

Skytroops Pulverize NVA Force

2790

By SP4 Tom Benic

Hours before President Nixon was to speak to the nation on the War in Vietnam, Communist forces shattered a 10 week lull with vicious mortar and sapper attacks against three 1st Air Cavalry Division fire bases.

The enemy was mauled in each attack, losing 146 men during the night's fighting. Helicopter gunships relentlessly pursued the retreating forces in the hours after dawn (Nov 4) to boost the total enemy dead to

269 for the 24-hour period.

The early morning attacks were tipped off (Nov 3) by a 1st Cav Ranger Team that spotted 45 NVA with AK-47's and carrying 107mm rockets near Fire Support Base (FSB) Buttons. Without revealing their position the team called in artillery and helicopter gunship support from Troop B, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, to kill 41 as night set in.

The 2nd Brigade Scouts also made contact near FSB Buttons earlier in the day, killing 21

NVA with support from Bravo Troop.

The enemy struck first at FSB Ike, 12 miles north northeast of Tay Ninh, with sappers breaching the wire at 12:45 a.m. during a mortar barrage.

Nearly simultaneous attacks were initiated at 1:30 a.m. against FSB Ellen, six miles west of Song Be and nearby FSB Buttons.

At FSB Ike, 12 sappers quickly overran one bunker but got no further thanks to an alert mess

sergeant who downed one sapper as he ran through the nearby kitchen, then emptied 200 rounds from his M16 into the bunker during a pitched battle at a range of 10 yards.

Helicopter gunships, an Air Force Shadow plane and artillery from several nearby fire bases blasted the perimeter throughout the night. At dawn, 48 enemy bodies were found in the area and five prisoners were taken.

"I've got to give the ARVN's at FSB Vicki credit," said Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Woods, Jr., commander of the 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry manning FSB Ike. "They were giving us plenty of artillery support while taking incoming at the same time."

Sappers also breached the wire at FSB Buttons, 70 miles to the northeast, but were quickly driven back. Artillerymen and clerks from the 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry found themselves fighting from the berm.

"Probably 90 per cent of my men had never been in a real firefight," said Lieutenant Colonel William Harrison, commander of the 1st Battalion, 77th Artillery. "Their response was outstanding."

The enemy lost 63 men in the attack while two Americans were killed and 26 wounded.

"We were watching the light show at Buttons and wondering when we were going to get hit," said Captain Rocco Alexander,

commander of Company E, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry at FSB Ellen. "Two minutes later we got our answer."

The sapper attack at Ellen was stopped short of the third strand of wire as helicopter gunships, direct fire artillery and Air Force jets strafed the perimeter.

1st Air Cavalrymen killed 35 enemy in the battle, beating back the ground attack in the first hour. Sporadic small arms fire was received until 4:30 a.m. There were no Americans killed; 14 were wounded.

At first light hunter-killer helicopter teams from Troop A, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry spotted .51 caliber machine guns and several individuals two miles from FSB Ike. They engaged with Aerial Rocket Artillery and called in artillery and a jet air strike to kill 16 enemy.

Helicopters from Troop B, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry killed five NVA near Bu Dop. Then a LOH took .51 caliber fire. Engaging the area with ARA and machine gun fire, the birds killed five more and destroyed the weapons.

The 1st Cav counter-offensive on enemy withdrawal routes netted 40 more NVA the following day (Nov 5).

Action tapered off during the rest of the week but the total enemy killed (474) was the highest since August 12. Ten Air Cavalrymen died in the action while 85 were wounded.



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DISCOM Ceremony . . .



(U.S. Army Photo)

Colonel Tom M. Nicholson (left), new commanding officer of Division Support Command (DISCOM) accepts the unit colors from Major General E.B. Roberts at a ceremony at Bien Hoa. Colonel Nicholson came to Vietnam with the Cav in 1965 after serving as a signal officer with the 11th Air Assault Division. A senior parachutist, the colonel served as commander of the Cav's 13th Signal Battalion and as deputy signal officer at USARV during his first tour in Vietnam. He attended the National War College before rejoining the Cav this fall.

Helicopters Chase Charlie

Withdrawal Routes Shut

By CPT Richard Shelton

TAY NINH — "Man, it was just like a turkey shoot," said LOH pilot Warrant Officer William McIntosh (Seattle, Wash.), as he described his part in the aerial reconnaissance activities of Troop A, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, following the attack on Fire Support Base Ike.

A total of three "pink teams," Mr. McIntosh and Cobra gunship pilot First Lieutenant Steve Justus (Center, Mo.), harassed the remainder of the enemy battalion-plus as they withdrew to the north. After 12 hours of reconnaissance by the air cavalrymen, 32 enemy lay dead

along the withdrawal routes outside Ike.

"We caught the first group in a trench line about 300 meters north of Ike," said 1LT Justus. "Then we just followed the trails to the north and kept picking them off."

Alpha Troop helicopters accounted for 20 of the total kills, while four were killed by artillery, six by 1st Brigade Forward Air Controllers (FACs) and air strikes, and two more by the rifle platoon of Alpha Troop.

"As they got farther away from the Fire Base, they started grouping together and heading for several small bunker complexes. Only one group fired at

us, the rest appeared to be taken by surprise," said Mr. McIntosh.

Lieutenant Justus expended all ammo from his Cobra gunship six times during the day, and other teams in the area did likewise, as enemy were spotted continually along trails and in or near bunkers. "One of them even looked up at me like he didn't believe we would shoot him," said Mr. McIntosh.

Four tactical air strikes and several artillery missions were fired on sightings made by the air cavalrymen, accounting for the destruction of numerous bunkers, uncovering trench line, and destroying one .51 Caliber machinegun emplacement.

One-Man Battle

Counter-Attack Kills 6 Enemy

By SP4 Dennis Keenon

FSB BUTTONS — The NVA soldier lobbed a Chicom grenade into Bunker 19 and Master Sergeant William R. Ikner of the 1st Air Cavalry Division covered it with his chest to shield two wounded GI's.

He waited. The grenade was a dud.

Ikner then launched a one-man counter-attack, killing six NVA in defense of Fire Support Base Buttons.

"It was a tremendous feat of personal bravery," said Major Robert DeFavaro, the 2nd Brigade adjutant who witnessed the heroics.

For his actions, Ikner earned the Silver Star, presented to him by Brigadier General George W. Casey, assistant division commander, in impact award ceremonies.

Ikner, an operations sergeant in the S-3 section of the 2nd Brigade, was moving toward the

northwest corner of the main defense line when the early morning NVA assault began. As he approached, three rocket propelled grenade rounds smashed into Bunker 19.

"I ran to the bunker when the rounds hit," Ikner said. "There were two men badly hurt and I called for the medics."

Simultaneously, the hand grenade landed in the bunker and Ikner fell on it. "It's a miracle it didn't go off," he said.

Ikner recovered and used the M-16 of a wounded Skytrooper to kill six NVA soldiers who had charged onto the berm a few meters away.

A first light check by Ikner revealed one of the six dead NVA was armed with satchel charges.

"I walked back to Bunker 19," Ikner said, "picked up the dud Chicom and threw it out. The damned thing exploded."

The blast caused no injuries.

Commander's Message

This message was sent to 1st Cav commanders from Major General E. B. Roberts, division commander, following enemy attacks on three Skytrooper basecamps Nov. 4:

"During the past 24 hours the division has performed in a magnificent manner and inflicted heavy damage on the enemy with 269 NVA killed and seven prisoners against losses of four friendly killed. This kill ratio of nearly 70 to one and an over-all ratio of 33 to one for the month of October demonstrates real skill and professionalism. Please convey to each member of your command my personal congratulations and appreciation for a job well done. The commanding general of II Field Force also passes along his compliments for your outstanding performance."

Wrapped Up . . .



(U.S. Army Photo)

PFC James C. Morrison, 1st Cav trooper from Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry, is all wrapped up in his work hauling a roll of chain link fence during the dismantling of FSB Jerri.

PSYOPS Message: Take Malaria Pills

FSB BUTTONS — 1st Air Cavalrymen couldn't believe their ears as a female voice floated down from a PSYOPS helicopter.

"I've heard that the Cav is called the FIRST TEAM," the helicopter borne, sex-filled voice breathed. "First in Manila, first in Vietnam. Let's not be first in malaria."

The PSYOPS mission, flown

over all the fire support bases in the 2nd Brigade area, was designed to declare war on malaria. "Take your malaria pills" was the primary message.

The operation is conducted just like a mission against the enemy. The chopper circles the base with loudspeaker blaring. When the tape has played through, the chopper moves onto the next firebase.

NCOC School Training Pays Off for Skyrooper

By 1LT Donald B. Ashton

TAY NINH — That pre-Vietnam training at the Noncommissioned Officer Candidate (NCOC) School is highly effective is illustrated by the professional competence and personal bravery of 1st Cav Staff Sergeant Clarence M. Self, of the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry.

In an action about one mile northwest of Fire Support Base (FSB) White two NVA soldiers had SSG Self's entire squad pinned down. He swiftly eliminated the two soldiers in their bunker, and rescued a wounded comrade lying in the middle of the contact area.

"It was the second time we had made contact that day," SSG Self said. "We had just taken a re-supply. As we moved out our rear security spotted six NVA coming up on us."

"When we opened fire two of them jumped in a bunker about 30 meters away from us. The others ran away. They had us pinned down for 45 minutes. The bunker must have been full of ammo. Our CO said we had to get them out of there."

"I asked anyone if they were going to go with me. Two guys volunteered. We tried to circle them, but they spotted the first man, one of our squad leaders, and he was hit. I got to their flank, crawled on top of the bunker and dropped a couple frags in there. After pulling the squad leader out, the platoon leader and I went back to check out the bunker. The NVA were blown away."

As a result of the action SSG Self was awarded the Silver Star. He added an Oak Leaf Cluster during a recent period of continual contact near FSB Ike. His unit, Bravo Company, was engaged almost daily by NVA forces vastly superior in size. Twice during that period it was estimated that the company was battling battalion-sized elements.

"We had been in heavy contact the day before," he recalled. "The enemy was defending a bunker complex and we were trying to move in against at least a company-size unit. We worked over the area with artillery and air strikes and moved in again the second day."

"They were still there. When they hit us, I got my people into a close perimeter, but we were pinned down by automatic weapons fire. We could shoot, but we

couldn't move. Artillery was coming in and "Blue Max" Cobras were on station. I was wounded by a frag while we were waiting for an air strike to come in.

"Then two NVA crawled up on us. The first sergeant (1SG David H. Mc Nerney, a Medal of Honor winner) and I got them with frags. We pulled back into a more secure area and I was MEDEVACed."

Artists Program Starts Dec. 15

The 1st Cav's newly-created combat art program will give qualified artists a chance to participate in a 90-day TDY period with the division Information Office.

Quarterly, beginning Dec. 15, five artists will be selected from applicants to join the program for three-month periods.

"The program is designed to contribute to unit pride and to provide a unique, authentic and permanent record depicting the life of the soldier in Vietnam," said Major J.D. Coleman, division information officer.

Applicants should be competent artist-illustrators with a foundation in life drawing, composition and color.

Artists will record military operations and mission functions of the FIRST TEAM, including training and support activities, logistical operations, administrative work and command post operations.

Applications must contain: name, rank, SSN, unit, DEROS, ETS, age, educational background and a detailed account of experience in the art field.

Samples of previous work or field sketches must accompany applications and be submitted to the information office no later than Dec. 8.

... For God And Country

By Chaplain (MAJ) Ronald S. Bezanson
1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry Chaplain

Life is filled with voices. At birth there are the soft voices of parents and the lusty cry of other infants. These give way to the happy chatter of children, the instructive tones of teachers and pastors, the commanding tones of the coach, the drill sergeant, the CO.

Each voice evokes a response within us — favorable or unfavorable, love or hate, obedience or rebellion.

There is one voice that stands out from all the rest. It is a still, small voice, the voice of God. If one has never heard God speak, one has never truly lived, for life is dependent on the initial and continuing experience of

communicating with God by the Holy Spirit.

God speaks to man through His book, the Bible. He speaks to man in the quietness of prayer and meditation. He speaks to man from the vastness and orderliness of the universe. He speaks in the beauty of nature. He speaks words of assurance, words of comfort, words of challenge, words of love. He calls man forth to heroic action.

God says, "Be still, and know that I am God. I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the Earth." (Psalm 46:10 RSV) "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28:20 KJV)

Music Lovers . . .



(U.S. Army Photo by SP4 Tom Benic)

Both young and old Vietnamese music lovers take time out from work and play to hear the Skyrooper Band perform during a MEDCAP in a village near Song Be. After intently listening to the band's performance, the villagers were treated by doctors and medics of the Cav's 2nd Brigade.



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Cav's Robin Hood . . .



(U.S. Army Photo by PFC Dennis Thornton)
When the NVA attacked Fire Support Base Buttons, Specialist Five Graciano Hernandez grabbed his flak jacket, helmet and trusty bow and arrows and headed for the action. The next morning, only four of SP5 Hernandez's arrows could be found on the Buttons perimeter.

NVA Gets Shaft From GI Archer

By PFC Dennis Thornton

FSB BUTTONS—The U.S. arsenal of weapons is an extensive one, but NVA sappers must have been a bit shaken when Specialist Five Graciano Hernandez pulled out his trusty bow and arrow in the defense of Fire Support Base (FSB) Buttons during a ground attack.

"It must have blown Charlie's mind seeing those arrows coming at him," Sp5 Hernandez laughed. A cook with the 1st Battalion, 77th Artillery, he manned the perimeter with other cooks and clerks from Headquarters Battery in the defense of this 1st Air Cavalry firebase.

"I had very little ammo handy, so I grabbed my bow and arrow," he explained. "I've hunted with a bow before but never against something that shot back."

The action was the first firefight for most of the clerks and cooks along the berm at Buttons. They killed 63 NVA with more conventional firepower including artillery and helicopter gunships. Specialist Hernandez is claiming one NVA wounded.

"I shot eight arrows but we could only find four the next morning," the specialist said. "I just can't figure out what happened to the other four."

Engineers Patch Bu Dop Airstrip

BU DOP — Dodging NVA rockets and mortars, 1st Air Cavalry Engineers wasted little time in patching up the heavily-hit Bu Dop airstrip after the recent night of intense shelling.

Moving with Cav-like swiftness, two squads from Company C, 8th Engineer Battalion, arrived on the scene at dawn following the night of mortaring. Repair equipment was ferried in by CH-47 Chinook helicopters and the versatile CH-54 Flying Crane.

While artillery and cobra gunships searched the area for enemy guns, the engineers went to work on the pockmarked runway, which had been bracketed by the NVA artillery. The job was completed in less than two days.

The repair operation was under the direction of First Lieutenant Kenneth L. Brooks who had nothing but the highest praise for the performance of his men.

"Working under the most adverse conditions of combat," said the lieutenant, "these men did one helluva job. The men know how important the airstrip is to the troops around here needing resupply. They worked night and day to accomplish the mission, and not once did I ever hear a complaint."

PHUOC VINH — The 1st Cav's long-range heavy artillery — the B-52 crews who daily pummel enemy concentrations in northern III Corps — came down for a closer look as guests of the division.

"I've been in the Air Force for 13 years and prior to today my only association with the Army was at the PX," said Major William Mohr, Jr. "Seeing how the Army functions at the firebase level gives you a better per-

Artillery Control Center Guides Planes Past Fire

PHUOC VINH — Aircraft pilots have enough to think about flying over enemy territory without worrying about meeting up with a stray artillery round.

The 1st Cav's Artillery Warning Control Center (AWCC) at Phuoc Vinh has the job of keeping over 2,000 aircraft out of the path of thousands of artillery shells each month.

And they're good at it, with an excellent safety record since the center opened in early 1967.

A call comes in over one of the four "fire pushes" and the AWCC men monitor. "We have artillery firing on a heading of 160 degrees with a 'max ord' of 6,000 feet and max range of 8.2 kilometers, impacting in grid 8307."

Within seconds, one of the three enlisted men is on the radio warning all aircraft in the area to stay clear of the fire base where artillery is being fired. If a pilot requests further assistance, AWCC will give him directions which will take him safely around the area of fire.

"Pilots put themselves in our hands as they're going through our area," said Captain Roger Fiske, who is in charge of the 3 p.m. to 3 a.m. shift. AWCC members have even "talked down" helicopters in times when communication broke down with

airport tower personnel.

"We have many close friends who are pilots," said Captain Fiske. "Our people are authorized to wear a special patch so pilots will recognize them."

Besides guiding planes and choppers around artillery on fire support bases, AWCC has the job of coordinating area clearances with the troops on the ground, approving areas for air strikes and Cobra aerial rocket artillery and keep track of no-fire zones.

When rockets and mortar rounds begin flying toward Phuoc Vinh, instead of hitting the floor, AWCC workers spring into another part of their job — coordination of counter rocket and mortar fire.

Intelligence second guesses Charlie and gives AWCC possible launching sites. The control center directs anything from 40mm "Dusters" to powerful eight inch or 175mm artillery toward the enemy locations.

Sometimes, artillery fired on enemy rocket locations can hit Charlie before he even gets set up.

"We have a real unusual situation here," CPT Fiske explained. "Everyone has to know what everyone else is saying. We have to be in constant touch with everyone."

Professionalism is what counts, CPT Fiske added. "If we have incoming, everyone has to work together very closely and rapidly."

NCO Foils Snack Thief

FSB IKE — Sergeant First Class Ivan Ronda was awakened by a noise in the mess hall and soon learned that it wasn't some GI pilfering a midnight snack.

"We were eyeball to eyeball for a split second before I let him have it," the sergeant said, referring to the RPG-toting NVA intruder. "Then all hell broke loose with mortars hitting everywhere. When I crawled to the front door and saw all kinds of guys crawling over the berm I just went crazy."

Sergeant Ronda emptied 200 rounds from his M16 into the berm, killing 10 NVA in a pitched battle at a range of 10 yards.

With the vanguard of the sapper attack smashed, 1st Cav firepower including helicopter gunships, artillery from nearby fire bases and an Air Force shadow plane began to take its toll. By dawn 54 enemy bodies were found in the area.

Repairing Runway . . .



(U.S. Army Photo by SP4 Robert Sharp)
Two squads from Company C, 8th Engineer Battalion, patch up the heavily-hit Bu Dop airstrip following a night of intense shelling. The 1st Cav engineers worked around the clock for two days repairing the pock-marked runway.

B-52 Pilots View Bomb Damage

PHUOC VINH — The 1st Cav's long-range heavy artillery — the B-52 crews who daily pummel enemy concentrations in northern III Corps — came down for a closer look as guests of the division.

"I've been in the Air Force for 13 years and prior to today my only association with the Army was at the PX," said Major William Mohr, Jr. "Seeing how the Army functions at the firebase level gives you a better perspective on the team effort in Vietnam."

Two B-52 crews and Air Force escorts — 14 men in all — got a good look at impact areas while aboard low-flying Huey helicopters. Most couldn't wait to get into the cockpit of a Cobra gunship.

"This is something we really look forward to," said Captain Sherman Ross. "From 33,000 feet usually all we can see is clouds. Everyone tells us we're hurting the enemy, but there's nothing like seeing for yourself."

The crews were greeted by 1st Cav Deputy Commander Brigadier General George W. Casey. Following an intelligence and tactical briefing, the crews were given a tour of the Division Tactical Operations Center (DTOC).

"I can't fully convey the importance of your mission," Lieutenant Colonel Robert Hannas

(G-2) told the crews. "Without B-52's in this large AO with its triple canopy jungle, we'd have a difficult time fulfilling our mission."

After a briefing at the 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry headquarters, the crews split up for tours of the 1st and 3rd Brigade AO's.

"I've been flying over Vietnam for four tours now," said Captain Eaton Robinson. "This is my first time on the ground."

Cav Convoy Makes Trip To Song Be

FSB BUTTONS—A major 1st Air Cavalry Division convoy carried more than 200 truckloads of building supplies from Phuoc Vinh to Fire Support Base Buttons, home of the Cav's 2nd Brigade, near Song Be.

The building materials are being used for construction and other improvements at FSB Buttons.

The caravan, which included armored escort vehicles, elements of the 545th Military Police Company and several ARVN trucks, rambled across the countryside, covering the 40 miles in about six hours.

Cobra and Huey gunships escorted the convoy, watching the road sides for suspected enemy movement.

Halfway through the journey, a Vietnamese civilian truck, traveling five minutes ahead of the convoy, hit an NVA land mine.

With the Cav vehicles halted, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Hannas, G-2, and Captain Carl Woodruff, 31st Engineers executive officer, probed loose soil near suspected enemy mine locations in front of the lead element.

The search didn't uncover any mines, and the convoy finished its trip to Song Be without further incident.

Photos by:
MAJ J.D. Coleman
SP4 Vic Fitzwater



Break Time

Skytroopers (above) take a break before the signal to "move out" is given at the Phuoc Vinh starting point for the convoy to Song Be and Fire Support Base Buttons. Material delivered by convoy was to be used for construction and improvements at FSB Buttons.



Long Road

Part of the more than 200 trucks and armored escort vehicles (left) carrying building supplies to the 2nd Brigade's headquarters at Fire Support Base Buttons ramble through the countryside.

Traffic Cop

Sergeant Delton Hockley (above) directs traffic out of Phuoc Vinh for the long 40 miles to Fire Support Base Buttons. Sergeant Hockley was part of the 545th MP Company detachment assigned to guide the convoy through villages and hamlets on the route.

Mine Probe

With the convoy halted, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Hannas (right), 1st Cav G-2, and Captain Carl Woodruff, 31st Engineers executive officer, gently probe the loose soil around a suspected enemy mine location in front of the lead element. The search did not uncover any enemy mines.

Five Survivors After Air Strike

QUAN LOI—Five Viet Cong sympathizers, the only known survivors of air strikes destroying a Communist bunker complex five miles northwest of Song Be, were detained by the "Blues" of Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry.

Aerial reconnaissance teams discovered the bunker complex hidden in thick jungle with heavy canopy. Air strikes were called in. When the smoke lifted, a platoon of infantry from the 1st of the 9th stationed at Quan Loi, home of the 3rd Brigade of the 1st Air Cavalry Division, was inserted into the area by lift ships of the squadron.

Under the cover of air support provided by Cobras and scout helicopters of the squadron, the "Blues" began their search through the maze of bunkers and hooches. They soon discovered that the Air Force jets had done their work well. The bunkers were almost completely destroyed.

Some food was found, mainly rice and dried vegetables, but no enemy soldiers were found, dead or alive. Large amounts of blood on the floor of the complex led the men to believe that at least two and possibly more enemy had been trapped by the cave-ins.

to hear the cries of a young child. Looking further into the complex, they discovered two girls about 18 years old and three young children.

Before being taken to Fire Support Base Buttons the detainees aided the "Blues" by showing them through many of the tunnels of the system. Again the search was stopped by cave-ins.

After insuring that the complex was empty and destroying anything that could be used by the enemy, the men were extracted and returned to their base.

Aerial teams of scout helicopters and Cobras continued to search the area for the enemy.

SFC Ha Thankful For Move South

FSB JAMIE — It was in December of 1954 when his father decided to move the family to the South. Vietnam was divided into two parts after settlement of the French-Indochina War, and Tran Ngoc Ha, then 13, wanted to stay home.

"We were a refugee family," he said. "I wanted to stay, but my father said we must get away from the Communists. Today, I am very grateful that we came."

Sergeant First Class Ha is now chief interpreter and interrogator for the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry. He has served with the 1st Air Cavalry since it arrived in Vietnam.

SFC Ha was offered a job in Saigon that would have enabled him to be near his wife and nine-

month-old son, but he turned it down.

"I would rather stay forward than in the rear, because everyone here thinks like me, that peace is soon coming," he said.

Lieutenant Sam Davis, intelligence officer at Fire Support Base (FSB) Jamie, feels that SFC Ha thinks he can better serve the interests of his country by being in the field.

"He told me, 'every minute out here is hell, but I must stay.' He's quite a man," said 1LT Davis.

When SFC Ha joined the army, he was taught English and military subjects at the Armed Forces Language School in Saigon. After being assigned to the 1st Cav, he was trained in interrogating and interpreting by the 191st Military Intelligence Detachment.

Scout Helicopter Versatile Aircraft

TAY NINH — It's not often you find one aircraft performing low-level reconnaissance, MEDEVAC and ammo resupply all within a matter of 30 minutes. Particularly not an LOH.

Unusual though it may be, all three missions were performed by a 1st Air Cavalry scout helicopter piloted by Warrant Officer Thomas Smith. The action was in support of sharp contact involving Company D, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry approximately six kilometers southwest of Fire Support Base Ike.

Delta Company was in contact three times between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. and had moved to a pick-up zone for emergency ammo resupply and MEDEVAC. Heavy enemy ground fire thwarted an initial resupply attempt, and MEDEVAC looked doubtful due to the volume of enemy ground fire and the size of the PZ.

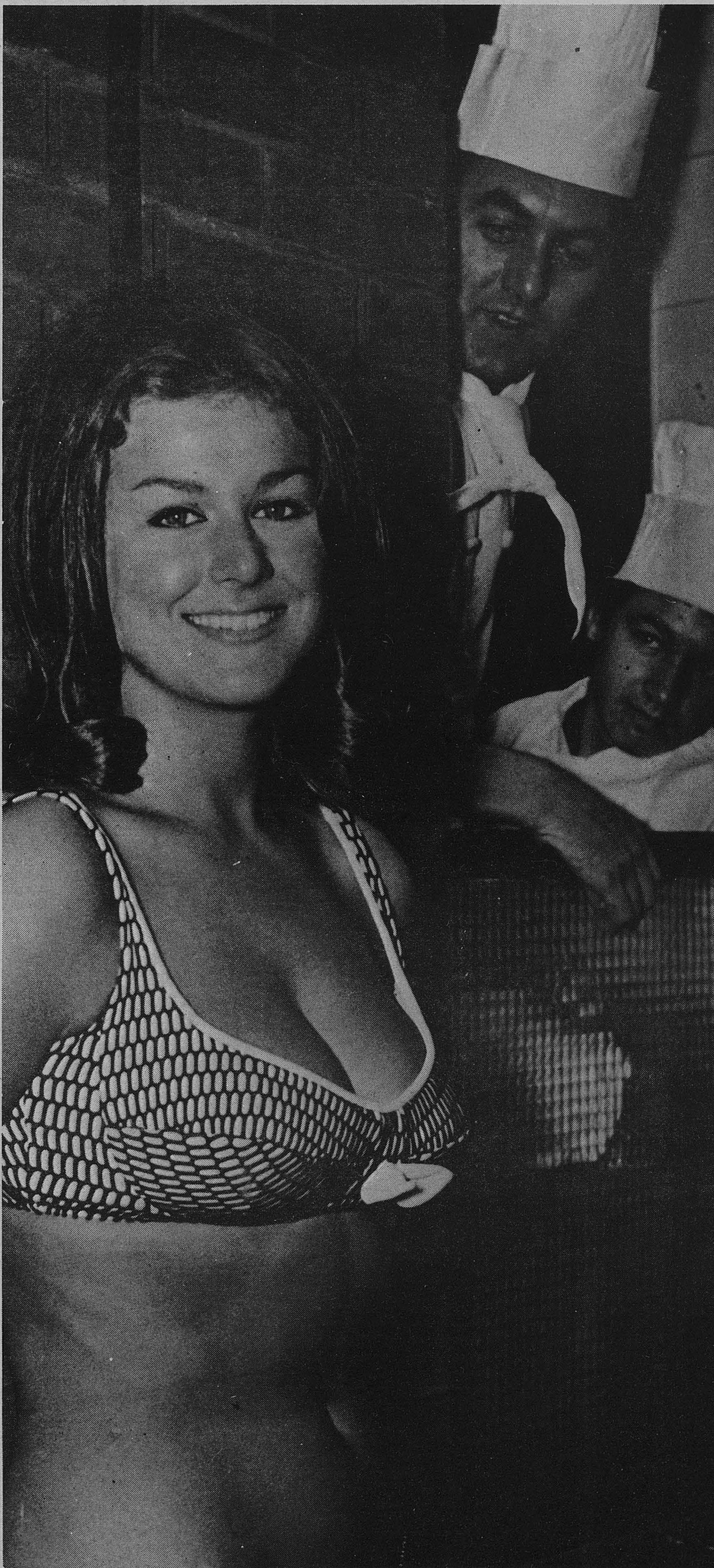
"We were flying recon in support of the company and got the word that they had a couple of seriously wounded troops down there," said Warrant Officer Smith, a pint-sized 22-year-old scout pilot for the 1st Brigade's Aviation Platoon.

"He had room for a couple of passengers, so he moved into the PZ, hovering about three feet off the deck," said WO1 Ron McNevin, who piloted the LOH flying cover for Smith. Both ships were receiving heavy AK fire during the action.

The two wounded troopers boarded and the chopper headed for the 45th Surgical Hospital at Tay Ninh.

The action possibly saved the lives of two Skytroopers and, in addition, illustrated what flexibility and imagination can produce in airmobile operations.

Happy Thanksgiving . . .



(AP Photo)

As Thanksgiving rolls around and days pass by in "Cav Country," Skytroopers will be treated to a festive meal with all the trimmings. Wishing you could be with her (or your families) for that gourmet is former "Miss Great Britain," Carole Fletcher. Two googly-eyed cooks (GI types?) look Miss Fletcher over from the rear . . . and seemingly enjoy what they see. Have a safe, productive and happy holiday, gentlemen.

1st Brigade Artillerymen Smear 'Charlie's Dignity'



Photo-Story by
SP4 Ron Merrill

Fire Mission! The call comes to the 1st Brigade's Fire Direction Center from an artillery liaison officer on a forward fire support base. The FDC jumps into action.

TAY NINH—A sign hangs in the 1st Brigade's Fire Direction Center (FDC): Artillery lends dignity to what would otherwise be a vulgar brawl.

The dignity of the 1st Cav artillerymen must denote their equipment and their methods. There isn't much dignity in the pace of their jobs.

Inside the heavily sandbagged bunker, Captain James Bowers, fire direction officer for the night shift, has the responsibility of coordinating all artillery operations in the 1st Brigade area of operations.

PFC Mike Duncan has just monitored a radio call from an artillery liaison officer at a forward fire support base and yells out, "Fire mission!"

Captain Bowers immediately heads for the big map on the other side of the room, barely missing a collision with PFC Dennis Maczynski, already preparing to plot the mission. As the fire direction officer reaches the wall size map, PFC Duncan yells a six-digit coordinate.

The groups of numbers are repeated by PFC Maczynski, huddled over the plotting table, and the captain's fingers race over the jungles northeast of Tay Ninh to find the location.

It is now the responsibility of the fire direction officer to assign batteries to perform the mission and determine how many rounds will be fired.

The important factor is to be careful that no friendlies are on the gun-target line, says Captain Bowers. As a safety point, artillery isn't fired over friendly troops unless absolutely necessary.

Within seconds, the room is alive with many radios blaring at once, men passing sheets filled with data and a computer silently double checking everything.

Seconds later, the range, deflection, azimuth and quadrants are figured and radioed to the 105 and 155 batteries on the forward fire support bases.

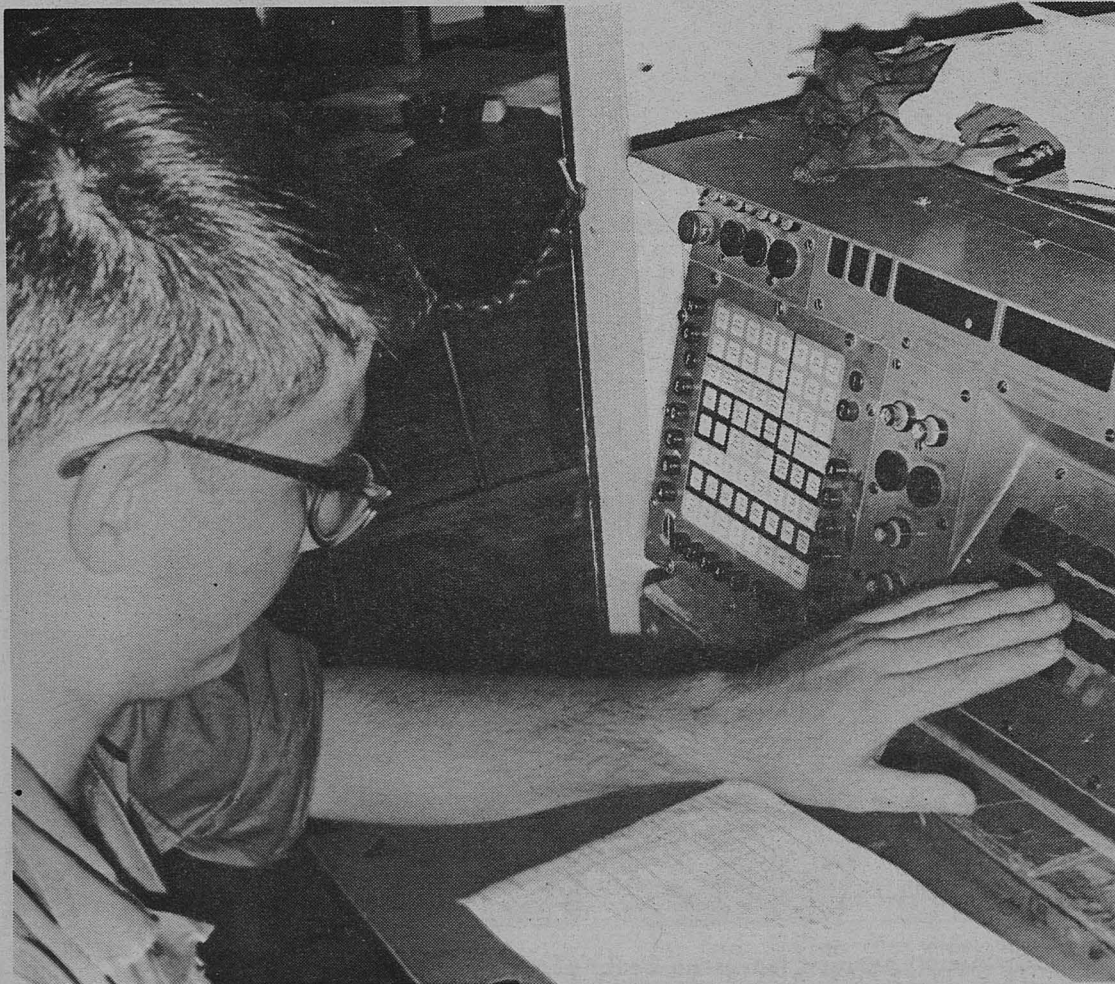
Minutes later and miles away, a white puff of smoke followed by an ear-shattering explosion of 95 pounds of "dignity" tears into an enemy position.

During the day the FDC is busy supporting infantry units in contact or preparing a landing zone for a combat assault.

By night the FDC remains active or "super" active depending on enemy activity. Preplanned artillery is fired from one fire support base in support of another fire support base under attack. "After the first incoming rounds start hitting an LZ, within minutes we're putting as much ammo around it as we can muster," says Captain Bowers, pointing to the chart showing the location of all the batteries.

More nights than not, fire support bases don't get hit, but the FDC is still busy firing planned artillery on suspect enemy locations, keeping a lot of people from getting a good night's sleep—including the enemy.

PFC Michael Duncan (below) makes a final check of the range, deflection, azimuth and quadrants before forwarding them to 105 and 155mm batteries at the fire support bases.



The request for artillery support has been received and FDC personnel work quickly and accurately plotting the mission. PFC Dennis Maczynski uses the Field Artillery Digital Computer to double check the fire mission data.

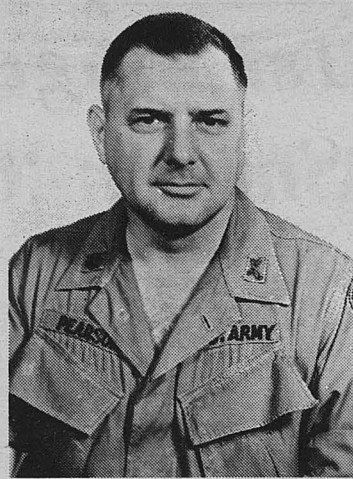




LTC Fitzgerald



LTC Cortner



LTC Pearson

Officers Named To Colonel List

(Editor's Note: Names of four 1st Air Cavalry lieutenant colonels have been added to the promotion list to colonel. Following are brief sketches of each officer. LTC John S. Norvelle was unavailable for a photograph.)

LTC Pearson

Lieutenant Colonel John H. Pearson, division provost marshal is midway in his first tour with the 1st Cav.

The Bay St. Louis, Miss., native served with the 2nd Company, 504th MP Battalion, II Corps tactical zone in his initial Vietnam tour in 1967-68.

Prior to joining the FIRST TEAM, LTC Pearson was chief of military police science and administration division at the U.S. Army MP School, Ft. Gordon, Ga., and later served as provost marshal for the 3rd Infantry Division, Germany.

He joined the service in 1943 after graduating from Loyola University of the South in political science.

His wife, Miriam, and son, Roger, live in Augusta, Ga.

LTC Cortner

Lieutenant Colonel Sanders A. Cortner, commander of the 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry, is in his fourth tour of Vietnam and his first with the FIRST TEAM.

A native of Andalusia, Ala., LTC Cortner graduated from Columbia (Tenn.) Military Academy in 1947 and from West Point in 1951.

LTC Cortner served in Korea with Company C, 40th Brigade in 1952-53 and with the 11th Airborne Division until 1958. After a tour working with high school ROTC, he attended the Command and General Staff College

at Ft. Leavenworth, Kans., in 1962-63.

His wife, Jo, and daughter Kathy, reside in Andalusia.

LTC Norvelle

Lieutenant Colonel John S. Norvelle, deputy commander of the 1st Brigade, 1st Air Cavalry, began his military career as an enlisted man serving in Germany in 1945-46.

He subsequently attended the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, graduating in 1951.

LTC Norvelle, who holds an M.S. in civil engineering from Texas A & M University, was assigned to the Limited War Laboratory at Aberdeen Proving Grounds from 1966-68 and graduated from the Naval War College in 1969, prior to being assigned to the 1st Cav for his present tour.

LTC Norvelle's wife and two daughters reside in Gallipolis, Ohio.

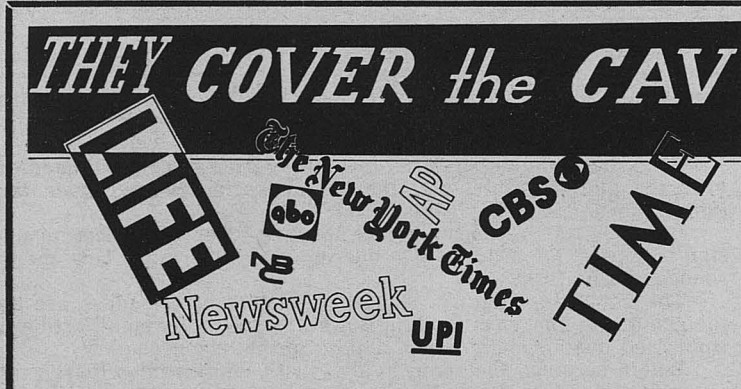
LTC Fitzgerald

Lieutenant Colonel Leo J. Fitzgerald, commander of the 1st Cav's 2nd Battalion, 19th Artillery, is a 1951 graduate of Michigan State University where he was commissioned after completing ROTC.

Following graduation from the Armed Forces Staff College in 1964, LTC Fitzgerald attended the University of Pittsburgh and received his master's degree in political and international affairs in 1965.

He joined the 1st Cav after a two-year stint at the Naval War College as a student and instructor.

LTC Fitzgerald's wife and four children live in Colorado Springs, Colo.



T. Sargent CBS News

By SP5 Joe Kamalick

A newspaper or wire service reporter on the job in Vietnam is fairly inconspicuous. He usually wears GI fatigues and looks every bit like an infantryman except that he carries a pad and pencil instead of an M-16.

But electronic media (radio and television) reporters like Tony Sargent of CBS News are not able to travel so lightly in the field. The average television crew has three and sometimes

four men who are made even more conspicuous by their large and heavy motion picture cameras and tape recorders.

To Sargent, the TV shooting equipment is "a one-ton pencil."

"Besides the weight," said Sargent, "the equipment has a psychological disadvantage in getting information. People will say things for a reporter who is only writing it down that they will not say in front of a camera and tape recorder."

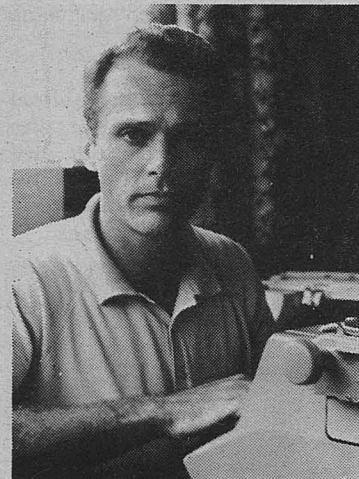
"It's a combination of stage fright and the thought that with their face and words recorded they are absolutely 'on the record' and cannot possibly later deny saying it."

But the visible bulk and numbers of a TV crew do have their advantages, said Sargent. The obvious equipment, he said, can become "a positive asset in a firefight." Sargent explained that in a firefight enemy riflemen will more likely aim for soldiers bearing arms who pose a threat, but not at men who are obviously newsmen. But a firefight is not a game of pot-shot target practice. The fire is more often wild and indiscriminate.

Television and radio crews, like other media, have taken casualties from unintended but none the less deadly rounds. CBS recently lost three men killed when the crew was caught in a mortar barrage on a night defensive position.

Sargent, who has worked for CBS in Vietnam since May 1968, told of another close contact near Da Nang. "We were with an ARVN Ranger outfit, walking through foot-and-a-half deep rice paddies south of Da Nang when 20 enemy soldiers popped up and started firing. There isn't any place to hide in a rice paddy."

Sargent was asked what he thought about that firefight. "We got some great footage," he replied.



Tony Sargent

Maintenance Sarge Arrived '65—Stays

BEARCAT — The man has simply never left.

When the members of Company A, 228th Aviation Battalion (ASH) of the 1st Air Cav stepped off the aircraft carrier USN Boxer on Sept. 10, 1965, one of them was Specialist Five Leland R. Arend. He's still here.

If one arrived in Vietnam today, he would have to extend his DEROS to November of 1973 just to be here as long as Arend, now Sergeant First Class. And he has no plans of leaving.

A maintenance supervisor responsible for the upkeep of 15 Chinooks, SFC Arend says he has never thought of trying to get into another unit. "The other companies are good, but Alpha is the best," he says with intense loyalty.

He seems to know what he's

talking about. Alpha Company recently established a phenomenal record of 12,165 hours of accident free operation. "Much of the credit must go to the 'real old man' of the outfit," said Major William A. Siegling, commanding officer of Alpha.

He joined the Army at age 17, after graduating from high school in Findlay, Ohio. He knows no other EM who has been with the 1st Cav as long as he, first joining it in June 1965 at Fort Benning, Ga.

The future? His current extension runs out next August, but he says, "As long as the Cav is here, I'm going to be here, too." And the solidly built man with the black hair and blacker-framed glasses will still be on the flight line, keeping the 'hooks in the air'.

Go Army . . .



(U.S. Army Photo by SP5 Terry Moon)

Their "Go Army" pennant leaves no doubt about the loyalties of these 1st Cav troops. Football interest reaches a peak Saturday (Nov. 29) when the Cadets of West Point take on Navy's Midshipmen in Philadelphia. Armed Forces Vietnam Network provides television replays of stateside games. These Skytroopers take in the action at Phuoc Vinh.