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General Wounded In Rescue Try

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14 Year Old NVA Rallies At Duc Pho

DUC PHO, (4th INF-10)—Drafted at 13 and sent to South Vietnam at 14, the young private's career in the North Vietnamese Army came to a sudden and lucky end recently when he gave himself up to the 4th Infantry Division's Company C, 1st Battalion, 33rd Infantry in the hamlet of Chi Trung.

The tiny infiltrator, dressed in black pajamas was in a small, barren hut when SSgt. Meredie Dube's squad from the 2nd platoon moved in and surrounded the structure.

He came out of the door, hands up, and yelled, "Chieu Hoi."

The battalion's Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) interpreter asked the youth a few preliminary questions for the company commander, then suddenly shook his head and looked puzzled.

"He is North Vietnamese. He speaks with their accent," the interpreter said.

The boy's story then came quickly and willingly.

He was drafted at 13 years of age more than a year ago. He took three months of infantry training at the North Vietnamese training center at Hoa Binh—with 100 other 13-year-olds in his training unit.

He said they were drafting youths his age a year ago and still are.

The North Vietnamese boy was put into an infiltration unit and sent on the long, arduous walk toward battle in the south, carrying only a rifle.

He said he was the only 14-year-old in his unit, but villagers in the Duc Pho area—being won over by the battalion's pacification programs since it arrived as part of Task Force Oregon—have reported many very young soldiers in NVA units which had been in the area.

On May 19, the boy's battalion

was walking toward a meeting with death at the foot of a tunnel-laced mountain a mile south of Chi Trung.

Eighty-one of his comrades died when the Cacti Green caught the NVA unit and mauled it in a 30-hour battle.

The boy was lucky, he didn't go to that fight.

Stek with malaria, he was left to the mercy of local Viet Cong and his weapon was taken. He was told that when he was well, he would be picked up by his unit. They never came back.

Villagers fed him and cared for him "because I was just 14" the boy said.

"They did not worry about me. They felt sorry for me and said I was too young for fighting anyway," he told questioners.

However, after recovering, the local Viet Cong made him pay for his keep by working at planting rice. The thin, half-starved boy showed hands with the palms cut and festered from this work.

He said that his clothing was taken and that he had given a new set of pajamas to replace the ragged farm clothes. He had to walk for two hours to another village and buy them with the few piasters he had been paid.

As the weeks went by the NVA battalion failed to return.

U.S. troops had pursued it out of the area after the fight on the mountain, and patrols by 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division soldiers kept it out.

The boy was frightened when the American infantrymen approached the village, but tired of a meager subsistence, he willingly rallied.

The men of Company C hope the boy can go through the division's scout training program and come back to them as an adopted son.

He has already volunteered to return to the company and show them the trails used by the enemy.



Brig. Gen. John F. Freund

AF Pilot Rescued By 1st Inf Chopper

QUAN LOI, (1st INF-10) — A U.S. Air Force pilot was rescued recently by helicopter pilots from the 1st Infantry Division when he parachuted into a suspected Viet Cong encampment following the engine failure of his F-100.

As the Air Force pilot ejected, he sounded a distress signal.

The signal was picked up by the command and control chopper of the 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry.

When the fighter pilot's parachute was spotted, the helicopter began circling the area until the downed man could reach the largest available clearing.

As the chopper was taking off, three Viet Cong were spotted with upraised weapons. The crew decided to avoid the enemy because of the confining trees and tried a different route out of the area.

The chopper was unable to

completely clear the trees, and its rotor blades chewed up foliage like a giant lawnmower.

The helicopter started to lose power and altitude. Because it was vibrating, the chopper would have been knocked out of the air if it had attempted to use its machine guns.

An enemy-free route back to Quang Loi was necessary.

A small valley was spotted in the jungle, and the helicopter dropped into the clearing, planning to hedge-hop home.

Contact was made with a forward air controller in the area to have a dustoff chopper follow the stricken aircraft.

When the rescue helicopter reached Quan Loi, it made an emergency landing, skidding and bumping along the ground in a fixed-wing fashion.

All persons, including the downed fighter pilot, arrived safely.

LONG BINH, (USARV-10) — Brigadier General John F. Freund, commanding general of the 199th Light Infantry Brigade, was wounded in the right leg by enemy gunfire when he and his command helicopter attempted to rescue two infantrymen during a battle in Hoc Mon Province about seven miles north of Saigon.

The general's aide, 1st Lt. Howell O. Hilton, in the chopper also, was hit in both legs. They are now undergoing treatment at the 3rd Field Hospital in Saigon.

Others aboard the ship, WO James J. Kaup, aircraft commander, 1st Lt. Stephen M. Proctor Jr., co-pilot, Sgt. Maj. Acy W. Akridge, Lt. Col. William S. Schroeder, commander of the brigade's 4th Battalion, 12th Infantry, Lt. Col. Dao Ba Phuoc, commander of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam's 5th Ranger Group, Maj. Pham Van Phuc, commander of the ARVN's 30th Ranger Battalion, PFC Richard Bornheimer, helicopter crew chief and left door gunner, and Sp4 John H. Stanley, right door gunner, were not wounded.

The brigade's Company E, 4th Bn., 12th Inf. was about to assault an area with the ARVN's 30th Ranger Bn.

As the troop-laden assault helicopters attempted to unload, the enemy, learned later to be a company-sized force from the 2nd Viet Cong Battalion, opened with a heavy barrage of fire, setting afire one chopper and forcing it to pull out of the area and land in a landing zone about 200 to 400 yards away, Freund said.

"I was in the command chopper. As the enemy fire forced each craft down, our ship flew over each to see if the men were alright and to make sure proper security was being maintained," the general, a decorated hero of WWII, said.

"I quickly arranged for a heli-lift to bring in more troops. Only a part of the assault troops were unloaded. I called in a double company, Company A from the 4th Bn., 12th Inf., and a company from the 30th Rangers.

"While we were waiting for the troops to arrive," Freund continued, "we circled overhead, looking for VC activity and any stray infantrymen.

"We saw a couple of men about 60 yards from where the first chopper was burning. They were in high grass along a dike.

"We circled a few times and then went down to see what things were like. I called to other choppers in the area to cover us as we went down to pick the men up.

"We were almost on the ground. I think in another three seconds we would have been down. I was already unbuckled, had my earphones off, and steel helmet on, about to jump off.

"What I was planning to do was to jump out and have the chopper take off. It was too hot down there for the ship to be kept down very long. When I

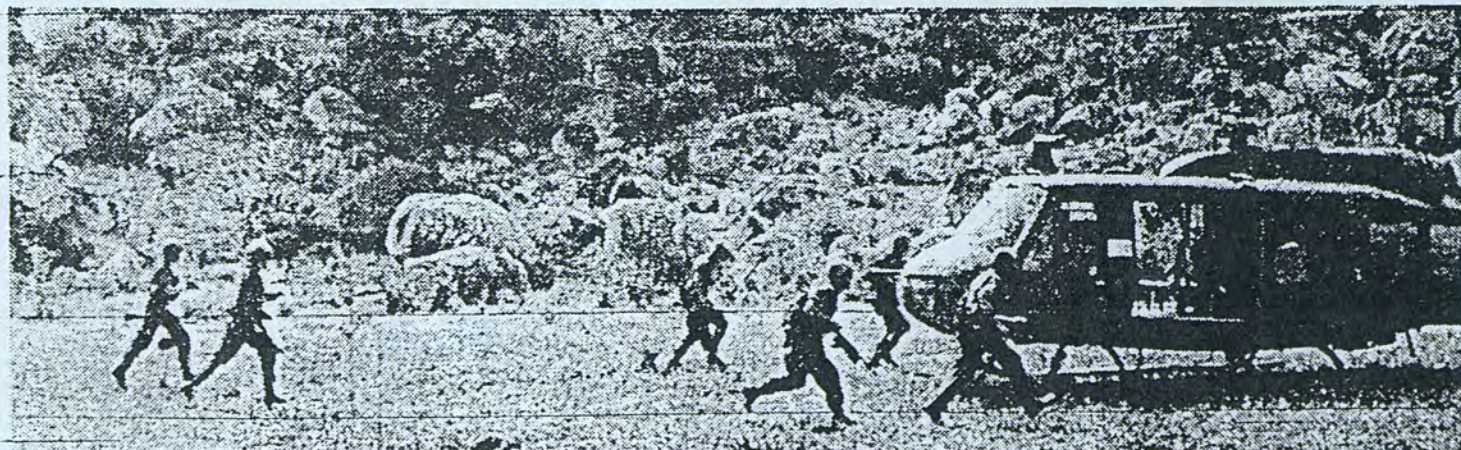
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\$1300 Received From 716th MPs

SAIGON, (MAC-10) — An envelope containing over \$1300 for the Army Emergency Relief (AER) fund was recently presented by Lt. Col. Gordon D. Rowe, commander of the 716th Military Police Battalion, to Brig. Gen. Robert L. Ashworth, commanding general of U.S. Army Headquarters Area Command.

The six-company battalion donated the money as part of the annual AER fund-raising campaign.

AER project officer, 2nd Lt. William L. Holmes, said, "The purpose of AER is to help Army personnel and their families with financial needs."



GOING UP—Six paratroopers race for a Huey chopper during one of the 19 operations the Screaming Eagle have participated in during the past two years. (Photo by Sp4 Johnny Jackson, 101st ABN-10)



HELPING HANDS—A tiny baby suffering from a severe ear infection was recently found in the village of Ba To. It was brought into the Special Forces camp dispensary for medical care. Checking the baby's pulse is Sgt. Garrett V. Graves Jr. (Photo by Sp4 John E. Judy, 5th SFG-IO)

Orphans Home At Ben Cat

LAI KHE, (1st INF-10) — Looking over the vast area where rice paddies and jungle once stood, the orphans' eyes lit up as they looked at their new home, the Ben Cat Orphanage near here.

The orphanage was recently opened after a year of construction by the 1st Infantry Division.

The buildings and site construction are part of a program sponsored by the division's 3rd Brigade. Construction chores were shared by Vietnamese and Americans.

Building funds and materials were donated by many people, including the men of the brigade.

To date, almost \$31,000 have been spent on construction. Future plans call for new dormitories and a religious chapel.

Personnel In Finance Section Soon To Become Billionaires

SAIGON, (IAC-10) — The 15 men of Saigon's 34th Finance Section will soon be billionaires.

About to wind up its first year in Vietnam, the unit has handled almost a billion dollars in military payment certificates (MPC), Vietnamese piasters, and U.S. currency in the past 12 months.

According to Capt. Arthur L. Jenkins, "The 34th brought every dollar of MPC in Vietnam over here, and made it available to disbursing officers throughout Vietnam."

MPC is flown from Japan by armed guards provided by the 34th.

Units located outside Saigon obtain MPC for their payrolls by sending armed couriers to Saigon, who are escorted for funds and are then escorted back to Tan Son Nhut Airbase by military policemen of the 716th MP

Battalion. Piaster conversion points in Saigon are operated by the 34th, which also serves Free World Forces personnel. Department of Defense contractors, military

Hedgerow Searchers Dig Up VC Hideouts

DUC PHO, (25th INF-10) — The 2nd Platoon, led by 1st Lt. Gary G. Myers of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry dug up eight Viet Cong from their underground hideouts recently.

The pick and shovel exercise took place north of here during operations conducted by the 3rd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. "The day started out as a routine search and destroy operation," recalled PFC Leland S. Edlen, point man for the 2nd Platoon.

"We were no more than 200 yards outside of our company when I spotted two VC on a trail. I was only able to get off

one shot and they were gone."

While probing the area a small camouflaged, cone-shaped lid was uncovered. A warning was given for anyone inside to come out. "With no response from the warning we threw in a hand grenade," said Myers, "and began to dig."

When the digging ceased, one Viet Cong, a sub-machinegun and two hand grenades had been uncovered.

The platoon divided into three-man teams and began searching the hedgerows on hands and knees with bayonets. Two hours after the first hole was uncovered, a second and third were found.

The third hole was actually discovered by a chicken which was scratching around the air hole.

An advanced notice was again given and the VC failed to respond. Several hand grenades were dumped into each hole and once again the digging began.

When the job was over there were eight VC killed, three weapons and an assortment of ammunitions and supplies captured.

Vietnam Communique

Task Force Oregon — In an all-night battle, paratroopers from the 1st Battalion, 101st Airborne Division killed 35 North Vietnamese Army (NVA) soldiers during the first major engagement of newly announced Operation Benton. The 4th Infantry Division's 3rd Brigade killed 22 enemy, flushing them from well-concealed spiderholes located in hedgerows north of Duc Pho. Troops from the 196th Light Infantry Brigade destroyed 28 enemy fortifications and numerous booby traps in their area of operations while Task Force Oregon artillery killed nine when they fired a mission in support of Army of the Republic of Vietnam forces in contact with an estimated VC platoon.

9th Infantry Division — Operation Coronado II, a multi-battalion sweep in Dinh Tuong Province, has been terminated. During the operation, 285 Viet Cong were killed and 649 suspects were detained. The division's 3rd Brigade sank two enemy sampans five miles northwest of Dong Tam, while barge-based artillery elements returned to the division base camp for refitting, repair and gun calibration after two months of roving the Mekong Delta waterways.

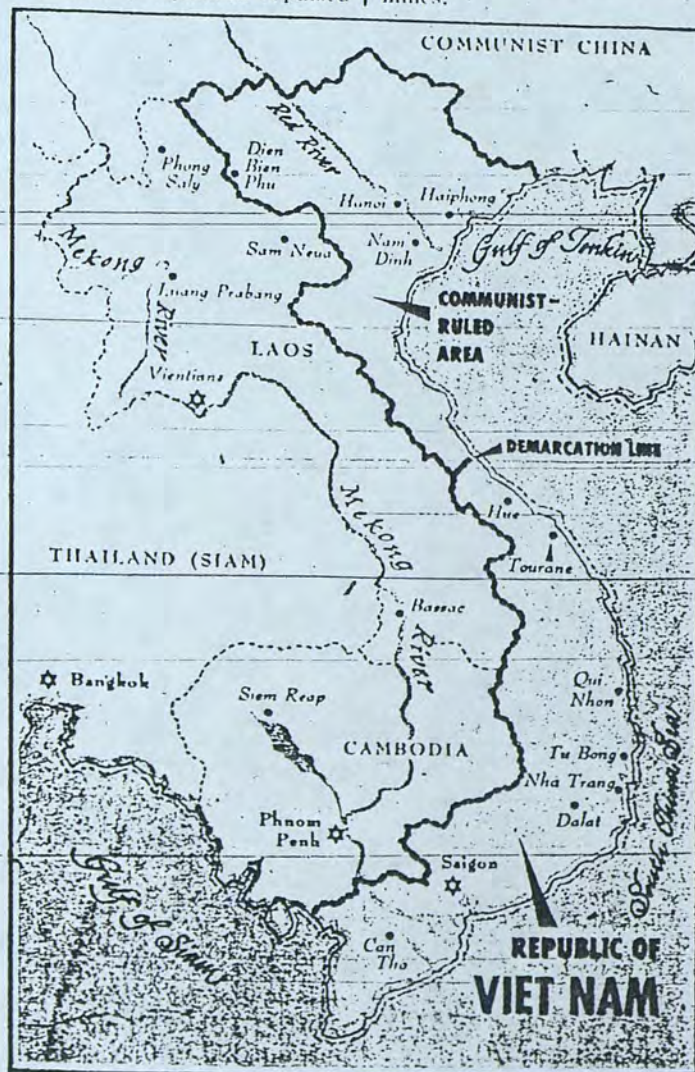
1st Infantry Division — For the second time in seven days the division's base camp at Lai Khe was struck by Viet Cong mortars. Counter mortar and airstrikes were directed at suspected enemy positions. In other action, elements of the division received enemy fire while providing security as Rome plows finished clearing the southern end of the Ong Dong jungle. Division engineers cleared 7526 acres of vegetation from the former enemy sanctuary.

1st Cavalry Division — A battalion force air-assaulted into Quang Ngai Province's Song Re Valley. The assault was intended to locate and engage an estimated enemy battalion believed to be operating in the valley, a relatively new area of operations for the cavalrymen.

25th Infantry Division — Mechanized elements of the division's 2nd Brigade recently destroyed a grenade factory 24 miles northwest of Saigon. The 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry found a large underground room containing tools, castings, explosives, and other grenade components. A 3rd Brigade unit was recently hit by enemy mortar rounds, followed by a ground attack from an estimated Viet Cong platoon while an element of a cavalry squadron repulsed

a similar attack by an estimated two Viet Cong squads.

4th Infantry Division — In the Division's 2nd Brigade area, artillery fire and airstrikes on enemy positions touched off two major secondary explosions. Two armored personnel carriers (APCs) from a cavalry element struck mines on the highway southwest of Pleiku City. Mine sweeping teams from the 4th Engineer Battalion later found and neutralized three more mines.



Charlie Gets Curious, Captured By Americans

DUC PHO, (25th INF-10) — Peeking at men of the 25th Infantry Division is one mistake that one Viet Cong will never make again.

His curiosity caused himself, two comrades, and their weapons to be captured.

When Company A, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry moved into the area north of here, they encountered light contact. Three enemy guerrillas were killed.

The next day, as the 3rd Platoon, led by 2nd Lt. Robert Peters, was sweeping through a village, some of the men stopped near a well.

As the men looked around, a small piece of ground beside the well began to rise and a pair of eyes peered out through the tiny opening.

Unluckily for the enemy, PFC Mike Dundon noticed the movement. Thinking the enemy might throw grenades, Dundon shouted a warning to his squad and took cover.

After some persuading by an interpreter, two of the VC decided to surrender. The third was reluctant to come out of the hole.

The platoon leader decided that the quickest and easiest way to get him out would be with a smoke grenade.

Crawling up to the trap door, Dundon hurled the grenade into

the hole and hurried upwind. Coughing and with his eyes watering, the VC quickly fled the hole and surrendered to the waiting Americans.

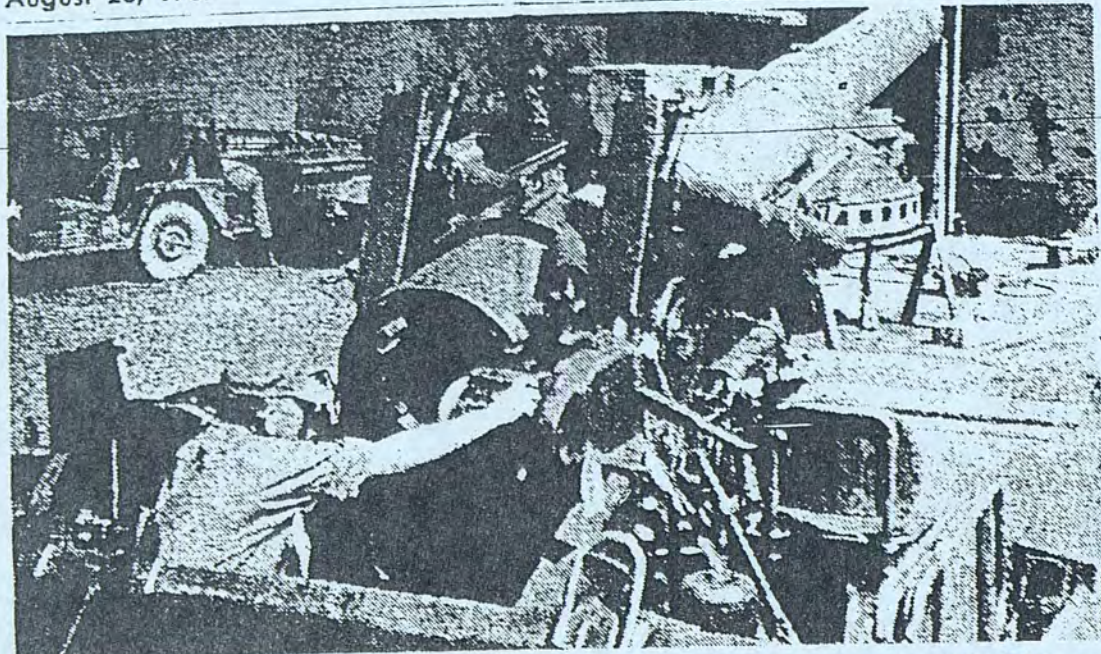
196th Platoon Kills 5 Enemy

CHU LAI, (196th INF-10) — The assault platoon of Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry, attached to the 196th Light Infantry Brigade, was credited with killing five enemy while conducting patrols within an eight-mile radius of battalion headquarters.

"The second day out, we spotted three VC about five kilometers away from our command post, which was on a high ridge," stated 1st Lt. Edward F. Lesko.

"They were walking towards an abandoned village. My radio-telephone operator called in artillery and got them."

"Two days later we spotted a column of Charlies and called in artillery again. The last one in the column was wounded by the first round, and when another VC came back to help him, the second round killed both of them."



GOOD AS NEW—Chief Warrant Officer Herbert R. Atkins, from the 632nd Heavy Equipment Company, inspects the breechblock of a newly refurbished self-propelled eight-inch howitzer. This Saigon Support Command unit's armament platoon, headed by Atkins, is performing the first overhaul of these howitzers in Vietnam. Previously, the work had to be done in the United States.

(Photo by Maj. L. R. Hawkins, 1st LOG-10)

Noose Traps, Kills 285 Enemy Soldiers

DONG TAM, (9th INF-10) — A joint American-Vietnamese force recently flipped a hangman's noose around the Cam Son Secret Zone at the beginning of the eight-day Operation Coronado II.

When the operation ended, the allies had pulled the noose tight, trapping and killing 285 Viet Cong.

The secret zone, a checkerboard of rice paddies and tree lines 15 miles west of here, had been quiet for several weeks. Intelligence reports indicating a large enemy force forming in Cam Son prompted the allied action.

Men from the 9th Infantry Division's 2nd Brigade combined with personnel from Naval Task Force 117 and Vietnamese Rangers, Marines, and soldiers. They walked, drove, flew, and sailed into Cam Son from every direction, sealing off escape routes.

A methodical search was launched, with allied forces poking and probing every thicket or tree line which might afford concealment to enemy troops.

Only light contact was reported on the first two days as a wary enemy remained hidden in underground positions.

On the third day, as the choking noose grew tight, the enemy lashed out with probing attacks, hoping to find an escape route overlooked by the allies.

Heavy contact was reported

by the 3rd and 4th Battalions, 47th Infantry, the 3rd and 5th Battalions, 60th Infantry, and Vietnamese Rangers.

But the Viet Cong were reluctant to force a showdown and fled each head-on encounter as quickly as it developed.

The search pattern continued into the fourth day with ground sweeps and Eagle flights scouring the area.

Helicopter gunships circled the battle zone to swoop down in support whenever contact was made with the VC. Artillery battered suspected and confirmed enemy locations.

The 3rd Battalion, 34th Artillery killed 18 enemy during one mission.

Navy Armored Troop Carriers from the Mobile Riverine Force ferried troops and patrolled the streams of Cam Son to prevent a waterborne escape.

Air Force F-100s and F-4Cs continually dropped 500- and 750-pound bombs on enemy fortifications.

In the predawn hours of the fifth day, the Viet Cong force made its final bid for escape. Twice the enemy tried to ram their way through Vietnamese Marines to safety. Both attempts were beaten back and the VC resorted to a familiar tactic—every man for himself.

By now the Allied force had been beefed up by the 3rd Battalion, 39th Infantry and two battalions from the 25th Infantry Division.

During the remainder of the operation the allies tracked down and defeated the enemy force.

One of the prisoners, who when captured was armed with a 9mm pistol with a red star emblazoned on the handle, admitted to being the deputy commander of the Viet Cong 263rd Main Force Battalion.

Wounded Pilots Fly To Hosp

QUAN LOI, (S&S) — A wounded helicopter pilot and his wounded crew chief recently flew themselves and four other American casualties to the 93rd Evacuation Hospital at Long Binh.

The 1st Infantry Division aircraft commander, pilot, and crew chief were wounded in an enemy mortar attack here.

The pilot took over as aircraft commander while the crew chief filled the pilot's seat.

The helicopter crew had been alerted to a possible Viet Cong attack on the airfield. As the men were getting dressed, a mortar round landed outside their tent, shrapnel hitting all but the door gunner.

A medic advised that the aircraft commander be immediately evacuated to the field hospital.

After having their own wounds attended, the pilot and crew chief flew their commander and three other wounded Americans to Long Binh.

As the chopper was leaving the airfield, it came under automatic weapons fire from an estimated enemy company storming the strip.

Elements of the 1st Inf. Div.'s 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry fought off the insurgents, killing seven.

Mortar Patrol Effective

AN KHE, (1st CAV-10) — The danger of nighttime mortar attacks on 1st Cavalry Division bases is being lessened by helicopter operations called "mortar patrol."

The gunships of the Cav's 2nd Battalion, 20th Artillery have been assigned nightly to watch for enemy mortar crews. At the flash of an enemy mortar tube, the chopper is ready to fire its rockets and break up an enemy attack.

At the sight of enemy activity, the pilot contacts division artillery and asks for firing instructions. Only if the division artillery clears it will the chopper make its firing runs at the target.

If illumination is needed, artillery units at Landing Zones Two Bits and English are ready to fire flares.

In addition to watching for mortar attacks, the ships launch pre-planned harassment and interdiction fire at suspected enemy positions.

Ships are organized in sections of two helicopters each. While one chopper is on mortar patrol, the other is on two-minute standby alert.

The 2nd Bn's pilots spend a fifth of their flying time in Vietnam on night missions.

Big Guns Repaired By 1st Log Platoon

SAIGON, (1st LOG-10) — An 18-man armament platoon of the 1st Logistical Command's 79th Maintenance Battalion is getting the big guns of the Army back into good condition and returning them to action.

The artillery repairmen, assigned to the Saigon Support Command's 632nd Heavy Equipment Maintenance Company are giving the M110 self-propelled eight-inch howitzers a complete overhaul — the first time this has been done in Vietnam.

Before the platoon was given this maintenance mission, the big guns had to be evacuated to the United States for depot rebuild — a process which often kept the weapon out of action for nine months.

The greater share of this lost time was taken up in transporting the M110s from Vietnam to the states and back.

Now, the same weapon rolls out of the 632nd's maintenance shop in two weeks or less, ready to be returned to the field.

When the howitzer is brought to the shop it is disassembled into its major components.

Dirt and grease are scraped off the carriage's hull and turret, and each metal part is given a bath in cleaning solvent.

If a part is serviceable, it is put back on the weapon — if not, it is repaired or replaced. At the same time, modifications

are applied to improve the howitzer's performance and extend its life.

The last step in the operation is a new paint job — not to make the howitzer pretty, but to protect it from the sun, rain, dirt and dust of Vietnam's jungles and battlefields.



STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN—Fighting the instability of a rope ladder dangling from a helicopter, engineers from the 1st Infantry Division conduct a training exercise with full field gear and weapons. The exercise is designed to acquaint some of the newer members of Company D, 1st Engineer Battalion with one more phase of their mission—descending into thick jungles to cut helicopter landing zones. (Photo by PFC Robert J. Stevens, 1st INF-10)

18th MP Soldier Gets Crayons For Orphans

LONG BINH, (18th MP-10) — As the result of efforts by a photographer assigned to the 18th Military Police Brigade here, 29 cent coloring books and boxes of crayons are being collected for Vietnamese orphans at Tu Duc.

Private First Class Chester R. Pierce volunteered to be a member of the five-man friendship team that makes weekly trips to the brigade - sponsored Orphanage Nationale.

He took his assignment very much to heart.

"We could use any and all the help we can get from you people back in the United States," Pierce wrote to his former

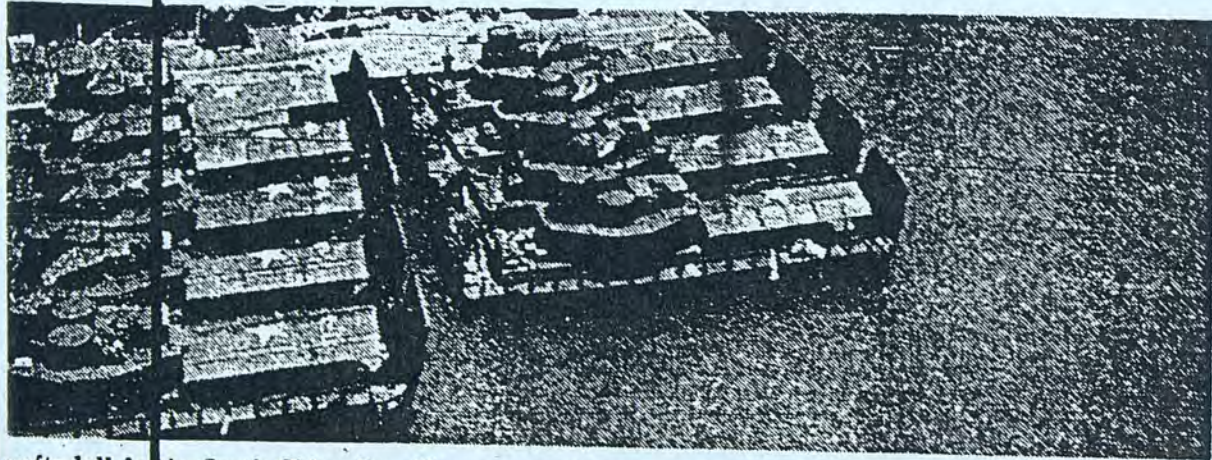
pastor, the Rev. Frank I. Smith, First Methodist Church, in Norwood, N.Y.

"We would like to get a coloring book and some crayons for each of these kids."

A local crusade was started in Norwood following the arrival of the letter. Excerpts from the letter and a photograph of a few of the orphan children were printed in a local newspaper, accompanied by a statement from a local merchant who offered to collect and mail any contributions.

Pierce reports that the contributions of coloring materials are beginning to pile up at home, and he is anxiously awaiting his first shipment.

Aug. 26, 1967



crafts loll in the South China Sea. These armored troop carriers are similar to the Monitor used during transport in Vietnam. They are used to transport infantrymen from the 9th Infantry Division to an area and then remain to provide fire and support. (Photo by Sp4 Don Cordi, 9th INF-IO)



ARTILLERY SUPPORT—Barge-mounted 105mm howitzers fire in support of 9th Infantry Division soldiers in the Mekong Delta. (Photo by Sp4 Don Cordi, 9th INF-IO)

Up On River Force

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These two ships and the USS Askuri, a landing craft repair ship, comprise the flotilla's nucleus.

Before the Benewah and Colleton joined the river force, also called the Navy's Task Force 117, the flotilla operated from a succession of base support ships which were not specifically designed for riverine operations.

The Benewah and Colleton, however, are specifically designed for their task. They are converted from tank landing ships and have a shallow draft, enabling them to establish a base of operations wherever needed.

Unlike most naval vessels, which are painted gray, the floatilla's craft are painted olive drab green so they will blend in better with the lush river basin foliage.

In addition to this infantry-navy force searching for the enemy, the 9th has two batteries from the 3rd Battalion, 34th Artillery assigned to the river force.

Nine landing crafts, medium (LCM) from the 1st Logistical Command's 1097th Medium Boat Company at Cam Ranh Bay are attached to the artillery elements to provide propulsion for the barges in case they need to be moved closer to the infantrymen's area of operation.

One of the LCMs is the fire direction center and is equipped with radios, maps, and plotting charts.

"Before we began operating from the barges," said Maj. Daniel P. Charlton, 3rd Bn. S-3 officer, "we were hit by enemy mortar rounds four of the seven times we set up in the field."

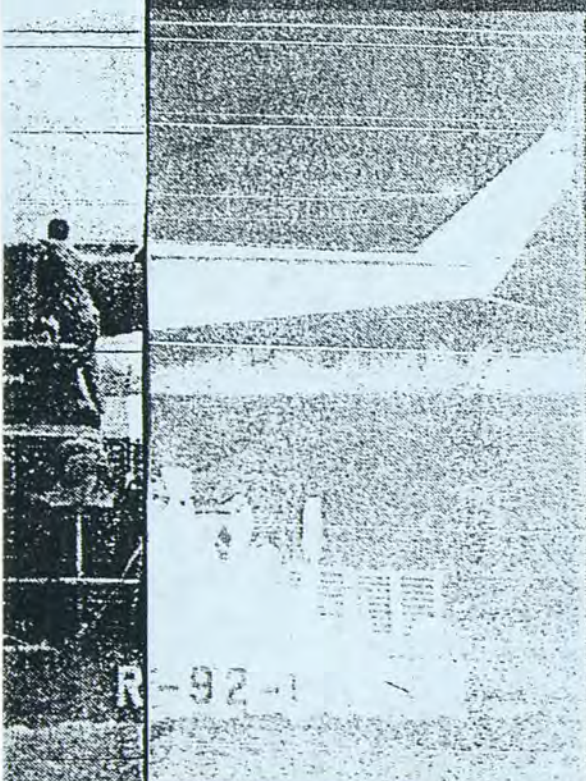
"But since we went to waterborne barges, we haven't been hit once. It's probably because Charlie never knows when or where we set up."

After working all day in the wet, muddy, hot swamp, chasing and searching for the enemy, the infantrymen have the advantage of being able to climb back into the barracks ships to dry out.

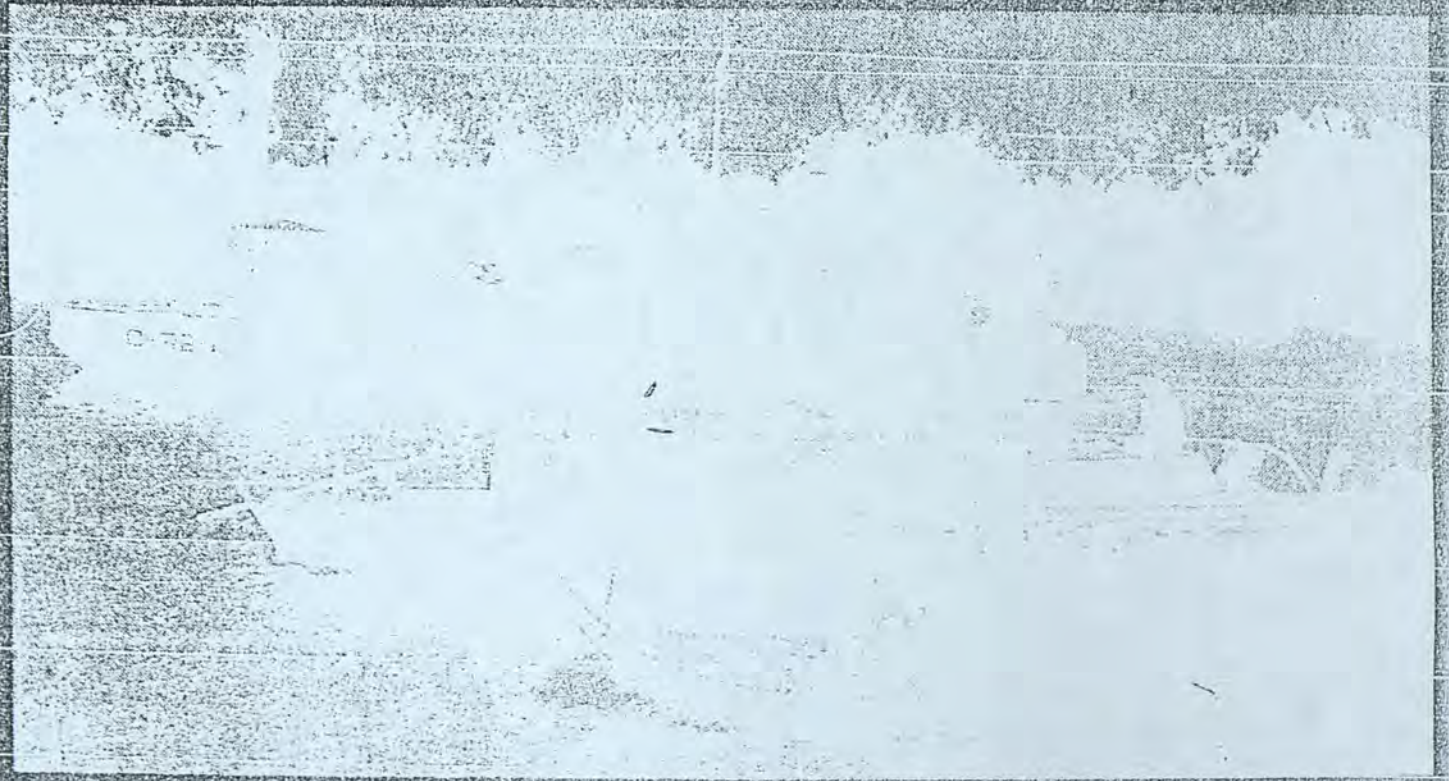
There, waiting for them, are clean bunks, hot food and showers, movies, a snack bar, and as many comforts as possible.



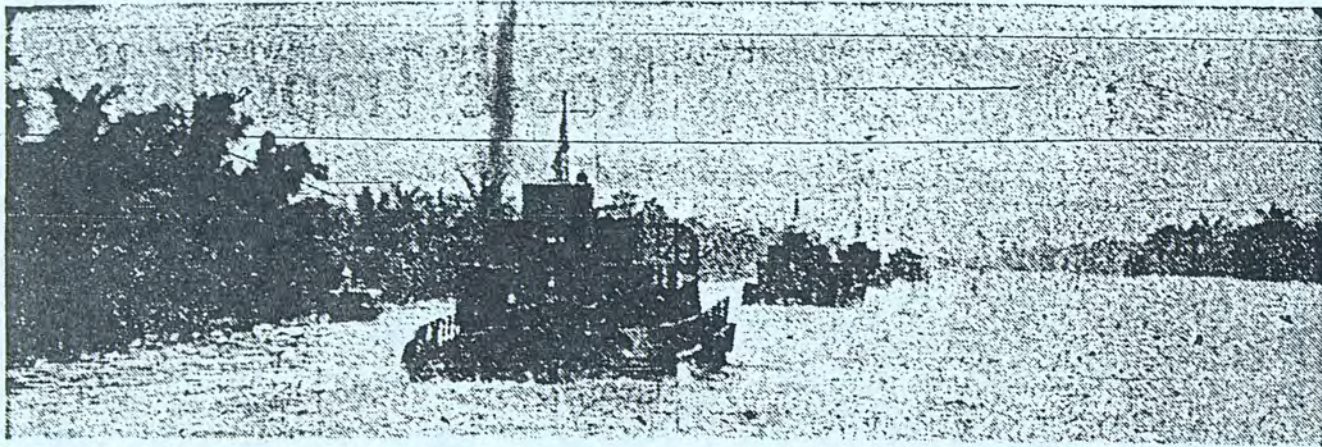
SIGHTING IN—Sergeant Charles Ulan (seated) sights in a 105mm howitzer as PFC Johnny Wealey and another artilleryman from the 9th Infantry Division's 3rd Battalion, 34th Artillery prepare to fire. The howitzer is mounted on a barge in the Mekong Delta. The barge enables the artillery to move its weapons closer to infantry units when necessary. (Photo by Sp4 Don Cordi, 9th INF-IO)



allest landing zone in Vietnam. This innovation (Photo by NAVFORV-IO)



CHECKING SAMPANS—A command communications boat checks two sampans for possible enemy troops moving into a landing zone. After the infantrymen are landed, the Navy blocks all waterborne movement in the area. (Photo by NAVFORV-IO)



MOVING OUT—Landing crafts transport infantry men to an area of operation in the Mekong Delta. These crafts are steaming up the My Tho River and will remain to give the soldiers support once landed.
(Photo by NAVFORV-IO)



WAITING—Nine landing crafts loll in the South China Sea. The crafts transport infantrymen from the Civil War. The crafts transport infantrymen from the Civil War, blocking support.

Navy Flotilla, 9th Inf Div Team Up On R



GOING ASHORE—As the bow ramp of a landing craft flattens the foliage along a canal bank in the Mekong Delta, infantrymen scramble forward during a search and destroy mission. In the background is a thatched hut which the infantrymen checked in their search for the enemy.
(Photo by NAVFORV-IO)

Story By
NAVFORV
And
9th INF-IO

LONG BINH, (USARV-IO)—Tactics used in the Civil War more than 100 years ago by the Union's Monitor are being put to effective use by the United States Navy and the 9th Infantry Division in the Mekong Delta and swampy Rung Sat Special Zone.

This second riverine force in America's history came into existence in September, 1966 with the commissioning of the Navy's River Assault Flotilla One at Coronado, Calif.

The flotilla's advance staff arrived in Vietnam in late 1966 and began operations in the Rung Sat Special Zone in February 1967 as enemy attacks against ships going to and from Saigon increased.

The river force soon linked up with the 9th Inf. Div.'s 2nd Brigade, giving the infantrymen greater mobility and needed fire power.

"Our boats," explains Petty Officer First Class Salvatore Costa, "transport troops and equipment to an operational area. We remain with them to provide fire support while we blockade the waterways to prevent enemy from escaping or bringing in reinforcements. When the operation is over, we bring the troops back home."

The combined Army-Navy units are called the Mobile Riverine Force (MRF).

The flotilla is divided into two river assault squadrons comprised of armored troop carriers (ATC), which are heavily-armored, blunt-nosed craft; command communications boats (CCB), and Monitors, a modified landing craft medium (LCM) armed with a 40mm cannon and 81mm mortar.

Each squadron is capable of moving an entire infantry battalion and supporting artillery into combat.

The flotilla's flagship is the USS Benewah, an amphibious barracks ship. It arrived in Vietnam with the USS Colleton. These two vessels are the only self-propelled barracks ships in the Navy. Both are capable of berthing more than 1,000 personnel.

These two craft repair ships.

Before the force, also called operated from were not specifically

The Benewah designed tank landing them to establish

Unlike the floatilla's will blend in

In addition the enemy, the talion, 34th

Nine logistical Co at Cam Ranh to provide pr to be moved tion.

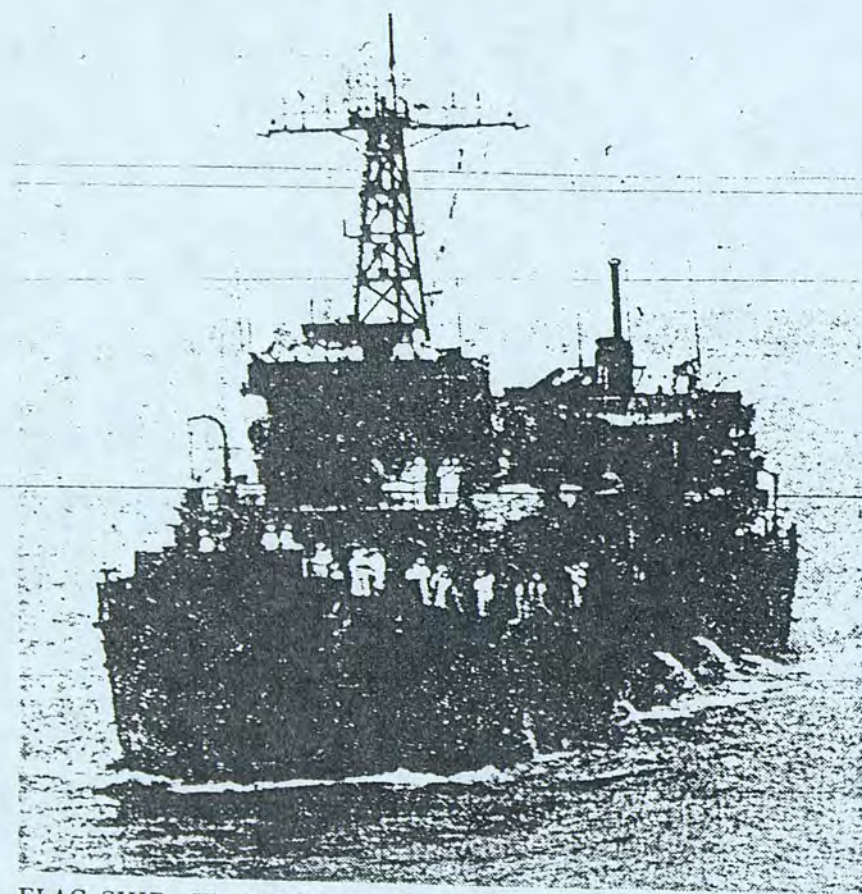
One of the is equipped v "Before

Maj. Daniel hit by enemy set up in the

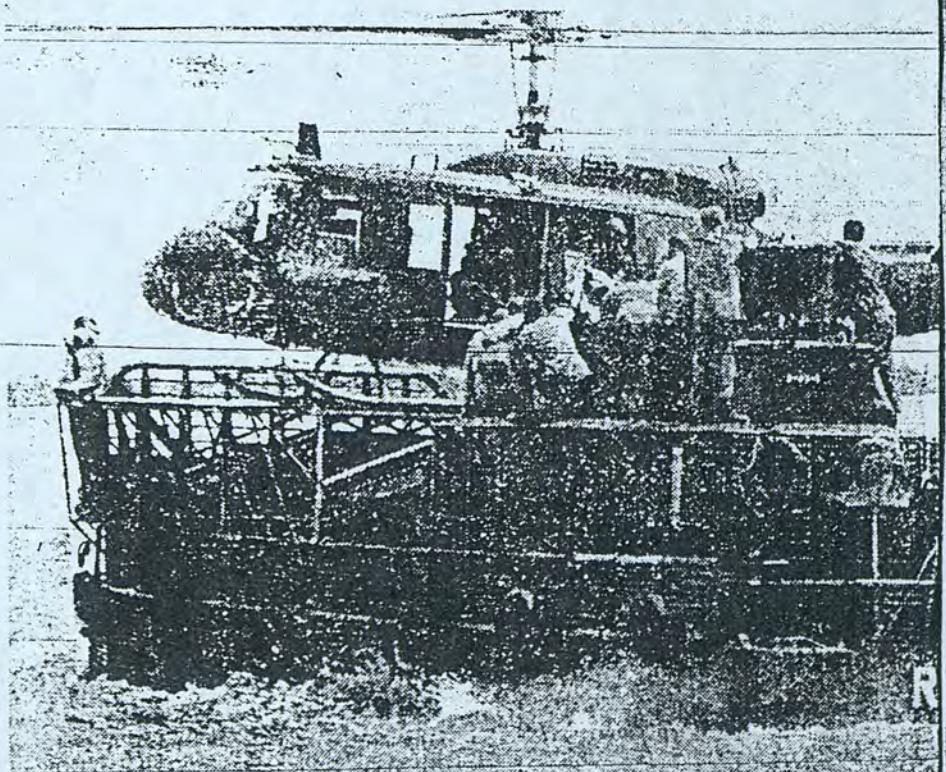
But the Navy's been never known

After a swampy area trymen have into the

There and showers as possible



FLAG SHIP—The USS Benewah, one of only two self-propelled barracks ships in the U.S. Navy, sits in Vung Tau Harbor. The Benewah and its sister ship, the USS Colleton, arrived in Vietnam in April to support the riverine force.
(Photo by NAVFORV-IO)



MINI-FLIGHT DECK—A Huey sets down on what may be the smallest landing deck. This expands the river force's command and control capabilities.