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Cobra saves downed crew

CU CHI — Under circumstances that sound like the script for an adventure movie, men of D Troop, 3rd Squadron, 4th Cav., 25th Infantry Division, found themselves in a frying pan of fury, but were able to make their way out and at the same time open the door to complete destruction of an enemy base camp.

While investigating indications that enemy were nearby, a light scout team consisting of a light observation helicopter and a Cobra gunship were hovering over a section deep in the Ho Bo Woods.

Suddenly the low flying LOH received fire. The pilot, Capt. Thomas H. Sinclair, and Capt. Wayne A. White, the observer,

were both hit in their right legs. The LOH faltered, hit the ground, and rolled over on its left side.

Immediately, Spec. 5 Charles D. Vierra, crew chief on the LOH, pulled the two wounded men from the downed craft and helped them to safety in a nearby bomb crater. All the while, the men were under enemy small arms fire.

Vierra returned to the aircraft, took out his M60 machine gun and ammo, and set up a 180-degree field of fire facing the enemy.

In the meantime, Sinclair left the crater, found an LZ about 20 yards away, and waved the Cobra in for a landing. The Viet Cong were hollering and rushing

the area, but Vierra kept up the suppressive fire.

After dumping its rockets on the enemy base camp, the Cobra touched down. WO Larry E. Bruce leaped from the Cobra and helped Sinclair unfasten the doors and free the ammunition pods. The ship took three hits while on the ground.

After some confused minutes of shuffling, all of the men reached the gunship. Enemy fire was constant, and Vierra kept the suppressive fire from the machine gun steadily blazing until he ran out of ammunition.

Bruce loaded the men into the gun well of the chopper, which lifted off, leaving the surprised enemy for 2nd Bde., 25th Infantry Division, soldiers.

Joint unit support helps hold district

BINH PHUOC—Recent successful joint operations are bringing increased cooperation between the 2nd Bn., 47th Inf., and Binh Phuoc District officials.

The District Headquarters and Camp Panther, the southernmost U.S. infantry battalion base camp in Vietnam, occupy opposite ends of this village.

"We are engaging in joint operations with the district on several levels: infantry operations, artillery support, intelligence gathering and civic action projects," said Lt. Col. James W. Rowe, the battalion commander of the 3rd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, unit.

In past weeks, the district forces and the American infantrymen have collaborated on airmobile and night patrolling operations which have been effective in keeping enemy activity at a minimum in the area.

"We don't have a set number of joint operations scheduled, but some tactical situations call for U.S. and Vietnamese forces to work together," explained Maj. McKenna Mahoney, the MACV senior advisor to the district.

"Having the district nearby is a great asset. It allows both of us an increased flexibility in our operations because we can call on additional troops for reinforcement and support," said Maj. Geoffrey Templeton, the battalion executive officer.

Indirect fire support is also closely coordinated between the local U.S. and Vietnamese artillery units with both sharing the responsibility for supporting allied ground operations in the area.

Perhaps the most active joint effort has been through pacification programs.

"The aid of the battalion has been invaluable in our efforts to complete the pacification of Binh Phuoc," said Lt. Nguyen Van Giup, who is responsible for picking prime areas for the civic action projects. "By working together we can use all of our resources to do our job more effectively."

"Through this concept of teamwork, we can get the job done," said Mahoney.

Device detects hidden foe

Night action kills 28 NVA



FB BUTTONS—A flash of machine gun fire from the black jungle below began a five-hour air-to-ground battle in which 28 NVA soldiers were killed by air cavalrymen 10 miles northwest of Song Be in the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) area of operations.

Be while tube artillery from FB Buttons and Don pounded the enemy.

"We went back to the area to see if artillery had made any direct hits, but when we came in at tree top level, the NVA opened up on us again," said the mission commander.

Priest brings people closer

PHU HIEP — Army chaplains have long been faced with the problem of running from one chapel to another in order to provide religious services for soldiers.

This situation has been somewhat relieved in the Tuy Hoa area, which includes the 268th Aviation Bn. of the 17th Aviation Group (Combat), thanks to the services of Father Peter Vu Van-Tu Chuong, a Roman Catholic priest from Tuy Hoa.

Father Chuong is originally from Ninh Binh, in the Red River Delta region on the coast, 70 miles south of Hanoi, in North Vietnam.

In 1952, while the French-Viet Minh war was still raging, Father Chuong traveled to Rome to study for the priesthood. After receiving his degree in Divinity, he became an assistant priest in

a Parisian parish. While he was living in Europe, the French were defeated at Dien Bien Phu. The Geneva Accords of 1954 divided the country at the 17th Parallel.

Residents from both the South and North were allowed 300 days to cross the parallel if they so desired. Father Chuong and his family chose to move to the south.

Father Chuong spoke fluent French and Italian when he returned to Vietnam in 1960, and he soon began to pick up English, though he never had the opportunity to study it formally.

Father Chuong would like to return and serve a parish in Ninh Binh, but until that becomes possible, he is serving as a volunteer priest, aiding any bishop who requests him. In 1966, he administered a parish in

Quang Ngai. Then, in July of this year, he came to Tuy Hoa, where he is currently principal of the local Roman Catholic high school.

During the day, Father Chuong teaches English at the school, in addition to his duties at the Tuy Hoa Roman Catholic Church. Sunday nights, he celebrates a mass at the Phu Hiep Army Airfield Chapel for U.S. servicemen.

Father Chuong' voluntary sacrifice of his time in order to see to the spiritual needs of the men stationed in the Phu Hiep area helps to create another bond between the people of our two countries. The Phu Hiep Chapel serves men from the 268th Aviation Bn., Headquarters Company, the 134th Aviation Co., the 180th Aviation Co. and the 355th Aviation Co.



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