

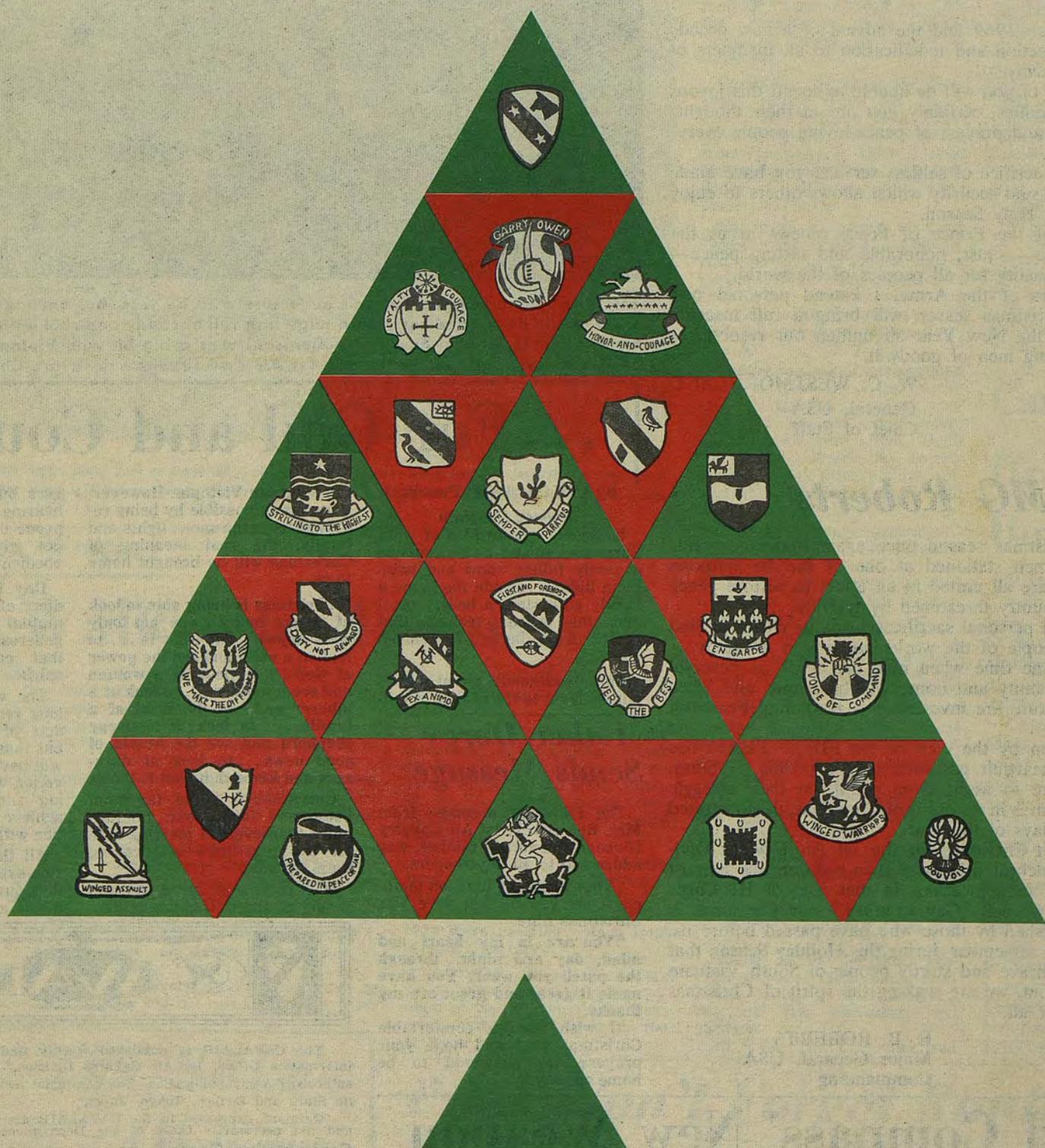


Vol. 3, No. 52

1st Air Cavalry Division

December 24, 1969

Christmas, Vietnam, 1969



Yule Greetings

...from Secretary Resor

To all members of the United States Army I extend my best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

The world's hope is that the true spirit of Christmas will one day prevail everywhere, for that would mean peace on earth and good will among all men.

No one contributes more to keeping this age-old hope alive than American soldiers. For almost two centuries they have been guarding our country's freedom and helping other people who seek freedom from tyranny and aggression.

I want all of you in the Army family—military and civilian, active and reserve components—to know that your unselfish and devoted service is known and appreciated.

May the Christmas season bring happiness to you and your families, and may the New Year and new decade be personally and professionally rewarding.

STANLEY R. RESOR
Secretary of the Army

...from Chief of Staff

Christmas Season 1969 and the advent of a new decade offer a time for reflection and rededication to all members of the United States Army.

Although many of you will be unable to spend this joyous season with your families, certainly you are in their thoughts and in the thoughts and prayers of peace-loving people everywhere.

Through your sacrifice of selfless service, you have made possible the freedom and security which allows others to enjoy the blessings of this Holy Season.

The birthday of the Prince of Peace renews in us the hope that real peace—a just, honorable and lasting peace—may yet become a reality for all peoples of the world.

To all members of the Army, I extend personal best wishes that this Christmas season will bring a full measure of happiness. May the New Year strengthen our resolve for peace on earth among men of goodwill.

W. C. WESTMORELAND
General, USA
Chief of Staff

...from MG Roberts

The 1969 Christmas season once again finds thousands of 1st Air Cavalrymen stationed at one of the far outposts of democracy. We are all united in an effort to restore peace and stability to a country threatened by tyranny.

Our efforts and personal sacrifices bring us closer to that day when all the people of the world can live in harmony.

We strive for the time when man can work in peaceful assurance that his family and home will be secure and when his hopes for the future are invested in a prevailing Peace on Earth.

The contribution by the men of the FIRST TEAM has created hope and heartfelt gratitude in the people of South Vietnam. Our desire to assist these people in their struggle for peace and freedom is in the spirit of Christmas, demonstrated throughout all the days of the year.

This is the fifth Christmas for the 1st Air Cavalry Division in Vietnam. Celebrated in more than a dozen fire support bases and scores of field locations in that part of III Corps Tactical Zone that we call "Cav Country," our Christmas is in a tradition established by those who have passed before us.

Let us pause to remember during this Holiday Season that in sharing with the brave and sturdy people of South Vietnam their fight for freedom, we are making the spirit of Christmas more meaningful for all.

E. B. ROBERTS
Major General, USA
Commanding

'Loaded Compass' New Weapon

By PFC Robert Hackney
FSB JAMIE — Although indispensable to the infantryman, the compass is not the best weapon to engage the enemy with, as First Lieutenant Lester Patten discovered.

Leading a platoon of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry, in search of a suspected mortar position, Lieutenant Patten picked up a fresh one-man trail and fol-

lowed it to a caved-in bunker.

Suddenly, a mortar tube popped in the distance, and the lieutenant drew out his compass to get the azimuth to the tube.

While concentrating on the hairline axis of the compass, the Air Cavalry officer was startled to see bushes start shaking 20 feet in front of him and a figure sneaking away.

The lieutenant dropped his

Santa's No. 1 ...



(U.S. Army Photo by PFC Len Fallscheer)
The little Vietnamese boy wasn't quite sure who he was, but anyone wearing a red suit, a snow-white beard and carrying a huge bag full of candy and cookies must be "number one." Santa Claus (Specialist Four Barry Bjornson) was a big hit with Vietnamese children as well as American troops as he toured 1st Air Cav firebases in a pre-Christmas visit.

...For God and Country

By LTC Charles F. Powers
Division Chaplain

Everyone has an idea of what Christmas should be ... outside a gently falling snow and twinkling light ... inside the home a family gathering, a hearty meal and the warm feeling that comes from being with loved ones.

This traditional picture does not conform to the reality of mil-

Mother Dorcy Sends Message

The following message from Mrs. Ben Dorcy, 1st Air Cavalry Division's honorary mother, was addressed to all Skytroopers:

"Your honorary division mother sends you all her love this Christmas time.

"You are in my heart and mind, day and night, through the patch you wear. You have made it great and great are my thanks.

"I wish each a comfortable Christmas Day and hope your prayers are answered to be home quickly."

itary duty in Vietnam. However, it's entirely possible by being removed from the snow, lights and family, the real meaning of Christmas will be brought home to us.

Christmas is being able to look at things and to see not only what appears but what is ... to look at a child and see the power of God ... to look at a woman and see a mother ... to look at a laborer and see the head of a family ... to look at a sleepy shepherd and see the herald of good news ... to look at darkness and know that God is there.

Christmas is being far from home and loving our families more than ever, of meeting men for the first time and calling them friends.

It is looking at strangers and seeing brothers. It is facing dan-

gers but feeling secure. It is hearing war and experiencing peace of soul. It is having little but giving all. It is being obedient and enjoying freedom.

Day in and day out the soldiers of the 1st Cav display the mutual concern, brotherhood, generosity, confidence and hope that comprise the Christmas spirit.

The world may little note or long remember their individual acts of courage and sacrifice, but those who have served here will never forget the spirit of devotion with which they are making such a valiant effort to achieve peace in truth and justice with honor.

All the chaplains of the division extend to you and your families our prayers and wishes for a holy and happy Christmas.



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2/5 SP5 Ken Gardiner	15th Med PFC Gary Holland
2/7 PFC Robert Hackney	2/12 SGT Dennis Harding

Double Trouble . . .



(U.S. Army Photo by SP4 Ron Merrill)
No, it's not a double exposure but a pair of 1st Air Cav Huey helicopters flying piggyback. The choppers are ferrying riflemen from Company D, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry, on a combat assault.

Recon Team Waiting

NVA Walk into Trouble

By SP4 William Block Jr.

TAY NINH — When the enemy walks right into the position of a small reconnaissance team, it spells only one thing — trouble.

"We had indications of enemy activity southwest of Fire Support Base Grant earlier in the day," observed Captain Ralph L. Hagler, intelligence officer for the 1st Air Cav's 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry. "I wanted to find out what was out there."

By mid-afternoon, Captain Hagler and nine volunteers from Company E were set up in three positions near a trail intersection.

Just before dark, we spotted

three NVA wearing black berets coming right at us from the open field to the west," said Specialist Four John J. McDonald. "All we could do was open up on them."

They did — with claymores, M-16's and a machinegun. Two NVA were clearly out of action. The third disappeared.

After Blue Max and artillery worked over the field, First Sergeant Jeffery Bailey led four men to search the area. Three, however, were hit and injured by AK fire from the third NVA, and all returned to the perimeter.

"Then we heard movement on all sides," said Sergeant Pete

Carrion, "and whenever anyone came too close we blew a claymore."

Seventeen claymores were detonated. A lift helicopter took 10 hits in an unsuccessful attempt to rescue the team. Finally, the Cav ground troops were extracted by armored personnel carriers.

For the 10 men, it was a long hour and a half from the time of first contact to extraction. The reconnaissance team and Blue Max were credited with a total of nine NVA killed.

When the personnel carriers arrived, the relieved group polished up its one remaining claymore and headed back to the firebase.

Enemy Crushed

Skytroopers Sweep Ridge

PHUOC VINH — Heavy fighting continued Nov. 29 through Dec. 5 as the 1st Air Cav killed more than 300 enemy soldiers for the fifth straight week.

Skytroopers accounted for 318 Viet Cong and North Vietnamese losses in the seven-day period.

The week began with the completion of a drive against NVA troops on a fortified ridgeline 10 miles south of Song Be. In one week, more than 120 North Vietnamese soldiers died, defending the position.

After losing 69 men on the heavily forested ridge Nov. 29, the decimated enemy force crept off under the cover of darkness.

Combining forces in the final day's attack were Air Force jets, a 2nd Brigade LOH (light observation helicopter), a Cobra from Company D, 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion, and hundreds of artillery rounds from nearby firebases.

The explosive power of three Cobras from Troop A, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, ripped into a group of 40-50 NVA troops after they were spotted setting up mortar positions northwest of Fire Support Base (FSB) Jerri Dec. 3.

Calling in Cobras were ground troops of Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, as they conducted a late afternoon recon. Fifteen NVA were killed. Alpha troops discovered the enemy mortar crews after having ambushed and killed five NVA in the same area.

A bomb damage assessment of a nearby air strike revealed six more NVA killed. The Troop B, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, helicopter making the assessment added two more with its own weapons.

FSB Buttons took an estimated 15 to 20 rounds of incoming, type unknown, Dec. 3. The first round slammed into the 2nd Brigade basecamp just before dark, with subsequent rounds coming in at 30-second intervals.

Several rounds landed near the airstrip, moderately damaging four helicopters.

Scout birds soon silenced the NVA firing position, however. Flashes of flame were observed spouting from an old bomb crater more than a mile from the base.

Diving on the location, gunships unloaded their deadly ordnance, killing 10 NVA and setting off five secondary explosions.

An NVA trap that backfired

led off a swirling series of actions between 1st Cav "Pink" teams, ARVN troops and a well armed enemy force 25 miles north of Tay Ninh Dec. 4.

A Trp A, 1st Sqdn., 9th Cav, LOH pilot on morning recon spotted a lone, armed North Vietnamese soldier standing in an open field. Suspicious, he dropped in for a better look.

"It was a trap," recalled Warrant Officer Andrew Redmond. "They had a .30 and .51 caliber waiting for us."

A Cobra dived in to kill two NVA and wreck the .30 caliber machinegun.

The aerial rifle platoon of Trp. A, 1st Sqdn., 9th Cav, made heavy contact Dec. 5 after insertion to investigate a morning LOH sighting.

Making the combat assault in mid-afternoon, the infantrymen found themselves in a shower of small arms, machinegun and B-40 rocket fire 22 miles northeast of Tay Ninh.

Soon joined by Company C, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry, the Skytroopers, aided by Cobra gunships, killed 25 NVA in the two hour battle.

There were 15 Cavalrymen killed and 50 wounded during the week.

Cardinal,

Dr. Hoffman

Here Today

PHUOC VINH — Terence Cardinal Cooke, Bishop of New York City and Military Ordinariate, and Dr. Oswald Hoffman, speaker for the International Lutheran Hour, are visiting Phuoc Vinh today.

Cardinal Cooke will offer Mass in the Division Chapel at 11:30 a.m. and meet with troops in the Service Club immediately following.

As Military Ordinariate, Cardinal Cooke is the Catholic Bishop for all members serving in the Armed Forces.

This is the cardinal's second Christmas visit to Vietnam.

Dr. Hoffman will give the Protestant service at 2 p.m. A speaker for the International Lutheran Hour, his radio broadcasts are heard on some 1,500 stations in 46 languages.

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Pilot Won't Forget Routine Day

TAY NINH — What started as a routine morning for First Lieutenant Ronald Whiteside ended up one he'll never forget.

The Troop A, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, Cobra pilot was flying over a large, horseshoe shaped clearing three miles north of the 1st Air Cav's Fire Support Base Carolyn.

The accompanying LOH (light observation helicopter), flying over the treeline at one end of the clearing, received two AK-47 rounds from enemy ground

troops.

"When the low bird took the two rounds and popped red smoke to mark Charlie's location," Lieutenant Whiteside said, "I rolled in and started hosing the area with mini-gun fire and rockets. Just as I was in the middle of the run, going east to west, the whole treeline to my right opened up."

Completing his run at the first target, the lieutenant circled his gunship to the left and maneuvered into position to engage the

treeline.

"As I got into my dive and started firing at the treeline, I came face to face with an enemy .51 cal machinegun position," continued the Air Cavalryman. "Man, I thought they had me for a minute. Those tracers coming up at me looked like bushel baskets."

After the tracer round exchange between Lieutenant Whiteside and the enemy machinegunner, the anti-aircraft position fell silent.

Santa 'Drops in' Air Cav Country



With his UH-1H Huey "sleigh" hovering at 75 feet, Santa prepares for an "airmobile arrival" into Cav Country.

Story by
SGT Roger Ruhl

Photos by
PFC Len Fallscheer

PHUOC VINH—Santa Claus quite literally dropped in—about a 75 foot drop to be exact—for a pre-Christmas visit, and 1st Air Cavalrymen gave him a genuine four-star welcome.

The rappelling arrival was a natural approach for the airmobile 1st Cav Division, though understandably more than a few heads turned when a fat man in a red suit with a huge red bag over his shoulder descended via rope from a Huey helicopter at Phuoc Vinh.

Santa, who bore a remarkable resemblance to Specialist Four Barry Bjornson, drew double takes wherever he went.

The incongruous red suit provided quite a contrast for GI eyes geared to O.D. reception. And the sight of Santa Claus driving a jeep in Vietnam overwhelmed some troops, whose expressionless faces seemed to write the episode off as a mirage, a figment of the imagination.

Armed with a bag full of cookies sent to the division from a group of Chicago girls, Santa spent two days touring Cav firebases.

He made careful notes in his little black book ("making a list and checking it twice"), jotting down Christmas requests of Air Cavalrymen. Most popular wish was for an instant DROS, followed closely by a stocking with Raquel Welch in it.



More than a few heads turned when 1st Air Cavalrymen saw a bearded old man in a red suit with a huge bag over his shoulder rappelling into the helipad at the division's Phuoc Vinh basecamp. Santa (alias Specialist Four Barry Bjornson) spent two days touring Skytrooper firebases.



Santa Claus (above) listens to the Christmas requests of Private First Class Robert Williams (left) and Sergeant W.H. Sanders on a visit to Fire Support Base Vivian. A two-day survey taken by Santa showed Skytroopers' most popular request was for an "instant DROS," with a stocking full of Raquel Welch running a close second.



"Don't pay any attention, Harry. That man in the red suit over there is just a mirage." That seems to be the emotionless reaction of these two Air Cavalrymen as they nonchalantly stroll past Santa Claus.

Up to 1,500 Tons Weekly

Redcap Specialty—Handling Cargo

By PFC Charlie Petit

QUAN LOI — Rabbit crouched against the blast of air, lifted the sling to the waiting Chinook, then suddenly jumped off the load of 155mm illumination rounds as the 1st Air Cav helicopter momentarily seemed to be settling.

The bird's pilot steadied the craft, and the load was securely attached, ready to be slung from

Quan Loi to Fire Support Base Vivian.

On the ground, Specialist Four Rabbit Steele shielded his nostrils and eyes against the huge, vicious cloud of red dust and gravel as the chopper bit its rotors into the air and moved off.

Rabbit is a Redcap, one of the men specially trained to handle the preparation, loading and unloading of exterior cargo.

The name? "Oh, my dad just

liked it, that's all," he said.

"This dust is really awful," he added. "The monsoons get you dirtier and the grounds more slippery, but this dust is the worst."

The skill of the Redcaps and the men they supervise on the helipads all over Cav Country accounts for the transfer of 90 per cent of the cargo carried to the outlying firebases, as well as a large portion to the rear area bases.

To an observer of the operation, particularly if the bird involved is a big skycrane, it seems the rotor wash would make working conditions next to impossible.

"Actually, there's not much wind right under the cargo hook, like in the eye of the hurricane," explained Sergeant First Class Dominic Lopicola, Redcap non-commissioned officer at Quan Loi.

"There's one good thing about

this dust," said Redcap Specialist Five Russell Garnett. "At least there's not so much static electricity in those birds as in the rainy season."

"I've seen guys get knocked clear off a load from the jolt of it, just by brushing a metal part on the cargo hook."

The Redcaps at Quan Loi are accustomed to slinging out from 800 to 1,500 tons of cargo a week, with as much as 14,000 pounds going out on one 'crane.'

Ex-Grunt Gives Aerial Firepower

By CPT Richard Shelton

TAY NINH—In his initial Vietnam tour, he developed a grunt-level appreciation of 1st Air Cavalry aerial support.

Now, Warrant Officer David E. Ciocca is on the other end, and the new Cav scout pilot is just as enthusiastic about helicopter support.

Mr. Ciocca served with Company D, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry, near Bong Son from December 1966 to December 1967, and was impressed with the reconnaissance and fire support provided by the Cav's helicopters.

"The support was really great," he said. "As a platoon sergeant for four months, I was in a position to really appreciate the benefits those choppers provide."

The 27-year-old aviator started his first tour as an RTO (radio telephone operator) for the forward observer.

After three months, he was promoted to sergeant and made squad leader. Just four months later he found himself a staff sergeant, serving as platoon sergeant.

"The helicopters have changed a lot since then," explained Mr. Ciocca. "Our scout birds were H-13's, and the gunships were Bravo and Charlie model Hueys (UH-1B and UH-1C).

"We have more sophisticated aircraft now, but I don't see how the support could be any better than that my platoon received."

Mr. Ciocca spent a lot of time while on firebases talking to chopper pilots, and, before completing his tour, he decided to apply for flight training.

After a nine month stint with the 197th Infantry Brigade at Fort Benning, Ga., he completed the warrant officer's aviation course and asked to return to the 1st Cav.

When he reported for duty with the 1st Brigade Aviation Platoon, Mr. Ciocca volunteered to fly with the scouts.

"I'm looking for a chance to be on the giving, rather than the receiving end, of some of that good air support," he said.

1st Air Cavalrymen Fleece Flag Factory

By SP5 George Vindedzis

FSB BUTTONS — The Viet Cong's answer to Betsy Ross is out of a job. The 1st Air Cav closed her flag factory.

In an operation near Fire Support Base (FSB) Buttons, Company C, 5th Battalion, 7th Cavalry, was searching for a log pad.

"We had just crossed a stream and moved to the top of a hill when we spotted a building," said Private First Class Richard M. Bryant.

"We sent a couple of people down to check for booby traps," he continued. "When they didn't find anything, we went down to recon the area."

The platoon moved down the trail to examine the building and nearby area, finding what appeared to be a flag factory.

Items captured included a sewing machine, two pairs of scissors, five pounds of sewing machine needles, 25 pounds of thread, 60 yards of assorted orange, green and grey cloth, and a bolt each of yellow and blue flag cloth.

"The sewing machine was in beautiful shape, complete with large foot treadle," said Captain Gerald E. Knapp. "Along with the rest of the cache, it was hidden on a bamboo platform with plastic over the top."

The sewing machine and much of the cloth were evacuated to FSB Buttons, home of the Cav's 2nd Brigade.

Scrubs NVA

2/7 Ambush

By PFC Robert Hackney

FSB JAMIE — Cleanliness may be next to Godliness, but it's not always the most important virtue when you're in the boonies.

A platoon from Company C, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry, set up an ambush on a trail outside a night defensive position. Two NVA strolled down the trail, stopped, then began to disrobe for a quick bath in a nearby bomb crater.

"At first I thought they were taking off their claymores, but then they started taking their clothes off," said Sergeant Jeff Buck.

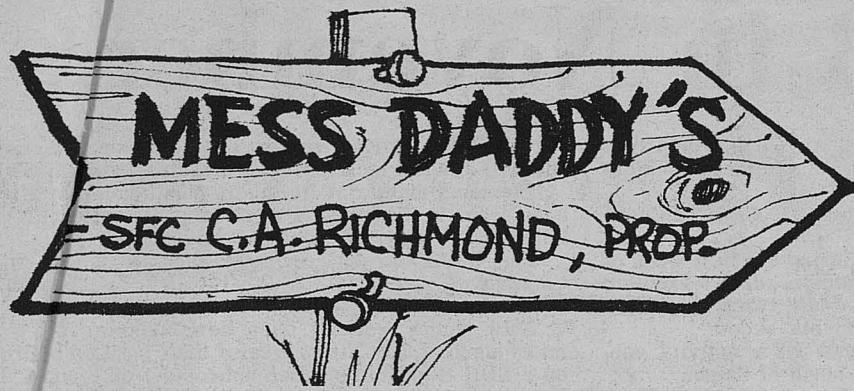
When the enemy got down to its underwear, Sergeant Lyman Dunnock decided things had gone far enough. His Skytroopers blew two claymores and opened up with small arms.

Result: Two NVA killed.

Light Her Fire . . .



(Photo Courtesy of NBC Television)
Goldie Hawn sends her wishes for a Merry Christmas to all Skytroopers and hopes you'll get home soon to help light her fire.



By PFC Charlie Petit

ESB VIVIAN—The menu announced "Chicken, your choice of fried, barbecued or in dumplings," and the patrons of the establishment talked about the chef's variety of omelettes.

Twenty-One? Maxim's? Perhaps The Pump Room? Not quite. This gourmet's delight is located at the 1st Air Cav's Fire Support Base Vivian, and a sergeant first class named Mess Daddy is head chef.

Nicknamed "Mess Daddy's," the mess hall of Battery C, 1st Battalion, 30th Artillery, and its affable steward, Sergeant First Class C. A. Richmond, have developed quite a reputation.

Lieutenant Colonel Morris J. Brady, division artillery commander, visited five firebases on Thanksgiving, but arranged his schedule to hit Vivian during the dinner hour.

"I've got to admit that Mess Daddy's lives up to its reputation," said the colonel. "But I like to think Sergeant Richmond is representative of all the cooks throughout the division who do such a great job."

Farther down the chain of command, Air Cavalrymen were equally enthusiastic about the rotund mess sergeant.

"It's a helluva lot better than what my wife fixes," said a specialist four who prefers to remain nameless, lest "she get all excited."

A glance at Mess Daddy's serving schedule explains why more than one stray grunt or visiting pilot has been known to sneak into the chow hall.

He serves fresh pastry and coffee every night at 8 p.m., plus pizza on Saturdays. Food is available 15 hours a day, fresh rolls and bread at each meal, and kool-aid and milkshakes from breakfast until dinner.

Breakfast brings an array of mouth-watering choices. In addition to the usual fare, omelettes are the specialty of the house, and Sergeant Richmond dazzles bewildered newcomers with varieties to include cheese, bacon, green pepper, onion or any combination.

"One lad comes in every morning and insists on a jelly omelette," laughs Sergeant Richmond. "But if that's what it takes to make him happy, then I'm only too glad to fix it."

Cooking is Sergeant Richmond's life. He scoffs at a profile which would exempt him from duty at a forward firebase and doesn't like to talk about high blood pressure. He wants to do his part.

He started his own short order business at age 12 and called it Sam's Place. He still owns Sam's Place, back in Quinwood, W.Va., but may change the name when he retires. He's thinking about calling it Mess Daddy's.



(U.S. Army Photo by SP4 Bill Ahrbeck)

Sergeant First Class C.A. Richmond, "Mess Daddy," supervises chow line assuring that everyone gets enough to eat. Sergeant Richmond is mess steward for Battery C, 1st Battalion, 30th Artillery, stationed at the 1st Cav's Fire Support Base Vivian.



Boonie Bathers...

It's not quite like the neighborhood swimming hole but these 1st Air Cavalrymen find taking a bath in a rain-filled bomb crater just as refreshing while on a mission with Company D, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry. Here, Specialist Four George Patton washes the back of Private First Class Fred Hill.

Photo by PFC Jack Oliver

Enemy Loses 1,808 in November

PHUOC VINH — 1st Air Cavalrymen killed 1,808 enemy soldiers during November.

The huge number of enemy casualties is just 71 below the 1,879 killed by Skytroopers during the Tet offensive in February of 1968.

Most severe single-action losses suffered by the Communists in the 1st Cav's area of operations were in the pre-dawn hours of Nov. 4, hours before President Nixon addressed the nation on the state of the Vietnam conflict.

Three 1st Cav fire support bases near the Cambodian border were hit by heavy mortar and sapper attacks.

Assaulting Fire Support Bases (FSB) Ike, Ellen and Buttons, 156 NVA died before sunrise. Pursuing enemy soldiers through the day, 1st Cav gunships raised the total to 269 for the 24-hour period. There was no significant breach of defenses at any of the bases.

Major General E. B. Roberts, division commander, sending congratulations to Skytroopers at the end of the first week's action, reiterated his commendation at month's end.

Hunch Pays Off For 'Kit Carson'

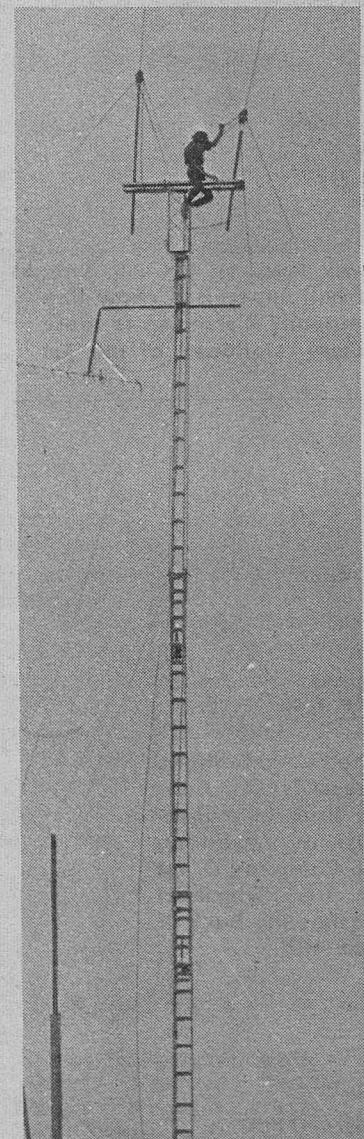
By SP5 Al Persons

QUAN LOI — When in doubt, they say, play your hunch. Dieu Luong, a 1st Air Cav Kit Carson scout, did just that, and it paid off big dividends.

A Ranger Team from Company H, 75th Infantry, had made contact with a small NVA force southeast of Fire Support Base Jerri, killing four enemy and capturing three AK-47's.

When the Rangers were extra-

Circus Act . . .



This isn't a high dive act for Ringling Brothers but an ARVN adjusting the antenna atop a radio tower, photographed by SP4 Dean Sharp.

ected, a "Blues" rifle platoon from Troop B, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, and their Kit Carson scout were inserted into the same area.

As the platoon moved along a trail, Dieu Luong, walking ahead of pointman Staff Sergeant Perry Glover, changed direction, crossed a stream and climbed over a knoll. Suddenly, he motioned everyone to follow him.

"When we reached him," said Sergeant Glover, "we found that he had discovered an NVA bunker complex containing an arms cache. I don't know how he found it—instinct, I guess."

Dieu Luong said through an interpreter, "I don't know what possessed me. As we were moving along, something told me to look on the other side of the stream. My hunch was right."

The cache consisted of 30 SKS's, two 9mm machineguns, six mausers, three sniper scopes and 400 rounds of ammunition.

Olive Drab

Is Off Limits To Sergeant

By SP4 William M. Sill

QUAN LOI — Tailored green plaid slacks and a sport shirt is hardly the standard attire at the 1st Air Cav's Quan Loi basecamp, but Sergeant First Class Charles Shannon has broken tradition with the blessing of his superiors.

It didn't take the sergeant long to decide jungle fatigues weren't for him. In fact, he broke into a rash every time he wore them.

A visit to the medics revealed that he was allergic to the O.D. coloring of the fatigues.

As personnel sergeant of the 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry, S-1 shop, he presents a striking contrast to his fellow workers.

But the men aren't complaining. Far from having a detrimental effect, the bright clothing seems to add stimulation to the office atmosphere.

Who said all allergies are bad?

He told his commanders to tell Air Cavalrymen that "their performance had been magnificent, simply magnificent."

More than 30 tons of enemy held rice was captured during the month.

The heaviest action occurred during the first week of the month when 474 enemy soldiers died. Fighting diminished only slightly in the middle two weeks, then increased sharply again as the month ended.

November's second week found NVA activity concentrated at FSB Jerri, 83 miles north of Saigon.

Following a heavy mortar and rocket barrage Nov. 11, sappers tried to enter the camp through the wire but were beaten back by artillery, helicopter gunships, an Air Force Shadow plane, and small arms and automatic weapons fire of Company C, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry.

Air Force jets and Company D, 227th Assault Helicopter Battalion, Cobras teamed up to kill 35 NVA in a 150-bunker complex 15 miles north of Tay Ninh Nov. 10.

Five-hundred pound bombs and Cobra mini-gun and rocket fire ripped into the one kilometer square complex.

Significant ground contacts were made by 15-16 with Air Cavalrymen inflicting large casualties in each.

Elements of the 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry, in afternoon recon in the jungle around Song Be, netted 14 NVA killed in a series of contacts Nov. 15.

The following day, 16 NVA died when they met Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry, in the bamboo forest southwest of Bu Dop.

NVA troops working on a new bunker complex 25 miles north of Tay Ninh revealed their position by firing on a LOH (light observation helicopter) of Troop A, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, on the morning of Nov. 26.

An Alpha Troop Cobra threaded its way through a hail of .51 caliber machinegun fire to spend its deadly ordinance on the complex. When the day ended 21 enemy bodies were discovered.

A two-day battle between a well-entrenched NVA force and 1st Cav artillery, gunships and Air Force fighter bombers netted 96 enemy dead around a ridge-line 10 miles southeast of Song Be Nov. 28-29.

There were 46 Air Cavalrymen killed and 209 wounded during the month.

USO A-Go-Go . . .



(U.S. Army Photo by SP4 Bill Ahrbeck)
Maureen Reagan, daughter of California Governor Ronald Reagan, sings to 1st Air Cavalrymen at Fire Support Base Ellen during the Tony Diamond USO show.



J. Woodruff
Baltimore
Sun

By SP5 Joe Kamalick

John Woodruff, reporting for the Baltimore Sun, arrived in country in June of this year. But he is not a stranger to combat of sorts.

"Before Vietnam, my only experience with warfare was when I covered the Detroit riots in the summer of 1967," he said. "I haven't yet seen firepower like I saw in Detroit. They took the whole front off a seven story building with a .50 caliber machinegun in trying to get at the snipers."

At the time he was interviewed, Woodruff hadn't been in Vietnam long enough "to get my boots scuffed." By now, his boots are probably well worn.

He did have a few observations on what he had seen of

Vietnam. "Hondas seem to be the highpoint of their civilization . . . it's like golf in the U.S."

Setting out on his coverage of the Vietnam war, Woodruff will do his job as he always has before: "I've always seen news coverage as looking for a change, improvement or deterioration.

"I'll be looking for stories which indicate changes in attitudes and methods, and I'll be looking for human stories, stories that reflect the eternal human conditions."

"I see my job as telling of the GI in combat and telling of the peasant trying to make a go of it with helicopters overhead and war around him. And, hopefully, I would like to do a story on what it means to be a VC or an NVA soldier."



John Woodruff