

unloaded a company of troops and climbed sharply back into the sky.

This was a heliborne combat assault — U.S. Army aircraft carrying Vietnamese Army troops to the Viet Cong.

The heliborne assault is nothing new in Vietnam, but each time one is executed, it's a study in precision flying, skillful coordinating and cool-headedness. I saw these helicopter crews in action recently when I spent a day flying with the 13th "Delta" Aviation Battalion.

Based at Can Tho, the 13th Avn. Bn. supports the entire IV Corps area. Major elements of the battalion are based at Soc Trang and Vinh Long. Lieutenant Colonel William Maddox commands the unit.

Our mission for the day was to lift 600 Vietnamese troops of the 9th Regiment to the base of the only mountain range in the Mekong Delta. The troops would sweep the target after an Air

Story & Photos By SSgt. Russ Anderson

Force B-52 bomber raid. Coordination between the ARVN troops and the U.S. troop carriers took place days in advance.

The objective was the Seven Mountains area near Chi Lang Training Center, about 120 miles southwest of Saigon. The Chi Lang center was the staging area for the operation.

Flying with Colonel Maddox, we took off from Can Tho before dawn in the command and control ship—a UH-1B Huey helicopter.

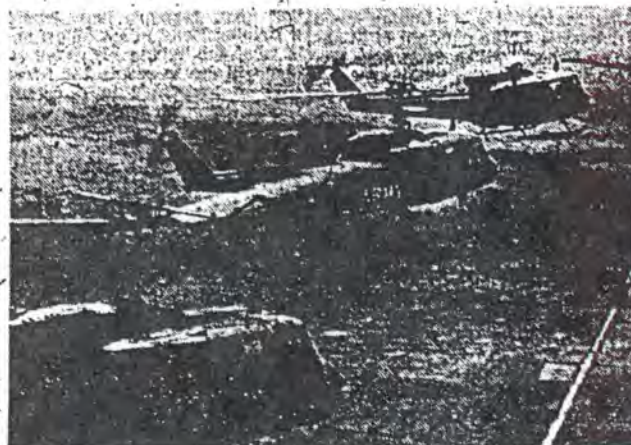
The command ship arrived at the target as the sun was coming up and the B-52 bombs were coming down. A huge fireball lit the sky followed by a geyser of debris. Then the mountain was on fire. It seemed incredible that anyone could have survived. But some did.

After witnessing the bomb run, we landed at Chi Lang where the ARVN troops and their U.S. advisors were making final preparations for the assault. Troop-carrying "slicks"—the UH-1D Huey helicopters—were bringing in more ARVN soldiers.

Other "slick ships" lined both sides of a short airstrip. Some 70 aircraft took part in the assault. The helicopters carry up to 10 ARVN troops.

The heliborne assault came in several waves. On this mission the first wave of troops drew the most fire but only one ARVN soldier was wounded. None were killed.

Arrival of the "slicks" at the landing zone is preceded by U.S. Air Force jet fighters bombing and strafing. Finally Army helicopter gunships come in at



PRECISION FLYING — UH-1D Hueys of the 13th "Delta" Aviation Battalion carry ARVN troops of the 9th Regiment to a mountain range that had been bombed earlier by B-52s. The 13th provided 70 choppers for the lift.
(Photo by USARV-10)

ground level with their rockets and machineguns.

The troop-carrying helicopters remain on the ground for just a few seconds—long enough for the troops to jump out. Then they are back in the air heading to the staging area for another load.

With so many aircraft in the air flying so close, it seems that collisions are inevitable. But it's not so.

Colonel Maddox compares a heliborne assault with the precision of a ballet. "It looks confusing until you're familiar with it," he says.

During the flight to and over the objective, aircraft with different purposes fly at different altitudes.

When a man is wounded, down comes the medevac ship. If a downed helicopter can be repaired, the mechanics are called down with their spare parts. The control ship oversees the entire operation.

The assault on the Seven Mountains was without U.S. casualties or damaged aircraft. The ARVN troops made a day-long sweep over the area, accounted for several Viet Cong bodies and a neutralized Viet Cong stronghold.

The 13th Avn. Bn. averages some 20 of these airborne assaults each month.

VC Fed Up, Call It Quits

CU CHI, (25th INF-10)—Two unidentified Viet Cong have surrendered to the 25th Infantry Division's 2nd Brigade, complaining they were tired of constant artillery bombardment of their area of operations in Hau Nghia Province, 20 miles northwest of Saigon.

The two, who were part of a quartermaster support platoon, walked into the base camp at Cu Chi armed with small arms and a full load of ammunition.

The men explained they were on a resupply mission not far from the brigade's northwest perimeter when heavy artillery from the 1st Battalion, 8th Artillery pelted the area with 105mm howitzers. The barrage killed eight of the defectors' comrades.

Their center of operations had been in a sector that was under regular artillery attack from "Tropic Lightning" firepower and the only way the two guerrillas could escape was to surrender to the Americans. Both men are natives of provinces outside of Hau Nghia.

Second Brigade spokesmen said their captives willingly cooperated in pointing out enemy emplacements in the area.

556th TC Speeds Strategic Supplies

SAIGON (1st LOG-10)—Army trucks of the 556th Transportation Company who traveled sniper-infested highways to deliver more than nine million gallons of fuel in a two-month period, have been commended by Brig. Gen. Charles W. Eifler, commander of the 1st Logistical Command.

General Eifler praised the men for their "exceptional performance" in supplying fuel to the combat units of the 1st Infantry Division. He particularly cited their "vigorous efforts and detailed planning" in speeding fuel to battle elements.

One platoon of the 556th has been loaned to the Saigon port, operated by its parent unit, the 4th Transportation Command, to keep that strategic flow of sup-

BLITZKRIEG'S FLYING gets wilder and wilder . . . 7 Division—reports from Tuy Force FAC flies over in h calling card attached to a "Your Airborne FAC has Blitzkrieg Von Phan (Rang United States Air Force. Jet Parachutist; Playboy; World International Lover . . . W

PACKAGE GAINS WEIGHT Jr. of the 101st received a had been damaged enroute tents. On the contrary, th have added peanuts, candy, Book." The note was signed

GIRLS SEEK CORRESP letter from three sisters, J Lake Oswego, Oregon. Th spectively. After reading in of the heroism and death o Bn., 16th Regt., 1st Inf. respond with soldiers in V Firecrest Court, Lake Osw

NEWS FROM THE ANIM the 936th Veterinary Det python named Long John. tail) Lt. Homer Hamby, P



Henderson and PFC Ron "well behaved," but notice Henderson. The dog's nam

ENGINEERS TRAVEL

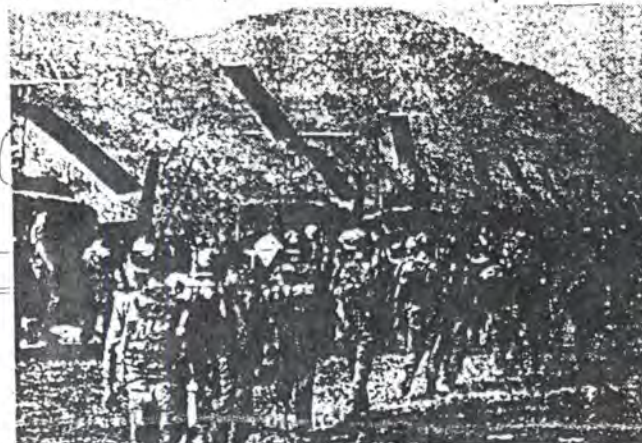
Engineer Battalion reports since arriving in Vietnam neers have constructed r port facilities, heliports, and hardstands from Qui Khe to Vung Tau. An ur the 84th over the one mi Phu Tanh and Qui Nhon.

UNITS RECEIVE MINU panies of the 12th Avia Minuteman Award for a participation in the Savin 56th, 330th and 611th Tr

AND ANOTHER PROI while back, some 1st Infan envelopes from C-ration b Clearwater High School, 17,500 envelopes, 30,000 s ball point pens. The writi division's forward elements

FOUL PLAY IN LAI KH

a 1st Infantry Division u with a sensational news st 16th Inf. Regt. jumped ar mediately shot. The "Wee foot spitting cobra, but c may get shot at if you spit



STAGING AREA — ARVN soldiers load onto troop ships of the 13th Aviation Battalion at Chi Lang training center. About 600 Vietnamese troops took part in

May 12/1966