

1600 Soldiers Air Assaulted In Operation

CHU LAI, (1st AVN-IO)—Operation Benton, a multi-battalion combat assault force from the Americal Division, placed nearly 1600 fighting men into fierce ground action on the first day of the operation.

Massive airmobile assaults planned and staged by the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion's five assault helicopter companies contributed over 60 aircraft during the first day of Benton. That day, 637 hours were flown, lifting the combat troops and 259 tons of cargo.

Assistant S-3 officer of the 1st Aviation Brigade unit, Maj. Derold Smith, called it "by far the most complicated assault operation we've run."

Final figures showed the 14th had lifted 12,256 men and 2046 tons of cargo, flown 2804 hours, and evacuated 48 casualties.

In addition, the battalion's gunships had been credited with 49 Viet Cong killed and 125 enemy structures destroyed.

The initial fleet of helicopter troops touched down in the landing zones (LZs) at 7:30 a.m. Intelligence sources reported the area was "heavily saturated with anti-aircraft positions and .50 cal. automatic weapons."

Another factor which concerned the flight leaders was the extreme care taken to prevent aerial reconnaissance of the LZs by aviation commanders. Only spotter-type airplanes had flown the operational area the day before so as not to arouse enemy suspicion of the assault.

All LZs were picked by map reconnaissance and verified by infantry battalion commanders and mission aviation leaders riding in the same chopper on the day of the assault.

Once on approach to the selected LZs, conditions proved less than desirable. While a command and control helicopter was marking all LZs for

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Trooper Slips Past Snipers

CU CHI, (25th INF-IO)—Caught between two lines of fire and alone, PFC John Miles, armed with an M-16, crawled, crept, and ran through flooded rice paddies and jungle hedgerows until he reached the safety of his unit's perimeter.

Miles was the first man off the lead river assault group (RAG) boat after it hit the shore of the Saigon River 15 miles north of Saigon.

Company C, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry had moved down river to form a blocking force for other 25th Infantry Division elements which were pushing an unknown sized enemy force east toward the river.

As Miles reached a point 30 yards inland, the RAG-boat came under heavy rocket and automatic weapons fire from a jungle thicket just beyond him. The Vietnamese flotilla commander gave the order to pull back into the river.

Those men who had made it ashore scrambled back aboard—except Miles, who failed to hear the shouts because of the gunfire.

"I saw the boats pull away," related Miles, "so I took cover

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Highest Honors To Former 1st Cav Sgt

LONG BINH, (USARV-IO)—The Congressional Medal of Honor has been presented to Sgt. David C. Dolby for his actions while assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division in 1966.

Dolby was serving as a machinegunner with Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry when his platoon, while advancing tactically, suddenly came under intense fire from the enemy located on a ridge im-

mediately to the front.

Six members of the platoon were killed instantly, and a number were wounded, including the platoon leader.

Aware the platoon leader was critically wounded and his platoon was in a precarious situation, Dolby moved the wounded men to safety and deployed the remainder of the platoon to engage the enemy.

Subsequently, his dying pla-

toon leader ordered Dolby to withdraw the forward elements to rejoin the platoon.

Despite the continuing, intense enemy fire, Dolby positioned able-bodied men to cover the withdrawal of the forward elements, assisted the wounded to the new position, and he, alone, attacked enemy positions until his ammunition was expended.

Replenishing his ammunition, he returned to the area of most intense action and single-handedly killed three enemy machinegunners while neutralizing the enemy fire.

This allowed friendly elements



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'Just Like Country Practice,' Says New Zealand Doctor

GIA CHAU, (1st CAV-IO)—"Out here, it's similar to a small country practice back home. One sees a few patients in the dispensary and makes some house calls."

Squadron Leader Robert Graham, Royal New Zealand Air Force, is the only doctor in South Vietnam's Hoai An District, a fertile rice-growing area near the coast of central South Vietnam.

In a three-room dispensary here, Graham sees over 70 patients a day. With the district dispensary chief, Tran Minh

Chau, acting as interpreter and assistant, the doctor treats cases of malaria, tuberculosis, worms, trachoma, and typhoid. He has also seen a few cases of plague.

Seriously ill patients are kept in the dispensary's six-bed ward.

During the afternoon, the doctor makes his house calls. He visits Hoai An's two maternity homes, several hamlets where regular patients reside, and refugee settlement areas where Montagnards have set up small communities of their own.

Graham is one of three doctors of the Royal New Zealand

Armed Forces presently serving in Vietnam. The two others operate a larger dispensary in Song Son.

Graham, an Air Force reserve officer, volunteered for a year's tour in Vietnam. So did his two assistants, Sgt. Keith Hollis and Flight Sergeant Pat Larter.

When Graham arrived in Vietnam, he worked for two months at a dispensary in Phu My, south of Hoai An. Then he was assigned to set up the Hoai An Dispensary.

Patients were slow to come at first, but after word of his work got around, more and more people began showing up. When he tours the villages and the resettlement areas now, he is greeted with smiles and waves of recognition.

Although Viet Cong forces have committed acts of terrorism in the area, they have never tried to disrupt Graham's work.

Some 15 Vietnamese assistants trained by the New Zealand team now help run the dispensary and maternity homes.



Sgt. David C. Dolby

on the flank to advance on the enemy position.

Dolby defied the enemy fire by personally carrying a seriously wounded soldier to where he could be treated.

Then, returning to the forward area, Dolby crawled through withering fire to within fifty yards of the enemy bunkers and threw smoke grenades to mark them for air strikes.

Although repeatedly under fire at close range from enemy snipers and automatic weapons, Dolby directed artillery fire on the enemy and succeeded in silencing several enemy weapons.

The sergeant is currently stationed at Ft. Bragg, N.C., where he is assigned to the 82nd Airborne Division.



MEN AND BARBS—Two 9th Infantry Division soldiers wait for the order to move out on a night ambush patrol. The two men are members of the 2nd Battalion, 60th Infantry stationed near Tan Tru in Long An Province. (Photo by Sp4 Gary Bipes, 9th INF-IO)

Silent Patrol Calls In Gunships On VC Patrol

DUC PHO, (101st ABN-IO)—The sun had set, shrouding the Song Ve Valley in darkness. A squad of paratroopers from the 101st Airborne Division crept across a rice paddy, hoping to reach their ambush positions before the moon could come out and give away their position.

As they neared a tree line, the soldiers, from the 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry, could hear the Viet Cong talking and moving around.

Staff Sergeant Shelby L. Wilson, the squad leader, cautiously led his men around the enemy. As they approached another tree line, they heard more voices.

The moon was rising now, and passing minute increased the possibility of discovery. The men had no choice but to hide in a well-concealed ditch near a trail, not more than 20 yards from the enemy.

Absolute silence was necessary. A cough, rattling of equipment, or even a sudden movement in the undergrowth could alert the VC.

Wilson, whispering almost inaudibly into the radio, called in gunships. Soon, the men could hear the hum of approaching helicopters. As the choppers reached the area and hovered overhead, a flare dropped from one and lit up the area.

The paratroopers remained low in the ditch to avoid detection as the gunships raked the tree lines and rice paddies.

The choppers circled for a half an hour, dropping flares, raking with machinegun fire, rockets, and grenades.

Finally, the last flare died out and the choppers left the ambush patrol to await the sunrise.



VACUATION—Quickly loading 9th Infantry Division patients, Sp5 Herbert C. Donaldson guides a stretcher on the MEDEVAC helicopter.



BREATH OF LIFE—Donaldson keeps a patient breathing.

Operating 57th Med 'Flying Ambulance'

Dustoff Chopper Crew Performs Emergency



COMING ABOARD—Hovering 200 feet above the thick jungle canopy, crew-chief Sp5 Charles W. Alden helps an Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) soldier off a hoist into the MEDEVAC helicopter.

LONG BINH, (USARV-10)—The shortest distance between two points is a straight line. This geometric theorem is being employed by the Army to save the lives of its men in Vietnam.

Helicopter ambulances, known as dustoffs, are proving this proposition.

Dustoff helicopters, on call 24 hours a day, evacuate sick, wounded from forward areas to well-equipped hospitals and minimum amount of time.

Specialist Five Herbert C. Donaldson is a medic with the original Dustoff unit in Vietnam, the 68th Medical Group's 57th Medical Detachment Helicopter Ambulance.

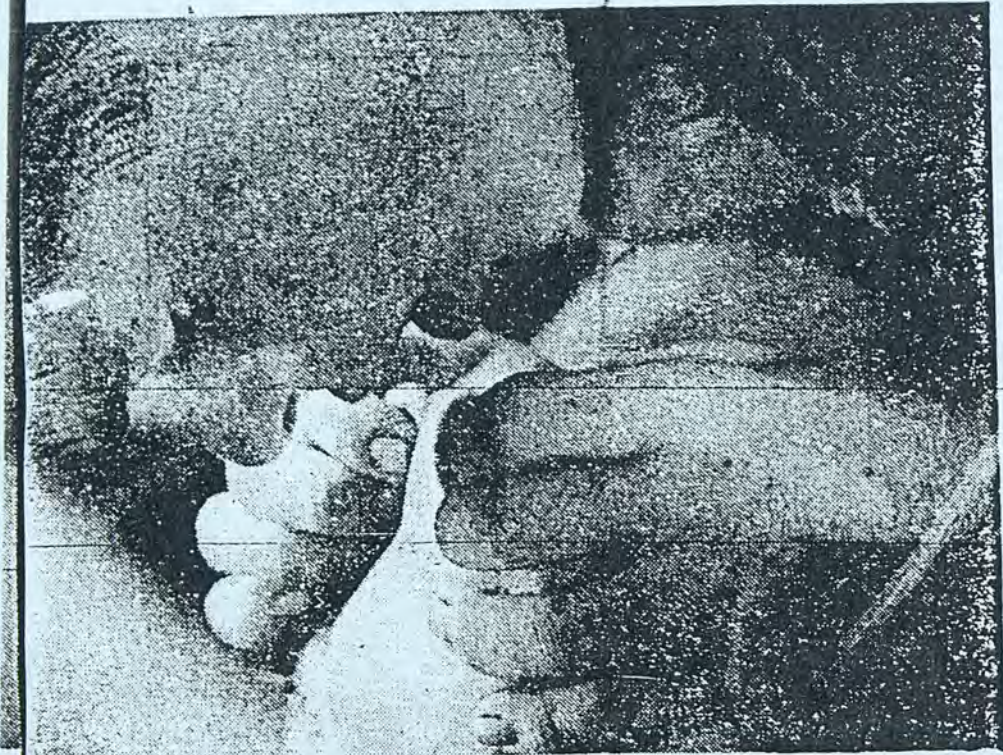
"My job is to check the patients we pick up, give them any flight treatment if necessary, and make them as comfortable as possible until we deliver them to the hospital," explained Donaldson.

Each new medic arriving at a dustoff unit is given a rigid physical examination and a detailed interview by the commanding officer. If he meets these requirements, he is teamed up with an experienced medic who breaks him in on the operating procedure of a dustoff aircraft.

"There is nothing routine about the job," Donaldson explained.



PAUSE—With the patient safe, Sp5 Herbert C. Donaldson, dustoff ambulance unit, catches a momentary rest from the tedium of his job.



Administering mouth-to-mouth artificial respiration, medic Sp5 Herbert C. Donaldson checks the patient's breathing till he can get to the hospital.

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Emergency Evacuations

distance between two is being employed in Vietnam. The Army's tool to evacuate sick and wounded soldiers from the front lines to the hospitals and the medical group's 57th Medical Group. They give them any in-hospital care as comfortable as possible," explained Donaldson. "I'm given a rigid physical examination by a commanding officer. If I'm up with an experienced procedure of a dustoff crew," Donaldson explained.

"Each mission is a different case, and I never know what to expect." After a pickup, the medic checks his patient, evaluates the injury or wound, and tells the aircraft commander where the patient should be taken. The pilot then notifies the hospital of the condition of the incoming patient. By the time the chopper arrives, a team of doctors, already prepared for this specific patient, are standing by. The versatility of the helicopter makes it an ideal flying ambulance. A wounded soldier can be evacuated from almost any terrain in Vietnam. Even the thick jungle canopy cannot stop med-evac choppers. They hover over the jungle, lower a hoist, and extract the patient without ever touching the ground. Evacuation of the wounded is not limited to just American soldiers. Many Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN), Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG), Vietnamese Popular Force, and Australian soldiers owe their lives to dustoff crews.

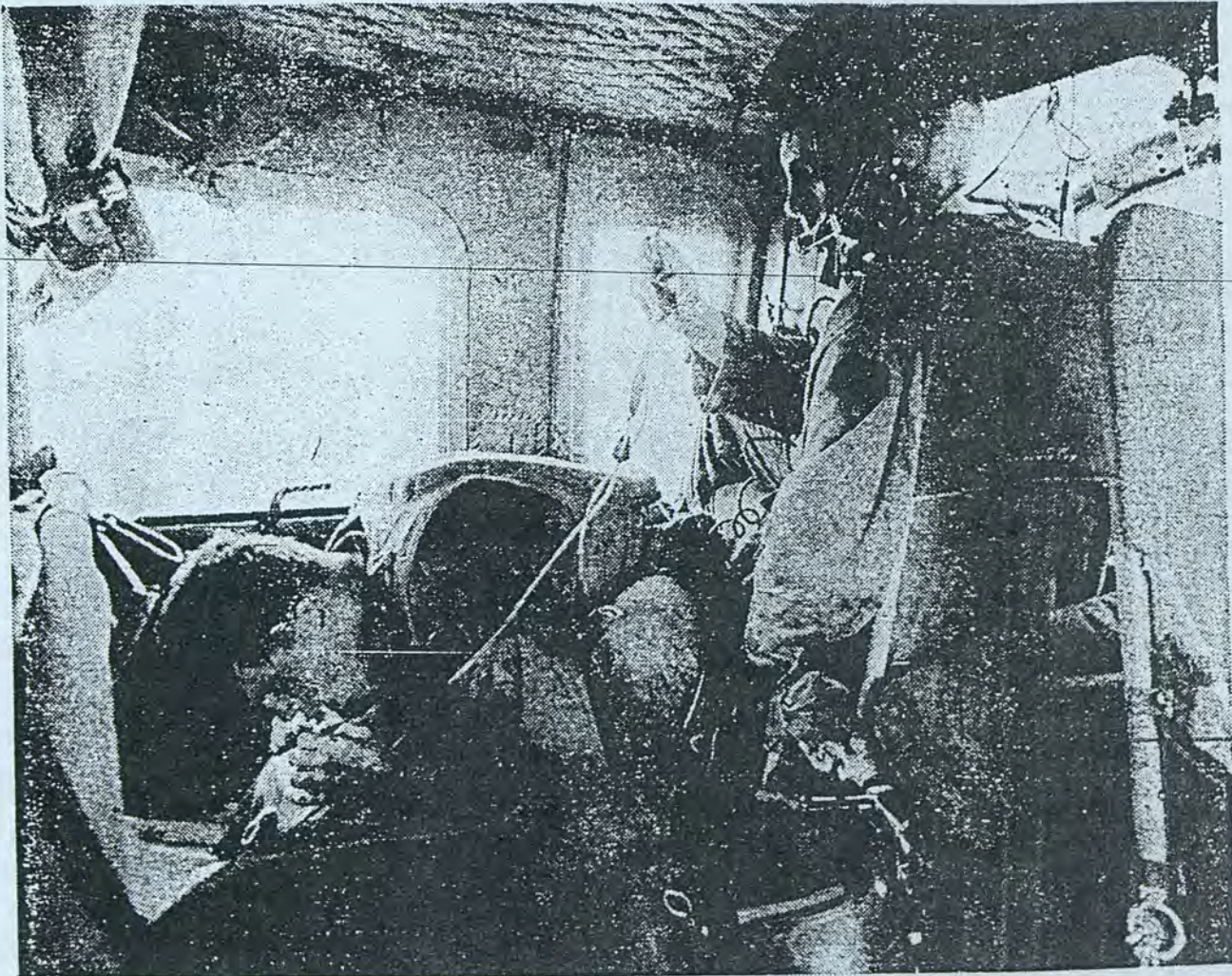
Story by Sp4 John J. Prokorym
Photos by Sp4 Gordon W. Gahan



CHECKING WOUNDS—Specialist Five Herbert C. Donaldson checks the wounds of an Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) soldier.



Herbert C. Donaldson, a medic with a helicopter rest from the tensions of the mission.



TEAM—Crew Chief, Sp5 Richard E. Yearman holds a plasma container as medic Sp5 Herbert C. Donaldson gives mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to a patient.