

Army Honoring Its Top Aviators of Year

565 Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Winners of Army aviation's top awards of the year will receive their laurels from Pentagon officials Friday at the annual honors luncheon of the Army Aviation Association of America here. They are:

— First Air Brigade, Outstanding Unit.

— CWO Jerome R. Daly, Aviator of the Year.

— Spec. 5 Dennis L. Falo, Soldier of the Year.

— Capt. Gary F. Ramage, Safety Officer of the Year.

Army Chief of Staff General Harold K. Johnson presented the unit award, a silver trophy, to Major Gen. George P. Senefl former commanding general of the brigade, and Sgt. Maj. Douglas W. Sims of the brigade now in Vietnam. Senefl is now in with

U.S. Army, Europe.

The 16,000-man brigade was honored for its part in convincingly demonstrating the effectiveness and unique capability of Army aviation in support of the combat soldier from April 1, 1966 to March 31, 1967.

Flying almost 2 million sorties throughout South Vietnam, the unit lifted more than 3.5 million troops and passengers, accounted for 8,400 Viet Cong killed, and destroyed nearly 4,000 enemy sampans and 4,300 enemy structures.

Almost three-fifths of the Army's aircraft in Vietnam are in the brigade's widely scattered units in support of U.S. and allied forces. During the first six months of the year, brigade pilots flew more than 1.25 million sorties.

For this performance the brigade has also been awarded four Meritorious Unit Commendations, two Valorous Unit Awards and one Presidential Unit Citation.

Daly, the Army's most decorated warrant officer, received the Aviator of the Year award from Undersecretary of the Army David E. McGiffert.

Almost half of Daly's 4,900 flying hours were spent as a gunship pilot in Vietnam.

The warrant officer received the award for making the evacuation of three downed helicopters possible on March 26. Daly made 12 passes between the aircraft and VC positions to lay a smoke screen to aid in recovery operations.

While doing this he flew less than 100 meters from the VC gun positions and received such intense enemy fire that, al-

though his crew escaped unharmed, his aircraft was beyond repair after the action.

For this Daly was also awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the Army's second highest decoration for valor.

Falo received the Soldier of the Year award from Army Secretary Stanley R. Resor for service as helicopter crew chief with the 2d Brigade, 1st Cav. Div. (Airmobile) in Vietnam.

On Nov. 22, 1966, when his aircraft was forced down in an insecure area, Falo removed the machine gun from the helicopter, moved to the top of a small hill and from this position helped disperse the enemy.

Again on March 21, 1967 the soldier was cited for helping rescue a wounded company commander while under enemy fire.

James H. McClellan Safety Award-winner Ramage is a former safety officer for the 228th Assault Support Helicopter Bn, 1st Cav. Div. (Airmobile). He has served two duty tours in Vietnam.

In the last year Ramage distinguished himself through an aggressive and realistic approach to flight safety, the association said. On one occasion he was among the first to arrive at the scene of a helicopter crash in a hostile area. Ignoring exploding ammunition still in the helicopter and the possibility of an enemy attack, Ramage collected debris to establish a basis for the investigation. A part of the forward rotor blade he collected revealed the cause of the accident and determined the cause of another crash.

'Blind' B57 Hits The Target

PHIAN RANG, Vietnam (OI)

— "We were flying at night and didn't know whether we were upside-down or right-side up," said 1st Lt. Melvin Burns, a B57 Canberra navigator, as he described a night mission over North Vietnam.

Burns, 24, assigned to the 13th Tactical Bombardment Sq., used a compass, mathematical calculations and dead reckoning to guide the B57 to its target after navigational equipment failed and the main attitude indicator malfunctioned.

A veteran of 104 combat missions in Vietnam, the young officer managed to rendezvous with two other B57s of the squadron at the scene of the target, 85 miles north of the Demilitarized Zone, and "I've never seen as many lights on the highway as on that particular night."

The trio of bombers made a series of passes which resulted in the destruction of eight trucks, eight secondary explosions and eight billowing fires. The lieutenant identified two of the blazes as large fuel fires, marked by black smoke clearly visible at 1,500 feet.

"We saw at least 20 to 30 pairs of lights," said Burns as he recalled the start of the bomber assault on the trucks, which were right along a mountain pass. The B57 crews divided up their target, and Burns noted six secondary explosions on the first bomb run.

He estimated 40 rounds of anti-aircraft fire came up at the B57s, and added that on a previous night mission 200 rounds of fire greeted his aircraft in North Vietnam.



Troopers Hit the Beach

First Air Cav. Div. troopers hit the beach along the South China Seacoast of Vietnam amid a swirl of sand sent blowing by the helicopters that landed them during Operation Pershing. (USA)

Sea Rescue Interrupts R&R

DA NANG, Vietnam (OI) — Three airmen assigned to Detachment 10, 366th Combat Support Group, at Da Nang Air Base saved a Marine from drowning at the nearby China Beach R&R center.

Airman 2.C. Gary W. Dansberger, 21, of Baltimore; Richard S. Tarr, 22, of Tucson, Ariz., and John Deneka, 20, of Minneapolis, were at the beach enjoying a day off from their duties at Detachment 10.

The water was rough, with 5-foot waves, and the undertow was strong. The three airmen were in shallow water near the shore when they spotted a man in trouble. It was a Marine, suffering a cramp.

"He looked like he was about half-a-mile out," Tarr said. Tarr and Dansberger swam out to pull the man in. Another Marine joined them. The three swam toward the beach, towing the stricken Marine in relays

against the rough ocean.

Deneka was in the water closer to the shore. "Tarr yelled that he was getting too tired to pull him any farther," he said, "so I went out and brought him the rest of the way in."

When Deneka pulled the man ashore, medics took over, performed first aid and rushed the swimmer to the hospital. The airmen flopped to the sand, worn out from their half-hour battle with the waves.

They're Up On Their Job

DAU TIENG, Vietnam (IO) — Getting to work in the morning—ranging by range—is a routine for the "Tower Rats" of the 2nd Bn., 77th Arty.

Other units in the tower system include elements of the 1st Bn., 27th Arty., 2nd Bn., 12th Inf., 2nd Pn. (Mech), 22nd Inf., 3rd Bn., 22nd Inf., and the 25th Div. Support Command (DIS-COM).

Teams of six men, all volunteers, are assigned to a 24 hour duty on one of the three observation towers at the Dau Tieng base camp of the 3rd Brigade, 23rd Inf. Div.

Observers who man posts within the tower system are required to have an extensive knowledge of use of the M2 aiming circle. When centered on a suspected mortar position, an azimuth of fire can be determined from it and called in to the fire direction center.

The Dau Tieng "tower rats" must also know radio-telephone-operator procedures and must be able to successfully direct and adjust artillery fire to any area.

Each morning Spec. 4 Paul Crompton of Kansas City, Mo., Spec. 4 Wayne Soprych of Chicago, and Spec. 4 Chuck Wells of Chattanooga, Tenn., take their posts 80 feet above ground.

Asked his feelings on the daily climb to work, Wells said: "Getting up is only half the work. When I started this assignment, I felt better going down again. I like my feet on the ground."

Names His Son After U.S. Cutter

WASHINGTON (PIO)—An unusual honor has been bestowed upon the Coast Guard cutter Point Hudson and her crew by her Vietnamese liaison petty officer.

The honor was the naming of his newborn son after the cutter—Le Hudson.

Little Le Hudson is the sixth child of Vietnamese Gunner's Mate 1.C. Le Chung who has been serving on the Point Hudson as interpreter and liaison petty officer for more than a year.

The 82-foot cutter operates out of Cat Lo, home of Div. 13, 45 miles Southwest of Saigon.

Seabees Help Viets Help Themselves

DA NANG, Vietnam (PAO)—A compact unit of 13 men is working to assist engineering problems of the South Vietnamese.

These men form Seabee Team 0701 and are selected from the different skills in Naval Construction Bn. 7.

Deployed near Nha Trang, Team 0701 is building a bridge with the help of volunteer trainees from the Phu Cat village

and supplies from the various forces in the Nha Trang area.

Training the villagers is Builder 1.C. Charles Donovan. His trainees have dug and formed the bridge foundations, freeing other team members for work on other projects.

Country roads are bad all over Vietnam and Equipment Operator 2.C. Ronald Christensen and Equipment Operator 1.C. Karl Wise have logged many hours in the Austin-Western grader on the back roads near Dien Khanh.

Involved in an active MED-CAP program in conjunction with CIDG medics from neighboring Camp Trung Dung is Hospital Corpsman 2.C. Woodrow Sullivan. During the past month they have treated over 1,000 patients in hamlets throughout Dien Khanh district.

In addition, Sullivan has assisted Special Forces medics with the night time treatment of wounded Vietnamese soldiers.

Team 0701's front yard was

used for an emergency landing zone by helicopters performing medical evacuations. The improvised landing field was illuminated with security floodlights.

The reaction of the Vietnamese people to the assistance is proven daily by the friendly greetings which the Seabees receive as they meet Vietnamese trainees. The men often are presented with gifts of food and beverages.