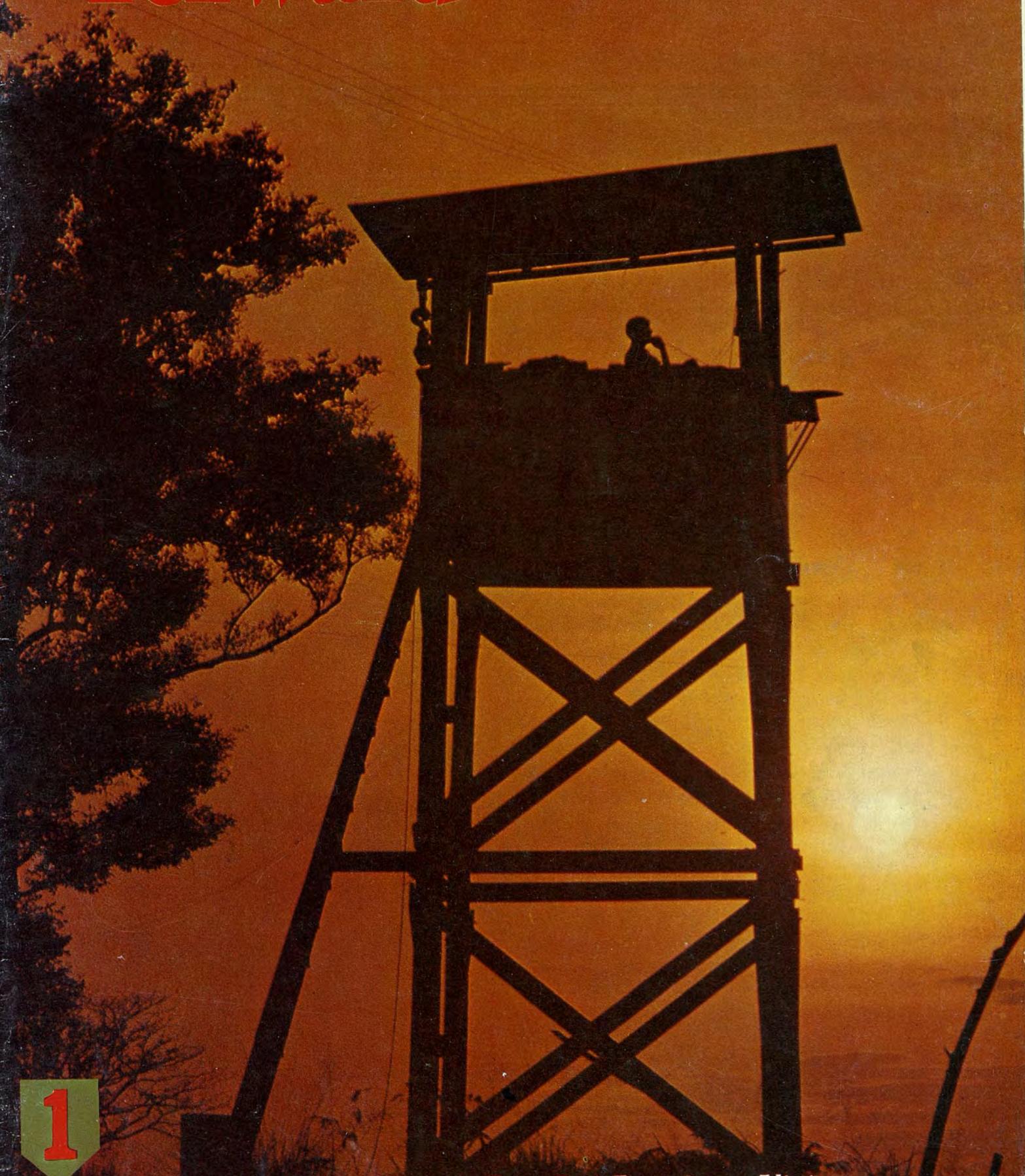


# DANGER *forward*

Spring 1970



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The Magazine Of The Big Red One, Vietnam

# In Retrospect

As this edition of *Danger Forward* is published, the 1st Infantry Division concludes 57 months of active combat operations in support of freedom in the Republic of Vietnam. During this time, the determined soldiers of the Big Red One have repeatedly demonstrated that for them no mission is too difficult, no sacrifice too great. Their unselfish deeds of valor and devotion to duty have further distinguished the magnificent heritage of the 1st Infantry Division, a heritage which spans 53 years of loyal service to our nation.

As the division leaves Vietnam with its mission successfully accomplished, it returns to assume another mission equally vital to the nation's defense and security. I am confident that those who have been chosen to carry on the proud traditions of the Big Red One will do so with the diligence, dedication, and special sense of responsibility that falls upon those who wear its famous patch.

To those who have served with such distinction in the Division in Vietnam, I extend my profound gratitude and personal admiration for a job well done. The record of your achievements, recounted in the pages that follow, speaks eloquently for itself. You have earned the coveted privilege of wearing the Big Red One patch on your right shoulder.

You now have joined ranks with the men of Aisne-Marne, Lorraine, Picardy, St. Mihiel, Kasserine Pass, Sicily, Omaha Beach, and the Ardennes. These veterans salute you and charge you to wear the patch with pride and honor it deserves.



MG A. E. MILLOY

Commanding General  
1st Infantry Division

# DANGER *forward*

Volume four, Number one—Spring 1970

(2842)

**The Magazine Of The Big Red One, Vietnam**

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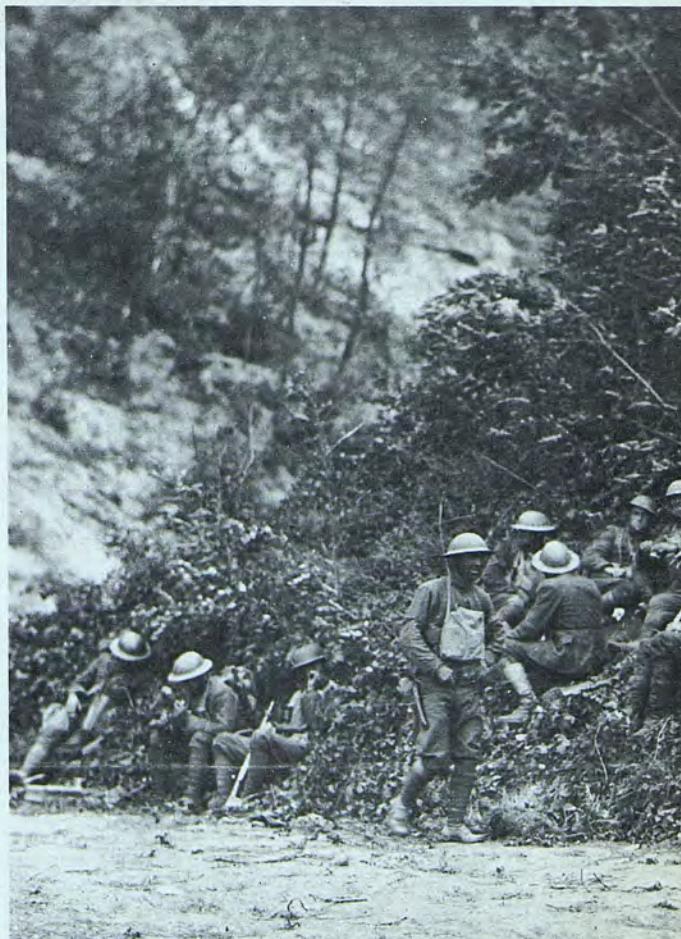
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The pencil drawing of 1st Infantry Division Commanding General A. E. Milloy was done by SP5 George Palms, a staff artist with the Big Red One Information Office.

DANGER FORWARD is an authorized quarterly publication of the 1st Infantry Division. Material of interest to Division members and the Army in general is invited and should be mailed to: Editor, Danger Forward, Information Office, 1st Infantry Division, APO SF 96345. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army. The title Danger Forward is copyrighted by the Society of the 1st Division.



In September 1917, men of the new First Division's 16th Infantry Regiment were in France (above) digging trenches for protection against air raids. Under enemy artillery fire, the 16th Infantry (lower left) moves through the streets of a French town on November 1, 1918. A few days later the Armistice was signed. Soldiers of the Big Red One's 16th Infantry Regiment (lower right) take a quick break on a roadside hill in France in 1917. A short time later they were to march into battle against the German army.



# In The Beginning

## World War I

The 1st Infantry Division was authorized to be constituted in the Regular Army as Headquarters, First Expeditionary Division on May 24, 1917. It was officially organized under the command of Major General William L. Sibert on June 8 of that same year.

Comprised of veteran graduates of the U.S. Military Academy and seasoned non-commissioned officers, but consisting mainly of volunteers who had rushed to enlist after war was declared, the new division numbered 14,000 men—a figure which was to double by the cessation of hostilities.

On June 28, 1917, its men stepped ashore at Saint Nazaire, France. On the Fourth of July, the 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry, paraded through the streets of Paris to bolster sagging French spirits.

Along the 5-mile route to the tomb of Lafayette, French citizens shouted,

"Vives les Teddies." Women rushed to the marchers, sprinkling their uniforms with cologne and hanging flowers on each man's campaign hat. At the tomb, one of General John J. Pershing's staff uttered the famous words, "Lafayette, we are here!"

Two days later the First Expeditionary Division was redesignated the First Division.

On the morning of October 23, in the rolling hills of Lorraine, Captain Idus McLendon, commander of C Battery, 6th Field Artillery, gave the order to fire. Sergeant Alex Arch pulled the lanyard on a 75mm howitzer and the first American shell of the war was sent screaming toward German lines.

Two days later the 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry, suffered the first American casualties of the war. Near the end of November, General Sibert returned to Washington to become Chief of Gas Warfare. His successor, Major General Robert L. Bullard, immediately revamped the Division's modus operandi into a free-wheeling, attacking style, which was perfected by intensive training conducted through the first part of 1918.

By April 1918, the Germans had pushed to within 40 miles of Paris. In reaction to this thrust, the Big Red One was moved into the Picardy Sector to bolster the exhausted French First Army. To the Division's front lay the small village of Cantigny, situated on high ground overlooking a forested countryside. It was a perfect German observation post.

On May 28, the 28th Regiment, later known as the "Black Lions of Cantigny," marched on the town and within 45 minutes had captured it together with 250 German soldiers. The first victory of the war was a First Division victory.

On July 15, General Bullard became III Corps commander and Major General Charles P. Summerall moved up from his Division Artillery post to take command.

Three days later the Big Red One was called upon by French commander, Marshall Ferdinand Foch, to take Soissons. By July 22, the Division had fought seven miles into German lines. The Soissons victory cost it 7,000 men killed or wounded, prompting the French commander to say, "American comrades! I am

thankful to you for the blood so generously spilled on the soil of my country."

After Soissons came the Saint Mihiel salient and Meuse-Argonne in the autumn of 1918—both Division victories in the first all-American offensive of the war. On October 18, Brigadier General Frank Parker became the Big Red One's new commander, with General Summerall moving to V Corps. Twenty-four days later the Armistice was signed and World War I was over.

The Division suffered 22,320 casualties in the war and boasted five Medal of Honor awards. Its colors carry campaign streamers for Lorraine, 1917; Lorraine, 1918; Picardy, Montdidier-Noyon, St. Mihiel, Aisne-Marne and Meuse-Argonne.

Following World War I, the Big Red One remained on occupation duty until its return to the United States in December 1919. The Division paraded down New York's Fifth Avenue and held a final review in Washington before President Woodrow Wilson.

In the years that followed, it was scattered, mostly at garrisons along the Atlantic seaboard, until 1939, when the Division was brought together again for maneuvers and training.

## World War II

In July 1942, an advance party of the Big Red One departed New York for England. The main body of the First Division followed in August aboard the Queen Mary. Maneuvers began almost immediately in Scotland, coming as an introduction to the combat soon to follow.

On August 19, the First Division was redesignated the First Infantry Division.

On November 8, the soldiers of the First Infantry Division were among some 39,000 American troops ready to strike the beaches at Oran and Algeria in the first invasion of North Africa. Major General Terry Allen, then Division Commander, had said, "Nothing in hell must delay or stop the First Division." Nothing did.

The men of the Big Red One marched through Oran and later, on



Officers of the 18th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Brigade (top left) "chow down" in France during World War I. Troops of the 18th Infantry marching to the front in France (top right). Before going into battle, soldiers of the 18th Infantry (bottom center) clean their weapons to insure they are in top condition.



to Tunisia, where the Germans had started a build-up. On February 18, 1943, the enemy launched a vicious attack in the Western Dorsal, which the First Infantry Division stopped.

The Division then took Gafsa, and continued to march through Tunisia, where on May 9, Major General Fritz Krause, commander of the German "Afrika Korps," surrendered his forces, 40,000 strong.

The next step for the Big Red One was Sicily. The Division landed at Gela on July 10, and quickly overpowered the preliminary Italian

defenses, only to come to grips with a German Panzer Division rolling down the Gela Road in a bold effort to drive the Big Red One back to the sea.

With the help of naval gunfire, and its own organic artillery, the First Infantry Division stopped the attack.

After 24 days of continuous fighting, it captured the town of Troina. On August 7, Major General Clarence R. Heubner took command of the Big Red One and moved the Division back to England to train for the biggest Allied offensive of the war.

On June 6, 1944, First Infantry Division soldiers embarked from three points and began wading ashore to the beaches of Normandy, France. During the next three weeks, the soldiers moved through the Normandy hedgerows, struggled to the St. Lo Road, and prepared to seal off Brittany.

After taking Courtaulies, the Division marched practically unopposed through the heart of France. It bypassed Paris and moved through Belgium, capturing 17,000 Germans at Mons. By the second week in September, the Big Red One had crossed the German border near the town of Aachen, which it subsequently captured on October 18.

The Division then prepared to punch on to the Rhine, where it would seize the crossings over the river. However, the German lines were tough, and it took two weeks to move seven miles. On December 16, 24 enemy Divisions, 10 of which were armored, launched a massive counter-attack in the Ardennes sector, resulting in the famous Battle

of the Bulge.

The fiercest fighting occurred four days later, when the Germans temporarily pierced the Big Red One's defenses with Panzer tanks. But, through much individual heroism, the tanks were stopped, and the German Army put to retreat through the snow deeper into its homeland.

In December, General Heubner left the First Infantry Division to take command of V Corps, being succeeded by Major General Clift Andrus.

On March 16, 1945, the Big Red One crossed the Rhine and by May 8, when the Germans surrendered, had moved all the way across the border to Cheb, Czechoslovakia.

The Division suffered 21,023 casualties and had 16 Medals of Honor awarded during World War II. Campaign streamers awarded were for Algeria-French Morocco (with Arrowhead), Normandy (with Arrowhead), Central Europe, Rhineland, Tunisia, Northern France and Ardennes Alsace. Additionally, the Big Red One had to its credit these decorations: Streamer, French Croix de Guerre with Palm, embroidered "Kasserine;" French Croix de Guerre with Palm, embroidered "Normandy;" Fourragere, French Croix de Guerre; Fourragere, Belgian (Mons and Eulen-Malmedy); and 20 unit citations.

Following the war, the First Infantry Division remained in Germany as it did after World War I. In the early summer of 1955, the Big Red One returned to the United States after 13 years of continuous overseas duty.

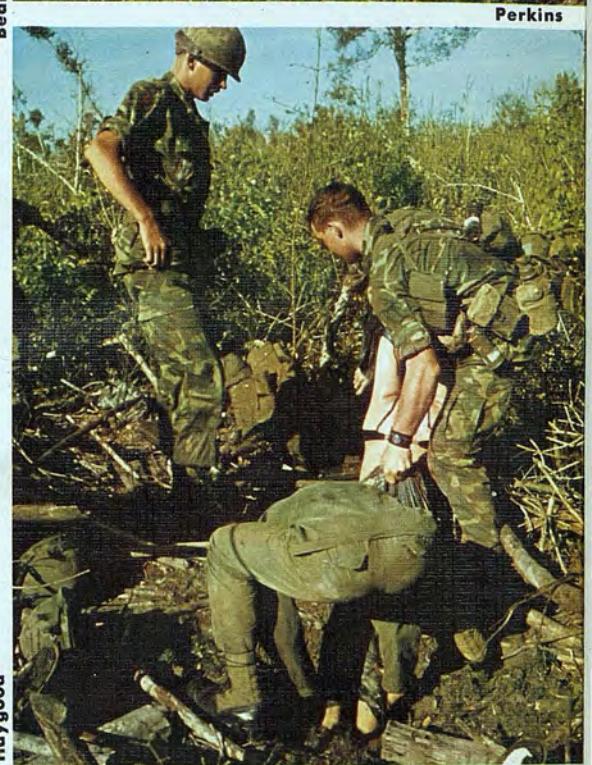


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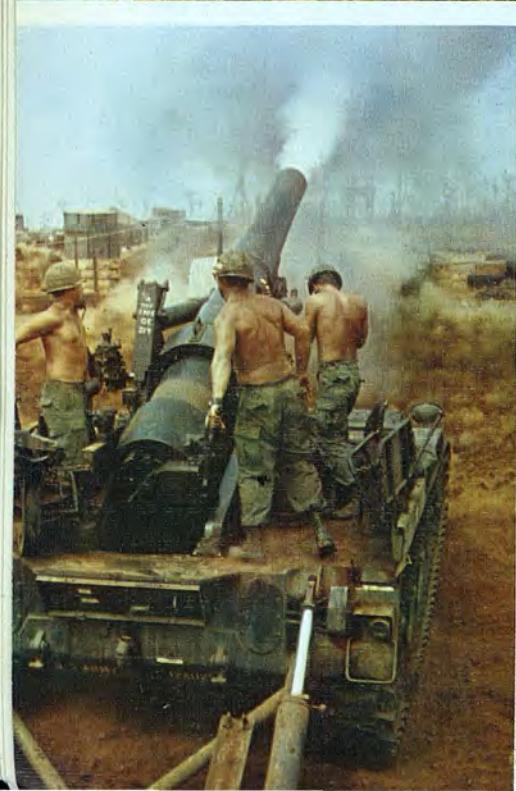
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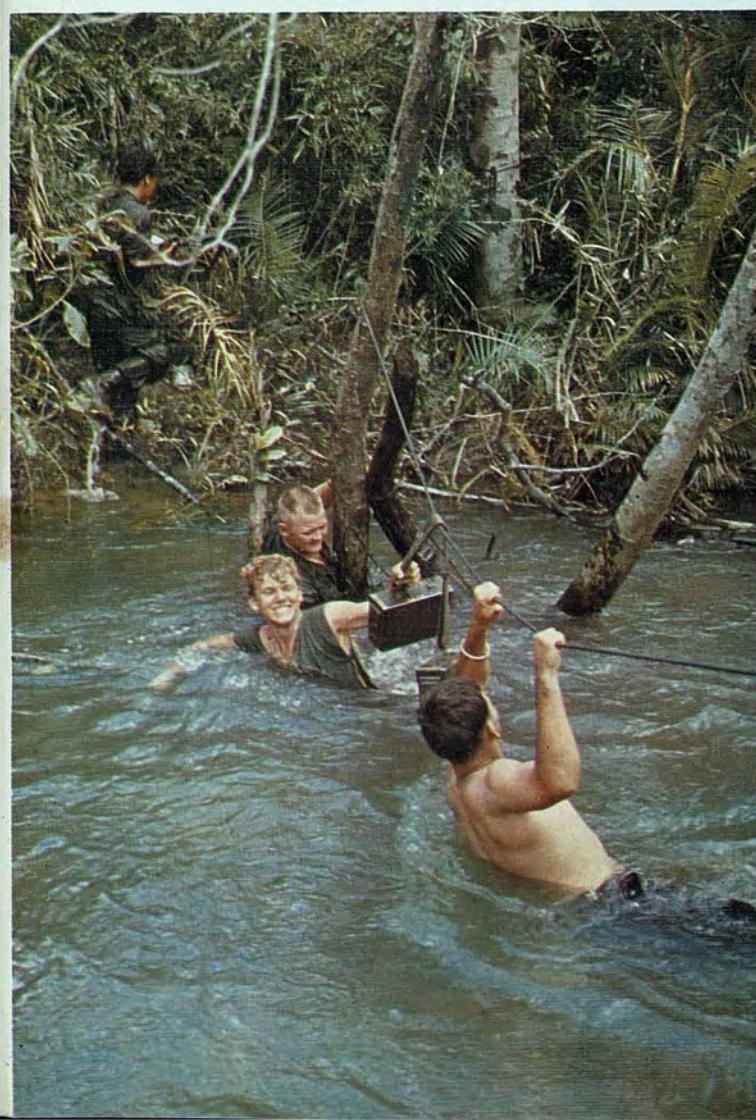
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# Five Years In Vietnam

Speculation and uncertainty were commonplace among Big Red One soldiers in June 1965 as word of the impending deployment to Southeast Asia was received. For those few veterans who had served in Vietnam before coming to Ft. Riley, it meant returning to the way of life which is combat. But for the majority, it meant a way of life for which they had been trained but had never experienced.

Suddenly, newspaper headlines and television newscasts took on new meaning to these men as they made preparations for the journey which was to take them halfway around the world. They realized that the struggle they had been hearing about would soon be their struggle.

Each man accepted the challenge and as the deployment commenced, performed his assigned job with the same professionalism which had been displayed by generations of Big Red One fighting men.

Once in Vietnam, the men of the First Division launched a series of operations which was to completely disrupt enemy activity within its assigned area of operations. During many battles, the Division pushed into and cleared such now infamous areas as the Trapezoid, Iron Triangle, Catcher's Mitt, Song Be Corridor, Saigon Corridor and Highway 13, better known as Thunder Road.

During the many battles fought by the 1st Division, a bitter enemy witnessed the extraordinary perseverance and determination of America's oldest Army division as over 21,000 of his numbers died in its path.

Five Years in Vietnam is more than a history—it is a tribute to those whose dedication to duty made this illustrious history possible and particularly to those of the Big Red One who sacrificed their lives to further the cause of freedom in Vietnam.

By 1965 the Vietnam situation had reached the point where regular U.S. units had to be summoned, if the Republic of Vietnam was not to be overrun by the Communists. The first U.S. Army division to be called to meet this challenge was the 1st Infantry Division.

During the spring and summer of 1965, the Division had been planning, training and getting ready for Vietnam. The first unit to deploy was the 2nd Brigade which organized with three infantry battalions: the 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry; 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry; and the 2nd Battalion, 18th Infantry, along with the 1st Battalion, 7th Artillery and other combat support and service support units necessary to permit operation as a separate infantry brigade.

The advance parties landed at Qui Nhon, Vietnam on June 23, 1965 where the first Big Red One soldier to step on Vietnamese soil was Private First Class Gerard Webster of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 7th Artillery.

#### Task Force

The U.S. Navy Ship Fordon departed San Francisco June 25, 1965 with 3,900 men of the 2nd Brigade Task Force, commanded by Colonel James E. Simmons.

On July 12, the Gordon left the men of the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry, reinforced by the men of C Battery, 1st Battalion, 7th Artillery, on the beach at Cam Ranh Bay where they were to provide security for the construction of a port facility. The Gordon then moved south, landing two days later at Vung Tau where the remaining soldiers of the Brigade disembarked and where airlifted to Bien Hoa Air Force Base to assume responsibility for a portion of the perimeter there.

#### First Contact

The heavy mortar platoon, 2nd Battalion, 18th Infantry, received sniper fire from Viet Cong infiltrators July 17, 1965, bringing the Big Red One under enemy fire for the first time since World War II. On the following night, the same unit came under a VC mortar attack resulting in the Division's first man killed in action in Vietnam.

The Big Red One's first offensive operation in Vietnam was begun on July 22, 1965, when Company B, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry conducted a search of the area around

the 2nd Brigade's base camp at Bien Hoa. The "Ranger" commander, Lieutenant Colonel Lloyd L. Burke, was directing armed helicopters in support of the sweep when his own helicopter was hit by a Viet Cong hand grenade. The colonel was injured and evacuated to the States.

The 2nd Battalion, 18th Infantry was then deployed to the north in the Central Highlands and operated with the 173rd Airborne Brigade. The 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry conducted Operation Barracuda 12 miles west of Nha Trang and killed 25 Viet Cong soldiers.

#### Main Force

Meanwhile, the remainder of the Division at Ft. Riley received notice that it had to reach combat-ready status by September 1. This status was achieved but required a reorganization of the Division, a period of intensified training and the acquisition of two additional infantry battalions. The 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 2nd Infantry, Ft. Devens, Mass., were ordered to deploy with the Big Red One. Two organic armor battalions and an Honest John battalion were not to deploy.

The main body of the Division began leaving the United States September 15 and began arriving in Vietnam October 1. The move was completed by October 19. Personnel and equipment were staged in the vicinity of Saigon University, approximately 15 miles north of Saigon, which was secured during the period by elements of the 2nd Brigade. The Division arrived at the end of the rainy season and conditions of rain, mud, heat and humidity were unpleasant and unhealthy, but all personnel held up well because of the intensive physical conditioning program conducted prior to deployment.

Although the rear detachment did not complete its move until December 23, the Division became operational November 1 under the command of Major General Jonathan O. Seaman.

#### Digging In

After arrival, the Division immediately acquired real estate and began hacking camps out of the jungles. The 1st Brigade began digging in at Phuoc Vinh, the 3rd Brigade at Lai Khe and Division Artillery at Phu Loi. Division Headquarters and Support Command



*In the early stages of the Vietnam war, 1st their effort at clearing and constructing new engineer's rime plows played an important role in the jungle. Tracked vehicles were used extensively in many areas and their great fire*

*power was welcomed by the foot soldiers.*

were co-located at Di An. The 2nd Brigade and the 173rd Airborne Brigade were given the mission to clear the VC from the areas around the new base camps and provide security until the camps were established. The 1st and 3rd Brigades were strategically located astride vital VC lines of communication. Primary emphasis during the next two weeks was placed on improving living conditions and expanding U.S. and Vietnamese government influence throughout the areas surrounding the new camps.

Initial combat operations during late October 1965 were devoted to security of the base camps.

#### Ap Bau Bang

The Big Red One fought its first significant battle November 12, 1965 near Bau Bang on National Highway 13. The 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry; A Troop, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry; and C Battery, 2nd Battalion, 33rd Artillery had settled

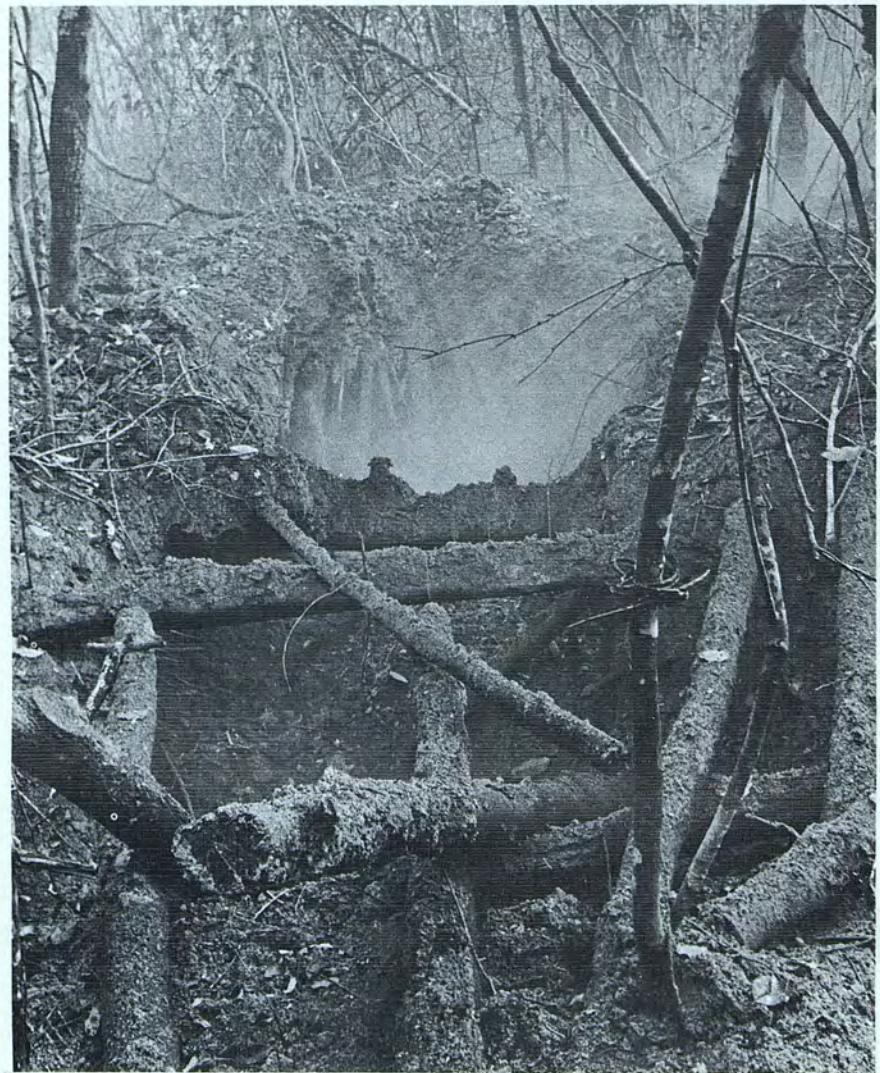
into their night defensive position November 11 when they received two mortar rounds to their front. At 6:30 the following morning, the battalion task force was to resume sweep and secure efforts. The enemy began to attack 55 minutes later. The battle raged throughout the morning with the Viet Cong launching three assaults on the perimeter.

When it was established where enemy mortars and recoilless rifle fire were coming from, airstrikes and artillery fire were called in on the enemy. At the end of the day, 198 VC bodies were found near the perimeter. The Big Red One had been victorious in the Battle of Ap Bau Bang.

#### Trung Loi

On November 20, Operation Bushmaster I, the 1st Infantry Division's first division-sized operation, was launched near the Michelin Rubber Plantation, northwest of the Division's Lai Khe base camp. The





2nd Battalion, 33rd Artillery was supporting the 3rd Brigade which itself was supporting the 5th Infantry Division of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam in search and destroy missions in the plantation.

On the first day of operations, a convoy was attacked by a sizeable Viet Cong force. The Battle of Trung Loi was on and by the time it ended 70 VC soldiers had been killed the Big Red One.

On November 27, the day before the Division started Operation Bushmaster II, the 3rd Brigade reinforced the 7th ARVN Regiment, which was decisively engaged in the rubber plantation. After the area was once again returned to control of the government, the 3rd Brigade began its return to Lai Khe.

#### Ap Nha Mat

It was during this march that the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry became heavily engaged with an estimated VC regiment at Ap Nha Mat. The

battalion, with the support of A Battery, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Artillery, killed 301 Viet Cong soldiers, captured many weapons, and destroyed a main camp and training area. For these actions, the battalion and A Battery both received the Valorous Unit Award by direction of the Secretary of the Army.

By the end of 1965, the Division had participated in three major operations—Hump, Bushmaster I and Bushmaster II—accounting for a total of 960 enemy killed. They had also detained 30 VC and captured 39 tons of salt, 242 tons of rice, 86 weapons and 14,214 rounds of ammunition.

During early 1966 the 1st Division concentrated on search and clear operations within its area of operations. On Operation Crimp, January 7 to 12, the 3rd Brigade moved into Hau Nghia Province and Cu Chi District in search of enemy forces. Although no major encounters were made, Big Red One troopers captured more than 2,000 tons

of food, 121 houses, 1,000 water containers, 33 bicycles, 70 tons of rice and two tons of salt which belonged to the VC in the area.

#### Tan Binh

On February 24, during Operation Rolling Stone, the 1st Brigade recorded its first major engagement. A road construction mission by the brigade and the 1st Engineers was to provide an all-weather road between Highways 13 and 16 which would open the area south of Lai Khe to government influence. The Battle of Tan Binh began in the early morning hours as Viet Cong soldiers attacked from three directions in groups of 30 and 40. These attacks were repulsed by intense small arms, mortar and artillery fire (often the artillery leveled its tubes and blasted directly into the enemy rank). The enemy left 142 dead on the battlefield. The 10 miles of road was completed.

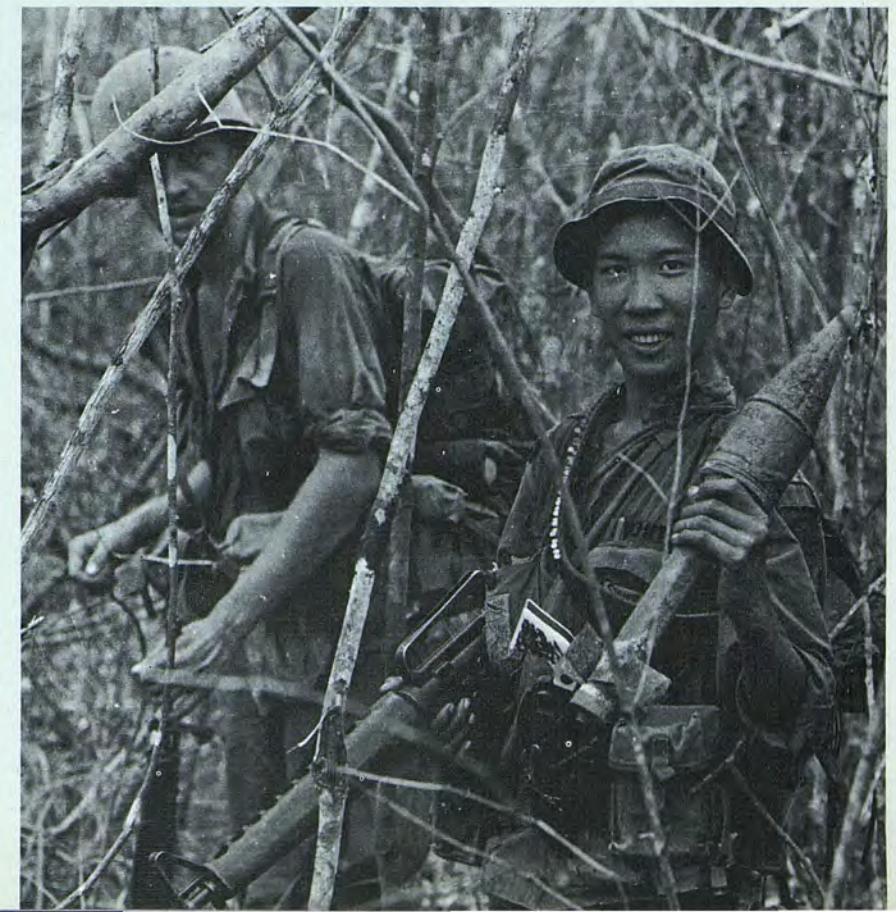
In Operation Hattiesburg, the

2nd Brigade moved into Tay Ninh Province in March and for five days disrupted the VC organization of the Be Lu Secret Zone, depriving the VC of 242 tons of rice, 400 pounds of TNT and 40 120mm mortar rounds.

On March 15, General Seaman took command of II Field Force Vietnam and Major General William E. DePuy became the new division commander. Two innovations that General DePuy brought to the division were the "cloverleaf" method of saturation patrolling, which would enable the infantry to search a large area without massing of its troops in any one spot, and the Revolutionary Development Task Force tailored to coordinate activity of the Big Red One and the Army of the Republic of Vietnam units operating in the area.

#### Lo Ke

During Operation Cocoa Beach



north of Lai Khe, a VC regiment attacked a Big Red One battalion in the Lo Ke Rubber Plantation. Troopers of the 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry broke the attack of the numerically superior force and with reinforcements pursued the regiment, killing 199.

The Battle of Lo Ke produced the Big Red One's first Medal of Honor winner in Vietnam. Lieutenant Robert J. Hibbs of Cedar Falls, Iowa, was posthumously awarded the Nation's highest recognition for valor for his heroic actions at the outset of the battle.

### Srok Dong

On June 30, 1966, during Operation El Paso II, the 271st Viet Cong Regiment suffered a defeat when it attempted to ambush elements of the 1st Division near the village of Srok Dong. B and C Troops, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry and the 1st platoon of C Company, 2nd Battalion, 18th Infantry were caught in an "L" shaped ambush but proceeded to break the ambush using their superior maneuverability, tactical air sorties and artillery support from the 8th Battalion, 6th Artillery located at Hon Quan.

The 271st VC Regiment lost 270 killed in action, 15 VC detained, 23 crew-served weapons and 40 rifles.



### Minh Thanh Road

The Battle of Minh Thanh Road was one of five major battles in which the Big Red One engaged and soundly defeated all three main force regiments of the 9th Viet Cong Division during Operation El Paso II. The last and most violent battle, as well as the greatest VC defeat at that time, was on the road from An Loc to Minh Thanh in Binh Long Province, 70 miles north of Saigon. The enemy force was the battle-tested 272nd Main Force Regiment, the elite regiment of the 9th VC Division.

Big Red One units involved in the battle were the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry and the 1st Battalions of the 2nd, 16th, 18th and 28th Infantry. Possibly the most important lesson learned from this battle is that the use of armor in breaking an enemy ambush can be decisive. When led by tanks, a cavalry column can take the punishment and respond with adequate firepower during the critical early pe-

riod until infantry battalions can be introduced by helicopter or foot movement to the battle area.

The price the enemy paid was high—238 VC bodies were found following the battle. While being interrogated following the battle, a prisoner indicated that the 9th VC Division had lost over 2,000 men during its three ambushes and two other battles with the Big Red One in June and July 1966.

The 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry, as a result of its magnificent performance in the Battles of Ap Tau O, Srok Dong and Minh Thanh Road, received the United States Presidential Unit Citation.

### Bong Trang

The 1st Brigade began Operation Amarillo August 23 to clear and

secure a section of Highway 16, to conduct search and clear operations and pass convoys along the route.

During the operation, aggressive patrolling located an occupied VC base camp. A violent battle followed which resulted in 171 of the Viet Cong's Phu Loi Battalion killed. Again A and C Troops of the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry teamed up with the 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry and the 1st Battalions of the 2nd, 16th and 26th Infantry to make the Battle of Bong Trang their victory.

Operation Shenandoah was conducted in Binh Long Province from the Minh Thanh-Chon Thanh area to Loc Ninh. The operation was significant from the standpoint that the VC in the area did not have the will to engage the Big Red One. A captured enemy document at-



tested to this reluctance and to the enemy's opinion of the 1st Infantry Division: "Elements of the 1st U.S. Division are stationed along Route 13 to Loc Ninh," said the document. "This is the best Division of U.S. Forces." Two encounters during the operation resulted in 97 enemy killed.

In November the 1st Infantry Division entered Operation Attleboro in the Dau Tieng-Soui Da area of Tay Ninh Province in conjunction with the 25th Infantry Division, which was already in contact with a VC division. Under the leadership of the Big Red One, Operation Attleboro turned into the largest operation thus far in the war. Viet Cong forces took a resounding defeat in which 845 were killed and tons of food and equipment captured.

### Ap Cha Do

The largest battle of the operation was the Battle of Ap Cha Do which pitted the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry against the 272nd VC Regiment and the 101st North Vietnamese Army Regiment. On the night of November 4 and morning of November 5 the division headquarters and its organic combat units moved to the battle area at Dau Tieng by air and land.

As the battalions moved into multiple landing zones, contact was made with VC forces. Airstrikes and artillery were concentrated against the enemy forces. The 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 28th Infantry were then moved into the battle area behind the enemy's offensive thrusts. The 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry was attacked during the early morn-

ing hours of November 8 and shortly after the 2nd Battalion was attacked at their night defensive position. The battle raged until 11 a.m.

When the 2nd Battalion swept the area the men learned why the enemy had been so determined. They had been defending a basecamp which stretched for over a mile through the thick jungle and contained one of the largest caches of ammunition and supplies taken in the War at that time.

In the camp Big Red One soldiers found more than 19,000 grenades, a claymore factory, 1,135 pounds of explosive, 400 Bangalore torpedoes, a command radio system and thousands of other miscellaneous items ranging from bolts of cloth to weighing scales.

The Battle of Ap Cha Do cost the enemy 305 killed. An additional 94 bodies were found the following day and were probably inflicted during the previous day's battle.

As a result of their outstanding performance during the Battle of Ap Cha Do, the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry received the Presidential Unit Citation.

### Cedar Falls

One of the greatest setbacks to VC activities in the area of the 1st Division came in January 1967 when Operation Cedar Falls resulted in more than three square miles of jungle in the Iron Triangle being cleared.

This operation deprived the enemy of his foremost operational base for activities against the Saigon area. In addition, 389 VC were killed, 180 detained and 471 rallied to the Government through the Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) program.

Major General John J. Hay assumed command of the division February 10.

### Junction City

The size of operations continued to increase. In February, March and April 1967, the Big Red One, augmented by elements of the 9th Infantry Division, 173rd Airborne Brigade, 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment and an ARVN cavalry troop and ranger battalion participated in Operation Junction City in War Zone C.

The Big Red One met and defeated four regiments of the 9th VC Division during the operation. A total of 1,809 VC were killed, the majority in four separate bat-

ties. The area covered by this operation encompassed the jungles between the Cambodian border on the north and west, Highway 13 on the east and a line from Tay Ninh City to Ben Cat on the south.

War Zone C had provided a sanctuary for insurgents for over 20 years and now Operation Junction City was aimed at destroying the stronghold.

#### Prek Klok I

On February 28, approximately 18 miles northeast of Tay Ninh City, division forces under the command of Major General John H. Hay, Billings, Mont., scored the biggest victory up until that time in the operation. The Battle of Prek Klok I occurred when the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry encountered what was later determined to be a battalion from the 101st North Vietnamese Army Regiment.

The Battalion's B Company was heading east on a search and clear mission when they became engaged with heavy fire at about 10:30 a.m. Twenty minutes later the enemy launched an attack from the northeast. Heavy enemy firing continued until 2 p.m. when the effort declined into a "selected sniper program." An hour later contact was broken.

Shortly before dark, two companies made a sweep of the area discovering 146 bodies. An intensive search the following day revealed an additional 21 enemy dead.

#### Prek Klok II

Ten days later a mortar barrage on Fire Support Patrol Base II heralded the beginning of the Battle of Prek Klok II. The battle area once again was located in Tay Ninh Province near the Prek Klok stream.

At 8:26 p.m., March 10, the 2nd Battalion (Mechanized) 2nd Infantry spotted three VC soldiers moving into position. The battalion was then placed on 75 percent alert status. At 10:08 p.m. the Viet Cong commenced heavy mortar attack on the firebase. Within two minutes after the initial attack, a counter-mortar fire program was initiated.

As the barrage ended, all units conducted a reconnaissance by fire of the area beyond the perimeter. After this was completed, the enemy launched a ground attack. Fire superiority was gained and close tactical air support and artillery were called in to put down the enemy drive.

The brunt of the attack had been repelled by midnight. The following morning, sweeps of the battle area disclosed 197 enemy killed and five wounded.

#### Ap Bau Bang II

The Battle of Ap Bau Bang II was the third major action in as many weeks during Operation Junction City. It took place March 20, 30 miles north of Saigon near the area where the 1st Division had seen its first major Vietnam action November, 1965.

A Troop, 3rd Squadron, 5th Cavalry of the 9th Infantry Division, was under the operational control of the Big Red One as was B Battery, 7th Battalion, 9th Artillery. Both were occupying Fire Support Patrol Base 14 when they were hit with a VC mortar attack and later a ground assault on their perimeter. A counter-mortar program was fired immediately and platoons of B and C Troops were called in to assist.

A second and third assault was waged on the fire base but they were thwarted by the superior firepower of the armor, 29 Air Force sorties and 2,148 rounds of artillery. When the enemy finally broke contact, he left 227 dead comrades behind.

On March 21, units of the 4th Infantry Division met the 272nd Viet Cong Regiment in the jungles of War Zone C and killed 600 of the enemy. All that remained intact now within the 9th VC Division was the 271st Regiment. That unit was soon to be completely mauled by the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, during the Battle of Ap Gu, 25 miles north of Tay Ninh City near the village of Ap Gu.

#### Ap Gu

March 26, the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry was air-assaulted into a landing zone near Ap Gu where there were suspected enemy base camps and fortifications. The battalion found fortified VC positions but no significant contacts occurred. The following day the 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry airlifted without incident.

The 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry then moved north of the night defensive position which they had set up and began reconnoitering the woods across the clearing from the perimeter. About 55 minutes later the reconnaissance platoon made contact. Airstrikes and artillery were called in and coupled to the fire-

power of the battalion, suppressed the assault.

The 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry was then airlifted into the area and immediately set up defensive positions. The Viet Cong then began their main assault on the perimeters.

The battle raged for two days during which 15,000 rounds of artillery were expended by Division Artillery. There were also 133 Air Force sorties flown in support of the ground action. The VC regiment was finally shattered and a police of the battlefield revealed 609 dead.

#### New Operation

On April 15, after 52 days of pounding enemy forces in War Zone C, the 1st Infantry Division ended its participation in Operation Junction City. Enemy dead reached an all-time high for the division for one operation—1,781.

On May 3, a Hoi Chanh (former Viet Cong) led A Company, 2nd Battalion, 18th Infantry to an enemy base camp during Operation Manhattan. Here, in an underground concrete storage room, was found one of the largest single caches of weapons and ammunition in the Vietnam War: 220 Mauser rifles, 147 Chinese Communist carbines, one Browning Automatic Rifle, one sub-machinegun, 1,500 60 mm mortar rounds, 2,000 82mm mortar rounds, over 300,000 rounds of small arms ammunition, 300 mines of various types and a number of other items.

#### Xom Bo I

The Battle of Xom Bo I began June 17, 1967 when A and B Companies of the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, the Reconnaissance Platoon of the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry and B Company of the 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry decided to walk into their landing zone rather than be airlifted in.

Intelligence reports had revealed that four companies of the 271st VC Regiment knew of their air-assault plans and were waiting in ambush for them.

The enemy were thrown off guard and suffered 222 casualties before the Big Red One troops and their supporting artillery were finished.

#### Ong Thanh

The next big contact with the 271st occurred October 17, in the Battle of Ong Thanh, some 12 miles northeast of Lai Khe. In an



*“Don’t preach to him about losses, he knows the meaning of death”*

area of heavy brush and jungle, A and D Companies of the 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry fought a violent engagement with a reinforced battalion of the enemy regiment.

But the battle was not won without a price, for the Big Red One lost two of its foremost leaders—Lieutenant Colonel Terry D. Allen Jr., the battalion commander, whose father had commanded the 1st Division in World War II, and Major Donald W. Holleder, the 1st Brigade operations officer, a former All-American football player at West Point.

When the battlefield was cleared the following morning 163 men of the 271st Regiment were found dead. Many were victims of deadly artillery fire and airstrikes called in by the Big Red One units.

### Srok Silamlite III

The division employed two brigades in War Zone D during Operation Shenandoah II in October and November 1967. The operation opened up Highway 13 all the way to Loc Ninh. During the operation VC forces were defeated and driven from the Long Nguyen base area. During the Battles of Srok Silamlite I, Srok Silamlite II and the Battle of Loc Ninh Airstrip, 189 enemy soldiers were killed. These battles were small when compared to the battle which was to follow, however.

The Battle of Srok Silamlite III began November 2 as elements of the 273rd VC Regiment tried once again to overrun the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry two miles west of Loc Ninh. Initial losses for the enemy were 220 killed, but as search and destroy missions continued for the next five days, additional bodies were found in the area until the mounting toll reached 263. U.S. losses in the superb NDP fortification were only one killed and eight wounded.

As a result of Operation Shenandoah II, the VC division’s drive for Loc Ninh District had been defeated and the enemy forced to retreat into jungle sanctuaries after suffering more than a thousand casualties.

### Bu Dop

The concentrated forces of the enemy were actually forced further north into the area of the Cambodian border. This theory was confirmed at the Battle of Bu Dop, which took place 90 miles north

of Saigon on November 29 and 30.

A Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) district headquarters at Quan Bo Duc was attacked and partially overrun in the early morning hours of November 20. In reaction to the attack, the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry and A Battery, 2nd Battalion, 33rd Artillery were airlifted from Quan Loi, 30 miles south, to Bu Dop where they set up a night defensive perimeter.

Early in the evening, elements of the CIDG made contact with an unknown size VC force just east of the "Black Lion's" NDP and returned to the perimeter. Heavy rocket and mortar fire then hit the NDP along with small arms fire.

A ground assault began at midnight and continued for an hour until the supporting artillery and fire superiority turned back the attackers. A conservative estimate placed the VC death toll at 90.

#### Hill 172

Only light contact with the enemy took place at Bu Dop up until December 8 when another NDP was set up days before by the 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry and B Battery, 1st Battalion, 5th Artillery, two miles southeast of Bu Dop on the south side of Hill 172.

At 1 a.m. a helicopter dustoff came into the NDP to lift off three men accidentally injured and was fired on by an undetected VC force. This gave the "Black Scarves" about a two minute warning of an impending attack, later to be called the Battle of Hill 172.

Two ambush patrols which were outside the perimeter at the time of the attack returned to the NDP as portions of the perimeter received heavy fire. Direct artillery fire was directed into the woodline from which the enemy were attacking. The attack was broken but another soon developed in another area of the perimeter.

The Big Red One forces continued to fire at the retreating VC until shortly after 4 a.m. A daylight sweep revealed 49 enemy bodies and numerous blood trails. It was estimated that more than 140 enemy were killed in the pre-dawn encounter.

#### Xa Cat

Only two days after the successful defense of Hill 172, the Big Red One was involved in its last large-scale battle of 1967 in the defense of

Fire Support Base Caisson VI, later to be known as the Battle of Xa Cat.

The firebase was located about four miles south of An Loc in the Xa Cat Rubber Plantation. The mission of the firebase was to post and open a section of Highway 13, known as Thunder Road. At 2 a.m. December 10, heavy mortar fire was directed against the firebase which was manned by A Company, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry; the 3rd Platoon, C Troop, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry; and A Battery, 6th Battalion, 15th Artillery.

The Big Red One soldiers fought back the attack in which several enemy breached the perimeter. The battle cost the enemy, later identified as the 2nd Battalion, 165th North Vietnamese Army (NVA) Regiment, 205 dead.

Following the Battle of Xa Cat, there was very little contact with the enemy during the remaining days of December. Only small isolated incidents interrupted the cease-fire truce during the Christmas and New Year Holidays.

#### Xom Bung

On January 6, 1968, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 18th Infantry while conducting a search four miles southeast of Lai Khe, met enemy opposition and the Battle of Xom Bung began.

The company had entered an enemy basecamp and became heavily engaged by members of the VC

Phu Loi Battalion.

The 2nd Battalion, (Mechanized), 2nd Infantry were ordered into the area along with artillery and tactical airstrikes. The battle raged throughout the day and finally subsided enough to conduct a sweep of the area revealing 58 dead VC. The forward air controller estimated an additional 15 enemy killed.

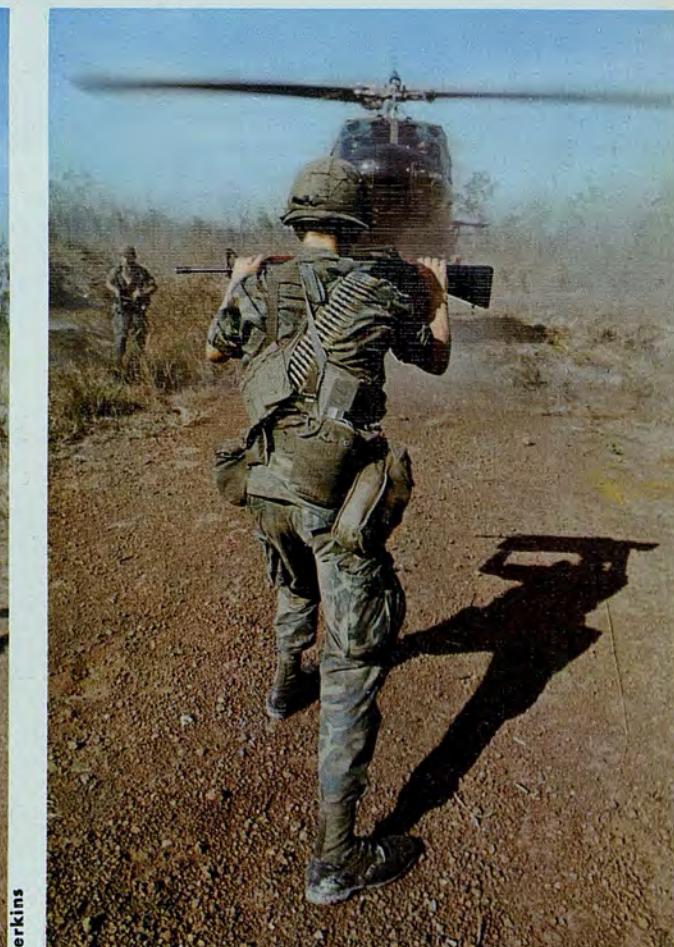
The 2nd Battalion, 18th Infantry was then extracted back to Fire Support Patrol Base Normandy I where they called in artillery on the basecamp area throughout the night. The following morning the battalion air-assaulted into the area again and turned up an additional 27 bodies bringing the total for the battle to 100.

#### Tet Offensive

At 3 p.m. on January 31, 1968, the day that marked the beginning of the Lunar New Year for Orientals, the enemy attacked 35 major



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population centers and virtually all major Allied basecamps throughout the Republic of Vietnam.

The Big Red One went to the assistance of an ARVN outpost at Bear Cat and killed a total of 48 soldiers. A few hours later the Division was called on to help secure the huge Tan Son Nhut Air Base. The 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry and A Troop, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry immediately moved to the base, where they killed 16 enemy in their first contact.

In several scattered contacts during the first day of the Tet Offensive, Division elements accounted for more than 80 enemy killed.

#### An My

The first day of February was marked by scattered heavy contacts throughout the division area of operations, including a savage battle around the village of An My, 20 miles north of Saigon.

The Battle of An My began when the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry and a platoon of B Troop, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry left Phu Loi basecamp enroute to a reconnaissance-in-force mission through the village, less than a mile from the north gate of the basecamp.

As they approached the village Viet Cong security elements hit the reinforced company with claymore, RPG and small arms fire. The battle was on with the VC who were dug in throughout the village. Com-

Getting in and out of an LZ/PZ took coordination, some smoke grenades and a sharp man on the ground. A soldier from Delta Troop of the Quarter Cav is shown here guiding a helicopter to a safe landing during a recent operation.

pany D and A, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry were airlifted to the area to assist Company C.

The battle raged on until 6 p.m. when the acting division commander ordered the contact broken with all units being withdrawn into the Phu Loi basecamp.

Clearance was received and artillery was called into the village. Enemy losses for the first day of the Battle of An My were 197 killed.

The following morning, the units began a sweep of the area and immediately made contact once again. Sporadic contact continued throughout the day until 7 p.m. when the sweep was completed.

Interrogation of detainees revealed the enemy force to be elements of the 273rd VC Regiment. Total VC losses during the two-day battle were 372 killed.

As the Communists continued their Tet Offensive the Division fought many battles in Ben Cat, Chau Thanh, Di An, Lai Thieu and Thu Duc districts, killing more than 1,500 enemy in 20 days.

In March Major General Keith L. Ware became the 39th commanding general of the Big Red One.

### Tan Hiep

On the morning of May 4, Company D, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry engaged an estimated VC battalion in Tan Hiep, two miles north of Di An. Air and artillery support was called in and continued until noon when reinforcements from Companies A and B of the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry and Troops A and B, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry arrived.

The armored cavalry assault vehicles and M48 tanks pushed to the front of the battle giving Company D a chance to regroup in preparation for the afternoon thrust which was to complete the task of wiping out three-fourths of a VC battalion.

Fighting continued throughout the afternoon and into the evening, finally breaking at 9 p.m. when the Big Red One forces returned to Di An.

The Battle of Tan Hiep cost the enemy 245 killed, later identified as members of the Dong Nai VC Regiment.

### May 5 Offensive

On the morning immediately following the Battle of Tan Hiep the communists officially launched their

second offensive, later to be called the May 5 Offensive, by raining mortars and rockets on the capital city of Saigon.

The Big Red One acted to seal off enemy movement toward Saigon. Elements assigned to this task were: the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry; the 2nd Battalion, 18th Infantry; the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry; the 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry; 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry; and the 7th Squadron, 1st Air Cavalry, which was under the operational control of the 1st Division.

### Xom Moi

In reaction to the threat against Saigon, two troops of the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry had been conducting reconnaissance-in-force operations northwest of Di An.

On May 5, Troop B sighted an enemy soldier just to the west of the village of Xom Moi. An hour after the contact was initiated, A Troop was called in to reinforce B Troop which was now in heavy contact.

The first day's action cost the enemy 156 killed.

The following morning the tracks were back on line sweeping the heavy jungle in which the retreating VC had refuge. Artillery and helicopter gunships supported the intensive sweep.

During the next several days, sporadic action continued but the battle was over with 440 killed.

### Loc Ninh III

The Battle of Loc Ninh III began August 23, when the 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry sought to rout North Vietnamese Army regulars who had burned the village of Loc Ninh and were dug in on nearby Hill 178.

After a week of fighting the "Black Scarves" defeated the NVA and destroyed the bunker complex on top of the hill. The battle cost the enemy 200 dead.

The 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry engaged a large NVA force north of Loc Ninh in a five-day battle which resulted in 216 NVA killed.

During the fierce fighting September 13, the command helicopter carrying Major General Keith L. Ware, commander of the Big Red One, Command Sergeant Major Joseph A. Venable and six others crashed and burned after being hit with hostile fire southeast of Loc Ninh. There were no survivors in the crash. Major General Orwin

C. Talbott, the assistant division commander, immediately assumed command of the Big Red One. The Battle of Loc Ninh IV was over.

### Trapezoid I

The Battle of Trapezoid I found elements of the Big Red One clearing the heavily vegetated area known as the Trapezoid which extends from the west side of Ben Cat northwestward to the Michelin Rubber Plantation.

During the seven-day period, 438 bunker complexes were destroyed, large caches of enemy munitions destroyed and an undeterminable number of enemy killed.

### FSPB Julie

The Battle of Fire Support Patrol Base Julie began on October 26 when an enemy element, estimated at four battalions of NVA regulars, tried to overrun the firebase two miles south of the Cambodian border in Tay Ninh Province.

The enemy prepped the firebase and then exerted heavy pressure on the perimeter and finally breached it. The 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry repelled the attack, using M-16s, machineguns and grenades.

The suicide attempt on Julie took the lives of 128 NVA soldiers.

The 1st Battalion (Mechanized), 16th Infantry and supporting artillery units at Fire Support Patrol Base Rita were attacked by a large NVA force November 1 which breached their perimeter and made their way 45 yards into the howitzer positions before they were killed or driven back.

The artillery lowered its tubes and fired directly at the attackers during the three-hour battle.

There were 27 NVA bodies found around the wire following the battle. No search of the outer area was conducted but unconfirmed reports from forward air controllers flying in the area and Darkhorse elements indicated a possible 400 to 500 bodies lying in the woods around the firebase. The number the enemy actually managed to carry off will never be known.

### Trapezoid II

In mid-November attention was again focused on the Trapezoid as 56 NVA soldiers were killed by the 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry during two clashes. During these two attacks, the NVA moved in on their target with the first barrage rather



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than "preping" the area first.

November 28 found the 2nd Battalion (Mechanized), 2nd Infantry engaged with an NVA battalion in the Battle of Loc Ninh V northeast of Loc Ninh.

During the two-day fight, Big Red One troops overran the NVA basecamp, killing 148.

### Atlas Wedge

On March 18, 1969, the Big Red One joined the 25th Infantry Division and the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) in a joint operation northwest of Lai Khe nicknamed Atlas Wedge.

Elements of the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, under the operational control of the 1st Infantry Division, together with the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry, repeatedly assaulted fortified enemy bunkers throughout the heavily wooded area with their rumbling tracks.

The action accounted for 421 enemy dead and 16 detainees.

On April 18, four Big Red One battalions began operation Plainsfield Warrior to search out and destroy Viet Cong and North Vietnamese infrastructure activity in the Trapezoid and Mushroom west of Lai Khe. Overall result of the operation were 38 Viet Cong killed, and 29 enemy detained.

### FSPB Gela

An attack materialized on Fire Support Base Gela west of Lai Khe May 12 when an enemy force launched a mortar and rocket attack against the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry.

Sappers attempting to breach the perimeter were repelled by Cobra gunships and five artillery batteries which had turned their tubes toward Gela's perimeter. There were 39 enemy bodies left in the area following the battle.

### An Loc I

The 1st Infantry Division and Republic of Vietnam Regional Forces, supported by gunships, artillery and Air Force tactical aircraft, killed 178 enemy soldiers during the Battle of An Loc I in Binh Long Province, May 23 to 25.

The 2nd Battalion (Mechanized), 2nd Infantry tackled an NVA anti-aircraft company the first day. The second and third day's contact was initiated by battalions of the 141st NVA Regiment.

Several days of bitter fighting, centered in the An Loc and Quan Loi areas, raged June 6 through 9 in one of the largest enemy contacts for the Big Red One since the Loc Ninh Offensive of 1968. An Loc, Quan Loi, Ben Cat, Lai Khe, Loc Ninh and Phu Loi were all target areas for the enemy's explosive assault.

### An Loc II

The first and largest contact came two and one-half miles northwest of An Loc when elements of Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry engaged an estimated company-sized NVA force fighting from a well fortified bunker complex.

Artillery, light fire teams, tactical air strikes and additional ground troops supported the Battle of An Loc II in which 115 enemy were killed.

### An Son

During Operation An Son in June elements of the Big Red One and forces of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam teamed up to secure an area which was once the hub of Viet Cong operations. Constant pressure by the 1st Division kept the enemy running for their lives. A total of 45 VC were killed and 23 detained during the operation.

The operation was one of the most important because it brought out a new way of defeating the enemy, a chance for the ARVN soldier to show his military skills and it added to the 1st Division's long list of successfully completed pacification programs.

On July 21, the Big Red One began a concentrated approach against a Viet Cong district heavily occupied by enemy forces, to restrict the flow of supplies and enemy forces through the Trapezoid and the Michelin Rubber Plantation and over the Tay Ninh and Saigon Rivers.

The division used extensive ambushes, seals and Rome plows to clear the land in the Trapezoid during the operation. Scattered contacts during the period showed that the enemy was reluctant to fight the Big Red One.

Major General A.E. Milloy became the 41st commanding general of the division August 10.

### Thunder Road

Suspecting that the enemy would soon strike in the 3rd Brigade area

of Highway 13 between Saigon and Quan Loi, the Iron Brigade commander, Colonel Elmer D. Pendleton, moved elements of the 2nd Battalion (Mechanized), 2nd Infantry from the Iron Triangle up to post Highway 13 on August 12.

As it turned out, it was a decision that was to cost the North Vietnamese heavy losses in the Battle of Thunder Road. Charlie Company outposted its forces north of Fire Support Base Thunder III. As the large resupply convoy moving north reached Charlie Company's position, an undetermined sized NVA force struck from concealment.

The action flared for nearly two hours, with the tanks and tracks coming on line and driving the enemy toward the jungle, leaving 73 NVA soldiers dead in their wake.

Two days later, on August 14, the NVA attacked a line of tankers returning to Long Binh after emptying their cargos in Quan Loi, 60 miles north of Saigon. The road was again outposted by elements of Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion (Mechanized), 2nd Infantry and elements of the 2nd Battalion, 34th Armor.

The enemy popped the ambush from the bushes along the roadside, blowing up two 5,000-gallon fuel tankers. A firefight ensued, with armored vehicles and tactical air support and helicopter gunships blasting the enemy. This time there were 20 dead NVA soldiers left in the aftermath of the battle.

A third attack on the road was launched August 20 but was quickly repelled killing seven NVA soldiers.

Within the ten-day period, the enemy had struck the road three times and had only the loss of 110 men to show for his efforts.

A three-pronged assault on Fire Support Base Thunder III September 5 and another attack on a convoy north of the firebase the following day netted the 2nd Battalion (Mechanized), 2nd Infantry an additional 78 NVA killed.

### Trapezoid III

On the morning of August 24, Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion (Mechanized), 2nd Infantry, while providing security for Rome Plows clearing an area of the Trapezoid, made contact with an estimated 30 enemy concealed in a bunker complex. Big Red One troops called in artillery, light fire teams and tactical air strikes for support in addition to elements of Alpha Company,

2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry.

The Battle of Trapezoid III raged on sporadically until darkness ended the fighting. A sweep of the area confirmed 31 enemy dead.

#### Phu Hoa Dong

On the night of November 15, an operation engineered by the Big Red One's 2nd Brigade was put into effect and became the largest operation conducted in the history of pacification by the 1st Infantry Division.

Ten U.S. and ARVN companies converged on the village of Phu Hoa Dong and sealed it for 11 days while the village was thoroughly searched by five Regional Forces companies, national policemen, an Armed Propaganda Team and U.S. troops. During the seal, several attempts were made by the VC to break out of the seal. They did not succeed however. At the end of the

seal, 23 enemy had been killed, 17 detained and 16 had Chieu Hoied.

During the 11-day period, extensive pacification programs were carried out for the villagers within the seal.

On November 15, a platoon of Company A, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry killed 21 enemy soldiers when they blew a successful ambush 12 miles east of Lai Khe.

#### Trapezoid IV

The Battle of the Trapezoid IV began when Company A, 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry received fire from an enemy basecamp 13 miles west of Lai Khe during a reconnaissance mission. The platoon couldn't maneuver and had to set up for the night under a protective blanket of illumination.

Attempts to advance the following morning were fruitless because of the heavy fire directed at the

Battalion (Mechanized), 2nd Infantry were called in for support. Once the tracks arrived on the scene, the Big Red One soldiers had no problem gaining fire superiority and overrunning the basecamp. A few enemy slipped out but they left 30 dead comrades behind.

#### The Last Offensive

From November 1969 until the time the Big Red One's colors are redeployed to Ft. Riley, Kan., 1st Infantry Division troops continue to combat the enemy left in its area of operations by the use of platoon and squad-sized ambushes. The enemy ceased to mass and operate in large units. He now has only small numbers and must try to avoid contact with the elite First Division. The Big Red One continues, right to the end, to strike heavy blows to the enemy and to destroy his will to fight.



Benton

# Big Red One Country



# Helping The Vietnamese Help Themselves

Vietnamization has played a key role in the success of the 1st Infantry Division. Special programs such as Dong Tien (Progress Together) and the many pacification projects helped to train the Vietnamese and prepare them for the Big Red One's eventual redeployment.



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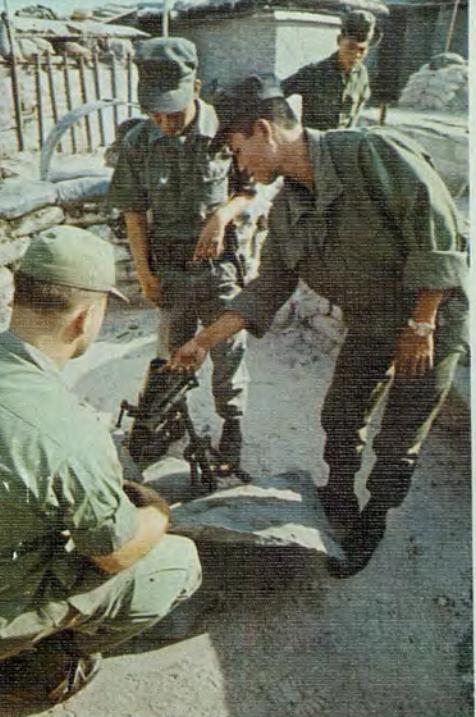
Searching for and destroying main force enemy units was one of the primary missions assigned to the 1st Infantry Division during its' first two years in Vietnam. This basic assignment was amended during the Big Red One's stay to include the training of Vietnamese forces and the pacification of rural areas. It was not an easy task, many sacrifices were made, but there is no doubt that the mission was completed.

The Big Red One's five years in Vietnam may be studied in the years ahead as a classic example of a successful division effort against counterinsurgency tactics. Clearing the 1st Infantry Division's area of operation (AO) of regular Communist forces was not an easy task. Yet, by comparing the enemy situation in the 1st Division area in 1965-66 to the 1969-70 situation, it is easy to understand why Major General A.E. Milloy stated recently, "we have worked ourselves out of a job."

In the beginning it was a different war. The Big Red One committed battalion and company size forces against enemy units and battles lasted for days and weeks. Body counts were high. In the battle of Ap Nha Mat in late November and early December of 1965 for instance, the 272nd VC Regiment attacked a task force consisting of the 2nd Battalion (Mechanized), and the 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry. The VC force, estimated at 1,200 men, fought with Big Red One troops for over a week before withdrawing, leaving behind the bodies of 301 comrades.

There were many other equally devastating battles, such as Minh Tanh Road in July of 1966 where 238 enemy soldiers died, Ap Cha Do in November 1966, 305 enemy KIAs, and the battle of An My in early February 1968 where 372 VC died.

During 1969, however, a gradual change took place on the battlefield. Although the enemy body count was still high, especially in the battles fought during the early part of the year, Big Red One tactics had changed. Because of a highly successful rice denial program, meticulous Rome Plow clearing of thick jungle areas, and constant pressure on the enemy main force units, the 1st Infantry Division could no longer find Communist troops massed in any one area.



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Four hundred and twenty-one enemy soldiers were killed in operation "Atlas Wedge" in early 1969 but they were accounted for in many separate contacts during a 16-day period. Contact with enemy troops at the end of 1969 consisted primarily of small skirmishes involving Big Red One squads and platoons. Enemy movement during the day was rare and a sighting of more than a dozen enemy troops at any one location at night was unusual. In late November for instance, the 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry ran into an unusually stubborn enemy force in the Trapezoid 13 miles northwest of Lai Khe. That fire fight turned out to be the most significant contact during the fall quarter with a total of 30 Communist KIAs credited to the Black Lions.

Killing VC and NVA troops however, does not accurately tell the real story of the Big Red One in Vietnam. "Vietnamization" combined with a strong pacification program and unique self help projects has been the key to the Division

success. The Division has proven that a well planned program using combined US-ARVN operations, combined fire support bases and literally hundreds of special civic action programs is the most effective way to defeat guerrilla forces. This program has been so successful that the Division can now redeploy from this AO, turning a much greater portion of responsibility over to ARVN troops, confident that the many villages, roads and highways now considered secure will remain so in the future.

Involvement with the concept of "Vietnamization" was started by the 1st Infantry Division long before the word itself became popular. The Big Red One has led all divisions in Vietnam in this effort with its Dong Tien (Progress Together) program. Unlike previous training programs in Vietnam, Dong Tien combined US and ARVN troops at fire support bases and also provided for combined operations down to squad level. ARVN soldiers at all levels of command received extensive on-the-job training giving them greater

combat experience and also greater confidence in their own ability and their support units.

The Progress Together concept has not been limited to any one unit. The 1st Division's Quarter Horse cavalry squadron has done extensive work with Vietnamese Regional Forces and Popular Forces units—the village-level self defense organizations. Vietnamese soldiers have also combined with other Big Red One troops on ground reconnaissance operations, ambush patrols and air assaults. The entire effort was designed to prepare the Vietnamese armed forces to handle both Viet Cong insurgency and North Vietnamese regulars.

The Big Red One efforts to upgrade ARVN and local defense units has been important and much emphasis was placed on this program during the past two years. Vietnamization, however, refers to more than armed forces training. It means the building of a stronger economy, stronger internal security and a stronger government.

Success in this area can be seen



most vividly by examining the fate of local villagers. Areas that four and five years ago belonged exclusively to VC/NVA hard core regulars are now secure. Vietnamese villagers live in these areas without fear. Not only are these villages secure, but the people can now travel to and from other villages without worry, they can transport their produce on improved roads and purchase items from Saigon and other centers of commerce that have never been available in the past.

Consider the condition of the famous "Thunder Road"—Highway 13. Two years ago travel on this road from the Di An—Saigon area north to Phu Cuong, Phu Loi, Ben Cat, and Lai Khe was limited to armed convoys. Today, Thunder Road is a busy, paved highway whisking traffic back and forth between villages and the urban areas to the south. The improvement of this road and many others in the Division AO, such as Highway 14 which snakes west from Ben Cat to Dau Tieng, has meant many things. It has brought a new economic life to the small farmer, it has opened the area to easy and convenient travel and has created a new feeling of awareness in formerly isolated communities.

Besides the roads, many other Big



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*TET of 1968 saw the VC and NVA launch coordinated attacks against many cities and villages throughout Vietnam. TET of 1970 was completely different as shown in these pictures taken in Ben Cat village several miles south of Division Headquarters.*

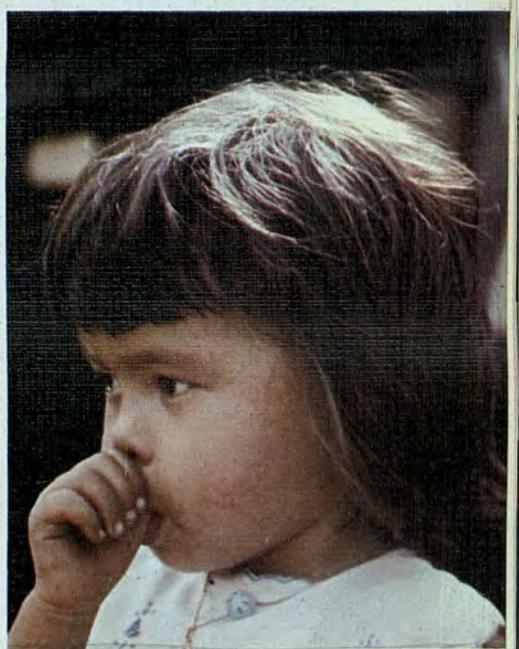
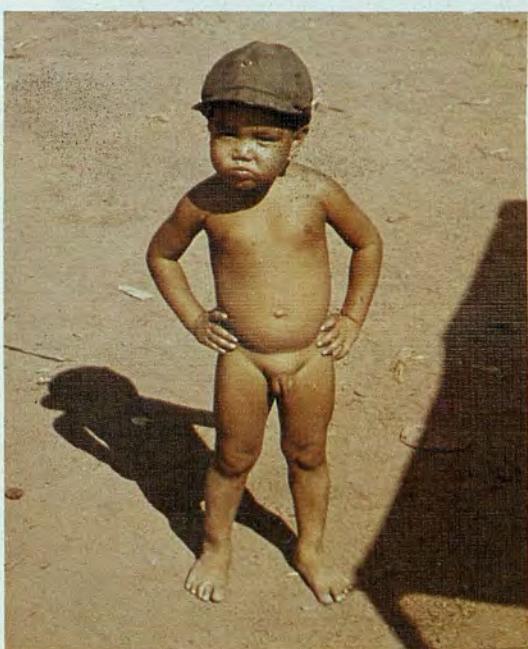
Red One projects have helped to make rural living a little easier. The Division Engineers have completed numerous projects such as ditch improvement and the construction of water wells, bridges and irrigation

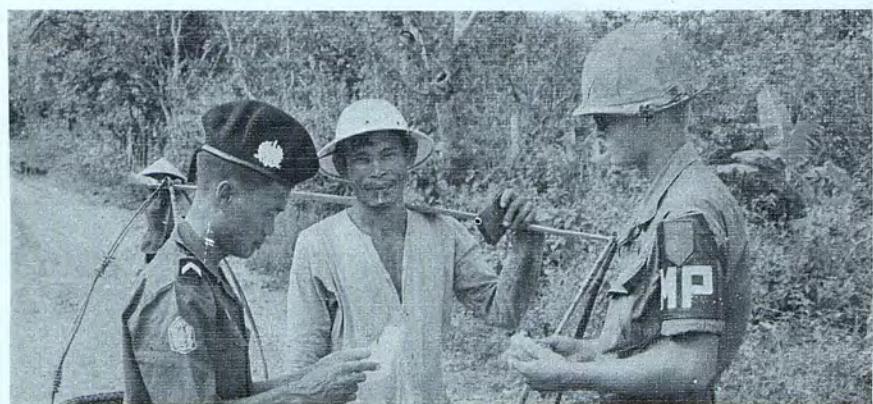
dikes. Schools, medical facilities and orphanages have also been built by Big Red One troops. Vocational training is another project of extreme importance and again the 1st Division has helped in this area.

Even a US civilian concern working in the Division area has contributed heavily to these projects, training over 300 Vietnamese from the Lai Khe-Ben Cat area to be heavy equipment operators, electricians and

Perkins







repairmen. This has provided the local people with a new source of income and given them valuable training and education.

The Big Red One effort in III Corps has targeted every aspect of this conflict from military operations to the civilian self-help programs. Some projects were no doubt more successful than others, but an honest, sincere and strenuous effort was put forth by the Division and the individual men in each of the units to help the Vietnamese help themselves. This was successful on the battlefield, in their villages, in their homes.

To gain a greater insight into the total Division effort, we must examine other activities conducted by the 1st Division during the past five years.

The Division G5 staff has been working for the past five years in two extremely important areas: civil affairs and psychological operations. Their mission has uniquely complemented the overall effort at Vietnamization but at a different level—the people to people level. Medical

teams for instance, traveled from village to village, day after day under G5 supervision. The medics brought aid and comfort to many villagers who perhaps had never before received medical treatment. The following story tells about the G5 mission to aid the people of Vietnam.

Helping people help themselves more accurately describes the mission of the Division G5 staff than any other phrase. Formally dubbed the Division "Civil Affairs-Psychological Operations" staff, the G5 section has been intimately concerned and involved with the Vietnamese people and problems affecting the local government, economy and welfare.

G5 has been divided into two sections each having distinctly different but related missions. During the past five years, this staff and the people working with it have gained the confidence of thousands of Vietnamese locals through special self-help programs designed to aid the villager solve his individual problems, to develop his own area and economy.

The Civil Affairs section has been primarily concerned with military civic action, technical advice, assistance and training, medical teams, and during the past year, supporting the "village self-development program."

Each battalion and brigade in the Big Red One utilizes an S5 staff to provide guidance and supervision at the local level. The ultimate goal of the G5 and S5 has been improvement of the living conditions of the Vietnamese people with the hope that this effort would eliminate the cause of insurgency—dissatisfaction and the lack of identification with the Vietnamese government.

Typical examples of the civic affairs activities during the Big Red One's stay in Vietnam has been the building of village medical facilities and schools. During 1969 these projects were de-emphasized in favor of the Government's village self-development program. This particular program provided for the ambitious spreading of benefits from the central government in Saigon, through Phu Cuong into the insecure areas of Binh Duong Province. Once certain prerequisites were filled, such as the election of a village council, villagers were given one million piastres, US \$8,484 to use as they deemed necessary to improve the village.

Technical assistance was provided by the Division engineers and the G5 and S5 staff in completing these self-

help programs. For instance, the engineers helped complete numerous drainage projects throughout the province. G5 and S5 personnel provided material and technical advise on digging wells, particularly in Ben Cat District.

Perhaps one of the most important programs conducted recently was the G5's emphasis on vocational training for the Vietnamese people. The 1st Medical Battalion at Di An played an important role in this program, conducting an intensive course to train Regional Forces and Popular Forces soldiers to be medics. A serious lack of medics among these soldiers was identified and a program developed to properly train a select group, with each man given classroom and on-the-job training.

This type of training provided for the RF/PF, but in addition, developed a cadre of adept and aware medics who can staff rural health stations in the future.

To provide immediate medical care to the rural Vietnamese, often in hostile areas, MEDCAP and ICAP teams were organized by the Division G5 staff. Medical personnel from throughout the Division participated in these projects, treating 85,000 patients in 1969 alone.

The G5 and S5 staffs have also been deeply involved with psychological operations, developing over the years highly sophisticated and effective methods of influencing enemy troops. Recently, the PSYOP efforts have been characterized by maximum exploitation of Hoi Chanh (ralliers) and the rapid response to special intelligence information. The G5 staff placed great emphasis on the use of specially prepared tape recordings and leaflets that were broadcast by helicopter loudspeakers or dropped in known enemy locations. These recordings and leaflets were specifically designed to reach identified enemy groups.

Many standard messages were also developed—such as the "Wandering Soul" recording—and broadcast day and night in an effort to insure the enemy was constantly aware of his sorry plight and the opportunity he had to return to a useful and healthful way of living.

A few examples of events that have taken place in the Big Red One during the 1969 will best illustrate the effectiveness of the G5 PSYOP program. A continuing tactical and PSYOP campaign had against both the local force and main been conducted in the Trapezoid force units. These operations lasted for three weeks. Finally a face to

face appeal by a Kit Carson Scout to the party chapter leader was conducted. The communist leader in turn, called his six men together and told them he was afraid of death, that he wanted to live in peace and felt that the Communist cause was lost. These reasons were the same themes that had been broadcast by helicopter to these men during the preceding three months. All seven men rallied to the Government side.

Another typical example involves the exploitation of a Hoi Chanh that paid big dividends in September of last year. A special tape made by this Hoi Chanh was broadcast over his former basecamp area. The next day four Communists rallied. Under interrogation later, it was revealed that one of the four was a brother of the first Hoi Chanh, that he had recognized the voice and talked a third brother, a brother-in-law and two friends into rallying. Two of these individuals made tapes that were also broadcast and six more Hoi Chanh came in who stated they rallied because they had heard the recording and believed it.

Perhaps one of the most successful single incidents resulting from the PSYOP program took place in late December when a total of 55 Communists or Communist supporters turned themselves over to 1st Infantry Division troops in two consecutive days of rallying. The Hoi Chanh came to Forward Attack Base Minnesota in two groups that made up seven farming families. They told authorities at Minnesota that they were tired of supplying food to the VC and that they were mistreated whenever they couldn't give the Communists enough.

Earlier that same week nine members of a local Communist infrastructure took advantage of G5 surrender flags by rallying to a 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry convoy. The Hoi Chanh were found along Highway 14 near the village of Ben Chau waving the flags. Wrapped in a plastic bag, the flags were complete with instructions for their use (printed in Vietnamese) and a map showing where to go to rally.

All of these programs combined with an obviously successful military effort, Dong Tien, pacification, Vietnamization and a great deal of individual work on the part of many Big Red One soldiers has turned a former Communist stronghold into one of the most secure rural areas in all of Vietnam.



1st and 2d Bns  
28th Infantry



1st Bn  
26th Infantry



1st and 2d Bns  
18th Infantry



1st Bn 16th Inf (Mech)  
and 2d Bn 16th Inf



1st Bn 2nd Inf and  
2d Bn (Mech), 2d Inf



1st Engineer Bn



1st Aviation Bn



121st Signal Bn



1st Sq 4th Cavalry



1st Bn 5th Arty



1st Bn 7th Arty



2d Bn 33d Arty



8th Bn 6th Arty

# THE BIG RED ONE PATCH



## THE BIG RED ONE PATCH

Two legends have emerged in answer to the question, "how did the Big Red One patch originate?" The first story has it that during World War I, Division supply trucks were of English manufacture so drivers painted a huge figure "1" on each truck to distinguish their vehicles from those of the Allies. Later, Division engineers carried the measure a step further by sewing a red patch on their sleeves on which was placed the number "1".

The second more-often-quoted tale involves a general and a lieutenant. According to this version, during the build-up and training days of 1917, a general officer decided that the Division needed a suitable shoulder insignia. He proceeded to cut a crude numeral "1" from a ragged suit of his red flannel underwear. He then sewed the number on his uniform sleeve. When a brash young lieutenant saw the red numeral, he shouted, "the general's underwear is showing!" The general shouted back, "all right young man, if you're so smart, come up with something better." The lieutenant produced a prototype of today's patch, using a piece of cloth (probably grey) from a captured soldier's uniform as a background on which he placed the red "1".

In October, 1918, the patch as it is known now, a red "1" on a solid olive background, was officially approved for wear by members of the Division. In Vietnam, where new camouflage measures have forced some other units into revamping their insignia, the Big Red One patch remains unaltered on the left shoulder of each man's uniform. Proudly worn, the patch symbolizes the tradition binding present members of the "Fighting First" with those who wore the Big Red One in World Wars I and II.



701st Maint Bn



1st S and T Bn



1st Medical Bn



1st MP Company



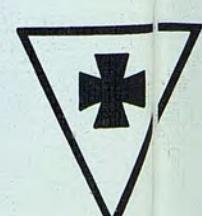
Hqs and Hqs Co  
1st Admin Company



1st Brigade



2d Brigade



3d Brigade



Division Artillery



Support Command

## R&R SITES

### FOR EVERYONE

Special care was taken in the Big Red One to see that each soldier received at least one R&R during his 12 month tour in Vietnam. Because of the well known fact that a rested man performs the job best, Big Red One troops had the opportunity to visit such places as Hong Kong, Hawaii, Australia, Tokyo, Taipei, Bangkok or Manila.

While each soldier was authorized one out-of-country R&R and one seven day leave, personal achievement would often win a man a three-day pass (in country R&R) to Vung Tau, a beach resort about 40 miles southeast of Saigon.

Most sought after among the R&R cities were Honolulu and Sydney.

In Hawaii Big Red One soldiers could visit with their families economically while enjoying the facilities of one of the world's most beautiful resorts. Honolulu, the state capital, said to be the "crossroads of the Pacific" offered the soldier every activity he desired, from bikini-watching on sunny beaches to a zestful and colorful nightlife that included Hawaiian Luau's and top name entertainment.

Big Red One Staff Sergeant Lester R. Hudson and his wife Mary were

special guests in Honolulu during April of 1969. He was the one-millionth serviceman to depart Vietnam for R&R. Their picture appears on page 37 with Juile Naito at Honolulu's Queen Surf.

Sydney was also a popular R&R site for Big Red One soldiers. A metropolis of almost three million people, it has 32 beaches, a moderate climate, skiing facilities and plenty of hospitality. Everything "Yank" is in vogue in the "land down under."

Tokyo, the world's largest city, was also visited by many 1st Division troopers. The "Land of the Rising Sun" offered fun and excitement along with some of the world's best shopping bargains. Reasonable buys on cameras and electronics were found all over Tokyo, especially on the world famous Ginza Street.

Among the interesting places visited by Big Red One soldiers were the Meiji Shrine, Mt. Fuji, the Imperial Palace and the Tokyo tower. Night life thrives in several of the city's districts including Akasaka, Shinjuku and Roppongi where the soldiers were delighted by the beautiful Japanese hostesses who entertained at most of the cabarets.





Staff Sergeant Lester R. Hudson was the one millionth serviceman to depart Vietnam for R+R. He is shown here with his wife Mary and Julie Naito at Honolulu's Queen Surf.



Chris Noel, star of the American Forces Vietnam (AFVN) Radio Show "A Date With Chris," was officially adopted as the Big Red One Sweetheart in 1967.



## Entertaining The BRO

The entertainment of military forces is not an altogether new event but in Vietnam that practise most probably was perfected. Live entertainment was in great demand by 1st Infantry Division troopers and a great variety of groups visited at Di An, Lai Khe, Dau Tien and many of the fire support bases.

Vocalists, combos and a blend of the two have appeared before Big Red One troops frequently. Allied nations such as Korea, Australia and the Phillipines have sent many groups to the 1st Division.

Girls have been an indispensable ingredient in the success of these shows and Big Red One troops have had the opportunity to see some of the biggest names in show business. The Bob Hope Christmas Show in 1965 featured Carroll Baker and Jill St. John and in 1967 Hope brought along beautiful Raquel Welch and the dynamic Barbara McNair. The Hope Show visited Lai Khe again

in 1969 and featured actress-singer Connie Stevens, temptuous Teresa Graves and the Goldiggers.

Other special shows also stopped to visit the Big Red One and some of the stars included, Anne-Margret, Nancy Sinatra, Joy Wilkerson, Edgar Bergen, Joy Heatherton, Connie Francis and Elaine Dunn.

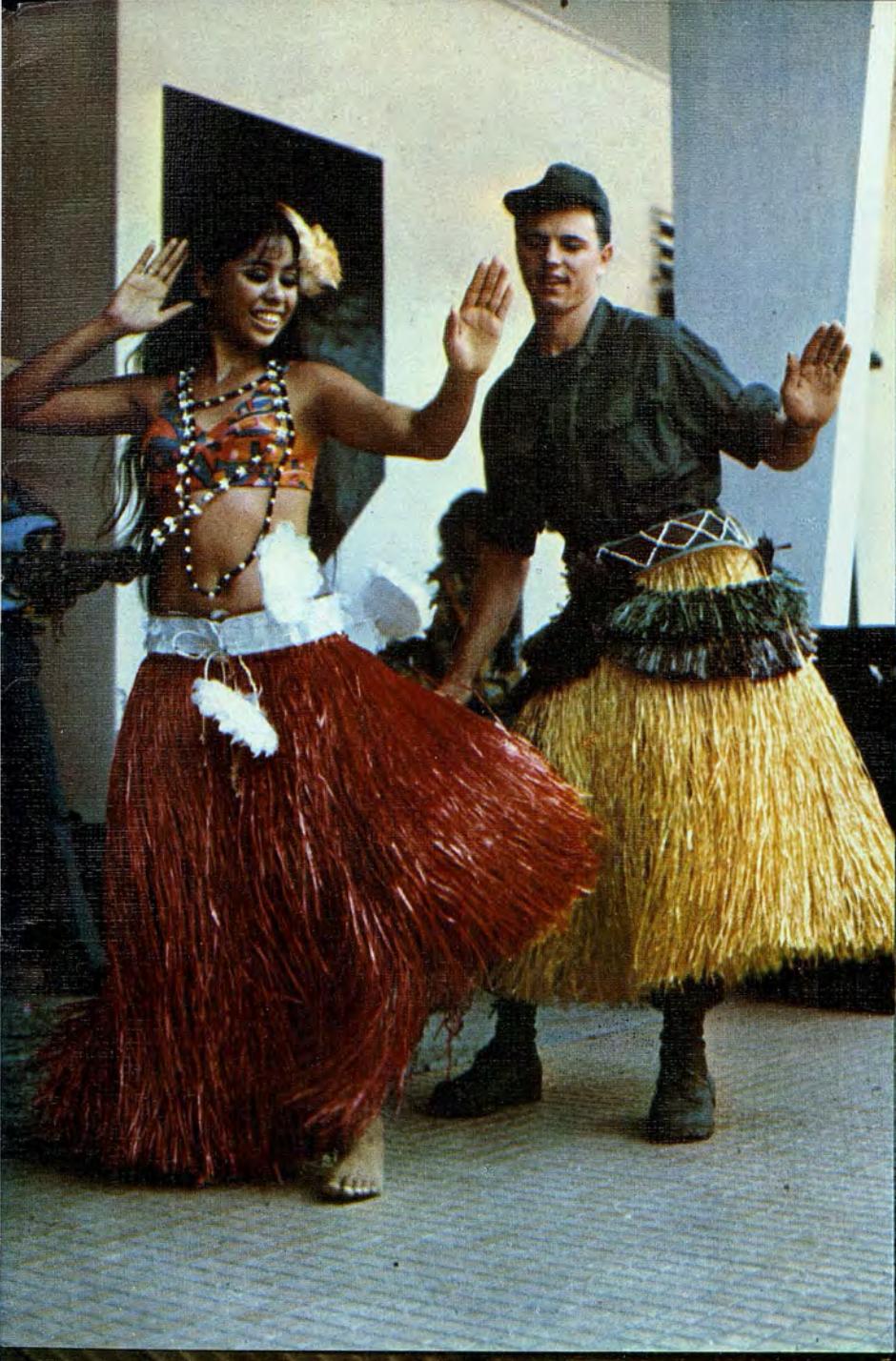
Through the Special Services' "hand shakes tours" many soldiers have been able to chat informally with show business celebrities including Henry Fonda, Arthur Godfrey, Glenn Ford, Arthur O'Connell and Raymond Burr.

Chris Noel, star of the American Forces Vietnam (AFVN) Radio Show, "A Date With Chris" was officially adopted as the Big Red One sweetheart.

During her 1967 visit to Vietnam, Chris stopped at Lai Khe and was escorted to several fire support bases by then Big Red One Commander, Major General William E. Depuy.







## Sergeant Donald R. Long

Sergeant Donald R. Long, Blackfork, Ohio, was on a reconnaissance mission, on June 30, 1966, with Troops B and C, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry, when the troops were attacked by a Viet Cong regiment. Sergeant Long abandoned the relative safety of his armored personnel carrier and braved a withering hail of enemy fire to carry wounded men to evacuation helicopters. Sergeant Long repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire at point blank range to provide the needed supplies. As he was handing weapons to the less seriously wounded and reorganizing them to press the attack, an enemy grenade was hurled onto the carrier deck. Realizing that the other crewmen would be exposed to the deadly explosion, he threw himself over the grenade to absorb the blast and thereby saved the lives of eight of his comrades at the expense of his own life.

## Sergeant Matthew Leonard

Platoon Sergeant Matthew Leonard, Birmingham, Ala., distinguished himself during a combat operation with Company B, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, near Suoi Da, on February 28, 1967. His platoon was suddenly attacked by a large enemy force employing small arms, automatic weapons and hand grenades. Although the platoon leader and several other key leaders were wounded, Sergeant Leonard quickly organized a defensive perimeter, redistributed ammunition and inspired his comrades. While dragging a wounded companion to safety he was struck by a sniper's bullet which shattered his left hand, but refused medical attention and continued to fight. Under the cover of the main attack, the enemy moved a machinegun into a location where it could sweep the entire perimeter. Sergeant Leonard rose to his feet, charged the enemy, gun, and destroyed the hostile crew despite being hit several times by enemy fire. He moved to a tree, propped himself against it, and continued to engage the enemy until he succumbed to his many wounds.

## Sergeant James W. Robinson

On April 11, 1966, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry was engaged in fierce combat with a Viet Cong battalion. Despite the heavy fire, Sergeant James W. Robinson, Jr., Lyons, Ill., moved among the men of his fire team, instructing and inspiring them, and placing them in advantageous positions. In the action that followed he eliminated an enemy sniper and saved the lives of three of his wounded comrades by administering first aid. In so doing he was wounded in the shoulder and leg. While patching his own wounds, he spotted an enemy machinegun which had inflicted a number of casualties on the American force. His rifle ammunition expended, he seized two grenades and, in an act of unsurpassed heroism, charged toward the entrenched enemy weapon. Hit again in the leg Sergeant Robinson staggered indomitably through the enemy fire, now concentrated solely on him, to within grenade range of the enemy machinegun position. Sustaining two additional chest wounds, he marshalled his fleeting physical strength and hurled the two grenades thus destroying the enemy gun position as he fell dead upon the battlefield.

# The Medal of Honor



## 2LT Harold B. Durham

Second Lieutenant Harold B. Durham, Jr., Orlando, Fla., was assigned to Battery C, 6th Battalion, 15th Artillery and serving as a forward observer with Company D, 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry, on October 17, 1968, when the company came in contact with the 271st VC Regiment 60 miles north of Saigon. During the battle he adjusted supporting artillery fire onto the insurgents, administered emergency first aid to the wounded and used his individual weapon in support of the hard-pressed infantrymen. While Lieutenant Durham was moving to replace the wounded forward observer from Company A, the enemy detonated an anti-personnel mine, severely wounding him in the head and impairing his vision. As the enemy pressed their attack, he called for supporting fire to be placed almost directly on his position, thus driving the enemy back. He refused to seek cover and instead positioned himself in a small clearing and continued to call artillery fire onto the enemy. Suddenly, he was severely wounded a second time by enemy machinegun fire. As he lay on the ground near death, he saw two Viet Cong approaching, shooting the defenseless wounded men around him. With his last effort, he shouted a warning to a nearby soldier who immediately killed the insurgents. Lieutenant Durham died moments later, still grasping the radio handset.

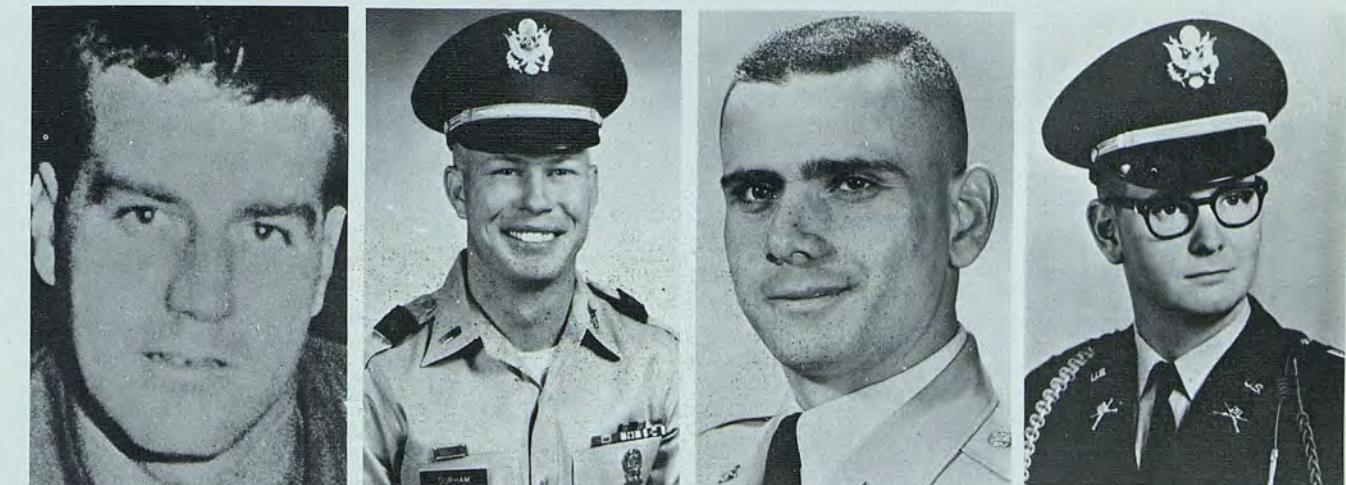
## Captain Euripides Rubio

On November 8, 1966, Captain Euripides Rubio, Jr., was serving as Communications Officer, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry in Tay Ninh Province, when a numerically superior enemy force launched a massive attack against the battalion defense position. Leaving the relative safety of his post, Captain Rubio received two serious wounds as he braved enemy fire to go to the area of most intense action where he distributed ammunition, reestablished positions and rendered aid to the wounded. After being wounded a third time and aiding the evacuation of wounded personnel, Captain Rubio noted that a smoke grenade which was intended to mark the Viet Cong position for air strikes had fallen dangerously close to the friendly lines. He ran to reposition the grenade but was immediately struck to his knees by enemy fire. Captain Rubio scooped up the grenade, ran through the deadly hail of fire to within 20 meters of the enemy position and hurled the already smoking grenade into the midst of the enemy before he fell for the final time. Using the grenade as a marker, friendly air strikes were directed to destroy the hostile positions.



Sergeant Long

Sergeant Leonard



Sergeant Robinson

Lieutenant Durham

Captain Rubio

Lieutenant Hibbs

## 2LT Robert J. Hibbs

Second Lieutenant Robert J. Hibbs, Cedar Falls, Iowa, was in command of a 15-man ambush patrol of the 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry when his unit observed a company of Viet Cong advancing along the road toward the 2nd Battalion's positions. After informing his command post by radio of the impending attack, he prepared his men for the oncoming Viet Cong. While leading his men toward the Battalion perimeter they encountered the rear elements of another Viet Cong element. He directed a charge against the Viet Cong which carried the patrol through the insurging force completely disrupting its attack. Learning that a wounded patrol member was wandering in the area between the two opposing forces, he and a sergeant went back to the battlefield to recover the stricken man. After they maneuvered through the withering fire of two Viet Cong machineguns and had dragged the wounded soldier to safety, Lieutenant Hibbs armed with only an M-16 rifle and a pistol charged the two machine gun emplacements and was struck down. Before succumbing to his mortal wounds, he destroyed the starlight telescopic sight attached to his rifle to prevent its capture and use by the Viet Cong.

## SP4 Robert F. Stryker

Specialist 4 Robert F. Stryker, Elbridge, N.Y., was serving with Company C, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, on November 7, 1967. Specialist Stryker was serving as a grenadier in a multi-company reconnaissance in force near Loc Ninh, when his unit was suddenly met with a hail of rocket, automatic weapons and small arms fire from enemy forces. Reacting quickly, Specialist Stryker fired into the enemy positions with his grenade launcher. During the devastating exchange of fire, Specialist Stryker detected enemy elements attempting to encircle his company and isolate it from the main body of the friendly force. Undaunted by the enemy machine gun and small arms fire, Specialist Stryker repeatedly fired grenades into the trees, killing enemy snipers and enabling his comrades to sever the attempted encirclement. As the battle continued, Specialist Stryker observed several wounded members of his squad in the killing zone of an enemy claymore mine. With complete disregard for his own safety, he threw himself upon the mine as it detonated. He was mortally wounded as his body absorbed the blast and shielded his comrades from the explosion. His unselfish actions were responsible for saving the lives of at least six of his fellow soldiers.



***“The best damn division in any army.”***

—General John J. Pershing, commander of  
US forces in France, World War I

***“The Commander in Chief has noted in this division a special pride of service and a high state of morale, never broken by hardship nor battle.”***

—General Pershing

***“I always thank God for the First Division. This was their fourth amphibious invasion. Any inexperienced division might not have made it that day.”***

—General of the Army (then Lieutenant General) Omar N. Bradley, commander of US forces during Normandy Invasion

***“You have shown the enemy that he cannot win in the invasion and that we will fight hard to give South Vietnam a chance to survive as a free nation.”***

—General William C. Westmoreland,  
Chief of Staff of the Army

***“This is the best Division of US Forces.”***

—Captured NVA document

