

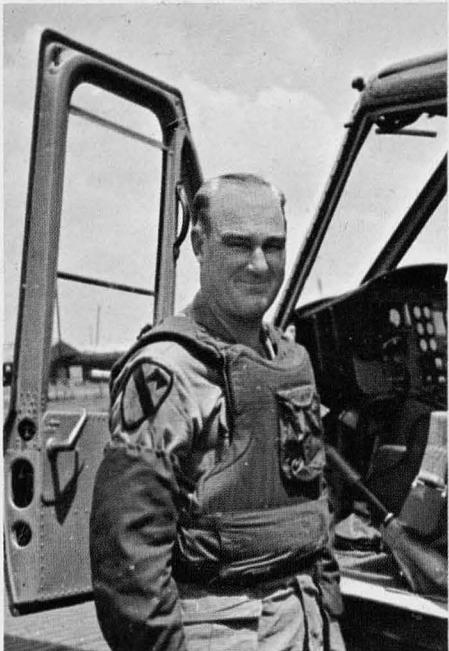
FIRST TEAM



CHILDERS N.

VIETNAM '70 - '71

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE



FAREWELL

"FIRST TEAM -- ALL THE WAY"

In August of 1965, the 1st Air Cavalry was committed to the defense of freedom in Southeast Asia. Since that time SKYTROOPERS have continually distinguished themselves by their heroism and dedication. In all four military regions of South Vietnam and in Cambodia, the Cav has dealt the enemy a powerful blow.

Since returning from Cambodia, we have completed another phase in this conflict. We have cut the enemy's supply lines, uncovered his caches, broken up his troop concentrations and strongholds, and convinced thousands of his followers to rally. Also, significant contributions to Vietnamization and pacification were made in training and combined operations with Vietnamese provincial forces. All of these accomplishments have contributed immeasurably to the security of the people of South Vietnam.

As the first of its kind, the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) has been the leader in developing a new dimension on the battlefield. The outstanding efforts of each and every SKYTROOPER have made the division what it is - THE FIRST TEAM.

I congratulate all members of the Division -- past and present -- for their individual and collective accomplishments. Each of us can be proud of the Division's record and satisfied that we have completed successfully our mission in Southeast Asia. I wish each of you continued success in your endeavors.

GEORGE W. PUTNAM, JR.
Major General, USA
Commanding



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Major General Elvy B. Roberts led the division in its disruption of enemy supply routes through War Zone C, along the Saigon River Corridor, the Serges Jungle Highway, the Adams Road, and the Jolly Trail. At this same time, major advances in Vietnamization were taking place with the ARVN Airborne and 5th ARVN Divisions, and the pacification effort was increased in Binh Long and Phuoc Long Provinces.



Major General George W. Casey directed the 1st Cav operation in Cambodia. It was on a flight to visit Skytroopers wounded during the Cambodian action that General Casey's helicopter crashed into the side of a mountain killing him and six other 1st Cav personnel. With his death, the 1st Cavalry Division lost a man who was not only a brilliant leader, but a leader who concerned himself with each individual member of the First Team.



Brigadier General Jonathan R. Burton, assistant division commander for operations, will command the stay-behind brigade of the First Team. General Burton also served as Acting Division Commander during the interim after the death of General Casey until General Putnam assumed command.

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Between the time the "Nubee" arrives in Vietnam and the time he lands in the jungle, he is indoctrinated in Cav techniques at the First Team Academy (FTA) in Bien Hoa.

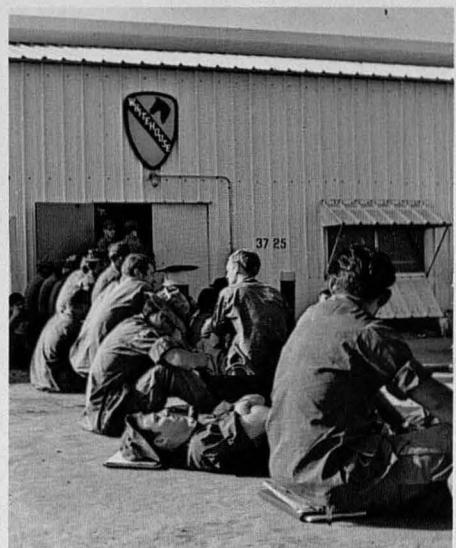
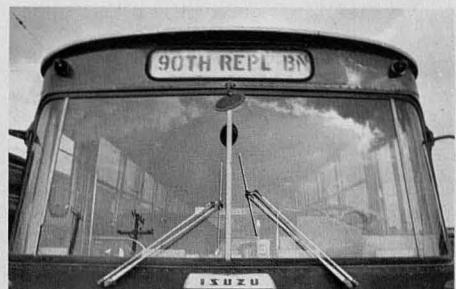
Each new Skytrooper, whether he is a clerk or an infantryman gets a chance to fire the M-16, M-79 grenade launcher, and the M-60 machine gun, as well as throw a handgrenade. They also view an artillery and Cobra firepower demonstration.

At Hanoi Village the nine-man Replacement Training Committee gives most new Skytroopers their first look not only at the jungle of South Vietnam but at the tactics of the

VC and NVA. They see a VC village, are ambushed, and view enemy weapons, rocket sites, and booby traps.

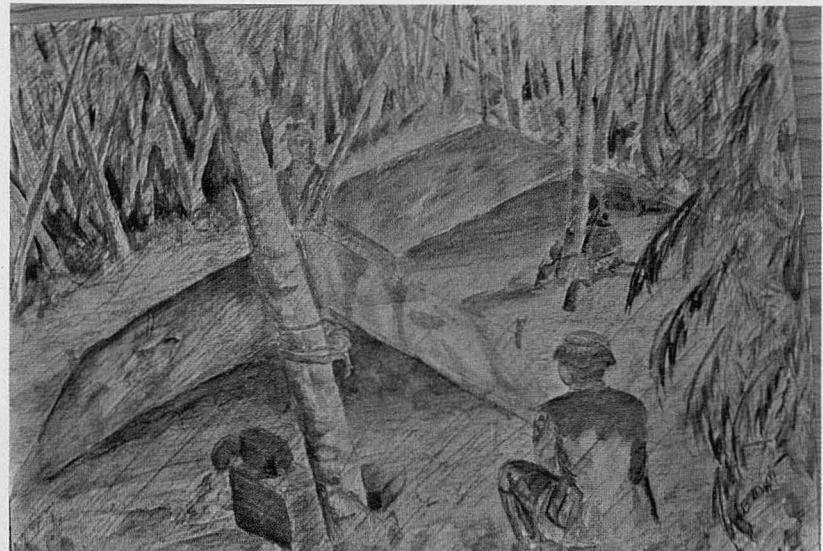
FTA also covers Vietnamese customs, sapper techniques, the use of Scout Dogs, and the employment of trip flares and claymore mines. The "Nubee" also receives classes on the Code of Conduct, human relations, and drug abuse.

The last day is the one which everyone has already heard about, with knees quivering and hands shaking the Skytrooper goes off the edge of the tower. Soon he stands on the ground below, a new member has joined the First Team.

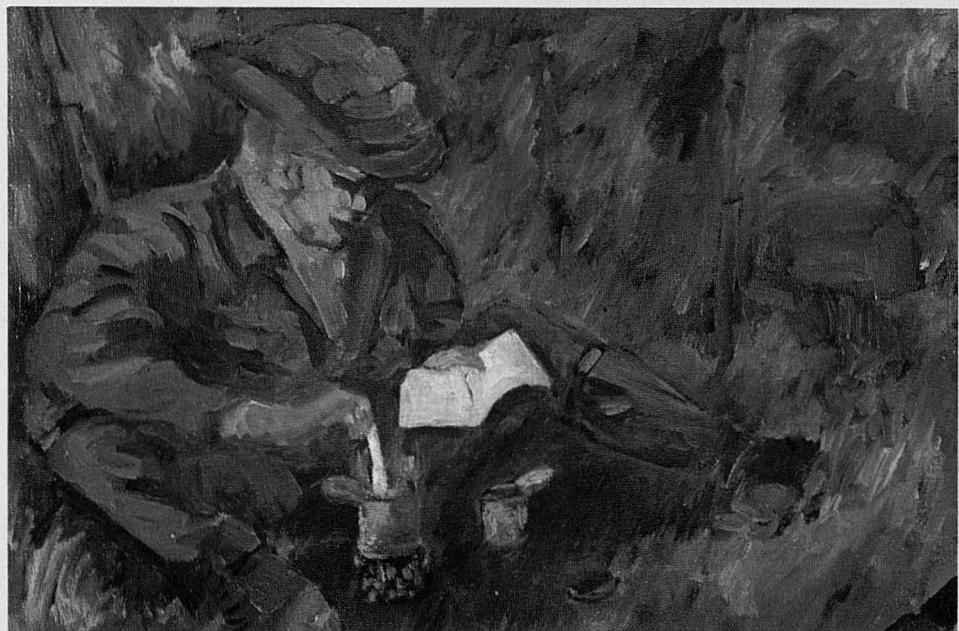




CHILDERS



MATTINGLY



CHILDERS



FIRST ROW: COL R. Maeder; COL W. Louisell; COL B. Vaughn; COL R. Harris; BG A. Hyman; MG George W. Putnam Jr.; COL G. Newman; COL J. Hamlet; COL R. Stevenson; LTC J. Cannon; LTC C. Putnam

SECOND ROW: LTC W. Bacon; LTC L. Wishart; LTC D. Gelke; LTC E. Trobaugh; LTC D. Vesser; LTC G. Meloy; LTC A. Spry; MAJ P. Pryer; LTC R. Kattar; LTC C. Horn; LTC L. Crain; CSM G. Lewis;

THIRD ROW: LTC R. Pate; MAJ Lee Allen; LTC H. Stein; LTC G. Martin; LTC C. Vuono; LTC H. Johnstone; MAJ G. Krausz; LTC R. Basha; LTC E. Teepe; LTC R. Philip; MAJ J. Griffith; MAJ C. Bird.



FIRST ROW: COL R. Harris; GEN A. Hyman; GEN George W. Putnam Jr.; COL G. Newman; COL J. Hamlet; CSM G. Lewis.

SECOND ROW: MAJ T. Wood; MAJ W. Good; LTC J. Kizarian; LTC M. Edmonds; LTC J. Klingelhoffer; MAJ W. Taylor; LTC G. Grant; MAJ B. Winzeler; MAJ V. Tate; LTC J. Conboy; CPT J. Anderson; LTC G. Kramer Jr.;

THIRD ROW: CW3 J. Asher; LTC A. Feener; MAJ J. Humphrey; LTC W. Douglas; LTC J. Rexford; CPT J. Jamieson.

CAMBODIA



May was dawning in Vietnam, and in the jungle white covers of mist arose above the canopy of trees to disperse the chilly morning air.

In Washington it was still April 30, and President Nixon addressed the nation:

"In cooperation with the Armed Forces of South Vietnam attacks are being launched this week to clean out major enemy sanctuaries on the Cambodia-Vietnam border...Tonight American and South Vietnamese units will attack the headquarters of the entire military operation in South Vietnam...The possibility of winning a just peace in Vietnam and in the Pacific is at stake."



Thirteen thousand miles away a long line of helicopters carrying Charlie Co., 2d Bn., 7th Cav, flew over the dense Cambodian jungle and dropped one by one into a virgin landing zone. Spec. 4 Terry Hayes adjusted his rucksack and sat upright in the lead UH-1 Huey helicopter. When he jumped onto the ground he began the most successful military operation in the history of the 1st Air Cav.

In the early hours of that May morning the enemy lost his sanctuary when 50,000 American and South Vietnamese soldiers, including armored cavalry, drove into Cambodia, 65 miles north of Saigon.

Led by the 2d Bn., 47th Inf. (Mechanized) of the 9th Infantry Div. and the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, both under the operational control of the 1st Cav, the joint ARVN-U.S. task force smashed into two massive Cambodian salients that thrust deep into the Parrot's Beak, south of Tay Ninh, and the Fishhook, west of Quan Loi.

The Sheridan and Patton tanks of the 11th ACR moved through the mud from early monsoon rains and dense jungle to two NVA base areas that had been softened in a pre-dawn raid by B-52 strikes.

Flanking the 11th ACR on the left were elements of the 2d Bn., 7th Cav, the first committed ground troops in Cambodia. The Skytroopers flew across the border in an 87 helicopter combat assault and established FSB X-Ray, six kilometers inside Cambodia.

Flanking the 11th ACR's right side was the 1st ARVN armored Cav, while six miles to the east of FSB X-Ray, the 3d and 9th ARVN Airborne Bns. combat assaulted in to begin their push west.

Air power dominated the day. Hunter-Killer Teams of Cobra gunships and Light Observation Helicopters of Alpha and Bravo Trps., 1st Sqdn., 9th Cav, conducted visual

reconnaissance of the terrain, looking for enemy movement on the ground.

They spotted plenty as the communists fled under the guns. One group of Cobras spotted a panicking NVA force of 200 soldiers fleeing the area in a dozen different directions. The pilots picked out small groups of 10 to 30 NVA and expended their 2.34 inch rockets and miniguns on them. On the first day the 1/9 killed 157 enemy.

On D-day plus two "The City" was discovered.

WO James Cyrus, a LOH pilot with Bravo Trp. 1/9, discovered the huge NVA military installation 12 miles inside Cambodia during a routine mission.

"We found the building complex almost by accident," said Cyrus. "We were looking for something in the area, but didn't see anything at first."

"Then I spotted a bamboo walk from hootch to hootch. I saw street signs, bridges with walk ropes, and what looked like a motor pool and a lumber yard," he added.

The 1st Bn., of the 5th Cav was inserted the following afternoon to an area four kilometers north of the complex to newly constructed FSB Terri Lynn.

Charlie Co. moved out of the base and down Highway 7 toward the suspected enemy complex. Leaving the paved road they entered extremely heavy underbrush, slowing movement to a crawl. A LOH circled overhead and called directions to the Skytroopers below, leading them towards the complex.

As the Charlie Co. troops approached the installation's perimeter they received light AK-47 fire from two enemy bunkers. The Skytroopers moved in, hurling grenades and silenced the enemy, killing four NVA while suffering no casualties.

They had uncovered a massive supply complex three kilometers long and one and a half miles wide. Three hundred





buildings complete with all weather bamboo walkway were bulging with arms, ammunition, clothing, food stocks and medical supplies.

The buildings, spaced out approximately 20 meters apart, were constructed of wood and faced a center court yard. The center of the oval was beautifully landscaped and terraced, complete with flowers and shrubbery that reminded some Skytroopers of municipal parks in their home towns.

Eighteen fully furnished mess halls were discovered; some were designated as VIP and officers' mess and enlisted mess.

"The City" yielded more surprises. As Skytroopers walked along the raised bamboo sidewalks they found storage bunkers filled with food stocks, clothing and medical supplies. A training area and a sunken classroom in the ground complete with a speaker's platform were also found.

But the men of Co. C received their biggest surprise when they followed the bamboo walkways to behind the main complex. There to greet them was a spacious, well constructed and inviting swimming pool.

Air power once again dominated the day as Charlie Co. entered the installation. Sixty-six of the enemy fell to helicopters and air strikes in the Fishhook.

"We had so much air power up there we were waiting turns to shoot at enemy positions," said WO Larry Grover, a Cobra pilot with Bravo Trp., 1/9. "We received lots of small arms fire but no large caliber weapons."

During the first week in Cambodia numerous FSBs were born from the red dirt of jungle terrain. Working in support of the divisions, 2d Bde. engineers from Co. B, 8th Eng. built six firebases in as many days.

"Our squads on firebases in Vietnam were moving with the first Chinook sorties in the morning," said Capt. Richard Estes, the company commander.

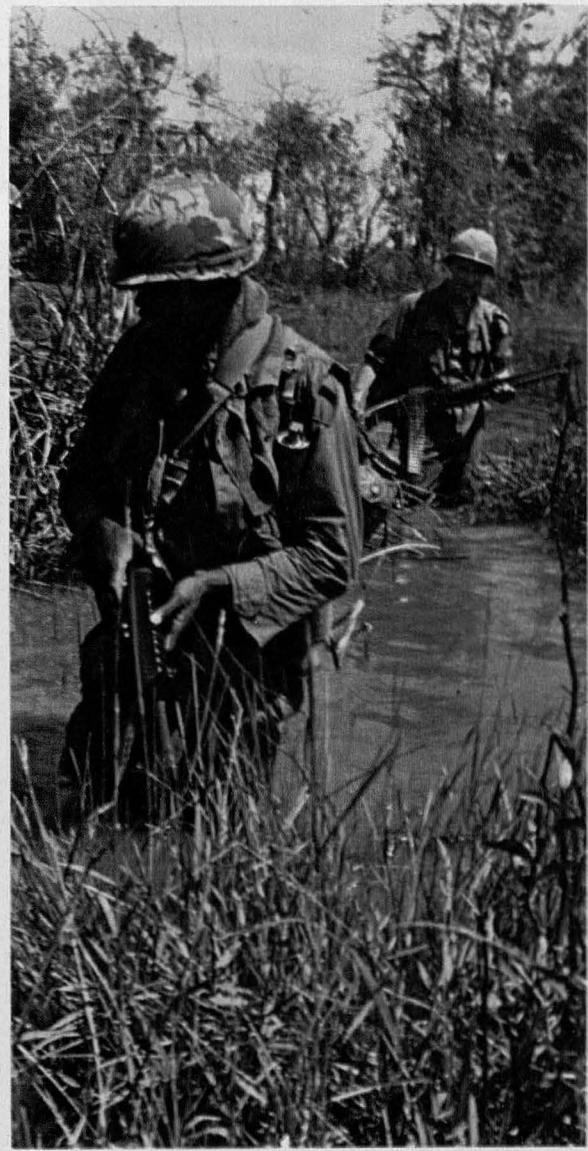
On May 7, as the 1/5 was stripping "The City" of its resources, 40 kilometers to the northwest, the great NVA arsenal "Rock Island East" was discovered.

Scout pilot Charles Frazier of C 1/9 was on a routine Recon near FSB Myron when he saw a road running out of a small village.

"We followed the road, which had been heavily used recently by trucks and saw pallets stacked off to one side of it," recalled Frazier.

"But the overhead jungle canopy was too thick to see very far inside. Next day two of the pallets we'd seen previously were gone and we found truck tracks leading to the spot. We followed them and saw three two-and-a-half ton truck loaded with troops in complete NVA field uniforms. They heard us and tried to dismount the trucks and hide. We engaged and killed 23 of them and destroyed their vehicle.

Learning of the discovery, LTC Francis Ianni, CO of the 2/12 sent Delta Co. to make a CA into the contact area. The Skytroopers landed 500 meters north of the site and moved



south. Two platoons began sweeping the area. Fifty meters across the road they made heavy contact with an estimated 40 to 60 enemy soldiers.

"We broke the ambush," said LTC Ianni, "by forming the company into an assault line that scattered the enemy." During the contact Blue Max Cobra gunships blew up a hidden cache and revealed the enemy's complex.

Toward the end of the afternoon Charlie Company and the recon platoon of Echo Company, CAed into the area, joining Delta Company, and explored the site.

Nicknamed "Rock Island East" after an arsenal in Illinois, the complex proved to be the largest ammo site captured in the Vietnam war. Fifty individual caches sat camouflaged. Each one was stacked six feet high on 20' x 15' pallets, each pallet 20 to 30 meters apart on alternating sides of the road. The site was 1,000 meters long and 500 meters wide.

After "Rock Island East" yielded all of its 326 tons of ammo and weapons to the Skytroopers, it was the job of the division Explosive Ordnance Disposal to close it forever to the NVA. On May 16 "Rock Island East" was turned into a gigantic fireball, the explosions rocking helicopters hovering far above it, when the EOD used over 300 cases of C-4 explosive to destroy the cache site.

As the 1st Cav and its opconned units fanned out searching for the enemy, the NVA fled, putting up little resistance. But slowly the NVA regrouped.

Fire Support Base Ready, manned by Bravo Company 2/5, beat back a ground probe by the NVA on May 14 with the help of ARA, Shadow, artillery and gunships.

"When the first two B-40 rounds went off it was a real scramble," said Spec. 4 Syd James of Bravo Company. "Everybody was grabbing weapons and bandoliers and diving for the fighting positions."

"When the illumines started up we could see the enemy swarming in the woodline. Several of them had crawled to

within 15 meters of the berm and two enemy machineguns were firing on us from the edge of the clearing. We started tossing frags and blowing claymores on the ones closest to the berm, and we opened up on the woodline with 60's, 16's and chunkers."

Artillery crews on the besieged base lowered their 105 and 155 howitzers and brought direct fire on the enemy.

The contact lasted 15 minutes. Twelve NVA were killed; one Skytrooper was killed and six were wounded.

In the air hunter-killer teams roamed far and wide taking a toll of the enemy. On May 11 a pink team from Charlie Troop 1/9 flew low over the dense jungle checking the results of an air strike, when WO Charles Frazier, a LOH pilot, spotted a huge messhall on the ground.

"It had been partially destroyed by the blast. We began taking fire from the enemy near it."

The NVA, wearing green uniforms, tried to scatter but Cobra pilot WO David Lawley had other plans for them. Bringing his craft into a rocket run, Frazier killed 12 NVA and Lawley rolled in for an additional 25 kills. In the two days that followed Cobras from 1/9 would kill over 70 enemy soldiers under the jungle canopy.

Skytroopers would remember the weeks to follow as one of increased enemy resistance and many small, fiercely fought battles. Where early resistance was from rear guard security, as allied forces moved through the Cambodian sanctuary, the troops began fighting regular infantry units.

The weather did not aid the Skytroopers either. Often early morning fog and late afternoon rains from the approaching monsoon season, caused the 1/9 to curtail team missions. Skytroopers were meeting maximum delaying tactics from snipers hanging from trees and rocketeers hiding in bunkers.

On May 22, Alpha Company, 1/5 caught a well equipped communist patrol in claymore ambushes as they were probing their NDP.



"They tried to pull out their dead and wounded, that's when the 105 howitzers and M-60 machineguns got whatever the claymores didn't," said Spec. 4 Roby Surber. Seventeen NVA were killed in the battle.

The 1st Cav celebrated the month of June by capturing a 150 bunker hospital and motor pool eight miles inside the border.

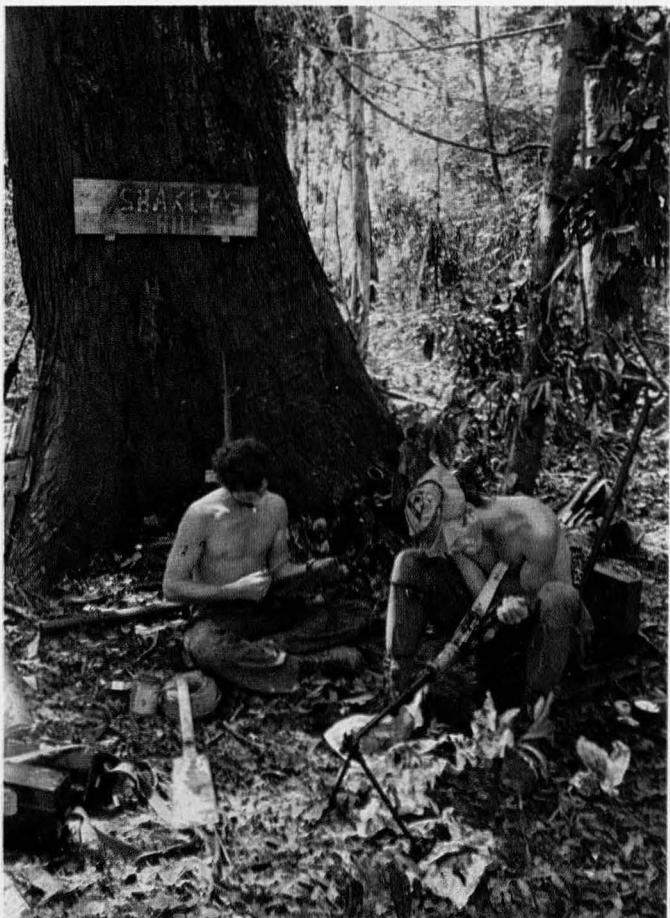
The hospital was discovered by Co. E 2d Bn., 8th Cav. It was equipped with laboratories, an operating room, three kitchens and four classrooms containing numerous medical texts. Medical supplies found included test tubes, blood samples, syringes, plastic bags, and a complete field medicine kit.

While ground troops fought on the ground in Cambodia the 1st Cav fought a second war to help prevent the spread of fear and suffering to those caught in between, the Cambodian civilians.

PSYOPS (Psychological Operations) messages were broadcast over much of the area entered by U.S. troops. Many Vietnamese living inside Cambodia came to the 1st Cav forces and were flown to the refugee center located in An Loc, near the 3d Brigade's headquarters at Quan Loi. There the people were given vegetables, bread, rice and water and clothed and housed by the Vietnamese Social Welfare department, operating under the Military Assistance Command Civil Operations and Rural Development (MACCORDS). Over 2,600 refugees were processed; one thousand would return to their former homes in Cambodia after the campaign.

Refugees escaping from the horrors of war found aid inside Cambodia, too. A refugee checkpoint was set up and manned by the civic action team and Cambodian scouts of the 1st Bn., 5th Cav near FSB David along a main highway in the Fish Hook Region. In the first month alone over 400 villagers received help.

On June 1st, Bravo Company, 5th of the 7th, watched from





a hilltop as convoy headlights disappeared at night over the distant hills. As the company moved through the valleys towards the lights, the enemy laid down a heavy screen of sniper and rocket fire. It was the 30th contact since entering Cambodia for the embattled Bravos.

The advance slowed to a crawl.

Pointman Private First Class Chris Keffalos, better known as "Shakey" to his buddies, snagged his trousers on a piece of tin sheeting at the base of a hill. He had discovered the entrance to a deep well shaft. He jumped to his feet with the cry, "Hey men, I've found it," only to be killed by a burst of fire from a hidden communist machine gun. The company returned fire and moved up the hill, later named after "Shakey."

"About halfway up at a five foot ledge we began getting AK-47 fire, machinegun and B-40 fire," said Sgt. Pat McConwell of the Recon platoon. "They could have rolled grenades down on us from up there. I'm sure glad they didn't."

By nightfall, muddy and tired Skytroopers owned the hill. The enemy had left three dead and numerous blood trails. Keffalos was the only American killed in the action.

The next morning they began their search. The Skytroopers uncovered 58 caves cut into the earth on all sides of the hill. Bamboo ladders went straight into the interiors 12 feet below them. The caves, at the bottom, then tunneled back for 30 feet to make rooms almost 10 feet wide and high.

Shakey's Hill was a rear service unit's main storage area. Uncovered by the Skytroopers were over 170 tons of weapons and munitions. These included 60 flamethrowers, 30 mortars, 100 machineguns of all kinds, 750 rifles and 60 pistols.

Over 1,440,000 rounds of small arms ammo were found along with 14,200 rifle grenades and 2,600 rocket propelled grenades. Over 477,000 chicom claymore mines were found, as well as other items such as 16 field radios, demolition kits and 1,000 pairs of socks.

On June 5 President Nixon addressed the nation on television. He said Cambodia had been "the most successful operation of this long and difficult war," and repeated his promise to pull all American troops from Cambodia by June 30th.

Skytroopers raced to find the enemy and keep him from desperately needed supplies before the withdrawal deadline, but the troopers, operating from the rolling green hills near FSB David, were ironically slowed down by the 14 caches they uncovered since late May.

Most of them, including the largest, Skakey's Hill, were along two roads that snaked along tops of grassy hills, then melted suddenly into the dense jungle.

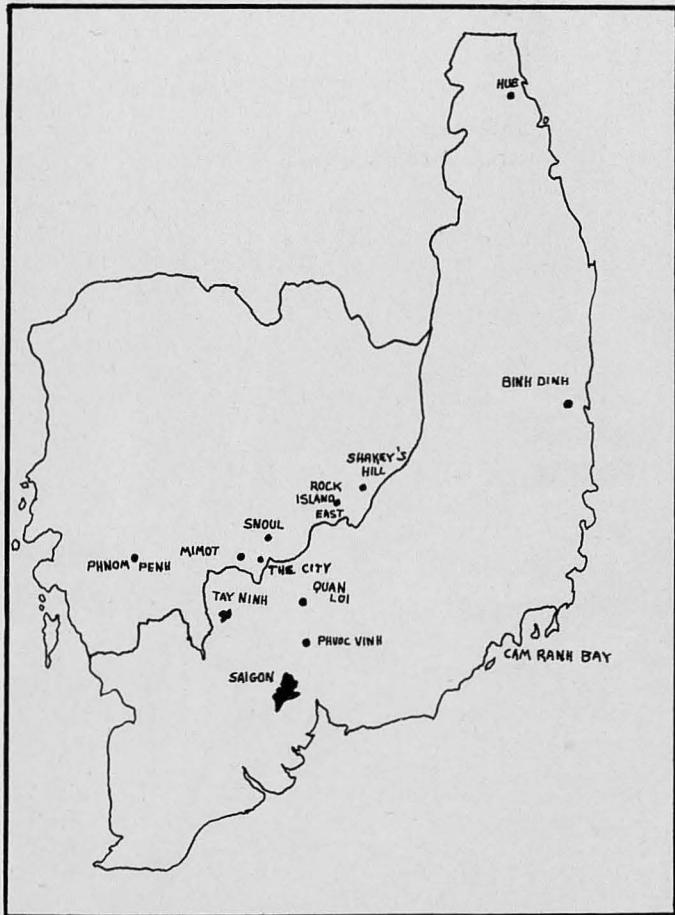
Rice, tons of it, became a nightmare to many Skytroopers. The grain, in 100 and 200 pound bags had to be luggered on their backs to cleared pick up zones where they were put in slings to be picked up and flown to FSB Snuffy by huge Chinook helicopters. There C123 cargo planes flew the rice back to Song Be and points south to be distributed to the Montagnards and Vietnamese people in the provinces.

Besides backhauling munitions and rice the Skytroopers had numerous contacts with snipers left behind by the enemy to delay the searchers.

"We don't expose our troops unnecessarily," said Brig. Gen. Eugene Forrester, the Cav's assistant division commander. "When we take fire it slows us down, because we don't try to buy time with lives."

The 1st Cav continued to move the rice out as fast as possible. Captain Henry Hall, 2nd Brigade S-5, contacted the MACV compound at Song Be for a possible solution.

MACV, the Cav's link with the Phuoc Vinh Provincial government, contacted LTC Luu Yem, Phuoc Long's Province Chief. LTC Yem wasted no time in arranging the aid of his troops. Eventually, five RF companies participated in backhauling rice in Cambodia. They aided in numerous small





caches as well as on Shakey's Hill. The movement of thousands of 200 pound sacks of rice was speeded up. Over 800 tons of rice was distributed during the two months of the Cambodian operation.

As operations in Cambodia entered their seventh week, the 1/5 beat back an early morning probe on the easternmost of the Cav's bases, FSB David, four miles from the border. It was the first time the firebase had seen action since the battalion CA in mid-May.

For their actions in Cambodia, three Skytroopers were recommended for the Medal of Honor, the highest award the country can give for valor. Five more 1st Cav soldiers were recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross, the nation's second highest medal. In two months of campaigning, 122 Silver Stars and 151 Distinguished Flying Crosses were given to members of the division.

By the end of the last week in June most of the 18 companies of Skytroopers began to make their way across the border to new firebases established during the week in Vietnam.

The firebases in Cambodia were quickly closed one by one. Chinooks from the 228th AHB flew at low level through valleys, skirting fog covered hills to reach FSB David. In extremely poor weather they removed the essential equipment from the base. Giant CH-47 Cranes from the 273rd Avn Co (Hvy. Hel.) picked up the 155 howitzers, 2½ ton trucks, bulldozers and other heavy equipment and flew it back to Vietnam. Remaining weapons and ammunition were destroyed where the enemy had stored them.

On June 29, the last Skytroopers of the 1/7, waded neck deep through a swollen jungle stream, as a Pink Team kept cover overhead, to end another chapter in the history of the 1st Air Cav, and the Vietnamese War.

In two months the 1st Cav had killed more than 2,500 enemy soldiers, 80 per cent in May alone. This accounted for

21 per cent of the 11,000 enemy killed in Cambodia, the equivalent of three enemy regiments.

More than 350 caches were found. Skytroopers captured 6,100 individual and 900 crew-served weapons in two months, a figure which represented 70 per cent of the total captured by the Cav since it began interdicting trails in III Corps in 1969. The number of weapons captured could outfit 35 250-man enemy battalions.

Thirty-five enemy battalions could eat for a year on the 2,340 tons of rice, salt and other food captured and destroyed.

Over 1,000 tons of ammunition of all kinds, including six million rounds of small caliber ammunition, 40,000 rounds of mortar and rocket rounds were uncovered.

The ammunition, the weapons, the rice, the vehicles, and the 30 tons of medical supplies captured, represented the lifeblood for three NVA divisions that traditionally faced the 1st Cav across the border in Vietnam.

One hundred twenty-three Skytroopers died in Cambodia and 366 were wounded.

Military officials estimated it would take the enemy months to recover. A half-year after Cambodia the war in South Vietnam was at its lowest point, in the number of casualties and large scale enemy attacks, since 1965.

Major General George W. Casey, commanding general of the 1st Cav, praised the men of the division in a command letter:

"Each one of you contributed to the team effort - the maintenance men who kept our helicopters flying and the aviators who so gallantly flew them for more hours than they have ever flown before; the support personnel who worked so long and hard to keep supplies flowing to our extended front; the signalmen who accomplished near impossible feats; the aerial scouts who sought out the enemy wherever he might try to hide; and most of all - the infantrymen who grappled with a tenacious enemy and searched out his hidden caches. All of you together made this success possible and deserve the



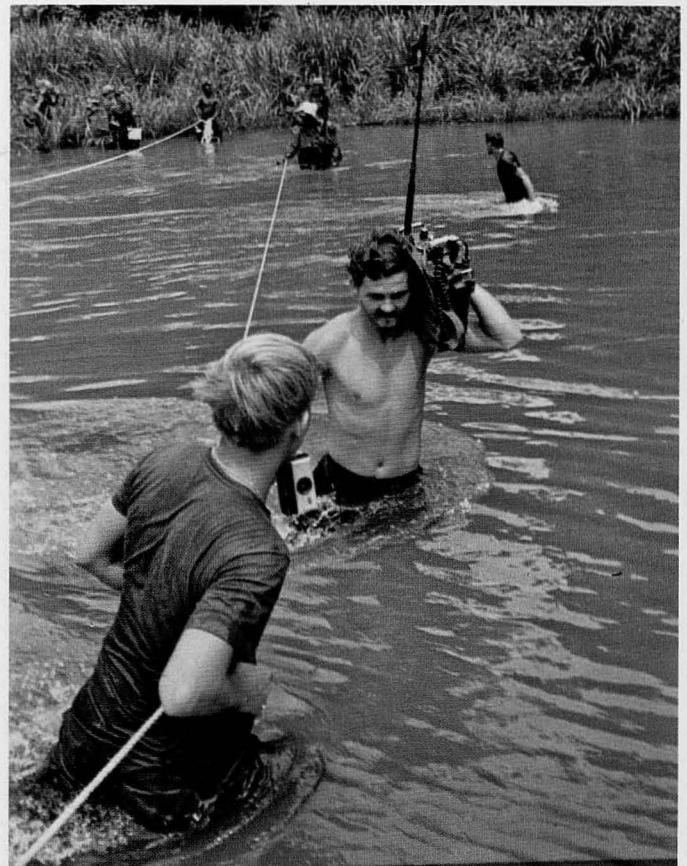
accolade of the First Team... it is my honor to have served alongside you during this crucial and historic period."

The letter was prepared on the evening of July 6, 1970. The next morning General Casey was enroute to Cam Ranh Bay to visit wounded Skytroopers in the hospital and give them a personal report of their success. While flying over the rugged mountains of the central highlands, Gen. Casey and all the officers and enlisted men aboard were killed when his helicopter entered a thick cloud bank and crashed into the side of a mountain.

For their accomplishments in Cambodia the 1st Air Cav was recommended for the Presidential Unit Citation for the second time.

On July 1, 1970, President Nixon addressed the nation on Cambodia as he had two months before.

"Together with the South Vietnamese, the armed forces of the United States have just completed successfully the destruction of enemy bases along the Cambodian-South Vietnam border...the Allied sweep...will save American and Allied lives in the future; will assure that the withdrawal of American troops from South Vietnam can proceed on schedule; will enable our program of Vietnamization to continue on its current timetable; should enhance the prospect for a just peace...We have bought time for the South Vietnamese to strengthen themselves against the enemy...Americans can take pride...in the competence and dedication of our forces."



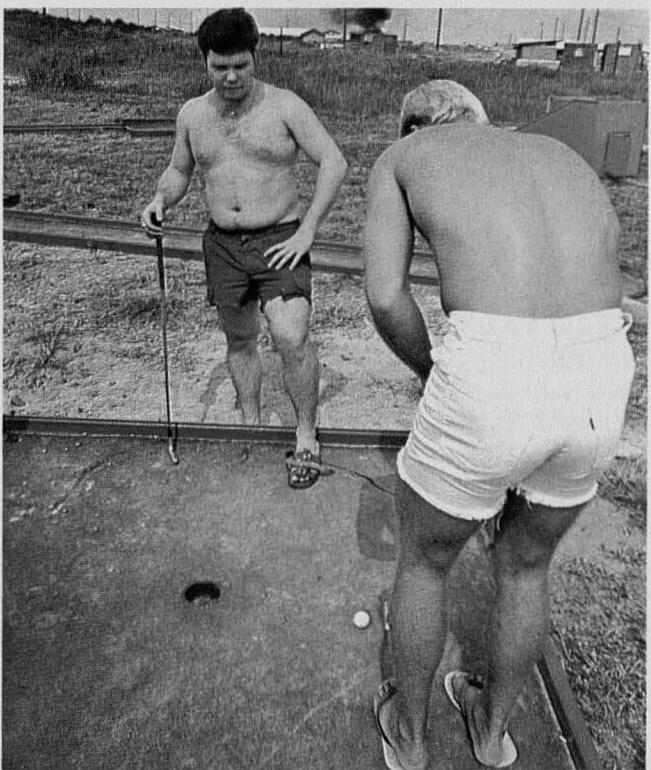
STANDDOWN

Standdown at the VIP Center in Bien Hoa means something different to almost every Skytrooper who gets an occasional break from the field. Things to do and see are in abundance.

A chance to go swimming or play miniature golf, or maybe just see a good movie will be the pleasant memory brought back. Others will remember the trip to the PX to place the PACEX order, or the chance to visit a restaurant in a foreign land. It might be time to catch up on mail home or to place a MARS call.

Standdown time provides a break from the routine of beating the bush throughout the First Team's area of operation. The training included in standdown or the quality of the floor show will be the subject of conversation long after standdown.

It adds up to a lot of laughs and memories, not an R&R but not very expensive either.





FIREBASES

From fire support bases born out of twisted vines in the jungle, artillery provides massive firepower with 105mm and 155mm howitzers as well as from larger guns. It is almost as much of a Cav trademark as the combat assault. Move in, set up a firebase, search the area, and move on. Sometimes a firebase will last a few days, sometimes several months.

Fire support base Cheyenne was one such firebase. A quiet clearing in the surrounding jungle canopy is filled with the roar of jet engines and a gaggle of UH-1 "Slicks" sweeps over the trees. As the birds descend and hover just above the elephant grass with their rotorwash making patterns in the grass, heavily laden infantrymen from the 2d Battalion, 5th Cavalry and engineers from 1st Platoon of Charlie Company, 8th Engineer Battalion tumble out of the open doors and dash for cover.

Fire Support Base Cheyenne is born.

While the infantry sweeps the surrounding jungle for signs of the enemy and to set up security, the engineers pick out the best spot to insert their heavy equipment.

High over the jungle in the distance, the engineers can hear the throb of approaching helicopters. A CH-47 Chinook, carrying a backhoe needed for digging emplacements in the days ahead, sends bits of loose brush and dirt flying as it approaches the position. Pop, the yellow smoke grenade in released, guiding the Chinook to the place where eager GIs wait. Through a blast of hot air and a cloud of dust the equipment is unhooked and the Chinook swings up and away.

As the hook leaves its place is taken by a CH-54 Skycrane with an artillery piece slung beneath its hump-backed silhouette. The airlift continues as Case 450 and D-5 bulldozers hit the ground with a soft thud, barely audible over the roar of the crane's engine.

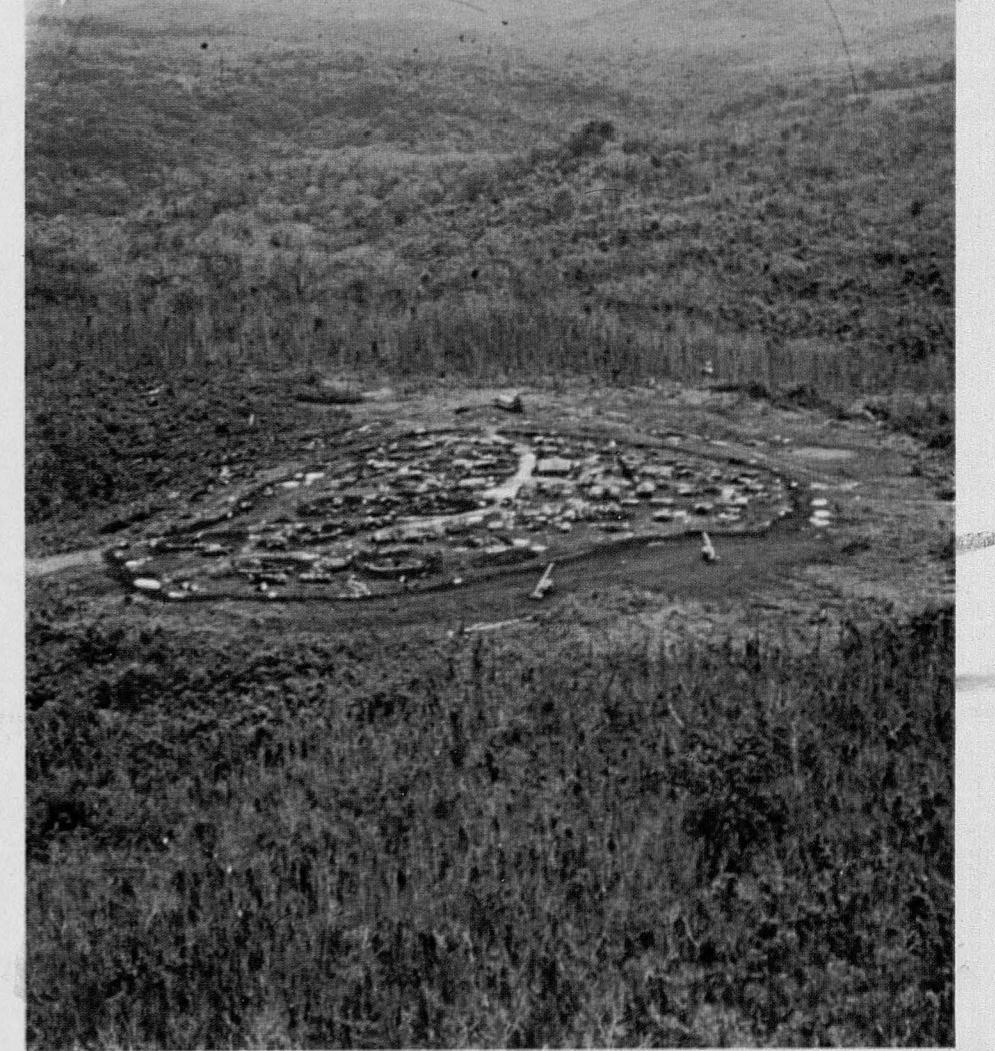
Soon the backhoe, C-450 and D-5 dozers rip into the jungle clay. Farther out into the jungle, the Pioneer group from Charlie Company is hacking away at the vines and creepers.

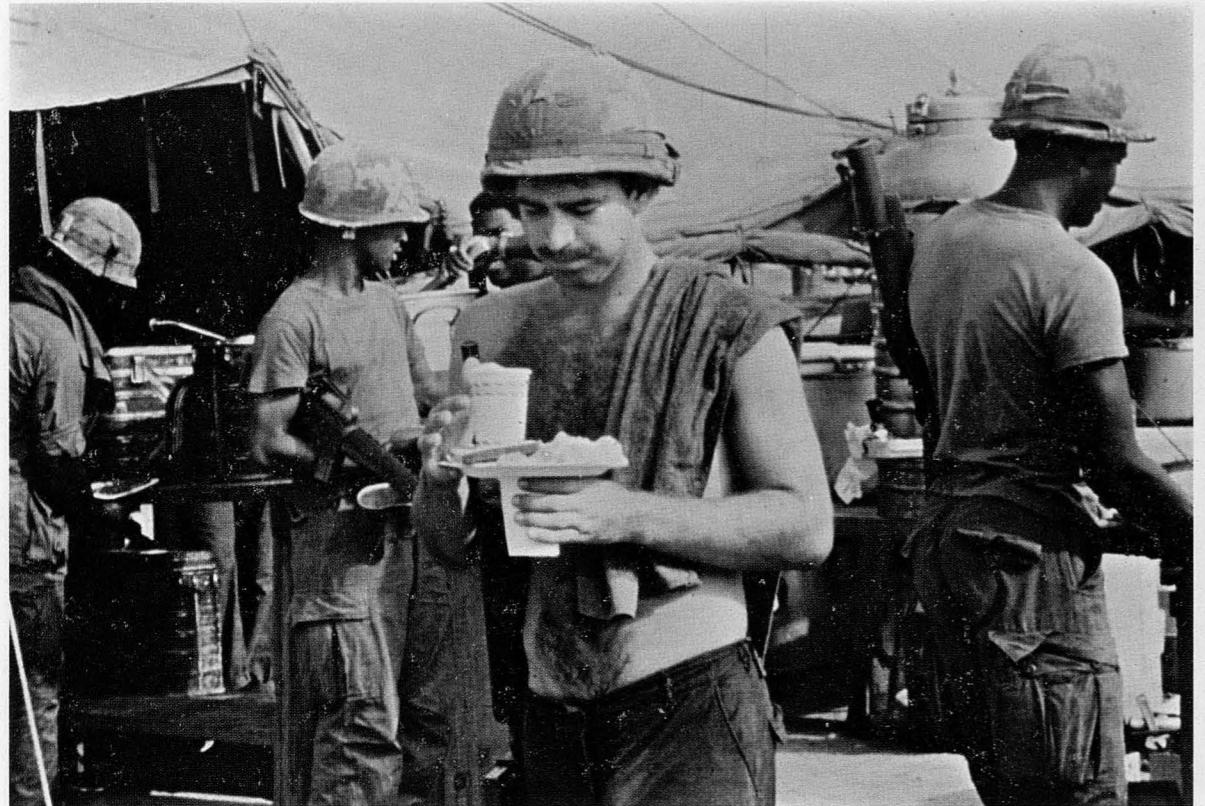
After they have cleared the undergrowth, the Pioneers begin the heavy work of clearing the huge teak and mahogany trees. The rattle of chain saws and cries of "fire in the hole" followed by the blast of explosives crash through the jungle while blue-black smoke snakes up through the green canopy.

Darkness finds the engineers still at work and they continue to grind away under the yellow glare of parachute flares popping out of mortars already laid in on aiming stakes pounded into the raw clay of the new-born firebase.

Heavy timbers and CONEXs form the core of bunkers which rise out of the darkness as dawn breaks. Already the new Tactical Operations Center is being covered by green sand bags. Word comes for the 1st Platoon of Charlie Company to move out, another fire support base must be built. When Fire Support Base Cheyenne has outlived its usefulness the engineers will return to destroy their handiwork.

A few kilometers from Song Be, a circle of infantrymen looks out at the steep slopes and valleys of Bu Gia Map.





On FSB Atkinson, the men of B Battery, 2nd Battalion, 19th Artillery stood in the mess line for lunch. Eyes brightened as the soldiers spotted some ice cream at the end of the chow line. It was a treat usually not provided for firebase residents and they welcomed this novelty with pleasure.

Suddenly the command went up: "Fire mission!" Ham, beans and ice cream were quickly put aside and B battery prepared to shoot the mission. "Doesn't Charlie over eat lunch?" one disgruntled Skytrooper asked. Within minutes, the rounds were in the air toward their unseen target.

Outside the perimeter, Delta Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry was positioned near the air pad waiting for their lift into the field. The men sat on the ground leaning back against their rucksacks. They talked and joked among themselves. Some Skytroopers finished reading their letters from home, others sat silent and stared at the quiet treeline a hundred meters away. Their mission was to operate in an area three kilometers to the west of the firebase, patrolling the jungle by day and setting up trail ambushes at night.

From over the trees at the edge of the jungle, a flight of Huey helicopters, bringing another unit in from the field, dropped into the landing area. A storm of red dust billowed up as the choppers hovered in for a landing. Tired looking soldiers, their uniforms covered with two-weeks accumulation of mud and dirt, jumped to the ground from the landed aircraft. The Skytroopers of Bravo

Company headed for the firebase believed that the mission was over and happy with the expectation of relaxing for a few days. They greeted friends standing on the perimeter and dropped their rucksacks to the ground. The choppers continued making lifts for the next 15 minutes until the entire company had been brought in from the field.

Mail was brought to the Skytroopers of Bravo Company, and there was the familiar sight of soldiers sitting on the ground each involved in his private thoughts, a letter open in his hand.

As the men of Bravo relaxed, the Skytroopers of Delta Company prepared for their lift. The squads took their place on the narrow air pad, one man in front to bring in the Huey helicopter to its correct position on the ground.

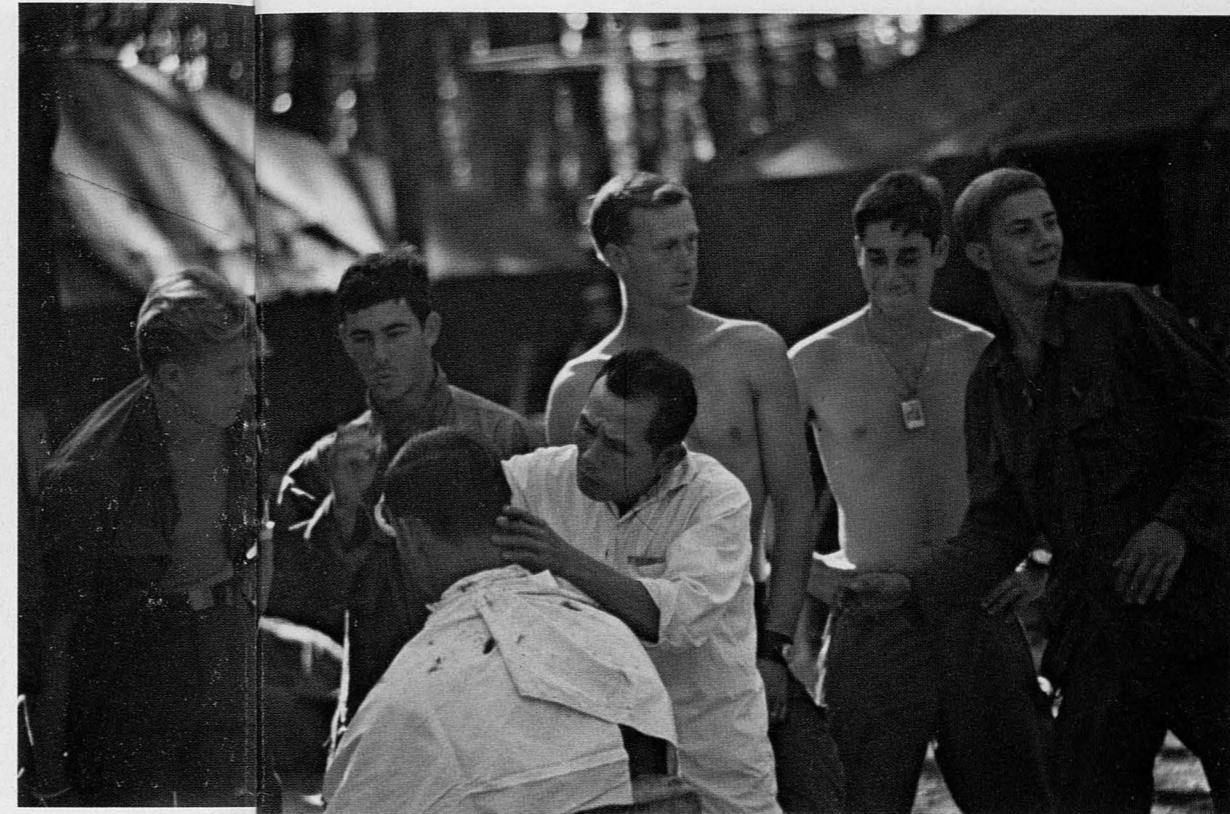
The helicopters, which had landed near the opposite end of the firebase, now took off, circled the base once and then dropped one by one in front of the Skytroopers guiding them in. The soldiers boarded the birds, one or two of them sitting in the doorway of the helicopter, their legs dangling out over the side.

The birds lifted off, and the Skytroopers waved and gestured to those still on the ground as the helicopters swooped upward to clear the trees at the edge of the jungle. Some of the men of Bravo Company waved back, but many sat silent still engrossed in their letters, or reading the first newspaper they had seen in half a month. Others were talking with friends.

The next five squads of Delta Company stood on line and waited for

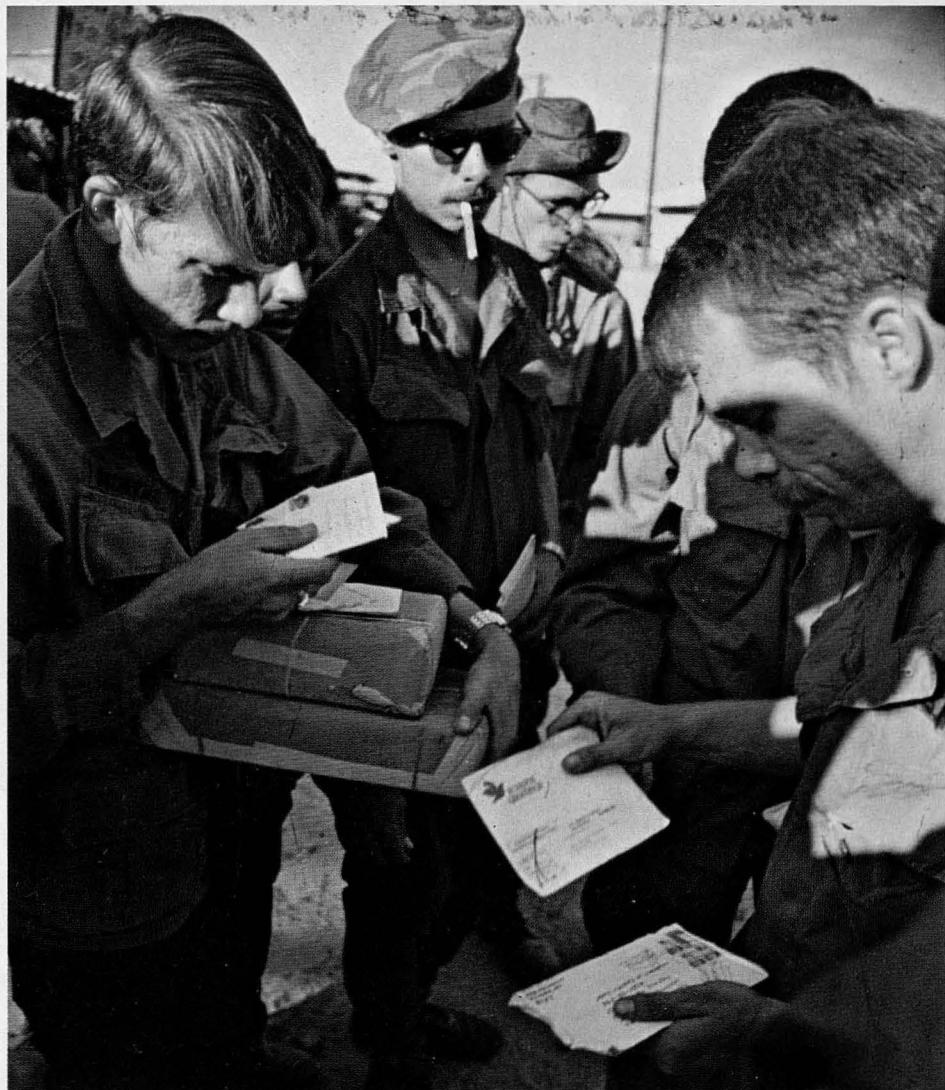


Life on a firebase is made up of many parts. It is a time to wash off the jungle grime but have it replaced by the dust thrown up by a Chinook. It is a chance to talk out loud and play a radio, it is also a time to "hold your ears" as the artillery fires a mission. There is the aroma of food cooking and the odor of waste disposal. It is a chance to rest those feet which cover a lot of ground in Cav Country.



WERNER





the Hueys to return. It all went without a hitch. Everybody had done it innumerable times; it was part of the job. The coming in from the field, the going back out: a ritual that rarely changes. It is all in the life of an infantryman. For the next 15 minutes, Delta Company was flown out and soon it was quiet again. Bravo Company picked up their rucksacks and moved inside the perimeter.

The settled themselves around the berm, a platoon to each side. They dropped their gear near bunkers which had been started by the men of D company. Then, personal gear was left for the moment as the men shed their fatigues and grabbed a bar of soap. They took turns under an Australian shower bucket hung over one of the howitzers. The men were taking their first shower in two weeks.

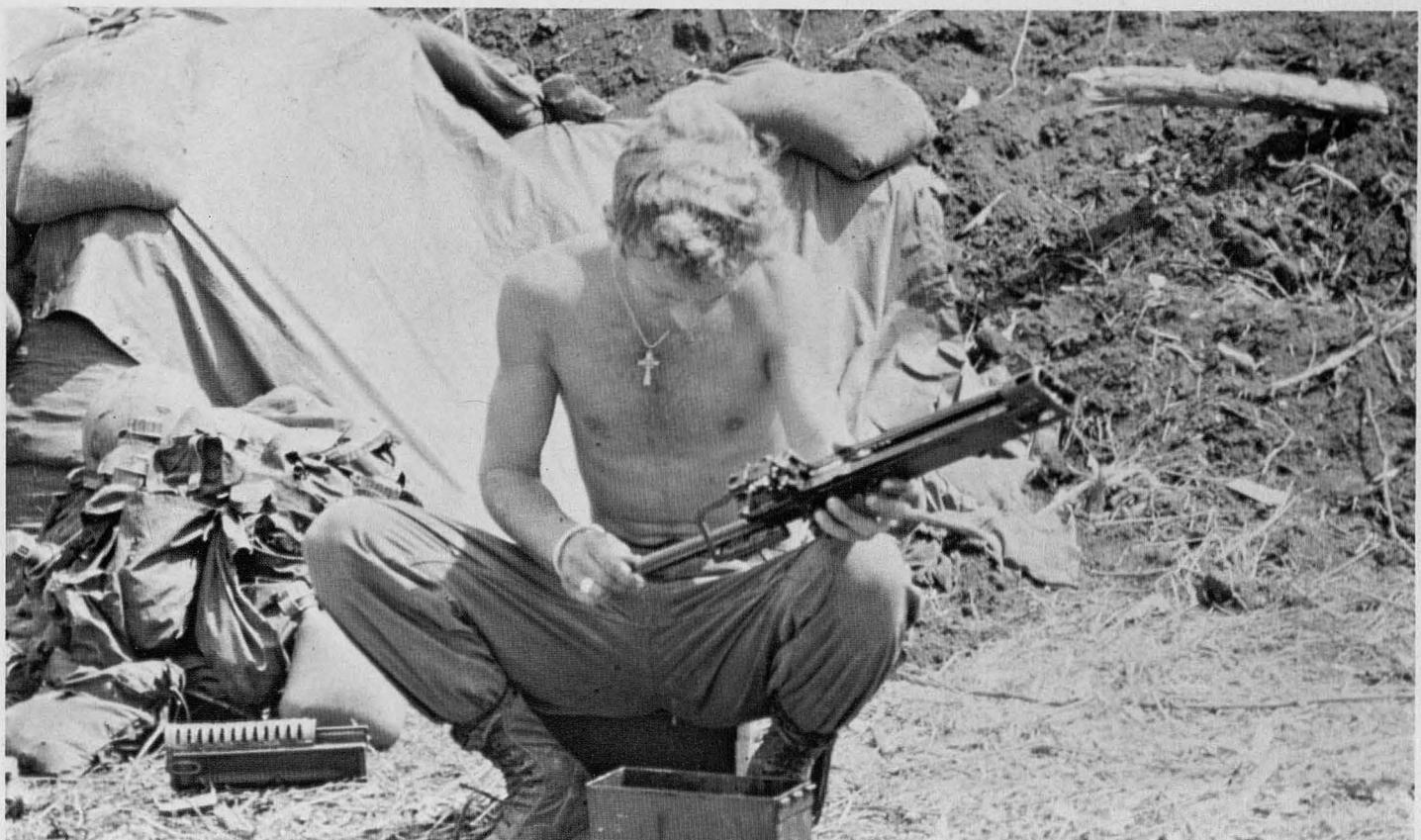
Razors came out, and 15-day beards disappeared under a blanket of white lather. Equipment was hung out to dry, and air mattresses laid out and inflated. Weapons were opened and thoroughly cleaned. A baseball was brought out, and there was a moment for a game of catch.

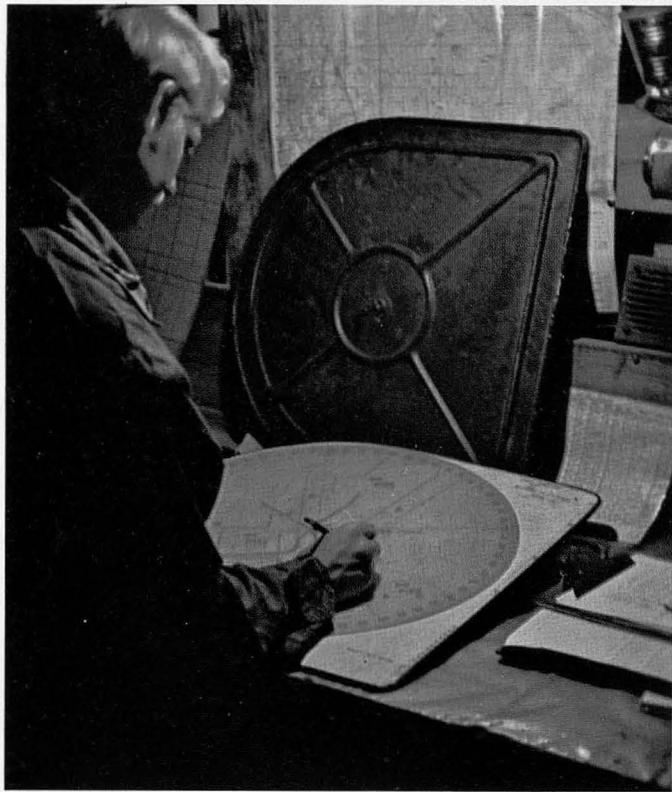
Radios and cassette tape recorders were turned on and some took out pen and paper to write home.

As night came, the men not on guard lay back and relaxed to the background music of Firebase Atkinson—the loud booms of the 155 howitzers.

The success of the 1st Air Cav as well as other units in Vietnam is the application of air mobility as well as close-in fire support for the troops in the field.







MORTARS

It's called High Angle Hell, but the 81mm mortar has provided a great amount of firepower for defensive operations on Cav fire support bases. Just like the big boys in artillery, the mortar crews build the ever faithful sandbag pits where the mobile 81mm is emplaced. The gun can be fired in any direction by just revolving the tube in its socket and by moving the tripod. The 81s are attached to the Recon element of a battalion, usually Echo Company, and the crews work out of fire bases or LZ's. At night the mortars fire illumination rounds when enemy movement is expected or detected. It's small, light and compact, but it's as essential to a firebase as the giant howitzers.

The men who operate the mortars are infantrymen with an 11-C military occupational specialty, rather than an artillery MOS but they have just as much pride in their skill.

Crew drill is a constant part of the daily routine, and each crew strives to improve the speed with which they can put out the rounds. The men in the fire direction center also practice their particular skill in order to cut the time required to place rounds on the target. There is a friendly rivalry with the artillery as to who can be on target sooner.





ARTILLERY

The firebase concept is the key to the airmobile 1st Cav and the batteries of 105mm and 155mm howitzers are the cornerstone of any firebase-its very reason for existence.

Three battalions of 105mm howitzers, 1st Bn, 21st Artillery; 1st Bn, 77th Artillery and 2d Bn, 19th Artillery, and one battalion of 155mm howitzers-the 1st Bn, 30th Artillery, are assigned to the 1st Air Cav. One battery of the the smaller guns, the 105's, work with each infantry battalion. The 155mm batteries are split in half and deployed to several firebases and basecamps. Bigger guns, the 175mm and eight inch, are operationally controlled by the 1st Air Cav Division from II Field Force.

"We've moved 15 times in four months plus three artillery raids where half the battery moved. The days just keep going on and we keep on moving. I'm sure that pretty soon they'll run out of places to move us and we'll finally get to a permanent firebase," said 1LT Meauman Coleman, acting commander of Bravo Battery, 2nd Bn, 19th Artillery.

Once the battery is told it's moving, usually only hours before the move is to take place, activity begins at a furious pace. The artillerymen get up before dawn and begin packing. A big three point sling is broken out of storage and

hooked to the howitzer after the baseplate is pulled out of the ground. Last to go are the radio and antenna that may still carry orders for a last minute fire mission.

With a rumble and a cloud of dust the first Chinook settles down, picks up the men, hovers to let the red hat hook up the howitzers, then takes off. Within 15 minutes of landing at their new base, FSB Hannas, the howitzers are emplaced and ready to fire. As the gunners unpack their ammunition, the fire direction center is setting up nearby, looking strangely out of place with its charts, maps generators and radios lying in the middle of the open field. Soon a bulldozer will begin gouging out a bunker for them.

Sandbags and ammo boxes become the basic building materials as hootches, ammunition pits and parapet walls rise out of nothing. Everyone in the battery, including the officers, NCOs, cooks and gunners, hurries to fill enough sandbags to get some overhead cover before night falls. Two of the six gun crews will be up all night. The others will be on call.

In the Fire Direction Center (FDC), half the crew will wake the other half when their 12 hour shift begins, with the men listening for the magic words "fire mission" on their radio.

"We're supposed to pull 12 hour shifts," explains PFC Bill Walter, an FDC computer, "but we're up almost all the time." All night long the muzzles flash and waves of sound rush across the firebase making the ground reverberate with its noise. The men are use to the noise. They have to be if they want to





sleep.

In the morning the same work day starts again. Endless sand bags must be filled; PSP and culvert have to be carried from the helicopter pad and everyone pitches in. In other pits already completed, the men read or write letters home. On a dull day they may break the monotony with a good game of catch or if the base is larger, with a net and volley ball.

But the words "fire mission" squawk over the radio. The sandbags are forgotten, the letters left unwritten, and the FDC rushes into action. Two men man the charts, hurriedly putting pins in the coordinates of the fire mission and finding the range and direction to the target. One computer works up the firing data as another feeds the data into the portable FADAC (Field Artillery Digital Automatic Computer). Lights on the FADAC flash and the final data appears within seconds.

An RTO barks out the command "battery adjust" and everybody in the battery runs toward their howitzers. Two of the gunners furiously crank their gun into position-the proper elevation and deflection-while another copies the vital data through his phone and two more ready the projectiles and fuses.

"Fire!" the RTO yells and with an ear shattering roar that encompasses the base with its sound, the shells are on their way to support the company in contact several kilometers away. A sheet of hot steel is laid down between the embattled infantrymen and the NVA.

The routine for the Redlegs is broken



when the communists launch ground and indirect fire attacks against the firebase.

"Our first reaction is to get in the bunkers. But if the rounds are landing a little ways away and it doesn't look like they're walking towards us, we come out on the guns and start to pump out rounds," said Spec. 4 Francis Cook.

Direct fire high explosives and "beehive" rounds have saved many fire bases during ground attacks. Bravo Co., 2d Bn, 19th Arty, received the coveted Presidential Unit Citation for withstanding a vicious attack on LZ Bird in 1966. The battery mowed down the attackers with swarms of beehive fleshettes.

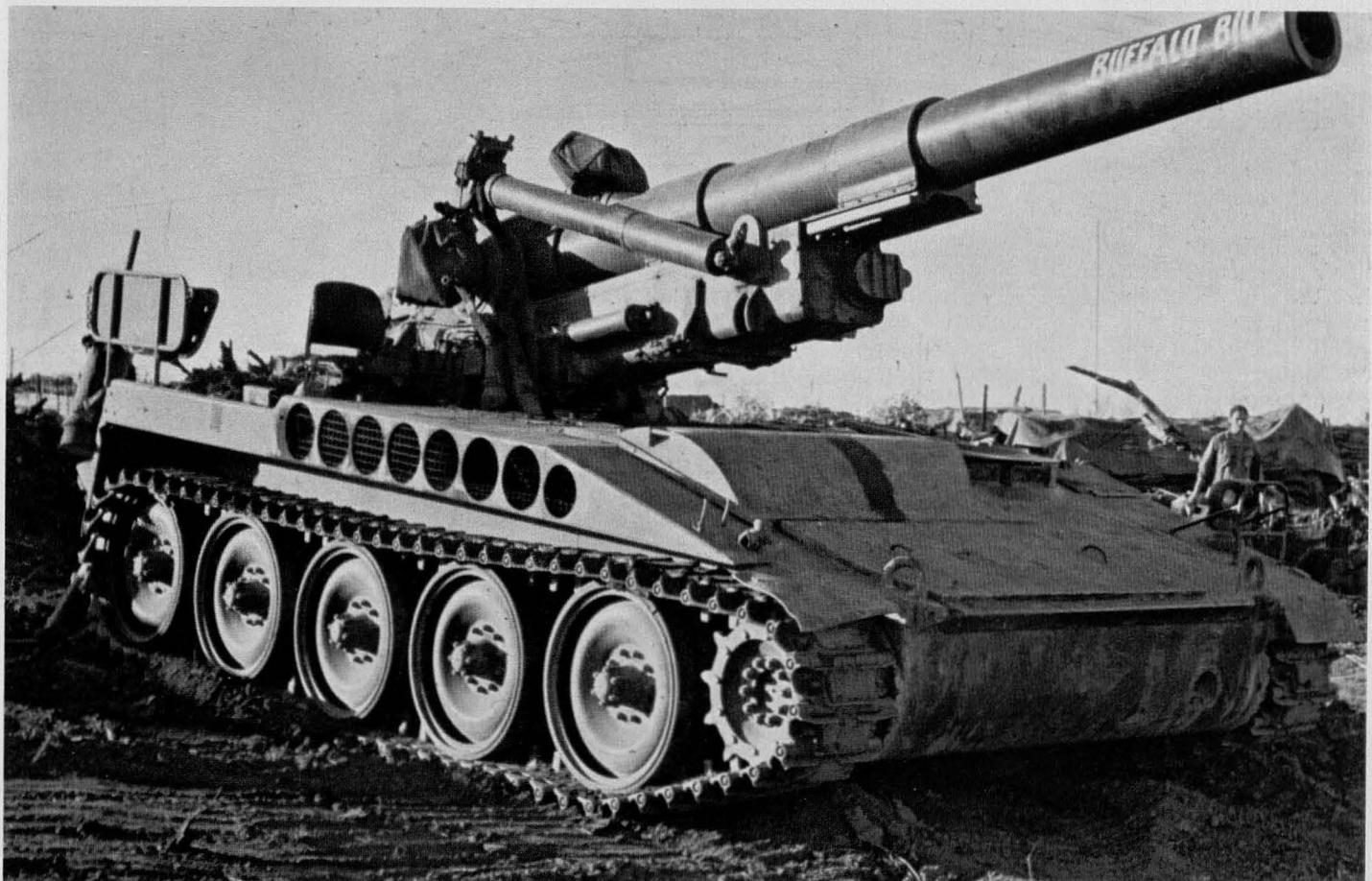
During one attack the battery fired 1,600 rounds in 12 hours. "These guys fight like crazy," said PFC Bill Walter. "We were running low on ammunition at

FSB Atkinson and began firing illumination rounds direct fire. We hit three NVA with a round just as they were approaching the berm."

SGT. Dean Fitzsimonds is typical of the men who handle the guns on the firebase. He's an ammo section chief for Bravo Battery, 1st Bn, 21st Art. In Cambodia he had his job cut out for him. "We were handling more than 1,000 rounds a day," said Fitzsimonds.

That's 30 tons of ammunition and its daily at a new firebase. "On a firebase where the action is really heavy our work day begins at seven the morning and may end at 10 at night. We spend our spare time building our hooches and filling sandbags for overhead cover."

Artillery. It is complicated, and requires hard work and long hours. But its the backbone of any firebase.



INTERDICTION AMBUSH RESOURCE CONTROL



After the end of the Cambodian operation, when the 1st Cav returned its fighting units to South Vietnam in July of 1970, they found the situation greatly changed. Instead of the pugnacious and tenacious adversary the Cav had been contending with as late as early 1970, now the NVA and VC evaded rather than sought confrontation as they had before.

The enemy's new tactics grew, at least in part, out of the new situation after the invasion of the NVA's Cambodian jungle sanctuaries. Not only had the incursion by helicopter-borne, airmobile troops behind the enemy's lines depleted his source of supply, but the tactic also swung the NVA's attention to the new non neutralist Lon Nol government in Cambodia. Wheeling around to face the First Team's combat power which had jumped into the jungle behind them, the NVA also found themselves facing a new adversary: the new Cambodian government. Long after US troops had all been pulled back to Vietnam, the NVA's fighting in Cambodia sputtered and flared in conflicts with both native government troops and ARVN's.

With his attention now divided between two fronts--Cambodia and South Vietnam--and with the depletion of his border storehouses and sanctuaries, the Communist

force found it necessary to depend heavily upon local resources to supply his troops operating in South Vietnam.

For the 1st Cav and other US forces in South Vietnam, the period after the end of the Cambodian operation also brought another kind of change. Fighting dropped to the lowest levels since the beginnings of the war, and US withdrawals from Southeast Asia were stepped up to the point that it appeared the US really meant to end its presence there.

The overall picture was such that by Christmas of 1970 when Bob Hope made his annual entertainment visit to Vietnam, he said that he expected he would not be making another visit there the following year. The implication was that there would not be enough US troops left in Vietnam to warrant the trip.

Adjusting to the lower level of hostilities and communist tactics of obtaining supplies from the local populace, "ambush, interdiction and resource control" became the name of the game for the 1st Cav. Ambushes, road check points and patrols were employed to deny the enemy easy access to the networks of jungle trails which he had to travel if he was to maintain his supply. Resource control aimed at denying the enemy the means of transporting supplies to his combat





elements. This supply system was commonly called "the shadow supply system."

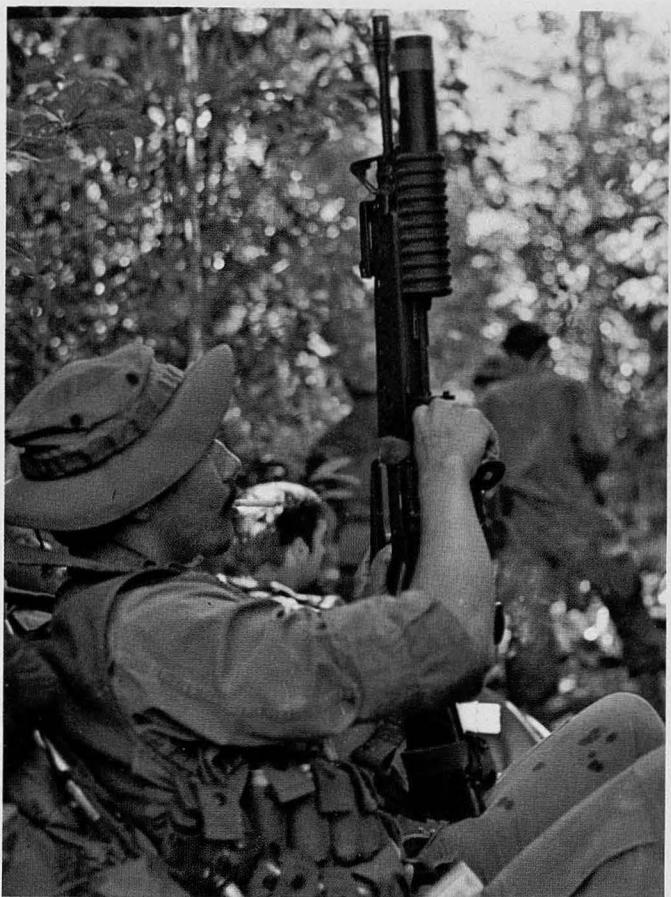
Ambush as a tactic took several forms in the months after the Cambodian operation, but one kind of ambush in particular consistently chalked up kills for Skytroopers. The enemy, pushed to find local sources of supply, found themselves hard pressed even in meeting the immediate requirement for food. Accordingly, when US infantry units moved on from sites where helicopters had lifted in logistical supply or when a firebase was moved to a new location and the previous site abandoned, hungry NVA and VC swarmed over the areas scavenging whatever foodstuffs that had been inadvertently left by the Skytroopers. In stay-behind ambushes, Skytroopers repeatedly cut down the enemy foragers as they crept over the abandoned sites under cover of darkness or as they sometimes brazenly walked into the abandoned US areas during broad daylight.

Other types of ambushes were also employed. The squad-size ambush--a basic ambush tactic--was regularly deployed along trails and areas regularly used by the NVA and VC. The automatic ambush, a device which came into wide use in the First Cavalry Division during the early months of 1970

was also used extensively during the May-June Cambodian operation. The automatic ambush, or "alpha alpha" as it was called by the troops who used it, consisted of one or more Claymore-type mines detonated by a trip wire strung across frequently used trails.

Although the ambush provided an efficient means of interdiction--especially during the hours of darkness--the Cav was also able to curtail enemy movement during daylight hours by applying the concept of airmobility and helicopter air power. While helicopter observation helped to keep enemy movement under the eye of 1st Cav tacticians, judicious use of the Cav's airmobile manpower kept the enemy off balance and thwarted his objectives. The light observation helicopter and Cobra gunships of the 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry brought direct pressure on the enemy by hunting him out and raining rockets, minigun and machinegun fire on him from the sky. Helicopter-borne firepower proved especially effective in interdiction of the enemy's daylight movement.

However, in order to successfully cut off the enemy's local source of supply, resource control was necessary. Produce which had previously been stored and marketed on an individual basis was now collected into community



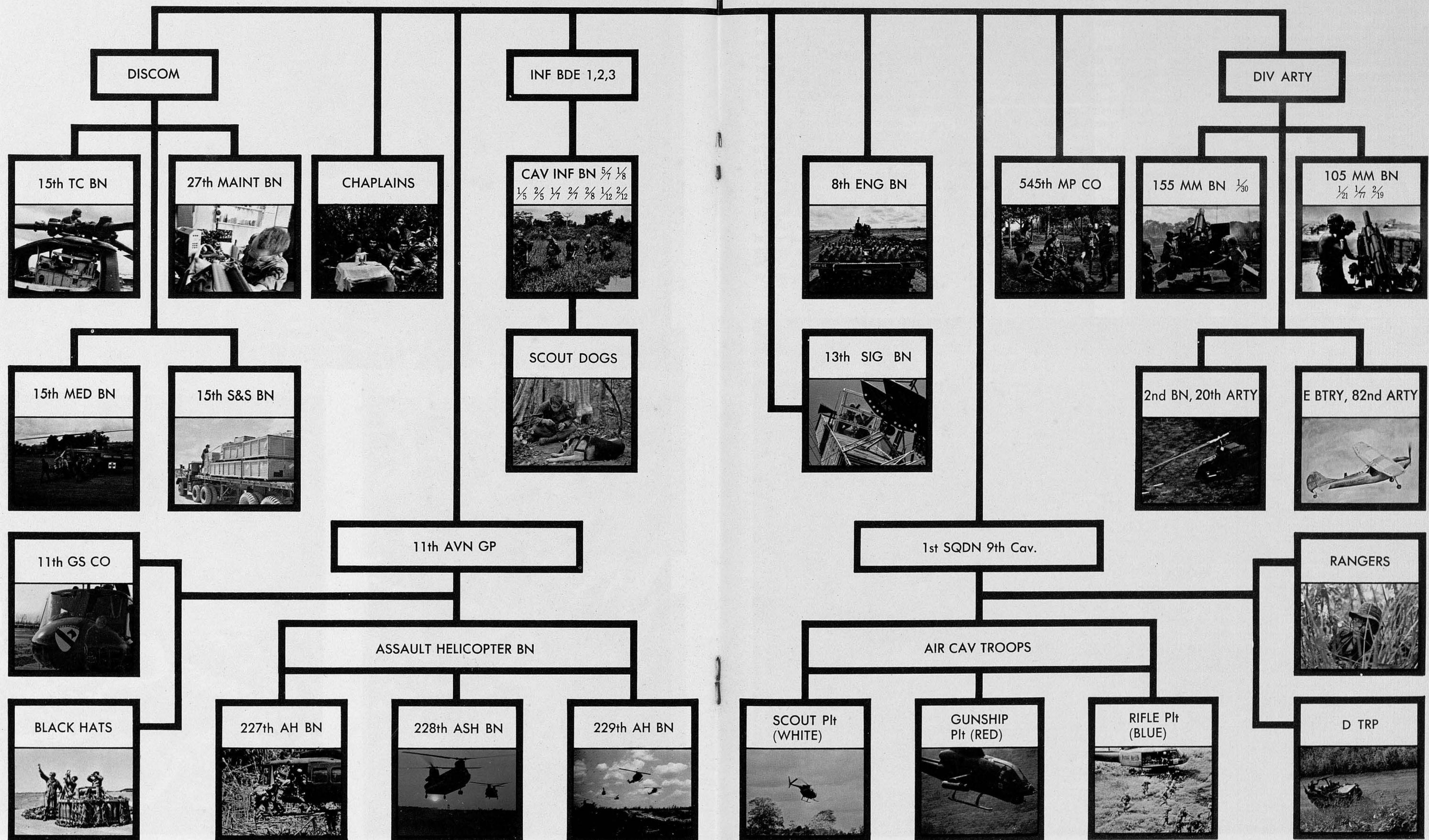


storehouses which were kept well guarded. By consolidating and guarding the crops between the field and the market, Communist units in the area were denied access to the provisions necessary to maintain a fighting force. When the harvests of 1970 and '71 came around, 1st Cav troopers were on the spot to see that none of the produce fell into the hands of the Communists.

The trend of US troop withdrawals from Southeast Asia began to emerge in late 1970 and early 1971, it became evident that the Vietnamese themselves would have to shoulder more of the responsibility of protecting their land and controlling their resources to the people's benefit. This objective is being accomplished from two different angles, the Vietnamization of the war and the Pacification Program.



THE WHOLE TEAM ★ ★ THE FIRST TEAM



The Psyoperators

PSYOPS or psychological operations wages a war of words on the enemy. With leaflets flying and loudspeakers blaring, First Team helicopters and planes from the 9th Special Operations Squadron bring another view of the struggle in South Vietnam to VC and NVA soldiers.

The North Vietnamese soldier who picks up a PSYOPS leaflet may find any of several different messages. He may be told how to prevent malaria, and that should he surrender he would receive proper medical care. He may read the case history of a wounded NVA soldier who was saved by a MEDEVAC helicopter. Another approach is the "letter home" leaflet which tells the story of a young soldier who comes south to liberate his countrymen only to find a powerful military foe and an indifferent populous.

Many of the leaflets seek to build the image of the Government of Vietnam.

These are dropped in both hostile and secured areas. Signboards and posters are also used to promote the image of the government.

The Montagnard people present a special problem since they have no written language. Considerable ingenuity goes into the preparation of picture stories instructing the Montagnards how to rally, report enemy movement and to promise them protection and a decent living.

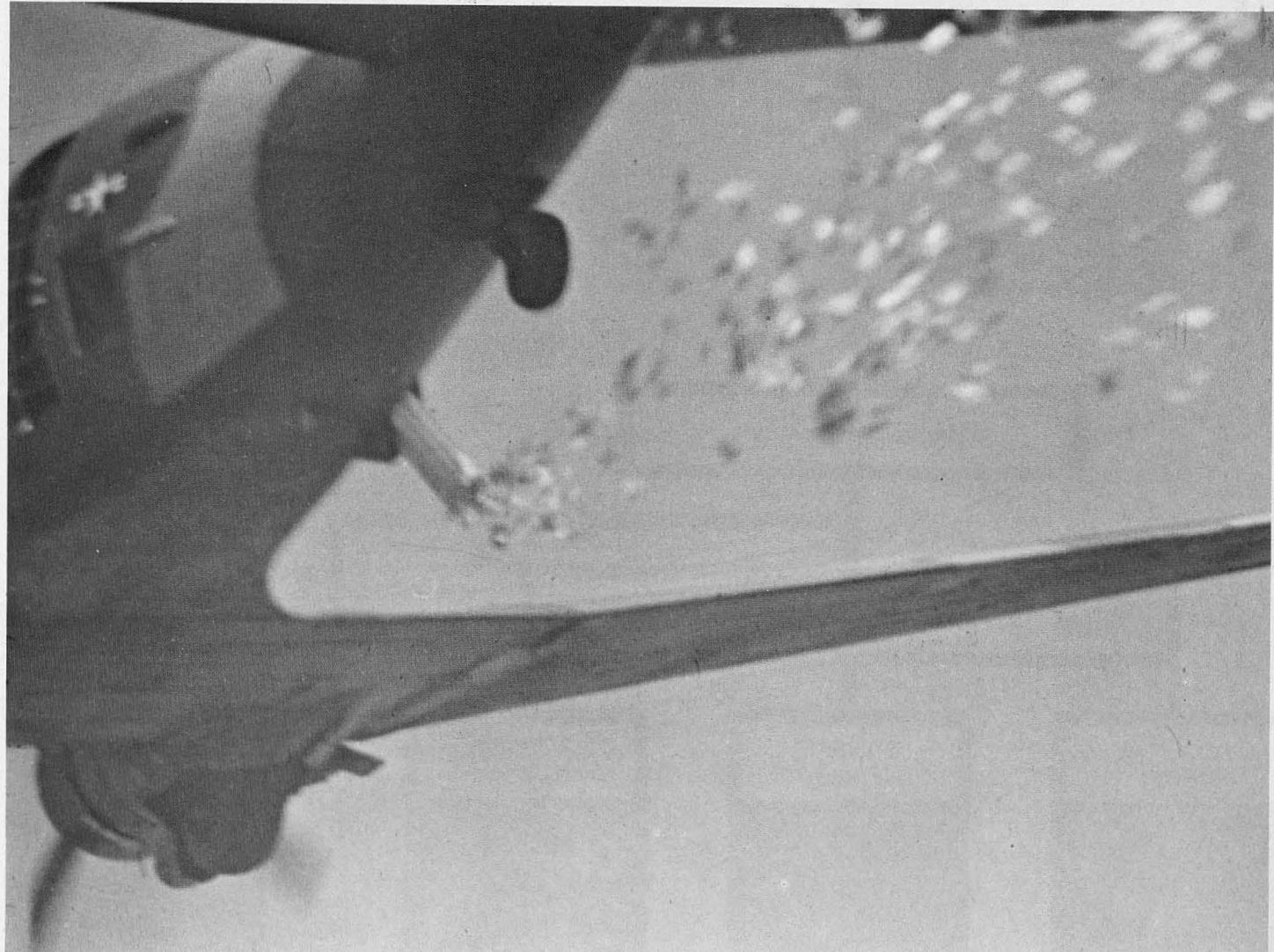
A rallier brought in may help prepare tapes and leaflets which will be directed at the area he has just rallied from. The people still in the jungle will be told of the good fortune of the rallier which they too can share. Hearing the voice and seeing the picture of a former companion has proved to be an effective means of encouraging others to rally.

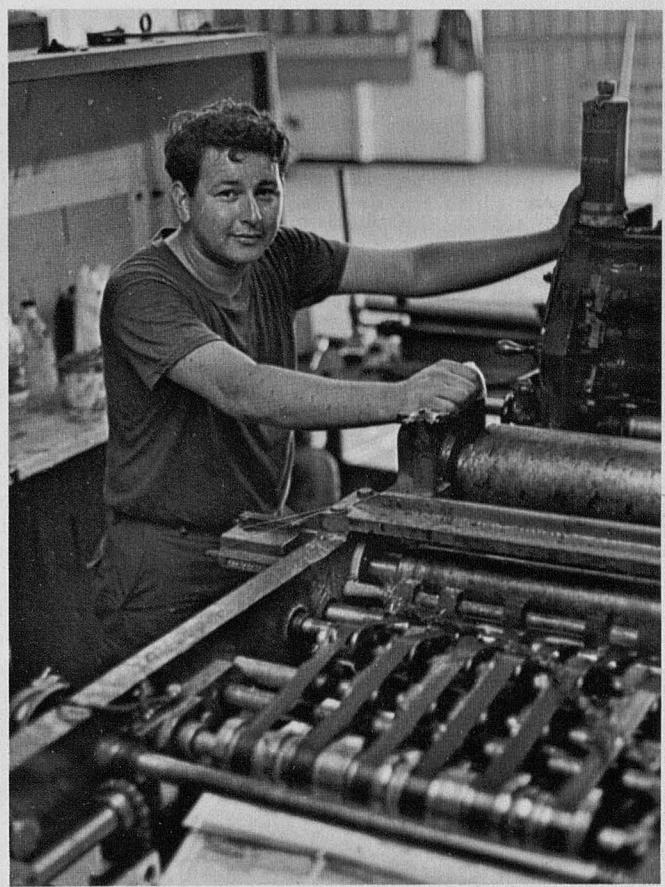
In cooperation with the 4th PSYOPS Group, the Cav can have leaflets back

into an area within 24 hours of the time the rallier was brought in. One method which reduces the reaction time needed in bringing tapes to the target area is known as "Early Word." A radio message is sent to the broadcast bird from a firebase or any place a radio can be set up, and the message is taped on the bird which then flies over the target area to deliver the broadcast.

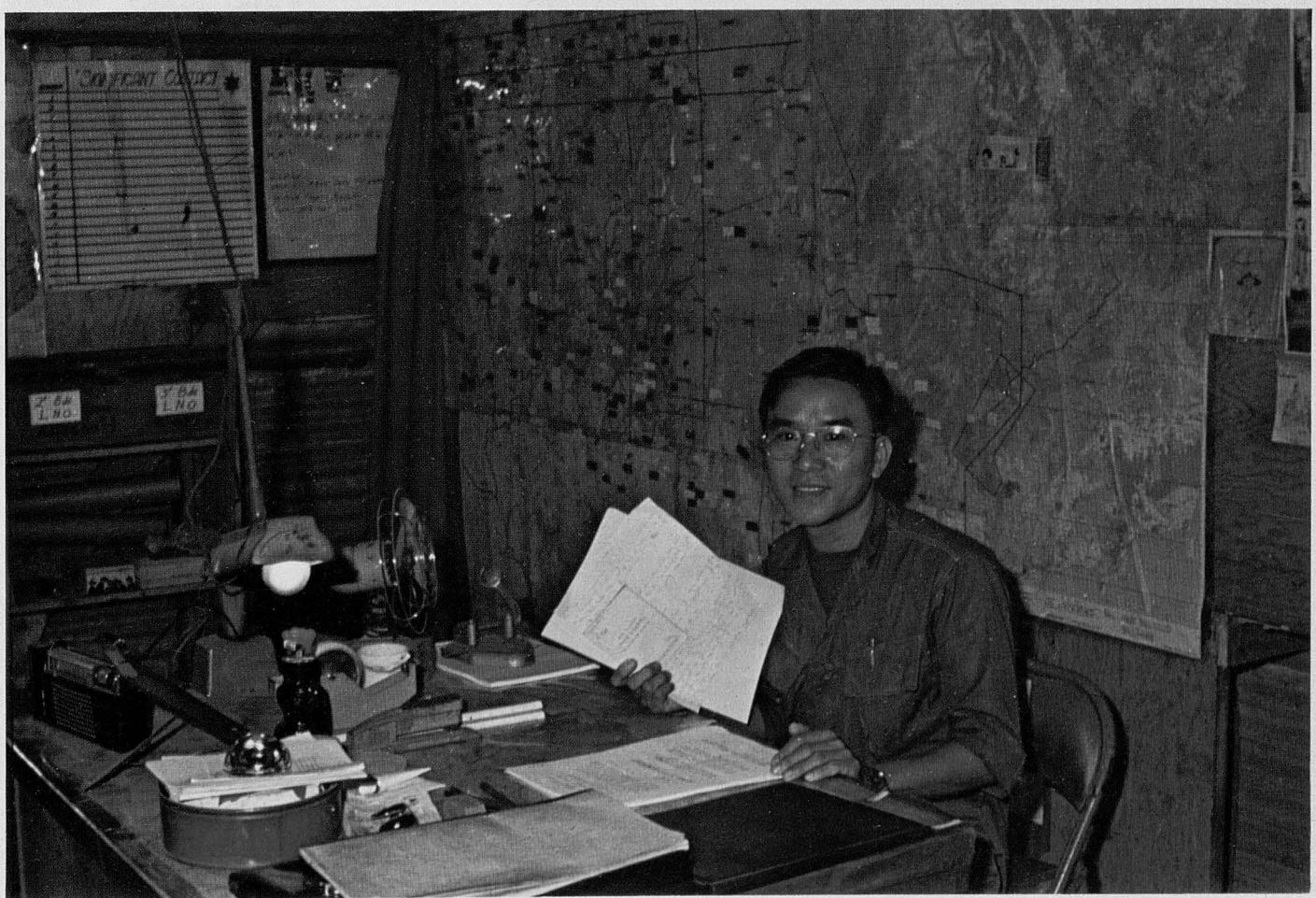
From June of 1970 through January of 1971, 152,045,000 leaflets were dropped within the Cav AO. From July of 1970 through January of 1971, 1,019 hours and 50 minutes of different PSYOPS material was broadcast over PSYOPS loudspeakers. This figure is even more impressive when one realizes that normal broadcasts last only about 30 seconds.

From July of 1970 through January of 1971, there were 1,915 ralliers in the Cav area of operation. This includes those who rallied to ARVN and Regional or





LEIGHTON



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Popular Forces in Cav country. Of those who rallied to American forces, 368 were Hoi Chanhs, that is they actually bore arms against Allied forces.

There are two basic approaches used in PSYOPS, the hard sell, tactical, approach or the soft sell, non-tactical approach. The first says: Chieu Hoi or we will kill you, while the second says: if you Chieu Hoi, you will get these benefits. Captain Mark Grissom, head of Cav PSYOPS, says "We have gone more to the soft sell in recent months because it is easier to back up. If you say something, you have to back it up or it loses its effect." An example of each type follows:

Front: Attention Communist soldiers: Fill out the blank spaces on the back side of this slip and keep it with you. When you get killed, the ARVN or allied soldiers will give you a proper burial.

Back:

Full name

Service number

Rank	Date of Birth
Position	Unit
Front: Attention Communist Soldiers!	
The GVN Chieu Hoi Program aims to help you in an honorable way to rebuild a warm and secure life. The GVN will see to it that each rallier will:	
Receive good treatment.	
Receive full rights of citizenship.	
Get medical care in the Chieu Hoi Center.	
Receive 50\$00 for food each day.	
Back:	
Benefits for a rallier:	
Money reward for weapons brought back.	
2 sets of clothes or 1,500\$00 for clothing.	
1,200\$00 for repatriation.	
Benefits for rallier's dependents:	
50\$00 for food for the wife and older children.	
25\$00 for each younger child.	

150\$00 for sundries per month for each member of the family while staying at the Chieu Hoi Center.

Families which desire to settle in Chieu Hoi hamlet will be furnished with cement, roofing, and 12,000\$00 each to build a house and to buy house utensils and a supply of rice for six months.

The role of American and Allied forces has been played down in the last few months. Any promises or warnings are made in the name of the Government of Vietnam. No one approach is used in creating PSYOPS material; Capt. Grissom says, "If it works, then it's good PSYOPS."

Working along the same lines as the Government of Vietnam Political Warfare Teams and personnel of the Medical and Integrated Civil Action Projects, PSYOPS fights for the minds of the Vietnamese people which is where the war will ultimately be won or lost.



PACIFICATION

The Pacification program is made up of many varied projects. Activities which are included range from civil and medical assistance all the way to the upgrading of Territorial Forces, military preparedness. There has been tangible progress since 1968 when the program began in earnest. Large portions of the countryside that were contested are now secure.

PSYOPS is concerned with bringing in ralliers and getting them settled in Chieu Hoi villages, where they are given food, clothing, and a chance to start a new life. Pacification is concerned with the people who are already on friendly terms with the Government of Vietnam. You might say that Pacification takes over where PSYOPS leaves off.

The people and the land can not be separated. Land is at the base of the economy, whatever use is made of it directly affects the majority of Vietnamese people. The efforts of the Government of Vietnam to settle its people on self-supporting farms has received considerable help from 1st Cav G-5 or civil affairs personnel.

Civil Affairs Teams working in the 1st Cav area of operation have provided aid

in many forms. Building materials and technical assistance has been provided for projects ranging from agriculture to education. Hospitals, schools, orphanages, and dispensaries have been constructed and equipped with the aid of First Team personnel.

Great emphasis has been placed on making these people self-sufficient. A large number of the Vietnamese who earn a living in ways related to American forces stationed here, will soon find their jobs disappearing. As troop withdrawals continue, there will be less need for laundry service and fewer jobs at PX stores. The civil affairs personnel have sought to provide these soon to be unemployed people with a new means of earning a livelihood.

Experimental farms have been established, new crops and livestock have been introduced.

The war has caused the relocation of entire villages, and this has been a particular problem for the Montagnard people. A fiercely independent people, Montagnards cling to their traditional ways in spite of the war. Aid has made it possible for them to survive the initial

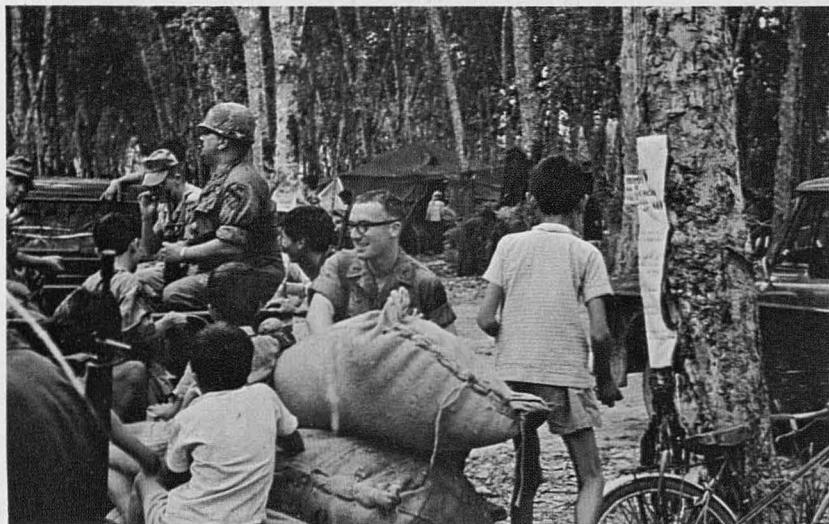
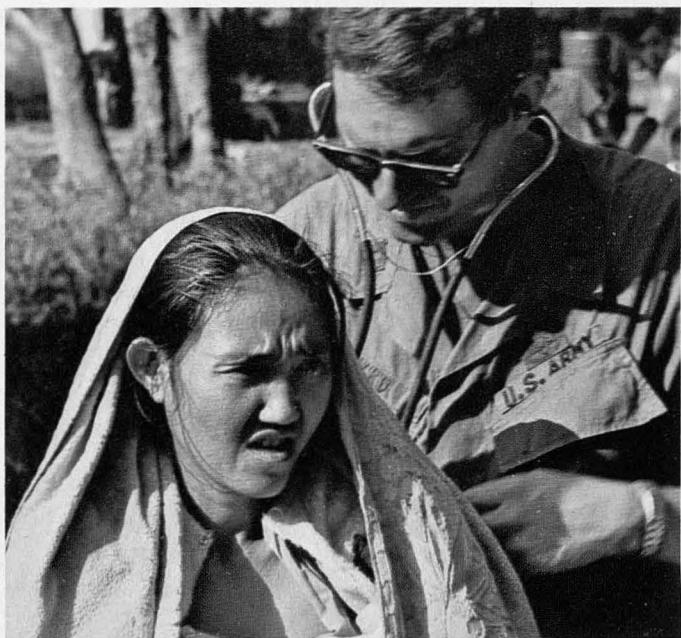
cultural shock, and preserve their way of life. For their own safety people who have farmed the same land for generations, have left their homes behind. Once security has been achieved, villagers have sometimes returned to their former location. When they move back to land which has been brought under government control, they receive aid to reestablish their village.

First Team engineers have cleared land for villages, and Cav helicopters have transported livestock, building materials, and tools to aid villagers.

A Catholic mission near Song Be has established a store which sells Montagnard crafts to 2d Brigade Skytroopers, profits are used to help the Montagnards establish a new life.

Pacification also involves the upgrading of the training of Regional Force companies, Popular Force platoons, and People's Self-Defense Forces. The Cav has sought to win the confidence of the people and to improve their fighting techniques. As American forces are withdrawn, these territorial forces will have to assume a greater role in their own defense.





In the 3d Brigade area of operation, Charlie company 1/5 and Charlie company 2/8 received training in weapons, ambush techniques, calling in artillery, reconnaissance, and patrolling with a view to instructing Popular Force platoons.

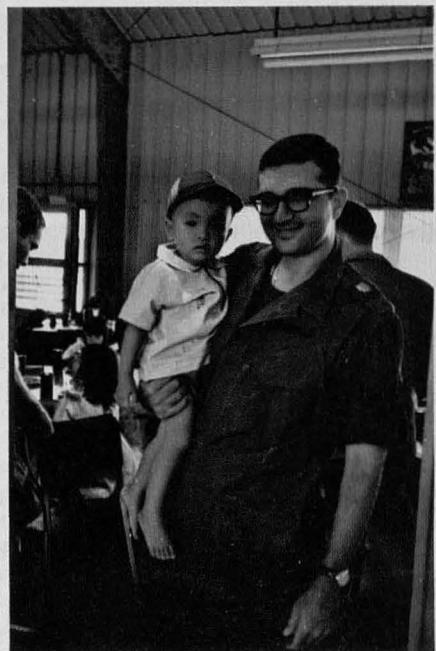
After completing this training, the men of these companies assumed the mission of training PF platoons. Province and district officials familiar with the PF platoons determined what subjects would be taught to upgrade PF combat readiness:

Another important type of aid provided to the Vietnamese people is the medical assistance of First Team medics and personnel from the 15th Medical Battalion. Medical care has enabled many Vietnamese to lead a fuller life, free of the ravages of disease.

MEDEVAC helicopters have saved the lives of many innocent Vietnamese civilians. For many of the isolated Montagnard people, the Cav provides

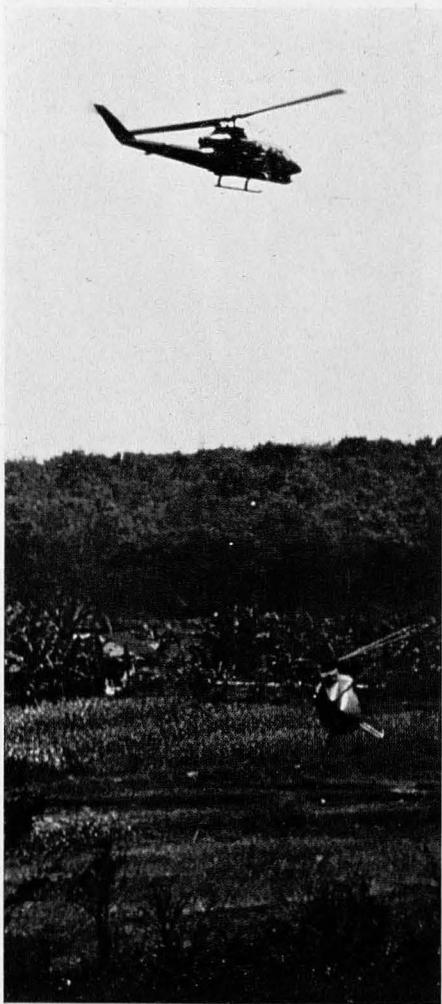
them with their first experience with modern medicine.

Pacification is a complex thing to evaluate, but in the confidence of the RF and PF forces, the success of the experimental farms, and the growing number of secured areas, substantial progress is evident.



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The "Cav of the Cav" or the "Real Cav" as the 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry sometimes calls itself, is a battalion size unit which is 100% mobile. The 1st of the 9th has its own organic transport which includes nearly 100 helicopters.

The unit has three air cavalry troops and one ground cavalry troop. The three air cavalry troops have an aero scout platoon, an aero weapons platoon, and an aero rifle platoon. Delta Troop, the ground cavalry unit, has three platoons mounted on wheeled vehicles.

The aero scout or "White" platoon employs the OH-6A Light Observation Helicopter (LOH). These scouts fly at

tree top level searching the country-side for any sign of enemy activity.

The aero weapons or "Red" platoon is made up of Huey Cobra (AH-1G) gunships. These gunships have a variety of armaments ranging from miniguns and grenade launchers to aerial rockets, all of which can be quickly brought to bear on the enemy.

A "White" LOH and a "Red" Cobra are combined to form a Pink Team, the basic working unit of the 1st of the 9th. The LOH flies low seeking the enemy and the Cobra swoops down on him when he is exposed.

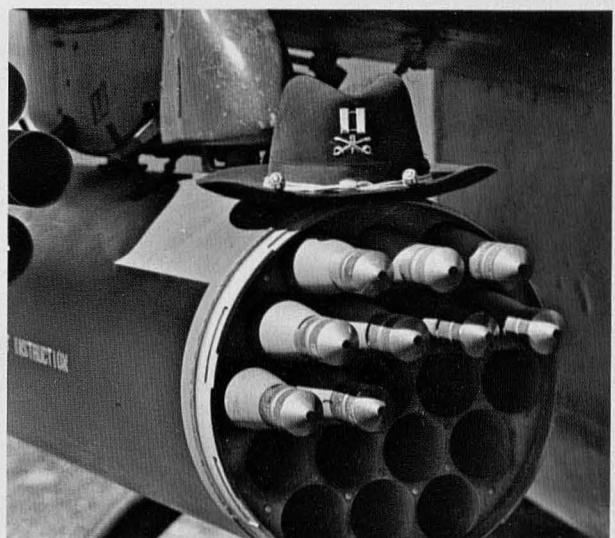
The aero rifle or "Blue" platoon



provides a balancing ground reconnaissance capability to the aerial reconnaissance of the Pink Team. The Blues can respond quickly to an aerial spotting; transported in Huey "Slicks", they can be inserted to check out the area. The Blues are also used to check air strike and artillery damage and to provide security for downed air craft.

Delta Troop, whose activities are often referred to as "Rat Patrols", provides road security, convoy escort, and maintains roving patrols through villages and hamlets.

Because of the success of the air cavalry troops, Echo and Foxtrot troops have been established.



2 / 20

Not long after his arrival in Vietnam, every young Skytrooper learns what Blue Max is. Before he ever leaves First Team Academy, he has a well deserved respect for the 2d Battalion of the 20th Artillery.

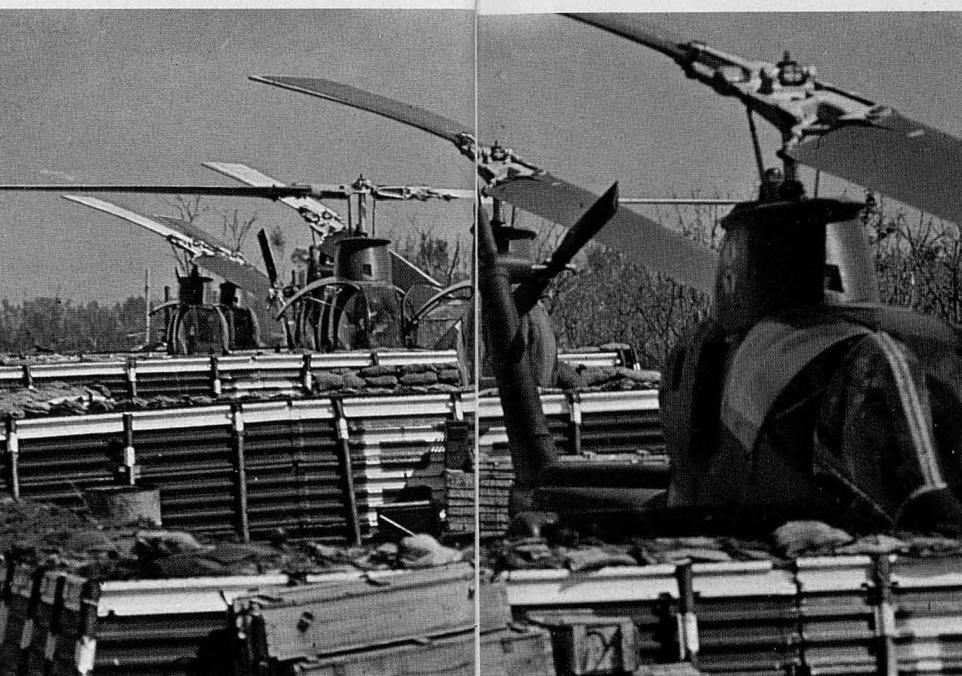
The AH-1G Cobras of the 2nd of the 20th pack 76 rockets, a mini-gun capable of firing 4,000 rounds per minute and a 40mm grenade launcher which can chuck out 400 rounds per minute. Each Cobra carries fire power equivalent to three conventional artillery batteries. Each battery consists of three platoons of four birds each and a service platoon which performs the maintainence.

Besides providing troops on the ground with aerial artillery support, the Cobras of the 2d of the 20th escort and cover the

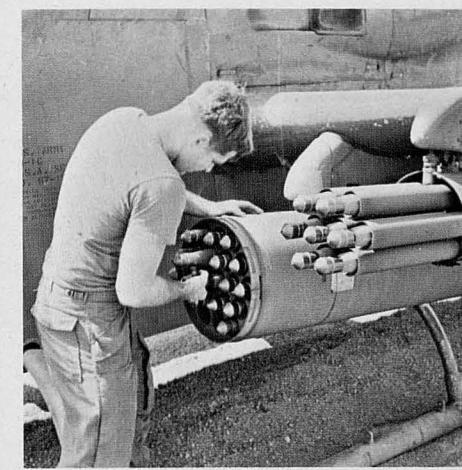
combat assaults of the First Team. The respect for the firepower of the Cobra is shown in the expression 'bring the max on the enemy'.

The first time you hear them rolling hot, just as you are about to come in on a combat assault it is a pretty frightening experience; but when you are on the ground and into the woodline without drawing any fire, most Skytroopers will agree that the swish, thud of the aerial rockets is a comforting sound.

The regular artillery batteries are back on the firebase and although they can put out considerable firepower, there is something reassuring about being able to see the Cobras flying overhead.



LEWIS



CLOSING A FIREBASE

Fire Support Base Guin has grown old, its time has come. The talk of closing has been heard for a couple of weeks, the close was delayed once but this is the real thing. The Chinooks swing in with engineers and bulldozers for a cargo. The men on the firebase have already begun to dismantle some of the less important parts of the construction which began several months ago.

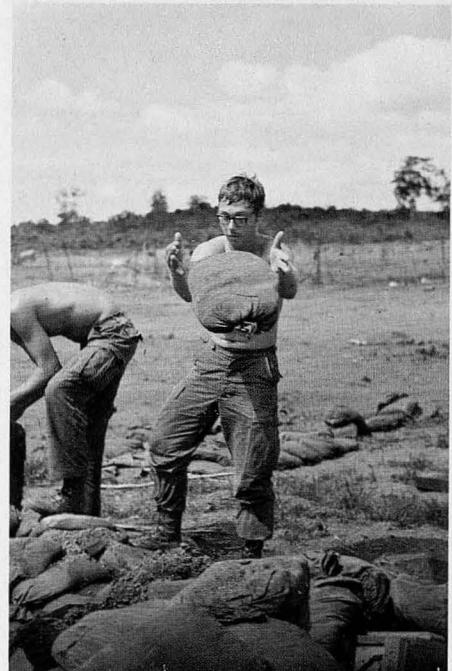
Out in the jungle surrounding Guin, the grunts of 2d Battalion, 8th Cavalry were moving in to night positions only about an hours distance away.

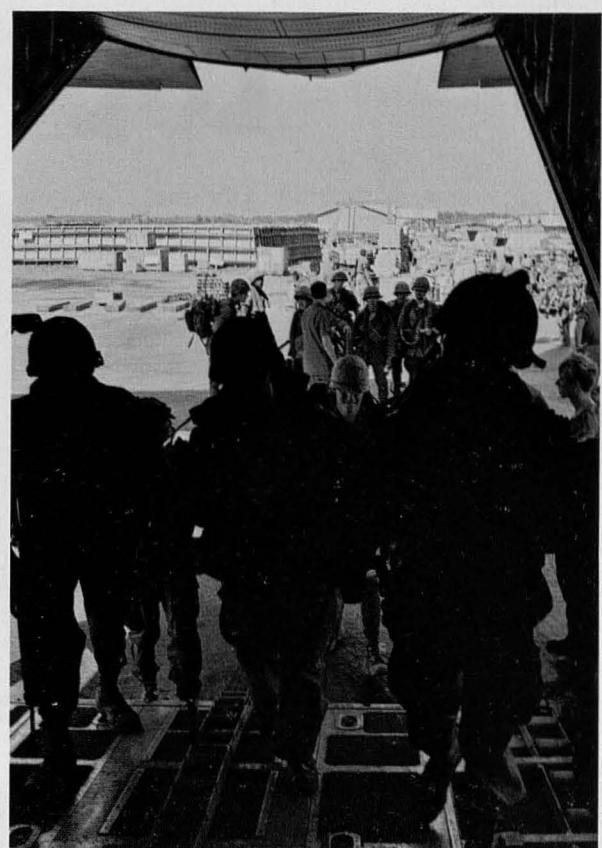
As dawn broke the tempo of activity increased, bulldozers finished filling in holes and the silhouette of the firebase began to disappear. Chinooks swung in and as each cloud of dust subsided with their departure a little less of Guin remained.

Cobras were on station to replace the departed 105mm howitzers. The grunts moved into Guin and became a human perimeter with the burn leveled and the concertina unstrung. Culverts and

CONNEXs moved south to become part of Fire Support Base Silver.

As the drone of the slicks fades into the distance and quiet settles over the clearing, the stay behind ambush waits in silence. Soon they too will be gone and the jungle will slowly begin to reclaim the gouge in its green blanket.





LOG DAY

Log day means many things to the man in the field. It means mail from home, clean clothes, dry socks, fresh food, and a break in the routine. It begins with finding a log site, a place where a bird can land or at least kick out the resupply. Meanwhile back at the firebase the log bird is being loaded up.

A clearing is found by the point team, they circle it and set up on the other side. The platoon leader or one of his men who has been trained to analyze landing zones checks the clearing to see what trees will have to be removed so that the bird has a route in and out. Security is put out and the clearing is altered to fit the needs of the log bird.

As the bird draws near a smoke grenade marks the clearing and the bird is guided in. The mail and water are

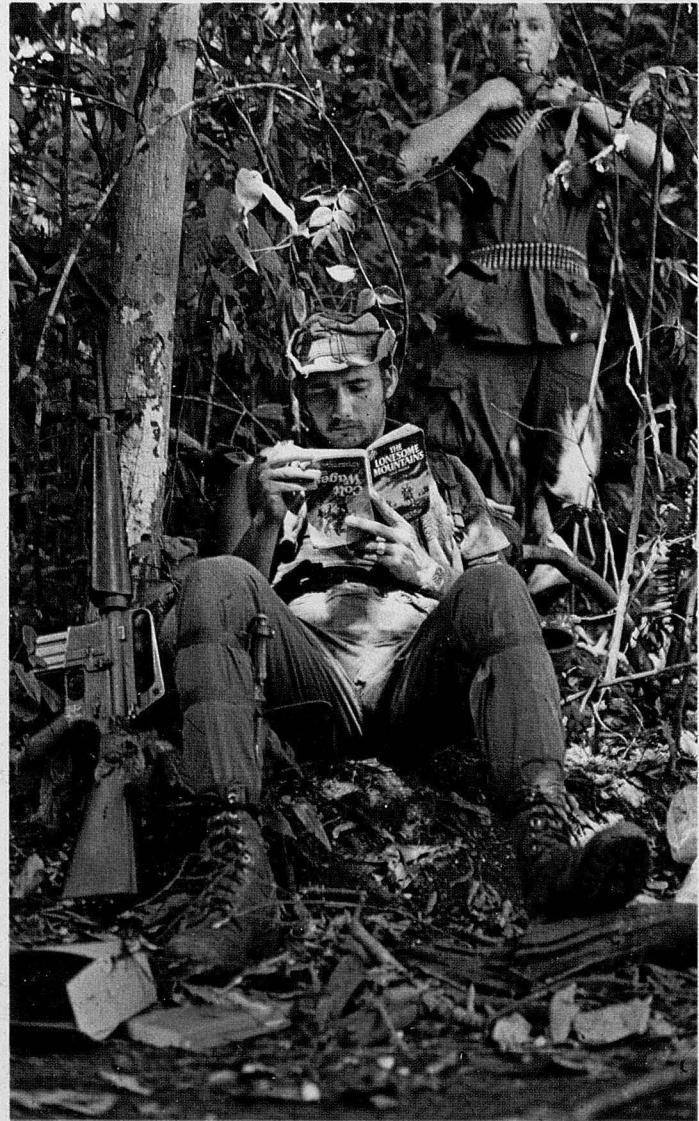
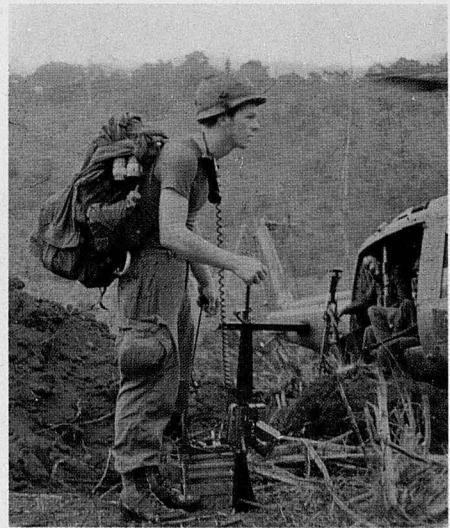
unloaded and the bird takes off, he will be back soon with clean clothes and food.

Log day is a busy time, the supplies must be unloaded and the backhaul of outgoing mail, dirty clothes and extra food must be ready when the bird brings in the next load.

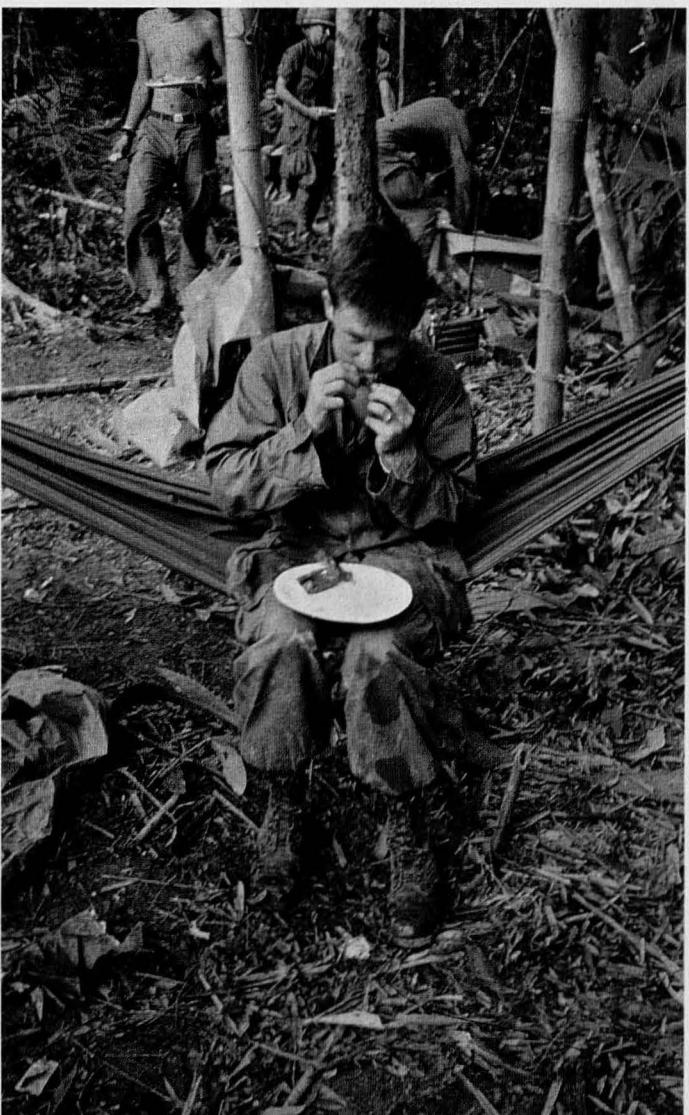
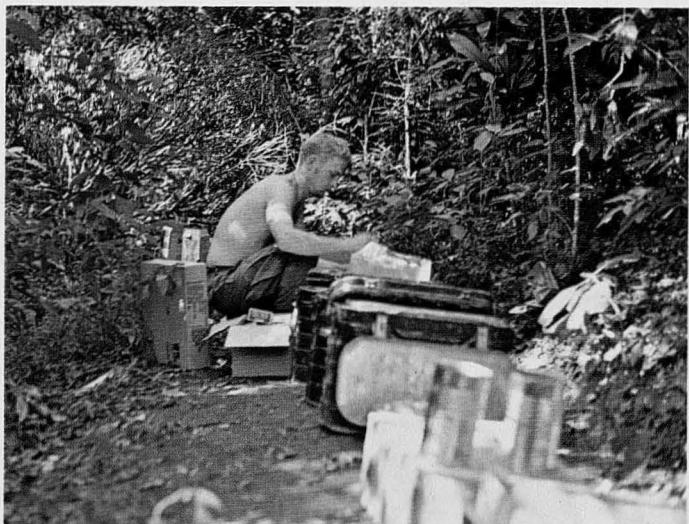
The supplies are broken down quickly; mosquito repellent here, lubricating oil there, smoke grenades and cleaning patches to those who ran out.

The next bird in brings the chaplain, who just left one of the other platoons. In between trading cracker units for pecan cake roll, and checking the newspaper for the latest score, the men take time to worship God.

But soon it is getting late and everyone wants to put some distance between the log site and the night defensive position.



RESUPPLY



CHAPLAINS

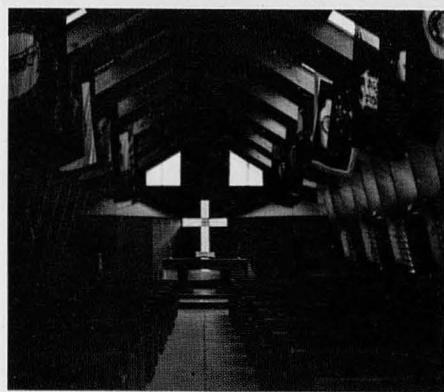
Everyday is Sunday in Cav Country. Every unit in the 1st Cavalry Division is provided with the maximum of opportunities for regular services and worship. No place is too distant, or jungle terrain to dense to prevent the chaplain's presence.

It is not an unusual sight for a line company, after chopping a log site, to see a chaplain on the first inbound log bird. As the men get some fresh food or read a sugar note, the word goes around "Protestant services in ten minutes, Catholic services right after that." From his green colored chaplain's kit, the chaplain passes out small bibles to the men. The strains of a hymn float faintly through the jungle. One service ends and the next begins, from an altar of 'C' ration boxes the Catholic chaplin distributes holy communion. There is a moment afterward for small talk and the chaplains are on their way to another platoon. Back at a forward fire support base there is time to talk to many of the men. The welfare and spiritual health of each Skytrooper is uppermost in the minds of all of the Cav's chaplains.

In the 1st Cav there are 24 chaplains, 7 Catholic, and 17 Protestant of all sects; there is also a Jewish chaplain that visits Cav firebases from USARV. Their days are long, it begins at first light with a flight to the forward fire support base. Their day takes them to the field for services, and back on the last bird at night to their chapel. On the days that they are not in the field, they are visiting Skytroopers in the hospital.

Great emphasis is placed on the chaplain being a priest-counselor, as the men come to him with problems ranging from money to mail from home. A chaplain seeks to calm the man and help him to see his problem objectively, the chaplain then uses his influence to help solve the problem.

Cav chaplains also work with the community, distributing food, toys, and clothing sent from the states.



USO

The USO (United Services Organization) brings a little bit of home to the men in the field. Shows range from talent within the Cav itself, or little known but talented groups from the world, all the way up to the Bob Hope Show. Special Services arranges for some men from each of the firebases to attend the Bob Hope show in his region, and many more crowd around television sets to see the show. Others will have to wait for the pictures taken by the men in their company who were able to go. Many more men will get to see the smaller shows which visit the firebases. But whether it is the brightest names in Hollywood or performers who the Skytroopers have never seen before, the message is the same, someone cares.

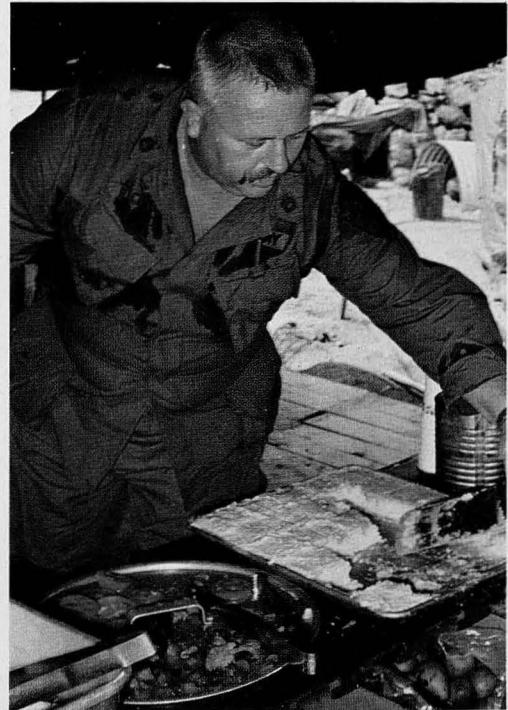
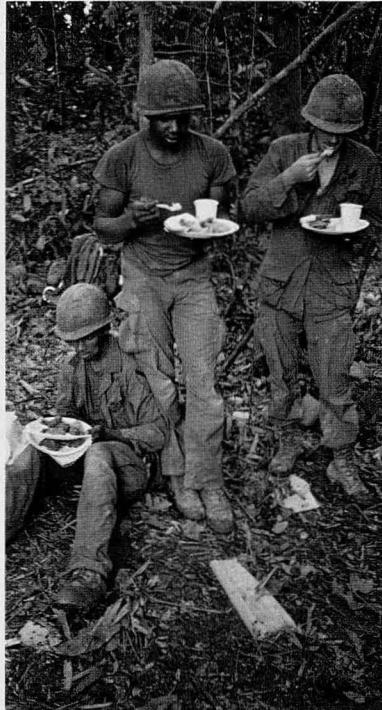


THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving is a special day even in Vietnam. Mess Sergeants all over the area of operation put out a special effort to get the turkey to the men in the field. Companies in the bush set up for a sit-down log, which includes turkey, dressing, and all the trimmings.

Red Cross "Donut Dollies" accompany many of the turkey birds, spending a short time talking with the men of each company. But of course, they soon have to move on to another company, and the men must move on patrolling the area.

It is almost as if everyone had taken a few hours off from the war.



CHRISTMAS

The other occasion which presents much the same break in routine as Thanksgiving, is Christmas. Well before the 25th of December the packages from home begin to provide headaches and backaches for mailclerks. Christmas is also another all out effort to see that the troops in the field get a special meal.

Red Cross girls distribute ditty bags made up of soap, razors, pens, paper and other such articles donated by various groups in the states. Some troops get plastic Christmas trees sent from home and drab firebases take on something of a holiday spirit. Perhaps Santa Claus may even visit in a chuck-chuck bird. Christmas is a time when most everyone thinks of home.



MEDICS



In the 1st Cav, a doctor is only minutes away by MEDEVAC helicopter for those soldiers sick or wounded in the field. But it's those precious moments that make the difference between life and death and which the medic is trained to fill.

The MEDEVAC world is one of blood, burns, shrapnel and bullets, and the ugly persistent skin rashes. It's one too of a Skytrooper saying "Hey doc, got anything for a headache?", or "Doc, you have a malaria pill?" It can be either world, and the medic has to be ready for both.

The Medical Training Center (MTC) in Fort Sam Houston, Texas is where all medical personnel for the Army are trained.

"I wanted to help people," said Ft. Sam Alumni, Spec 5 Bill Manning, a medic with the 2d Bn., 8th Cav. "As a child I once witnessed an automobile accident and felt completely helpless in the face of the victim. Ever since then I've wanted to help anyone who needed it."

The ten week course at MTC covered a panoply of subjects, with the curriculum ranging from Basic Psychology to how to sweep a hospital ward. Included were the sterile techniques for handling necessary equipment, and how to administer the whole array of injections.

The largest single area of instruction is in the administration of bandages and

dressing and the consequent treatment of wounds. The use of splints, burn treatment, and different forms of artificial respiration are also part of the course. Treatment of shock and the heavily circumscribed use of morphine are two other areas of importance.

At the end of the course the medic is prepared for what the Army thought they would be running into.

According to Manning, the first few days on the job are the hardest. "It seems like when you graduate from MTC you really know something. But when you get out your aid bag and then go out to the firebase and look around, a strong feeling of inadequacy sets in." But experience fills in the educational holes quickly.

"The men are waiting to see if you live up to their last medic, what your attitude is, just how much they think you know about the job. Then, all of a sudden, you're 'doc', someone who can help the men."

"To them you become a 'grunt', a special grunt but still one of them. Everyone works as a team. Each carries his share of the load, but if someone needs a hand, he'll get it. It's just like being kin to all the men in the company. You help them and they help you."

"Sick call is any time someone needs something. All they have to do is ask. You might say my schedule is pretty flexible, but one thing I almost always do

in the morning after giving out the malaria pills is to just talk with anyone who wants to rap."

The medic can handle physical problems one way or another—salve for jungle rot, disinfectant for a scratch or blister, a clean dressing for an injury—but many times there's more than that.

"It may sound corny, but it always helps to be a good listener. Maybe I can give him a little help, or if I can't maybe I can tell him where he can get it."

But its under combat that the medic must use all of his knowledge, skill and, even more important, his courage.

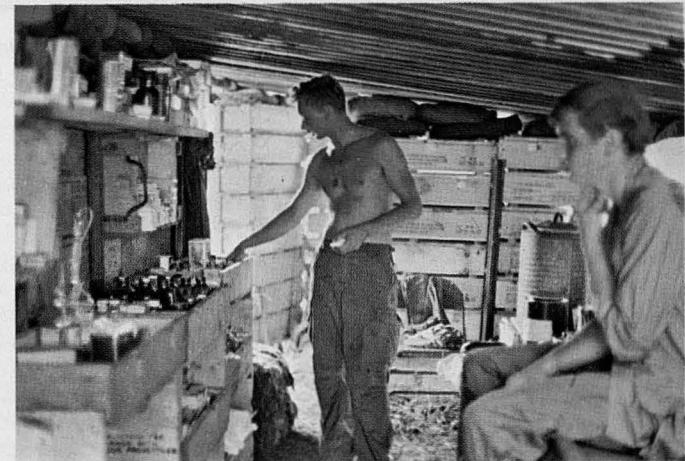
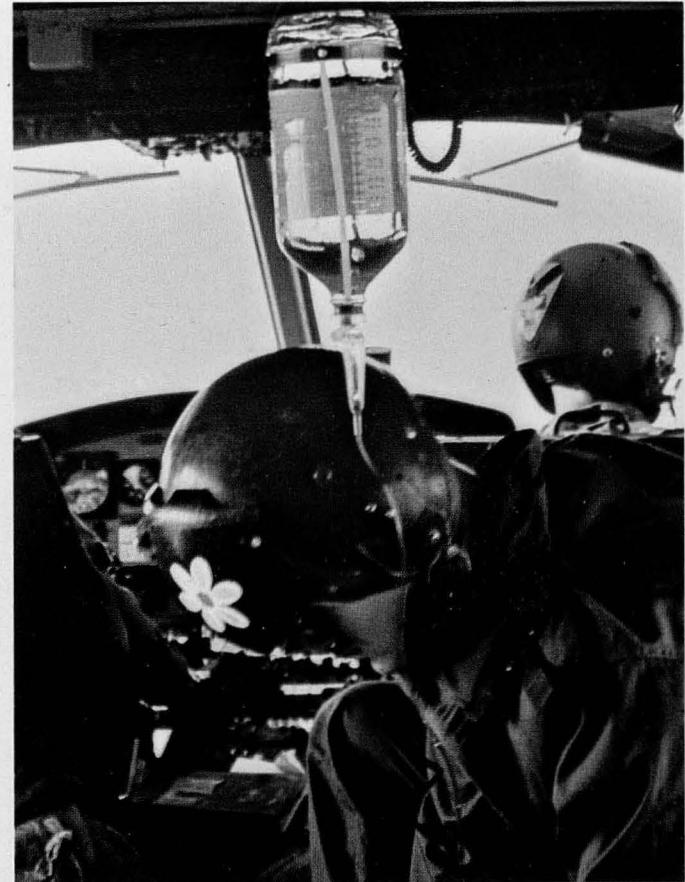
Most of the time medics stay back from the contact and treat the casualties brought to them, but sometimes they need a medic right up front.

"Then you don't crawl, you run," said Manning.

Manning received the Silver Star for his moving out under fire to patch up four men, helping them back and providing help elsewhere.

"For a few seconds you forget yourself and don't really think about the thing you're doing. My hands shook and I felt sick to my stomach but I had the men there and they needed the help and I knew how to give it, so I did. Even though it's really natural to think of yourself first, for a little while you don't. Your friends are out there dying, taking fantastic chances for you. I just wanted





to be sure they came back. You worry about what you did later."

The usual tour of duty for a medic in the field is 6-8 months and the rest of the time is spent at a firebase or in the rear. But for some medics, there's a reluctance to leave.

"After a contact, when you've really helped someone, maybe for the first time in your life, it's difficult to leave," said Manning. When the time came to rotate I hated to leave. I thought I should stay to get the new medic squared away, to make sure he knew what was going on. You just want all the guys you know to get through."

Next to helping wounded Skytroopers,

bringing 20th Century medicine to the Vietnamese villagers is for some medics, a favorite job.

"One time when we went on a MEDCAP," said Manning, "we came on a boy with what we suspected was tetanus. We treated him as best we could and sent him to the district dispensary. We came back a week later and he came bounding into the room, one of the first ones in, all well. I couldn't have been happier."

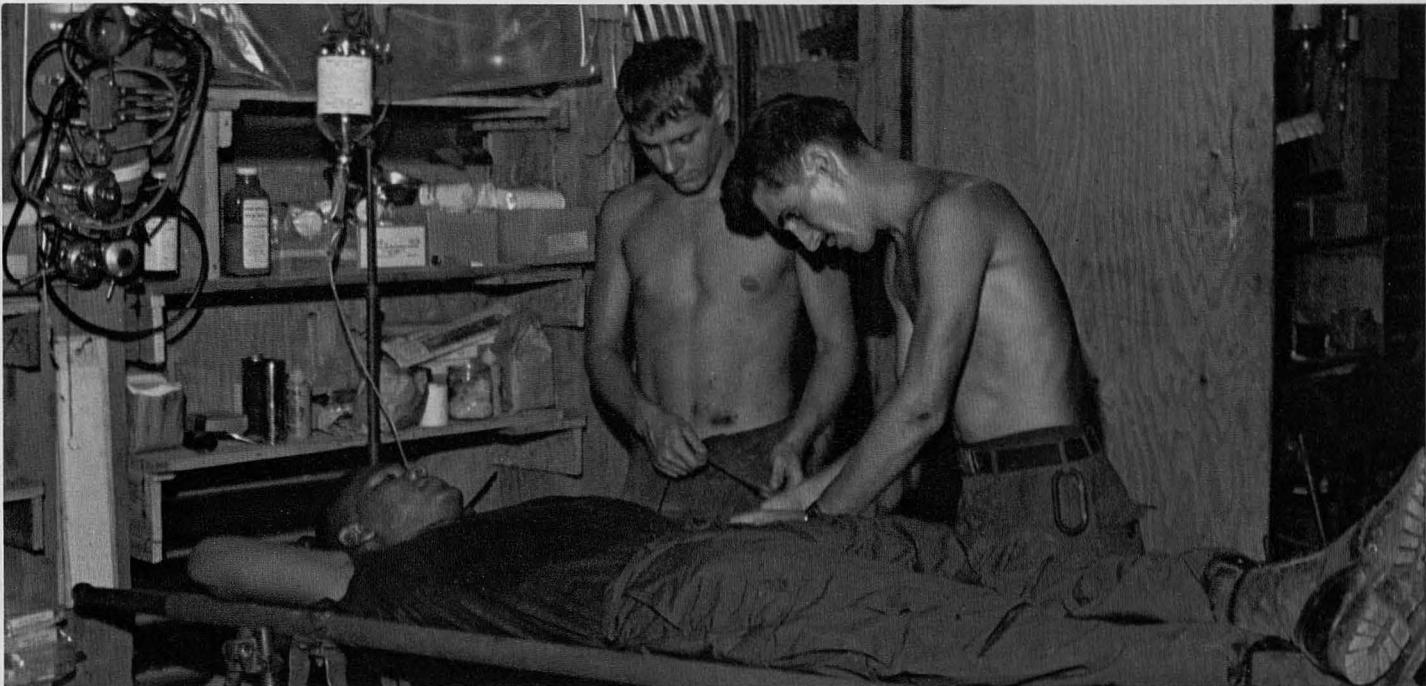
When contact is made the difference between life and death can depend on the speed of the MEDEVAC bird.

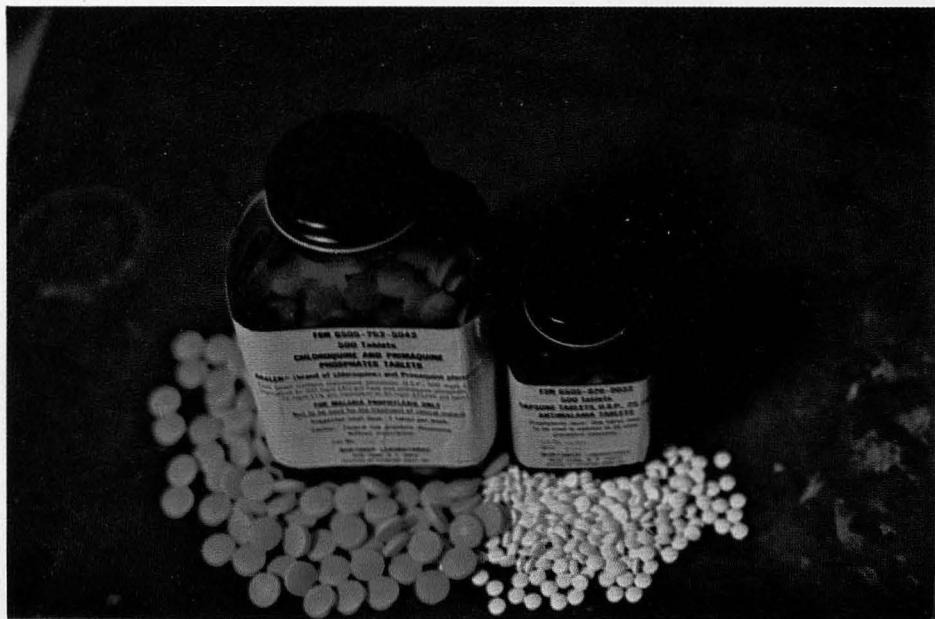
Medevac teams of the 15th Medical Battalion are on call 24 hours a day. But when the "scramble" horn is sounded the

birds are in the air and to their objective in minutes.

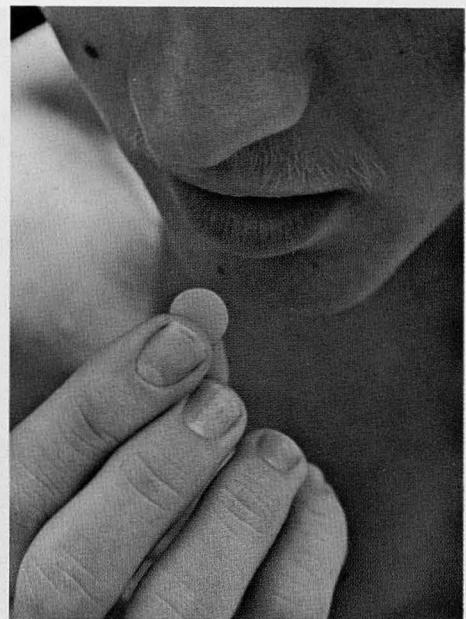
"I've never seen a mission aborted," said a MEDEVAC gunner. "I've seen missions delayed by weather and suppressive fire, but never called off."

Once over a MEDEVAC site, the Huey can drop two pieces of equipment to retrieve the wounded. A jungle penetrator, a four pronged anchorlike device which is lowered by a winch, is used for the not too seriously wounded patients; and the rigid litter that looks like a stretcher, and is designed to accommodate the unconscious or seriously wounded soldier.

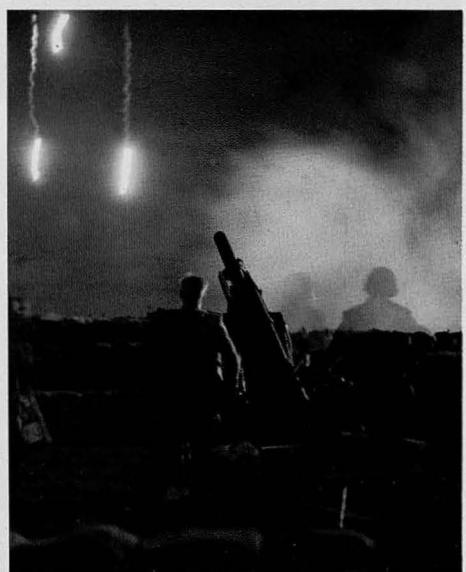
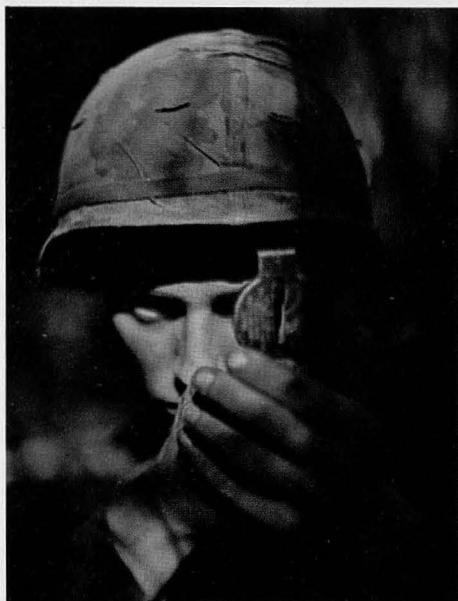


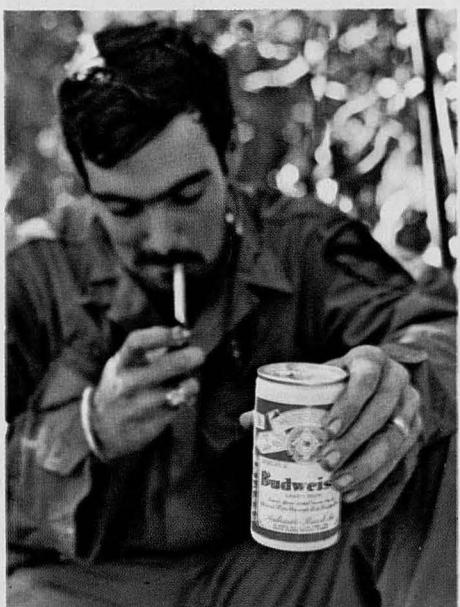


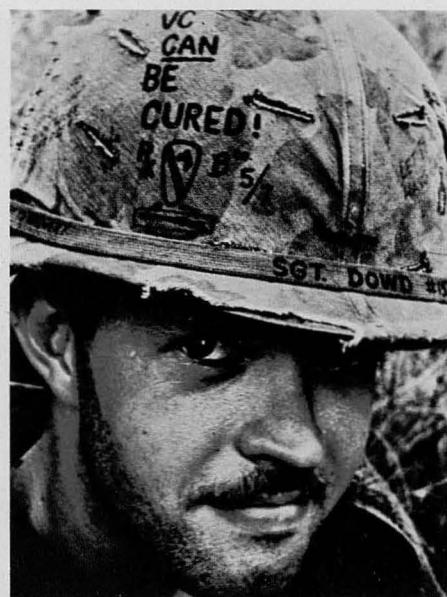
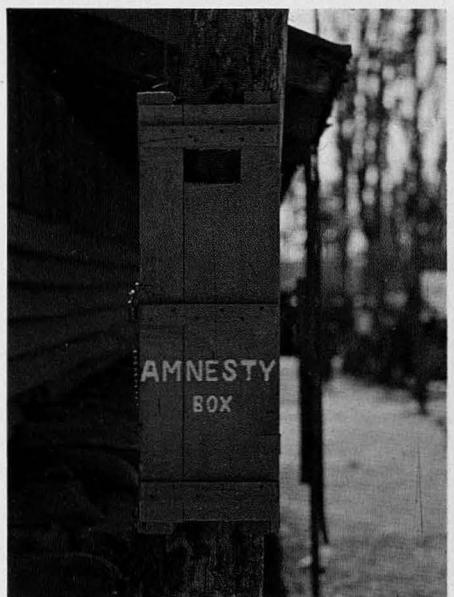
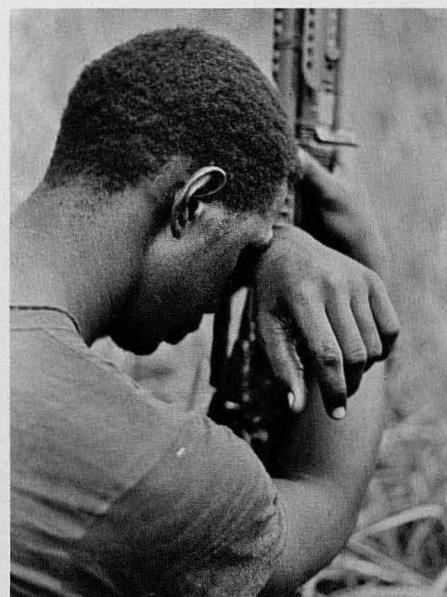
LEWIS

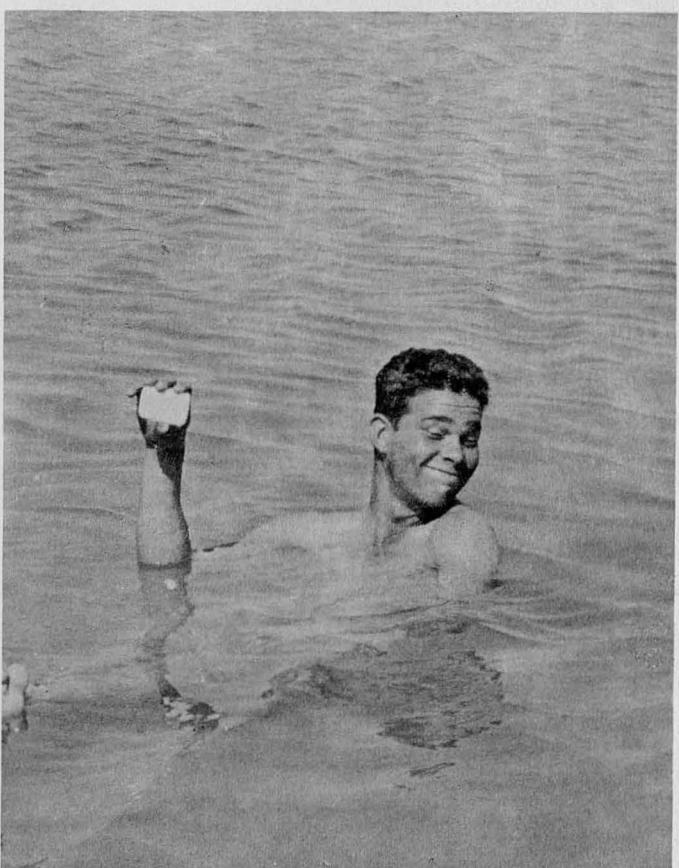
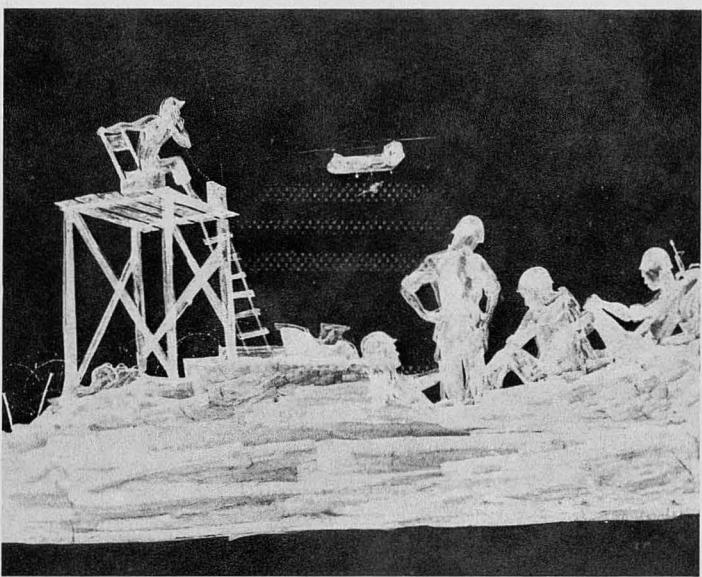
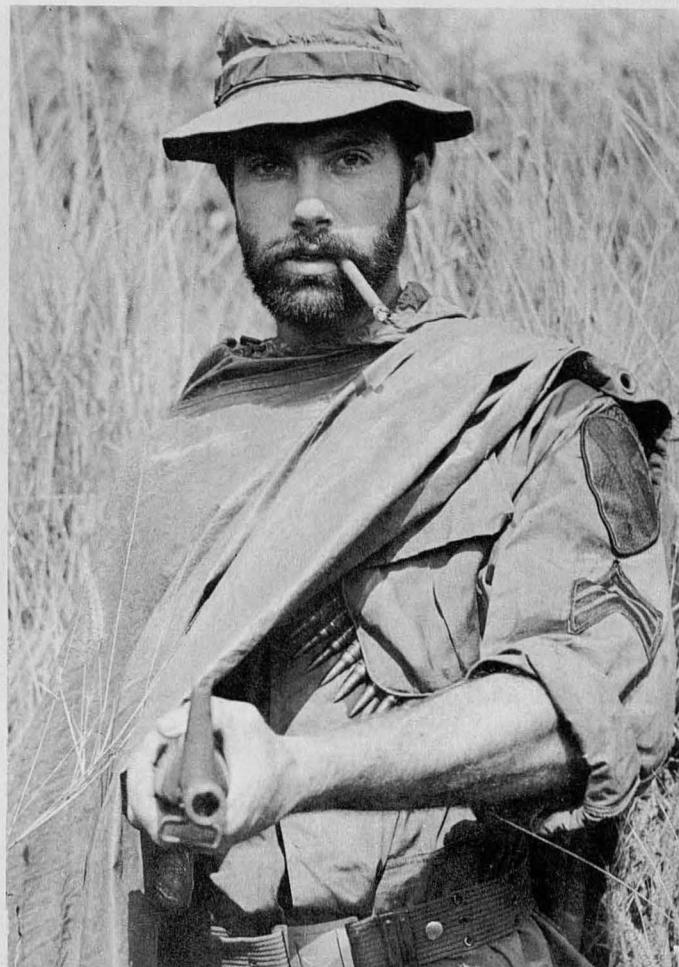


LEWIS













FIXED WING

Everyone is aware of the First Team's helicopters, but some people forget that the Cav has fixed wing aircraft, too. The O-1D Birddog, and the OV-10 Bronco are employed by the Cav.

The Birddogs of Echo Battery, 82d Artillery, help the various batteries in the division to register their tubes. The pilot and an artillery adjuster from the battery involved co-ordinate with the firebase. Radio messages are often relayed by birddogs who also drop flares or PSYOPS leaflets when the need arises.

The Bronco is an Air Force plane which is used by Forward Air Control to direct air strikes. The FAC co-ordinates with artillery, ground troops, and the jets; he directs routes of approach, marks and adjusts the target area, and describes the situation and reference points to attack craft pilots.

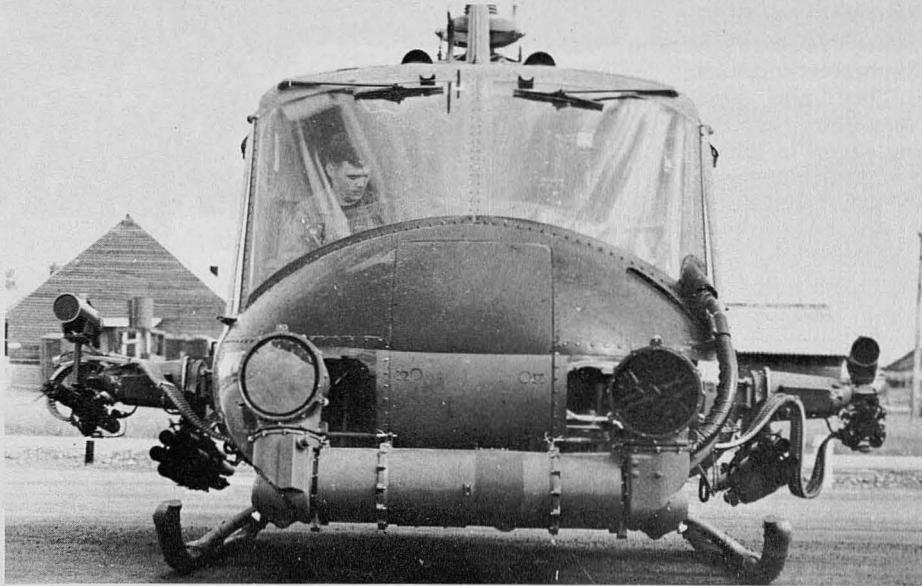
Fixed wing aircraft are a part of the team effort which has proved so effective for the Cav.



SPECIAL PURPOSE AIRCRAFT

The Cav employs many electric and chemical devices to find the enemy. The Sniffer (lower left) units analyse the air which is drawn in from a flexible hose which may be attached under any Huey slick. It does not smell but rather notes differences in chemicals in the air. The machine can be installed or removed in about five minutes.

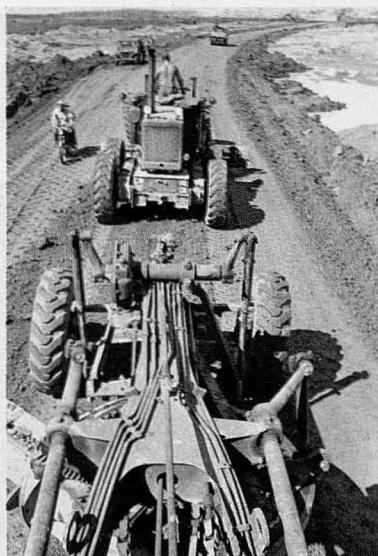
The Nighthawk (lower right) is a slick equipped with a 50,000 watt searchlight, a starlight scope, and a minigun. It is accompanied by a Cobra from the 2d of the 20th Artillery. Also employed at night is the Iroquois Night Fighter And Night Tracker (INFANT) which uses infrared cameras and searchlights to find the enemy. INFANT's miniguns and rocket pods swing with the cameras as they cover the terrain.



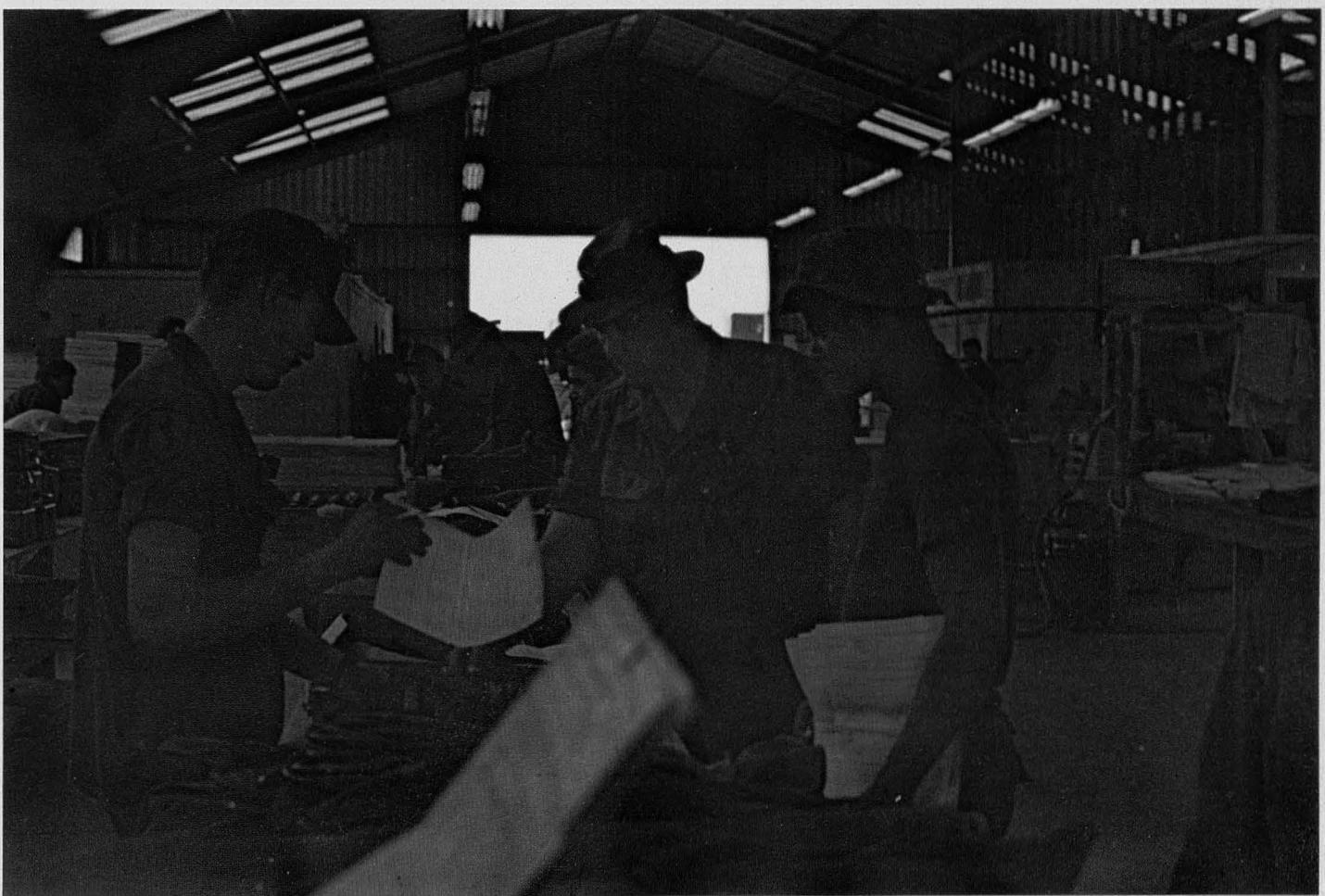
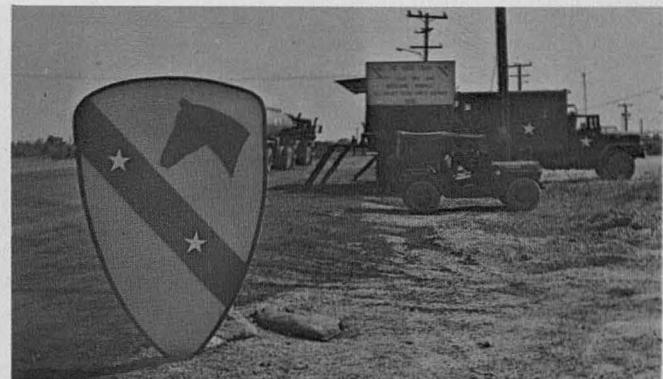
ENGINEERS

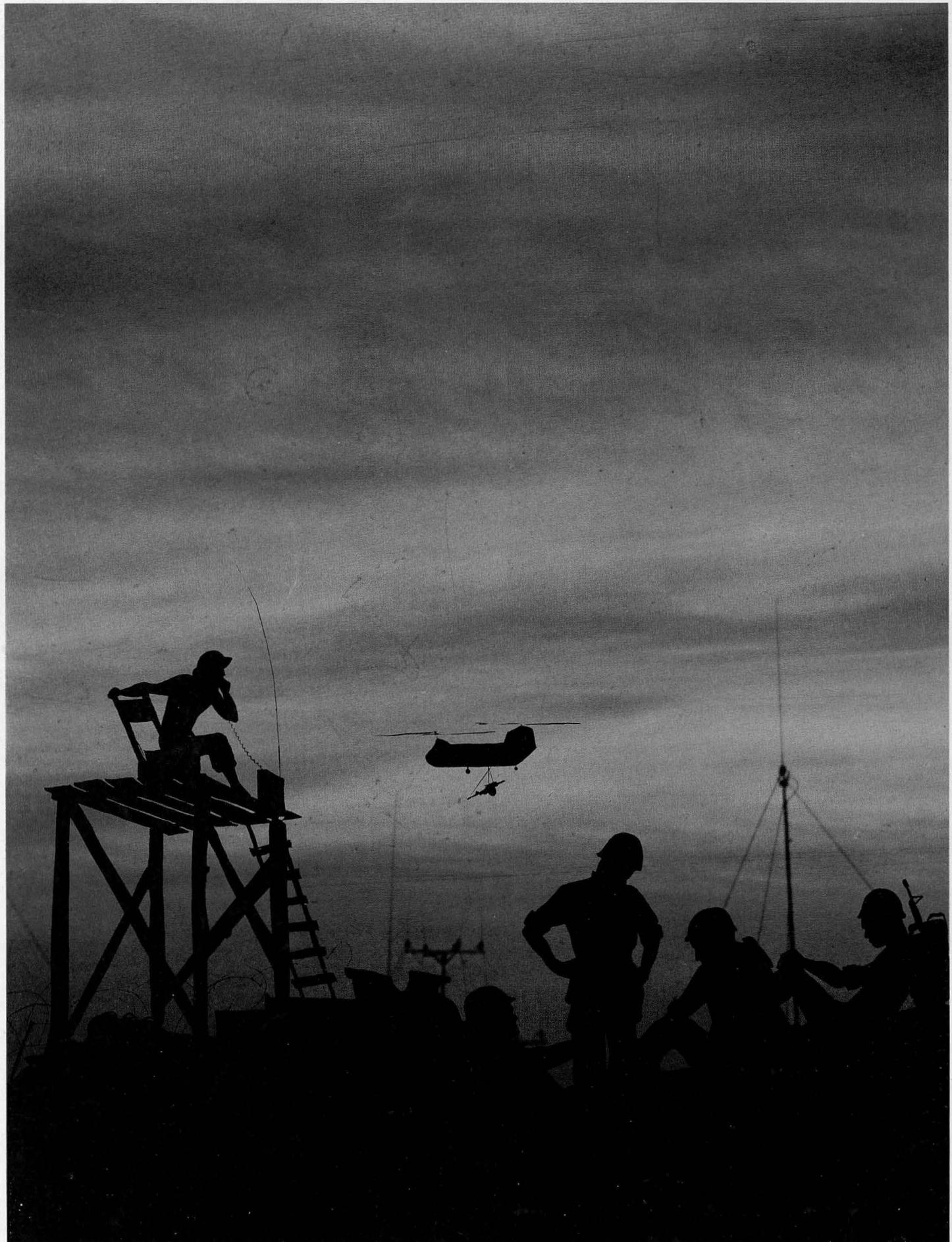
Known as Skybeavers, the men of the 8th Engineer Battalion build the roads, bridges, and LZs of the 1st Cav. These soldier-engineers build hootches for rear echelon workers and fighting positions for front line troops. Some of the rear areas require airstrips which the Skybeavers construct.

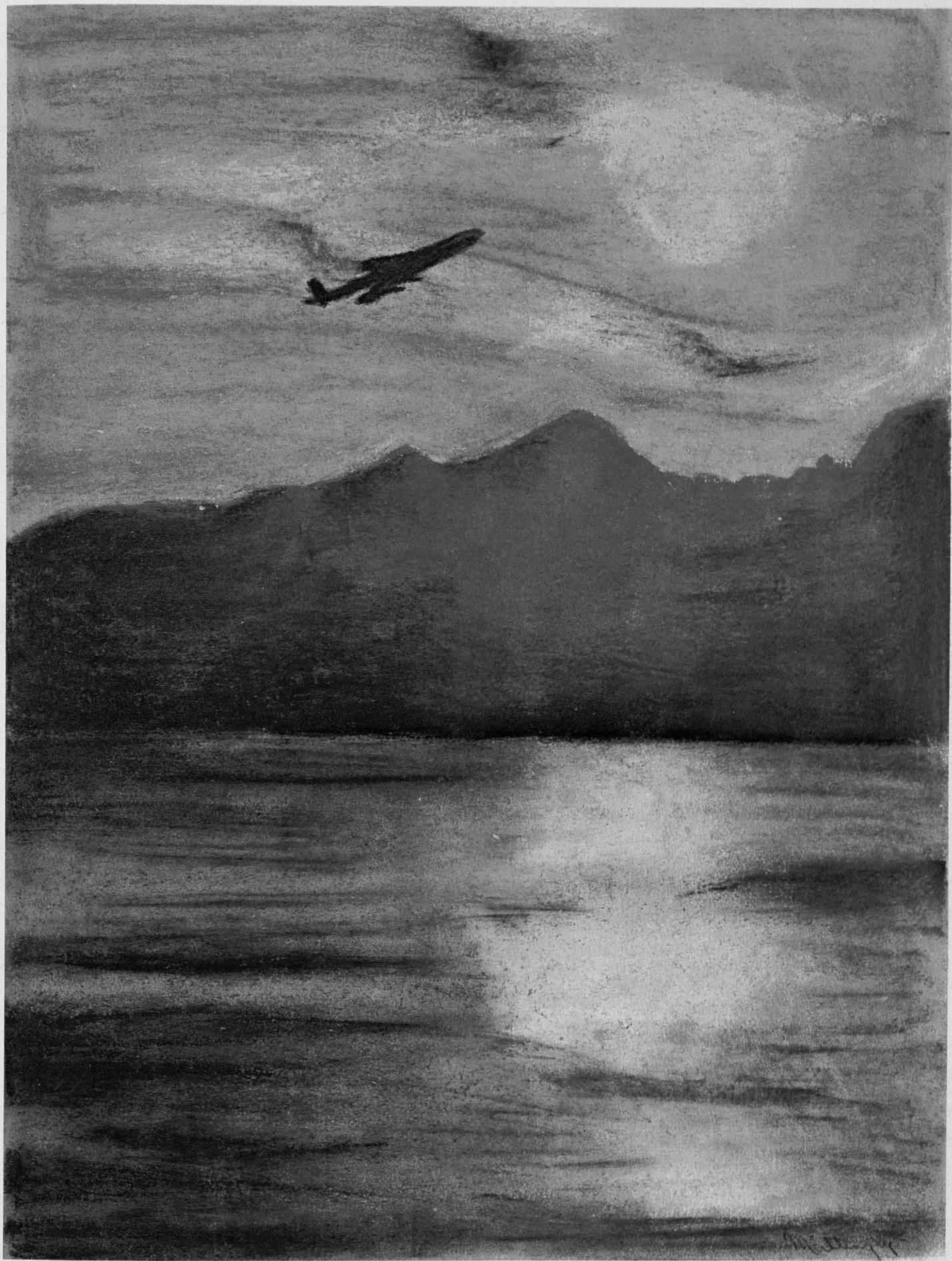
They also supply minesweep and demolition support to the infantry battalions. In spite of extremes of terrain and weather, they build the roads and keep them operational.



KEYSTONE ROBIN CHARLIE









MATTINGLY