

JUNE
1968

"DUST OFF"
50TH MEDICAL DETACHMENT (HEL AMB)
APO SAN FRANCISCO 96303

Commanding Officer: Major Ronald C. Jones

First Sergeant: SFC James T. Ratliff

Monthly News Letter

1 July 1968

"Everyone should travel—if only to get himself acquainted with the comforts of home."

"Courage doesn't consist in feeling no fear, but in conquering fear"

NEWS

On 1 July 1968, the 50th Medical Detachment (Hel Amb) was separated from the 44th Medical Brigade under Brig. Gen. Glenn J. Collins, Commanding General, and became part of the well known 101st Airborne Division under Major General O.M. Barsanti, Commanding General. With the 101st Airborne Division changing over to an Airmobile Division, the famed 50th Med Det (Hel Amb) has been selected to become the organic medical evacuation capability for this new airmobile division. "Small but Mighty."

With Major Ronald C. Jones, Commanding Officer, 50th Med Det (Hel Amb) returning to the states during the month of July at the completion of his second tour of Vietnam duty, the men of this unit want to take this opportunity to express our appreciation and gratitude to you for the outstanding leadership and devotion to duty which you have given us. You have demonstrated this outstanding leadership in every phase of Command. On the battlefield we have seen your magnificent display of courage while performing our units mission. In garrison you have inspired and directed our efforts by your own example. Major Jones, your men think you are tops. May success continue with you in your future assignments.

We welcome Major Robert R. Cloke, our new Commanding Officer who arrived in country the last of June. We give you our full support.

ADDITIONS

This month has brought us Private Anthony T. Burdo, medical aidman, who came to us from the 36th Evacuation Hospital, Vung Tau. Our new arrivals from the states were:

W1 Michael L McKenna—Aviator

W1 Max E. Tucker—Aviator

SP4 Michael P. McLane—Helicopter Mechanic

Two new aircraft commanders took their place in the left seat. Dust Off 97, W1 Loren P. Skarie and Dust Off 98, Captain Charles E. Lewis were given these call signs after successfully completing their aircraft commander check rides. Congratulations Gentlemen!

Colonel Norman J. Coles departed Vietnam during the month after completing his tour. Colonel Wallace R. LeBourdais assumed Command of the 67th Medical Group shortly after Colonel Coles departure.

VIPS

Colonel Norman J. Cole was given the red carpet treatment while making his final farewell visit of the medical facilities which were under his command in the northern I Corps area, prior to his departure for the States. His transportation was provided by the very best unit—"Good Ole" 50th Med Det (Hel Amb).

The new 44th Medical Brigade Deputy Commander, Colonel Fillbury and the S-3, 44th Medical Brigade, Colonel Waterfield were privileged to tour I Corps in our VIP ship.

The newly assigned Commanding Officer, 67th Medical Group, Colonel Wallace R. LeBourdais, flew his maiden trip of the northern I Corps area medical facilities with our gracious VIP crew and ship. He could not find enough words of praise for the outstanding accomplishments achieved by the men of this unit in only a thirty day period.

AWARDS

The following individuals were decorated by Major Ronald C. Jones, Commanding Officer, during the monthly awards ceremony.

The Soldiers Medal was awarded to Specialist Five George L. Sterns, who distinguished himself by valorous actions on 27 December 1967, while conducting a rescue mission near Guy Hoa, Republic of Vietnam. Specialist Five Sterns volunteered to be lowered on the hoist penetrator into a mine field in order to extract a Vietnamese woman who had detonated a mine. He was positioned over the body with pinpoint accuracy and cautiously maneuvered his arms under the patient despite the danger of detonating other mines. He then raised the woman into his arms with one concentrated movement and both were lifted into the hovering helicopter. While enroute to the nearest hospital, he stopped the bleeding and treated the patient for shock.

The Air Medal with "V" device was awarded to Chief Warrant Officer Frederick C. Whitney, who distinguished himself by exceptionally valorous actions on 24 October 1967 while serving as pilot engaged in airmobile evacuations near Lai Khe, Republic of Vietnam. An urgent request for a hoist extraction was received from a reported massacre area. Bringing his aircraft to a hover, the forest penetrator was lowered to the ground. On the ground troops strapped the wounded soldier onto the penetrator, the aircraft became the recipient of intense enemy fire. Two explosions physically shook the aircraft and a round struck the hoist mechanism leaving it inoperative. Ignoring the personal danger that the enemy fire posed, he remained in the area until the patient was secured. Disregarding the onrushing fire which crippled his aircraft he slowly and skillfully departed the area successfully completing the mission.

The Basic Air Medal for meritorious achievement while participation in sustained aerial flight over hostile territory were awarded to:

Staff Sergeant Allen C. Williams—Basic Air Medal

SP5 Curtis L. Dierdorff—Basic Air Medal

SP4 David L. Woods—Basic Air Medal

Clusters to the Air Medal for meritorious achievement in repeated aerial flights over hostile territory were awarded to:

CW2 Fredrick C. Whitney—8th and 9th Oak Leaf Clusters

SFC James T. Ratliff—1st and 2nd Oak Leaf Clusters

SP5 Thomas J. Kelly—13th thru 20th Oak Leaf Clusters

SP4 Patriamor Aguilana—1st thru 3rd Oak Leaf Clusters

SP4 Roger W. Goodwin—1st thru 3rd Oak Leaf Clusters

Our first Purple Heart was awarded to SP4 Roger W. Goodwin for wounds sustained in action on 18 May 1968.

Sgt Curtis L. McDermott and SP4 William J. Cosby were awarded the USAFV Certificate of Achievement for displaying singular perseverance, fidelity and professional competence while rendering meritorious service in support of the counterinsurgency effort in the Republic of Vietnam.

PROMOTION

The unit had one promotion this month. Private Anthony T. Burdo became Private First Class Burdo in an impressive ceremony held in the new orderly room.

MISSION

The unit performed the following mission during June:

		Patients Evacuated	
US	<u>FREE WORLD FORCES</u>	<u>ARVN</u>	<u>OTHER (CIVILIAN AND POW)</u>
538	54	122	129

Total patients evacuated during month:	843
Day flying time:	292
Night flying:	55
Total hours:	347
Aircraft availability:	74%
Hoist missions:	26
Average aviator time:	48hrs

CLOSING REMARKS

Major Jones has received many warm and thoughtful letters from the many loved ones back home. Many of the wives and families have written expressing their appreciation for the News Letter and other correspondence which has come from the commandors office. He has asked me to express his appreciation to you all for these letters. It has been an honor for him to have served with your husbands and sons. God bless you all.

Now it comes time for me to likewise say goodbye for awhile. My tour is coming to a close in mid-July, and I am looking forward to the reunion with my loved ones. I have a deep respect for the men in this unit and the outstanding job which each has done. I thank you all, gentlemen, for your support, trust, and team effort while performing our mission in the spirit of DUST OFF, (Dedicated Unhesitating Service To Our Fighting Forces).

"Friendship is the only cement that will hold the world together."

FOR THE COMMANDER:

Peter M. Hansen
PETER M. HANSEN
CPT, MSC
Public Information Officer