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09Jul66-'Dust-Off Rescues Children Hit By Viet Cong Mortars

DI AN, (1st INF-IO)- On a dark rainy night last week Viet Cong mortars struck the village of Long Thanh near the 2nd Brigade Base Camp at Bear Cat.

Special Forces personnel in the area relayed an urgent plea for medical help from the district adviser and minutes later ambulances of Company C, 1st Medical Battalion, were on their way.

Fighting rain and mud the ambulance drivers, PFC Bruce M. Williams and Sp4 Richard Bilmyer, forged their way to the Special Forces area to pick up the casualties.

All five were in critical condition and all were children.

The radio jeep called for a dust-off helicopter to meet them back at the clearing station.

One child was near death, another needed amputation.

At the clearing station, Capt. Donald D. Cofield and Capt. Leonard J. Kut assisted by Capt. G. Ramirez-Schon, made a super human effort to give the emergency treatment while the helicopter, hindered by low ceilings, tried to land.

One child died, but the rest were successfully treated and evacuated to the Seventh Day Adventist Hospital in Saigon.

The father of three of the children, including the one that died rode with the ambulances to the clearing station and stayed with the child to the last.

When he returned to his village the next morning, American soldiers were already starting to rebuild his damaged house.

09Jul66-Pass In Review: Awards and Decorations

Distinguished Flying Cross

WO Thomas E. Bowen

CWO Michael G. Lindell

Capt. James M. Rice

09Jul66-Ox-cart Victim Lifted

Photo caption - MED-EVAC - Miss Cao Thi Thu is transferred from an ambulance to a U.S. Army helicopter for evacuation after being run over by an ox-cart. (Photo by Sp4 Norman Weersing. 1st AVN BDE-IO)

TAY NINH, (1st AVN BDE-IO)

The pilots of a 120th Aviation Company helicopter had been waiting at Tay Ninh airfield to go on a civic action mission to the top of Nui Ba Den Mountain when they received a request from Tay Ninh Hospital. Earlier that morning a little girl had been run over by an ox-cart and needed prompt evacuation to Saigon.

Could she go in the "chopper'" "Sure, we can do it!" replied Maj. Gerald D. Burroughs, operations officer of the 120th.

A few minutes later an ambulance rushed up to the helicopter pad bearing the unconscious Cao Thi Thu. With her mother assisting, and PFC Gerald F. Matuszewski transferred the litter and child to the helicopter.

With turbines whirring and all aboard, the chopper lifted off under Maj. Burroughs' control and sped away to a hospital just outside Tan Son Nhut.

There little Thu was turned over to the care of Vietnamese military medics, only half an hour after leaving the ambulance at Tay Ninh.

09Jul66-117th Avn Co. Joins 101st Strike Force

DAK TO, (101st ABN-IO) - A proud but battle weary battalion commander of the 101st Airborne Division, Lt. Col. Henry E. Emerson, made a special trip by helicopter recently to address members of a veteran aviation company in their base camp here.

His sole mission was to personally commend and thank each member of the 117th Aviation Company for their acts of heroism and outstanding services performed during Operation Hawthorne.

Lieutenant Colonel Emerson, known locally as "Gunfighter," stood surrounded by the entire company as he welcomed them as individual members of his Strike Force. "You are now part of our unit," he said, "in every battle and every mission. Our victory is your victory."

He continued, "Your accomplishments have been totally remarkable. The amount of enemy exposure that your pilots and crew-members have subjected themselves in areas of hostile fire defies description.

"Gunfighter" summarized the successful Operation with final statistics, battle experiences, and significant tactics that "changed the tide." He explained his New Frontier Strategy that for the first time in Vietnam, has established offensive front lines. "From now on," he concluded "the Strike Force, with your assistance, will stop them at the border-coming and going."

Before departing to join his units in combat, he met and congratulated every member of the aviation company.

16Jul66-Photo Caption - DURING "HARDIHOOD" -Paratroopers of the 1st/503rd Infantry unload "C" rations from a supply helicopter of the 82nd Aviation Bn. after capturing a VC stronghold in Ba Ria (Photo by Sp4 Daniel L. Peksenak, 69th (SIG-IO)

16Jul66-'Flying Cook' Caters With C's

PLEIKU, (25TH INF-IO) -Specialist Four Lynn J. Woodard is a "flying cook," one of a unique group of men whose main purpose is to airlift at least one hot meal a day to companies in the field on operations.

Specialist Woodard, a cook for the 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry of the 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, is now catering for Operation Paul Revere, southwest of Pleiku.

There are no cooking facilities in the field, so food must be prepared at a rear area base camp and airlifted to the men. This is the occupation of the "flying cooks" and to anyone who doesn't particularly enjoy the taste of C rations, the "flying cooks" are a welcome sight.

Their job isn't an easy one. The empty insulated containers are taken from the command post each morning and loaded onto helicopters to be taken to the battalion's rear location.

By this time, the hot food is usually ready. It's loaded into the containers and properly tagged by Specialist Woodard to insure that each container gets to the right unit.

Specialist Woodard hustles to the bakery and checks to make sure each company gets all it is supposed to have. This usually will include anything from donuts to cakes.

After everything is gathered together, the food and utensils are taken to the helipad, loaded and flown to the forward command post.

"It may sound as if there isn't much to it," Woodard said, "But there have been many times when I've gotten into some ticklish predicaments.

"I remember one time when the company I was to feed that night was to be helilifted into a new position."

He said that he was notified by the logistics officer that he was supposed to hit the landing zone before his company, even though a platoon from another company was there and supposedly had the area secure.

"When I got to the landing zone," he said. "I saw the platoon just getting there. If I'd been there five minutes earlier, I would have been all by myself on a hot landing zone.

The Viet Cong may have appreciated the hot food, but Specialist Woodard was a bit flustered, although he admitted flustered, although he admitted "it really wasn't so bad."

In any case, the hot food was there and the "flying cook" had completed another mission.

16Jul66-'Screaming Eagles' Switch Roles With Aviators

DAK TO, (1st AVN BDE-IO) -

Unit commanders of the 101st Airborne Division traded their steel pots for pilots' crash helmets Thursday to fly and fire the same armed Army Hueys that gave them immediate fire support during Operation Hawthorne.

The occasion and the helicopters were provided by the big 17th Aviation Group's 10th Aviation Battalion, partner to the "Screaming Eagles" for over six months in an airmobile combat team comparable to the 1st Air Cav. Gunship pilots of the 48th, 117th and the 139th Airmobile Companies displayed their hardware to such 101st luminaries as hero Capt. Bill Carpenter and Walter R. Brown, and to their battalion commander, Lt. Col. Henry E. Emerson, among others and gave them a turn at the controls.

Taking advantage of a lull in the action around Dak To scene last week one of the war's heaviest engagements, the chopper pilots and infantry leaders made a demonstration firing run over Viet Cong territory.

Carpenter added another note of distinction to his combat record, becoming one of the only known non-pilot infantry commanders ever to destroy an enemy hut by aerial rocket fire.

The event introduced gunship pilots and ground leaders, some of whom had been in combat together since last January without meeting, and provided a forum for discussion of their joint tactics. Of the suggestions it produced, Captain Carpenter said he favored one that would put infantry companies in direct radio contact with the gunships. "That way, we can call the fire in where we need it," he said.

Brown said he was impressed with the firepower available from the Huey arsenal, ranging from machineguns and rockets to automatic grenade guns. "They can really bring some smoke with those weapons," he said.

Captain Brown also termed the afternoon "Very enlightening" and added. "Now we have a better idea of the problems these pilots have trying to hit targets for us - they can only be as accurate as the directions we give them from the ground.

In Operation Hawthorne, which ended June 20th 10th Aviation Battalion choppers flew 2000 combat hours in support of the 101st, carrying over 11,000 troops and over a million pounds of supplies.

16Jul66-No Mission Too Tough For 82nd 'Cowboys'

BIEN HOA, (173rd AEN-IO)

Shortly after the arrival in Vietnam in April, 1965, A Company of the 82nd Aviation Battalion took their name from an equally tough group of football heroes from Dallas, Texas, and became the "Cowboys."

Formerly a subordinate unit of the "All American" 82nd company attached to the 173rd Airborne Division [sic]. Their job is to carry troops into combat, bring them back, and to provide all the supplies and combat aviation support while the troopers are engaged with the enemy.

The Cowboys are a hard-flying, hard-fighting team, interdependent on themselves, with their goal being the successful accomplishment of each mission. Each Cowboy is essential to the team's success.

The quarterback for this team is the company commander. Maj. Larry J. Baughman. He calls the plays based on established procedures, the enemy situation, and his wealth of personal experience. The fullback, is the armed helicopter platoon leader, Maj. Abb W. Mangram. It's his job to smash through the enemy and clear the way for the ball carrying halfbacks. The halfbacks are the platoon leaders of the troop carrying helicopters. These platoons are the work horses of the company and take the ball over the goal line after the other Cowboys have done their jobs. The Cowboys' center is the operation officer Maj Bruce Gibbons. He receives word of pending mission and passes it to the commander. The "play" is started and the operation is complete after the goal has been reached and the mission accomplished.

The Cowboys line consists of all the officers and warrant officers who fly the helicopters and the crew-chiefs and gunners that complete each crew. These are the men who bring the food, water, and ammunition to the ground soldiers, fly him to medical aid in minutes after he is wounded, act as his eyes above the ground, and get him out of tight spots when nothing but the helicopter can do the job.

The Cowboys have a combat record any professional team would be proud to display. After one year and some 400 airmobile combat operations in Vietnam, A Company of the 82nd Aviation Battalion has transported 85,000 combat troops, carried 2,500 tons of supplies, and has flown 22,500 hours on over 85,000 combat sorties.

This rough and ready "All American" unit stands always ready to do whatever task is asked of them. Dallas, as well as the 82nd Airborne Division is justly proud of their representation in Vietnam, the "All American Cowboys."

16Jul66-Photo Caption **HELPING HANDS-** A wounded paratrooper is lifted to a med-evac helicopter by his comrades of "C" Company, 2nd/503rd, 173rd Airborne Brigade. (Photo by PFC Paul Epley, 173rd ABN-IO)

16Jul66-Capital Avn Bn Activated

TAN SON NHUT, (1st AVN BDE-IO) - Lieutenant Colonel Raymond M. Gunn assumed Command of the Capital Aviation Battalion (Provisional) upon its recent organization by the 1st Aviation Brigade.

The Capital Aviation Battalion (P) consists of the 120th Aviation Company, the 125th Air Traffic Control Company, USARV Flight Detachment, and the 5th Flight Detachment. It will exercise command, administration, and logistical support for these assigned and attached units.

23Jul66-1st Aviation Brigade

The first Aviation brigade in U.S. Army history was formed in March 1966. the brigade consists of all non-divisional aviation units in Vietnam. It is the largest aviation unit ever to serve with the U.S. Army.

In the eight months from April to December 1965 the number of Army aviation units in Vietnam increased from 13 to 48 companies. The number of aircraft jumped from 430 to more than 1600.

This 400 per cent increase in aircraft and personnel called for the creation of an aviation brigade. The 1st Aviation Brigade controls the 12th and 17th Aviation Groups and the 34th Aviation Group (Aircraft Maintenance and Supply).

Last year Army aircraft flew nearly 900,000 sorties. Army aircraft units have caused more than 14,000 enemy casualties while suffering only one downed aircraft for every 16,000 sorties.

Photo Caption - COMING HOME - Helicopters of the 118th Aviation Company based at Bien Hoa return to a landing ?? after lifting troops to assault Song Be. (Photo by USARV-IO)

Photo Caption - EASY DOES IT - A CH-37 "Mohave" lifts an A1-H "Skyraider" during a recovery mission (Photo by 39th SIG-IO)

23Jul66-VN Government Lauds 13th Avn Bn

CAN THO, (1st AVN-IO) -Presentation of the first Fourragere of Gallantry to an American fighting unit was witnessed by a half mile long formation of Vietnamese and American servicemen and hundreds of spectators in ceremonies here.

Lieutenant General Tran Van Ninh, Vietnamese Armed Forces Chief of Staff, presented the yellow braid to the color, officers and men of the 13th "Delta" Aviation Battalion for participation in Vietnamese IV Corps operations.

U.S. officials attending the awards ceremony included Brig. Gen. G.P. Seneff, commanding general of the 1st Aviation Brigade, and Colonel Raymond P. Campbell, commander of the 12 Aviation Group.

The citation credited the 13th Aviation Battalion with flying some 50,000 hours during its first year in Vietnam.

The Army aviation unit was further cited for its participation in three major operations-the battles of Tien Giang, Long Phi, and Dan Chi.

The citation praised the armed helicopter crews of the 12th for their action at Dan Chi, January 28-30 1966, when they repelled five Viet Cong assaults which enabled the Vietnamese 21st Division to route the 306th Viet Cong Main Force Battalion.

The Vietnamese Fourragere adds to a long list of awards won by the 13th, which includes the Vietnam Unit Citation and the Army Aviation Unit of the Year.

Commanded by Lt. Col. William J. Maddos, the 13th has companies of helicopter gunships and troop-carrying "Slick ships" located at Vinh Long and Soc Trang.

30Jul66-174th Aviation Co. Ambushes VC Ambush

QUI NHON, (14th AVN-IO) - Using Viet Cong tactics, the 174th Aviation Company killed 10 VC and destroyed their automatic weapons position seven miles north of here.

For several days a small force of Viet Cong had been shooting at helicopters from the 174th Aviation Company which were flying rations and ammunition into remote outposts manned by elements of the ROK Capitol Division. Each day, armed helicopters were dispatched to the scene only to find that the VC patrol had disappeared.

Desperately seeking a solution to the problem, the 174th decided to ambush the ambush. An aviator and two volunteers were airlifted into the area where they set up an observation post.

After two days of waiting they spotted the VC patrol getting into position.

When the next helicopter flew a supply mission into the outpost, the VC began to fire.

Armed helicopters, which had been orbiting out of sight were called in by radio from the small observation post. The armed Hueys arrived on the scene and annihilated the VC patrol before they had a chance to hide.

Subsequent supply flights have been conducted into the outposts without further enemy harassment.

30Jul66-Former Dead Men Will Fight Again

QUANG NGAI, (USARV-IO) -

Every day and night U.S. Army medevac teams are saving men who would have died in any other war.

The U.S. Army advisory team to the Vietnamese Army at Minh Long radioed the medevacs here for helicopter evacuation of their radio operator who had been seriously burned by an exploding generator.

The medical evacuation team of Capt. Denne McGuiness, WO Terrell Clark, and Capt. John Manning were airborne 15 minutes later.

Heading southwest along the Song Be Reiver, the helicopter encountered heavy cloud cover which blackened the whole area. It was impossible to distinguish the land from the sky.

The first mortar flares popped illuminating the camp and surrounding area enough to allow the copter to settle on the flare marked helipad.

Captain Manning administered aid as the wounded soldier was carried on board.

Lifting off in a steep spiral, the copter entered the clouds. Twenty minutes later the soldier was out of danger and receiving medical treatment at Chu Lai.

30Jul66-Photo Caption - ALERT AND READY - A door gunner has his machinegun ready during a 174th Aviation Company re-supply mission to an isolated ROK outpost. (Photo by SFC James Stuhler, USARV-IO)

ROKs - Army Aviators Combine to Smash Charlie

PHU TAI, (USARV-IO) -The evening's conversation centered on the day's combat assault missions. The men talking wore Army aviation crewmember's wings.

"You've got to hand it to those guys," one young machinegunner quipped. "They've got guts."

"You see how fast they head for that treeline? They don't waste time going after Charlie," a crew chief said.

"They know how to use helicopters," another war-seasoned crew chief added.

"It's easy work with them."

The men they were talking about were the infantrymen they had helilifted into battle-Korean Tiger soldiers.

Atop a mountain pinnacle some 1500 feet high, a Huey helicopter on a resupply mission cautiously felt its way through the thin and dangerous air to a small landing pad. The pad was steep enough to prevent the helicopter from touching down so the pilot hovered, his rotor blades whipping through the air a few feet from the high side of the pad.

Crouching low, a half dozen Koreans ran to the chopper and began unloading ammunition, food and water. With the cargo on the ground, the Koreans waved their thanks as the pilot skillfully backed the helicopter off and swooped down the valley.

The combat assault and resupply mission took place on the same day by the same helicopter and crew. These missions are flown every day in the mountains here about 25 miles west of Qui Nhon. The area is thick with Viet Cong.

At Phu Tai, carved out of the side of a hill, sits a model heliport. From here the pilots and crews of the 174th Aviation Company go about their business of supporting the men of the Republic of Korea's Tiger Division.

To handle his company's mission, Maj. Robert M. Stuart has 25 Huey helicopters. Eight of these are gunships and the rest are "slicks" that carry eight men to the fight. There are other aviation units supporting the ROKs and they are all typical of the 174th.

Each week 174th helicopters average some 13,000 sorties. Besides the combat assault and resupply flights, they fly reconnaissance and liaison missions.

Most crew members agree that their toughest missions are the resupply flights in the mountains. More so, they claim, than the combat assaults.

30Jul66-Mailman Has Nothing On Avn. Mechanics

BIEN HOA, (145th AVN-IO) - Through blistering sun, stinging sand, torrential rain, water, mud and coming darkness, they worked. More dedicated than the mailman is an aircraft field maintenance team reporting a downed helicopter in a combat situation.

The 573rd Transportation Detachment proved it recently in a five-hour battle against weather and time in War Zone D. The 573rd was on a combat assault mission in support of its parent 118th Assault Helicopter Company when they were faced with the task of repairing a bullet damaged fuel tank on an armed UH-1D helicopter that had been hit by ground fire and landed at Phuoc Hoa.

The repair crew, Sp6 Clifford Hawkins, Sp5 Walter Breakons, Sgt. Jimmie Pirtle, and Sp4 Richard Elsinger tried in vain to patch the holes in the tank.

Major Philip Williams, commanding officer of the 573rd, radioed for a replacement fuel cell and other parts as the crew began taking out the damaged cell, which involved removing most of the aircraft's belly. Boiling sun and blowing sand hampered progress. Team members had to take turns because of the toxic effects of fumes from spilled jet fuel.

When the cell had been removed, maintenance technician CWO Albert Smith arrived with news that there were no spare cells in Bien Hoa.

It was a choice to either repair the fuel tank or leave the aircraft overnight in the notorious Zone D where it would be a prime target for the Viet Cong.

Someone remembered a wrecked UH-1D helicopter that had been left at Phuoc Vinh for months. Could they use the fuel tank from the chopper? It was worth a try.

The team flew to Phouc Vinh and encountered a heavy thunderstorm which forced the pilots to feel their way along at tree-top level. After spotting the aircraft, they managed to make a forced landing. Working in the rain, they removed a fuel cell and several other parts from the wrecked chopper. All parts looked to be serviceable.

When they returned to Phuoc Hoa with the replacement, the area was four inches deep in water. A drainage ditch had overflowed. The team worked in the quagmire to replace the tank.

Hawkins and Breakons, half submerged in mud and water, finished the job by replacing a fuel boost pump from underneath the helicopter. The task was now finally completed. The weary workers watched as Capt. Niles Clark wallowed under the chopper to inspect the work. They smiled with relief as he gave it his approval.

Using a five-gallon can, the team transferred 45 gallons of fuel to the repaired gun ship. As darkness closed in around the field, the team packed up and flew home with a job well done.

30Jul66-Heads Up!- 'Sorry Bout That' Charlie

DAK TO, (101st ABN-IO) -

"We were marking a landing zone for the heliborne assault coming in when we noticed something odd about a clump of brush," said Capt. Richard Akre, platoon leader of the 117th Aviation Gunship Platoon.

"We dropped a couple of smoke grenades and out popped a pair 'Charlies'," he added.

The gunships orbited the area holding the two Viet Cong at bay until an element of A Troop, 17th Cavalry could arrive on the scene and take the two into custody.

The 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division paratroopers then called in a helicopter to return the captives to the Brigade Command Post for interrogation.

30Jul66-197th Lightning Bug Team Mauls Charlie's Sampans

BIEN HOA, (12th AVN-IO)-In two nights of lightning action recently, attack helicopters of the 197th Aviation Company blitzed two fleets of Viet Cong sampans near here in one of the most successful air attacks of the Vietnam war.

A single platoon of armed helicopters, utilizing the Lightning Bug technique, destroyed 68 sampans and killed an undetermined number of Viet Cong. (Lightning Bug is a helicopter equipped with seven powerful search lights and supported by heavy artillery.)

On the first night, a team from the 1st Platoon 197th, spotted a flotilla of river boats in a free-strike area southeast of here. "At first we thought they had to be friendly," said one pilot, "But they were so far into the free strike zone that it could only have been the VC."

The assault team confirmed identity of the fleet with ground forces of the 25th ARVN Division who gave the order to attack. In the face of intense return fire, the choppers ended the Viet Cong infiltration by blasting 30 of them out of the water.

The next night a second team from the 1st Platoon answered a call from an outpost that was under attack south of Saigon. The choppers strafed to the very edges of the enemy fortress, repulsing the aggression.

After re-arming, the Lightning Bug team located a fleet of large sampans, 30 and 40 footers, northwest of Tan An. The craft were fully loaded but had been abandoned hastily on the river bank.

Guided by the powerful search beam, the armed helicopters again smashed their target, sinking 38 sampans and getting several secondary explosions. For two miles the river was strewn with wood shreds, oil slicks, blasted cloth and twisted outboard motor parts.

After the final count of VC bodies was made, advisors at the outpost reported the mission to be highly successful.

Later reports from US advisors at Tan An Sector revealed that ARVN ground forces trapped large group of VC attempting to escape the holocaust of the first night's attack and killed 34 insurgents.

30Jul66-Aerial Recon On Foot?

NHA TRANG, (17th AVN-IO)

---Falling out of the sky into a Viet Cong stronghold didn't discourage Army spotter pilot 1st Lt. Tom Morris. He completed his visual reconnaissance (VR) mission on foot.

Shot down in the course of a low-level VR flight, he and his observer, Sgt. Robert Robles, stepped from the wreckage of the O-1 Bird Dog and thrashed through the jungle for six hours gathering information on VC activity. A helicopter found them that afternoon.

Morris said at one point he and Robles accidentally came within 20 feet of overtaking a VC squad moving through the jungle. "Luckily, they didn't see us," he said, "so we beat as hasty a retreat as we could at a high crawl, and didn't stop crawling until we were sure they were a long way behind."

30Jul66-Happiness Is a Base Airfield For Big Red One Mechanics

DI AN (1st INF-IO) As the little OH-13 helicopter with the Big Red One tattooed on its side settles to the ground, two men carrying tool boxes run into the clearing.

The men Sp4 Garland Guffey and Sp4 Daniel Ellis, are helicopter mechanics of the Company B "Longhorns", 1st Aviation Battalion, 1st Infantry Division. Their job is to keep Longhorn 368 and her sister ships flying safely.

As the light fades the two crew chiefs begin their work. Since the observation helicopters are often flying from dawn to dusk, the task of performing the required maintenance and post-flight inspection is not easy.

Without the aid of a well lighted, well equipped maintenance hangar the men go about their task with grease gun, oil can, and flashlight, keeping a keen eye for discrepancies.

Every 100 flying hours, each helicopter must undergo a detailed inspection involving some disassembly and other maintenance at the permanent airfield facility. In a few days, Longhorn 368 and her sister ships will be rotated to the base airfield for maintenance, while others will be brought to the forward area to replace them.

For a few days, Guffey and Ellis will enjoy the luxury of working on their aircraft at the base airfield.