

WELCOME WAGONS—Paratroopers of Company C, 1st/503rd, coffee at American Red Cross stands after returning to Bien H

Sept 3, 1966

Milestone Passed In Vietnamese Aviation History

CAN THO, (1st AVN-IO) — A ceremony in this Mekong Delta capital today marked a milestone in Vietnamese aviation history. For the first time a group of Vietnamese Air Force pilots have begun training in U.S. Army Aviation tactics in Vietnam. Their classrooms are the rugged UH-1D Hueys of the 1st Aviation Brigade's famed 13th Combat Aviation Battalion.

Brigadier General G. P. Seneff, Jr., CG of the 13th's parent 1st Aviation Brigade, presided over the ceremony at which the Vietnamese pilots, members of the 211th and 217th CH-34 Squadron, VNAF, were introduced to Col. Jack Dempsey, Commander of the 13th Battalion, and to their new instructors. Half of the group will train with the 121st Assault Helicopter Company at Vinh Long, while the remainder train with A Company of the 502nd Aviation Battalion at Soc Trang.

The program of instruction will consist of missions flown by the airlift platoons of the Assault Helicopter Companies, from resupply flights to combat missions. They will also receive an orientation on armed helicopter operations. All of the VNAF pilots have received basic aviation training with the U.S. Army, and all are qualified in the VNAF's H-34 Choctaw chopper. Similar training sessions will get underway later in the month, as additional classes report to units of the 1st Brigade's 12th Combat Aviation Group.

Big Red One MPs

ARVN-US Troops Team Up— Give Charlie A Tough Lesson

BIEN HOA, (III CORPS-10)—A three-vehicle convoy carrying the commander of the Vietnamese 48th Regiment and his assistant American advisor was ambushed recently about six miles south of Phu My.

Thirty-five Viet Cong were killed in the ensuing battle, which saw the 14-man detachment of Vietnamese and one American battle their way out of an encirclement of two companies of Viet Cong.

The action started when ARVN Lieutenant Colonel Du, the regimental commander, pulled his convoy off to the side of the road to co-ordinate air support with his American advisor, Captain James A. Smith. The regiment

was on a road-clearing operation in Phuoc Tuy Province, securing Highway 13 for a Vietnamese ammunition convoy.

As the Vietnamese soldiers accompanying Colonel Du and Captain Smith moved into a perimeter defense position, they immediately contacted and killed two enemy soldiers.

Captain Smith called for a fire team and one arrived over the area. Minutes later, the chopper was hit and one of the crew injured, and the team had to return to its home base.

"Ten minutes later, while we were still under heavy fire, all hell broke loose," Smith said. "One company of VC moved in front of our position and one com-

pany moved to our south. They had us surrounded, with automatic weapons, 75 and 57mm recoilless rifle, 60mm mortar and small arms fire coming from both sides of the road."

Another fire team was minutes away and it was called. As it arrived overhead, Smith directed the chopper's fire in a circle around their concealed positions in some brush to the side of the road.

"We lay there, not daring to move or speak for about 15 minutes," Du said. "We could hear the VC hitting our jeeps on the road less than ten meters from us."

The colonel looked for a weak point in the enemy position and found one to the northeast. He and his escort troops, along with Smith, battled for 20 minutes to break through that portion of the encirclement. It was in this fighting that the enemy inflicted heaviest casualties.

Meanwhile, a Vietnamese Air Force air strike moved in and began blasting enemy positions, followed closely by a U.S. Air Force strike and backed up by fire teams of armed helicopters.

"Air power saved the day for us," Captain Smith commented. "I doubt if I'd be sitting here telling about it if it hadn't been for the air cover we got. It was outstanding."

After they had broken through

the surrounding force, Du spotted three VC carrying mine wire attached to an anti-personnel mine near the trail they were moving along. "I guess they thought I was a VC," the colonel said, smiling. "I gunned them down where they stood."

Reaching the road, Colonel Du contacted one of his battalions and had them send a reinforced company to his assistance. They then swept through the area, trapping the fleeing enemy troops and killing a number of them.



ALL ALONE—A lone soldier from the 25th Infantry Division seeks out the enemy in the Ho Bo Woods during a phase of Operation "Kokohead," which the division is currently engaged in.

(Photo by Sp4 James Pardue, 125th SIG-10)

Slow Day

DI AN (1st INF-10) — Flying a routine passenger transport during Operation El Paso II, Maj. Carl A. Wilson interrupted his mission for an emergency evacuation of wounded troops.

Flying a little OH-13 helicopter from Quan Loi to Song Be and back, Wilson, of the 1st Aviation Battalion, 1st Inf. Div. received a call for help in evacuating wounded. He let his passenger off, then proceeded to the scene. The fire fight was still going on, and an air strike was taking place not far away. He evacuated several wounded then led other, larger aircraft to the scene.

Mission accomplished, Wilson calmly returned to Quan Loi and picked up his passenger.



SHOWING THE WAY—U.S. aviator WO Julius L. Berry gives instructions on maintenance of a UH-1B "Huey" helicopter to VNAF aviator Capt. Nguyen Dinh Thap.

The 725th Maintenance Battalion at the 25th's base camp consists of five companies. Headquarters and Company A are the main support units in the battalion. All equipment which cannot be repaired at the forward support companies are brought in to Headquarters and Company A. Companies B and C are the forward support companies. Company E of the 725th is the aircraft maintenance company.

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SUPPORT YOUR RED CROSS

Vietnam Communique

Last Week the central highlands were a main battleground for Army forces. Combat elements accounted for heavy enemy losses in Pleiku Province's highlands during Operation "Paul Revere II." U.S. Strike pilots flew 2968 sorties, damaging or destroying 3582 enemy structures, bunkers, 117 sampans and numerous trenches and fortified positions.

1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile)—Sky Soldier units, participating in Paul Revere II with the 25th Infantry Division, fought an estimated three enemy companies for two hours, 10 miles east of Plei Me Village. One company of the 1st Air Cav suffered heavy casualties. But after reinforcements arrived, 15 enemy were reported killed. Overall friendly casualties were moderate.

1st Infantry Division—Elements of the 3rd Brigade continued actions in Operation "Springfield II," 45 miles north-northeast of Saigon. Ten enemy soldiers were found dead and two others captured. Meanwhile, multi-battalion units of "Big Red One" launched Operation "Cheyenne," a route security mission along Highway 13 in Binh Long and Binh Duong provinces, 60 miles north of Saigon. The operation was completed a day later with one enemy found dead and 17 captured. Friendly casualties were light.

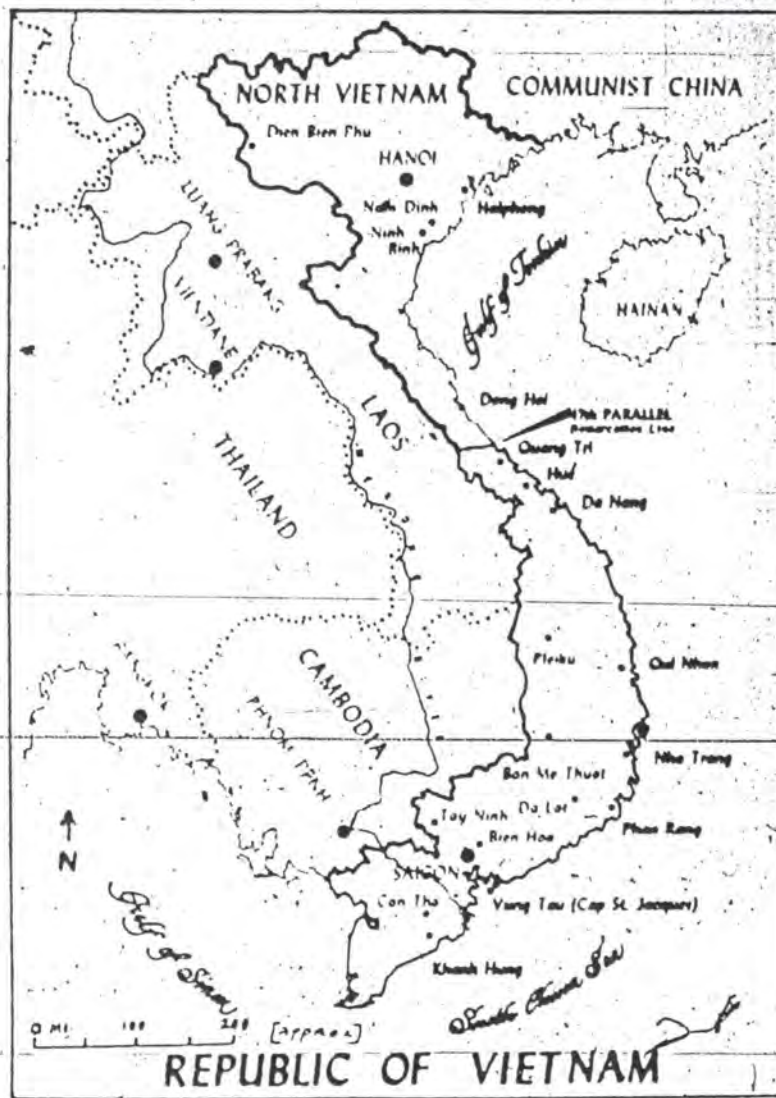
25th Infantry Division—Armor elements of the division launched a counter-attack against enemy battalions 30 miles southwest of Pleiku, and after a six-hour encounter, reported 170 enemy dead. The action brought total enemy losses during Paul Revere II to 385, with 20 others captured. The division's 2nd Brigade terminated Operation "Koko Head" after uncovering

enemy cache containing Viet Cong uniforms 25 miles northwest of Saigon. The operation accounted for 40 enemy dead.

1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division—Units from the brigade and from the Republic of Korea's 2nd Marine Brigade reported 42 enemy

dead, two captured and 35 weapons confiscated after a battle in the Phu Yen Province south of Qui Nhon. The action was part of Operation "John Paul Jones" which began July 21.

173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate)—No major actions reported.



Moment Of Truth Brings Out The Best

By SFC Frank Frost
PLEIKU, (25th INF-10)—In any battle there are many acts of heroism that go unnoticed in the drama of the big action. Many die; many become heroes.

Battle is the moment of truth. The recent Battle of the New Ja Drang involving men of the 2nd Battalion, 25th Infantry, of the 25th Infantry Division's 3rd Brigade Task Force, was no exception.

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