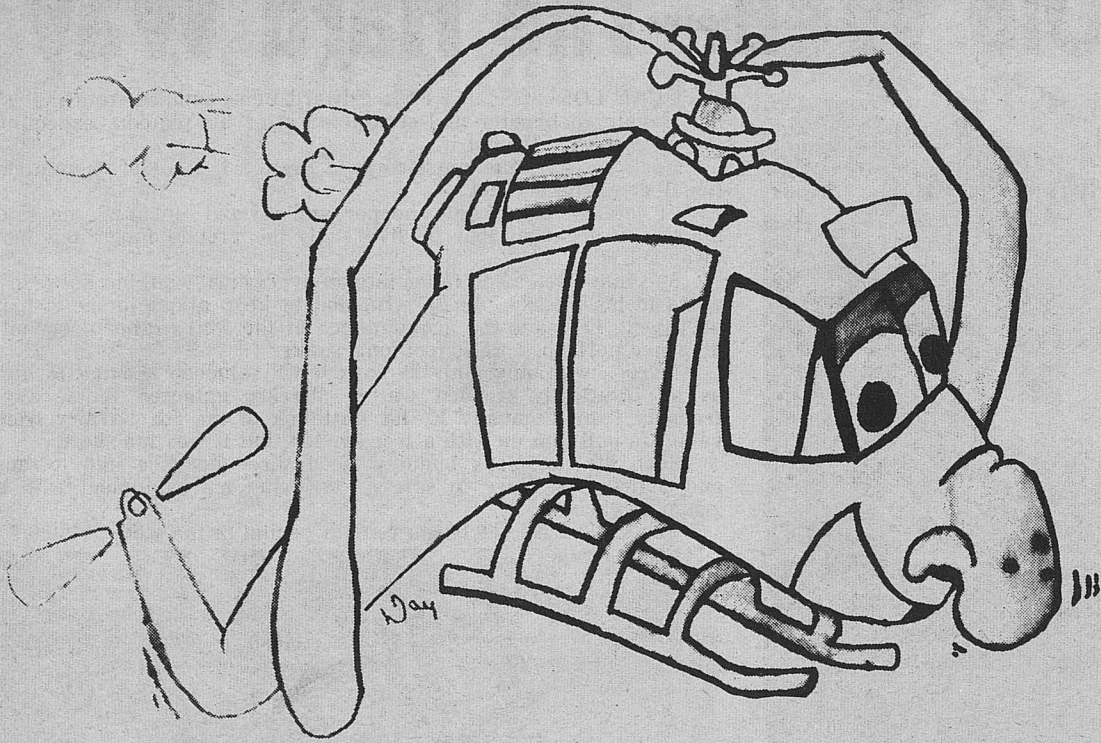
Wet from his unexpected drop into the well, SP4 Belec describes his experience to his rescuers.

Photos By
SP4
Bill Sharpe



An exhausted and relieved SP4 Belec wonders why that well couldn't have been somewhere else.

Airmobile Bloodhound . . .



(Art by SP4 Dennis Day)
Prowling over the jungle, the Cav's "sniffing" Huey noses out enemy positions.

Vung Tau R&R Popular For In-Country Relaxing

The French call it Cape Saint Jacques; the Vietnamese call it Vung Tau; and the Americans haven't had time to call it anything less than great.

Located 77 miles east of Saigon (15 minutes via C-130 flight), Vung Tau, a one time resort area for the French, has become a serene Rest and Recuperation center for weary American soldiers.

Few spots in Vietnam could offer more to get away from dreary front lines, rear lines, and mess lines—as more troops are finding out every day.

The picturesque natural setting has been matched by an excellent R&R center for the use of enlisted personnel, and 1st three grade officers, on a quota basis.

Because of deluxe military facilities, Vung Tau has been

turned into an inexpensive three days of sun, sand, and surf which compares favorably to a \$500-\$700 bash in Bangkok or Tokyo.

Billeting, meals, and maid service at the modern R&R center are free of charge. The food tastes too much like military fare, but is at least served on individual plates in an air conditioned room.

The R&R center also offers PX, library, free movies, and a chapel—but, anyone spending more than five minutes at the library has already received a little bit too much fun.

If there is one never ending quality at Vung Tau, it is sun. All day long, troops looking like civilians for the first time in months hop military buses for a short ride to the back beach. The water is always a little

rougher there, and the bikini-clad Vietnamese beauties a little groovier on the back beach. The water is warm, and swimming, fishing, boating, and water skiing are offered daily.

Cav-PFs Discover VC Weapons Cache

By CPT Peter Zastrow

FSB BUTTONS—Information from ralliers led a combined force of American and Vietnamese soldiers to two completely assembled enemy mortars and a cache of ammunition.

The combined force, composed of the elite Provincial Reconnaissance Unit (PRU) from Phuoc Long Province, and the 2nd Platoon of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry, were reacting to information supplied by a rallier from the village of Phu Vang, an unmapped, VC-controlled hamlet six miles northeast of Fire Support Base (FSB) Buttons.

Lift ships from Company A, 227th Aviation Battalion, combat assaulted the force into the area near FSB Judie, base of the 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry, and the soldiers began a ground reconnaissance. Spotting a small village almost hidden by the dense jungle undergrowth, the two-platoon sized force executed a classical envelopment maneuver and swept into the village.

Several detainees were taken during the ensuing sweep. They were extracted from the area and sent to the Chieu Hoi Center at Song Be, while the Skytroopers and PRU troops continued through the area.

In mid-afternoon, making maximum use of noise discipline, a training point which had been emphasized on previous joint operations with the PRU, the combined force found five Viet Cong. They opened fire, and the VC fled.

The retreating enemy left behind an 82mm mortar and a 60mm mortar, complete with baseplates and sights, and in excellent condition. Sixty 82mm rounds and 30 60mm rounds, hastily covered with brush, were found.

Employing their intimate knowledge of the terrain and the enemy tactics, the PRU also uncovered numerous enemy booby traps in the vicinity.

191st MI Watches Charlie's Moves

By SP5 Ed Freudenburg

PHUOC VINH—"Hey Charlie, don't look now but the Cav's got a 'tail' on you."

At least that is the way it may seem to enemy units being "covered" by the 191st Military Intelligence Detachment of the FIRST TEAM.

Military intelligence gathering is not a "cloak and dagger" operation in the 191st MI, but rather a concentrated effort in coordination and analysis of information gathered on the enemy from several sources.

"Over 90 per cent of our daily operation is not involved with secret 'James Bond' type work but concerned with more routine analysis of information received through division channels," said Major Clarice M. Brintnall, detachment commander.

"Most of the men in the detachment are college graduates and all of them sign up for intelligence work," said MAJ Brintnall. "We probably have more college graduates in our unit than in any other Cav unit of the same size."

In the order of battle section of the detachment, specialists and PFC's have the opportunity to think ahead of the enemy to analyze where Charlie will probably turn up tomorrow or a week later.

The analysis section is one of the top sources of information on enemy troop activity that is given to division commanders who then must decide what action to take against the NVA.

Taking the barest facts, MI personnel are able to tie in several bits of information to create an overall picture of what is happening in the Cav's big AO at any particular time.

"We are also in charge of interrogation of prisoners and Hoi Chanh to obtain additional information," said the major. "We give prisoners the most thorough examination for information that can then be used by field commanders immediately."

Helping in the interrogation of prisoners and Hoi Chanh is the 2nd ARVN Intelligence Detachment, which is attached to the 191st MI. The ARVN's work closely with the American interviewers to find the exact meaning of prisoner statements.

"We also maintain a constant contact with the local government in each area of our operation for additional intelligence gathered by the South Vietnamese," Major Brintnall said.

"Another job of the MI is hamlet evaluation for use by battalion level command. Battalion commanders are briefed as to what to expect when one of their units moves through a native village or hamlet.

"We turn up some information that later produces some pretty spectacular results for the division. Our operation is such that our Specialist Fours and PFC's can see what their work has accomplished when the division moves into an area and discovers a large enemy basecamp or complex."

THEY COVER the CAV

LIFE

The New York Times

CBS

Newsweek

UPI

TIME

AP Writer
Bob Ohman

By SP5 Joe Kamalick

"It was dramatic, being in Khe San when the Cav ground troops arrived. It was 9 a.m. and the Marines were getting ready to move out. Instead, they stood and gave the incoming cavalrymen cans of grapefruit juice."

That is how Bob Ohman of Associated Press remembers the morning at embattled and weary Khe San when the cavalry broke through to relieve the besieged base. For Ohman it was neither the first nor the last meeting he would have with the Cavalry.

"The first operation I was on with the Cav was west of Pleiku in the Au Shau. That was after I first came over here in March of 1966. After that there were many, many other times with the Cav."

Now, long after Khe San and after more than three years of combat coverage and war watching, "war at this point is more political, both on a national and international level, than it ever has been—and it has always been political."

In covering the war, Ohman has found many moments "that have been boring, but otherwise it is challenging."

"And as far as America is concerned, Vietnam is the number one story. For example," said Ohman, "the war is on the front pages of most newspapers seven days a week, but what happens in Paris will make it on page one maybe twice a week."

"Whatever the political wind, the Americans here have done a good job. In fact, I've never known an American force of a company or larger size to take a defeat in battle."

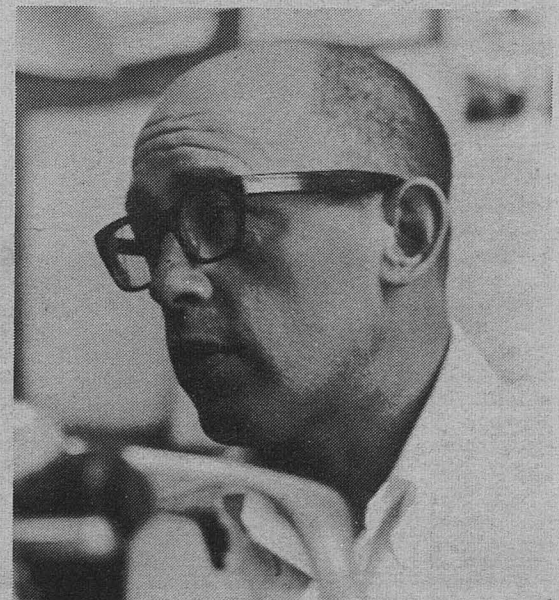
Ohman believes that "the basic premises of this war are right. And I think that the escalation of the war came from the other side and that the U.S. reacted to that."

As to the future, Ohman, by any judgement a qualified observer, had this to say: "Without anything constructive from Paris, the war will become a police action, trying to get the VC

infrastructure out. The pacification program is the key. Unless the rural areas and popular forces are secure and the VC infrastructure eliminated, military action cannot solve the war at all."

"It will take time and patience to see it out—both militarily and personally. And the outcome very much depends on the South Vietnamese Army."

Ohman, 40, hails from the Colorado town of Steamboat Springs. He has not been home to Steamboat Springs in twenty years. "You always tell yourself that you'll leave in six months or in a year, but then something comes up and you stick around to see it through."



AP Reporter Bob Ohman