

Airpower, artillery ravage enemy

NVA anti-aircraft gunners fired on a pair of C Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cav., 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) helicopters eight miles northeast of Song Be on Dec. 11, triggering fighting in which 72 Communist soldiers were killed.

After the helicopter had been fired on, an Air Force air observer was sent into the area and spotted an unmanned .51 caliber mounted on a tripod. An aero-rifle platoon from C Troop was combat-assaulted into the area to retrieve the weapon.

As the men neared the weapon, they received a heavy volume of fire. After 10 minutes of fighting, they killed three NVA regulars and were lifted out of the contact zone so that tube and helicopter aerial-rocket artillery could be used on the enemy.

Helicopter gunships and Air Force fighter bomber strikes combined with artillery to kill 35 enemy soldiers.

That night, gunships of Companies A and D, 227th Assault Helicopter Co. were fired upon while operating in the area of the earlier clash. Vietnam Air Force AC119 gunships and 1st Cavalry Division gunships combined with artillery to kill another 34 enemy soldiers and knock out a .30 caliber machine gun position.

1st Cav Div

A lone enemy soldier burning some documents on Dec. 13, five miles northeast of Quang Ngai, alerted a helicopter pilot from D Troop, 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry Division to an enemy position and the resulting battle netted 53 NVA soldiers killed. The battle was fought by men of D Troop and C Troop, who were air-assaulted into the area.

In an unrelated action the same day, men of Co. A, 1st Bn., 20th Inf. killed five VC and detained another five in a bunker five miles northwest of Duc Pho.

On Dec. 8, Huey transports landing in a pickup zone near FB Jami, 58 miles northwest of Saigon to pick up men of Co. A, 2nd Bn., 7th Cav., came under fire. One platoon of men quickly boarded one of the Hueys for return to camp and another platoon rushed into a bamboo thicket where it tangled with an enemy force of approximately 35 men.

Aerial artillery, ground artillery and a U.S. Air Force strike were called in by the soldiers. When the fighting was over 33 NVA soldiers had been killed and two .51 caliber and one .30 caliber machine guns were destroyed.

The same day, a hunter-killer team from A Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cav., spotted 15 to 20 NVA troops in the dense vegetation 20 miles north of Tay Ninh, killing 10.

Also on Dec. 8, five enemy soldiers were killed by a hunter-killer team flying just north of Bu Dop.

Soldiers of Co. D, 1st Bn., 8th Cav. discovered a small NVA bunker complex on Dec. 9, 12 miles southeast of FB Jeri. One platoon from Co. D set up an ambush on a trail to the rear of the camp and the rest of the company opened fire on the enemy position. Aerial rocket and ground artillery combined with the riflemen to kill 13 enemy in the bunker complex and ambush.

The same day, while on a sweep eight miles northwest of Song Be, elements of Co. E, 1st Bn., 7th Cav. tangled with an estimated squad-sized NVA force, killing eight Communists.

Eleven NVA regulars were killed on Dec. 12 in action 58 miles northeast of Saigon by a helicopter of C Troop, 1st Squadron, 9th Cav.

America Div

Armored personnel carriers of B Troop, 1st Squadron, 1st Cav., American Division and infantrymen of Co. D, 2nd Bn., 1st Inf. clashed with an undetermined number of VC in an area 12 miles west of Tam Ky on Dec. 14, killing 20 enemy.

The same day, men of Co. C, 1st Bn., 46th Inf. walked into a 150-bed enemy hospital in the same area, 12 miles west of Tam Ky. In addition to medical supplies, the infantrymen found six 82mm mortar rounds.

On Dec. 8, soldiers of Co. B, 1st Bn., 52nd Inf. killed four NVA regulars and detained a fifth in a night ambush seven miles west of Quang Ngai City.

Three VC were killed and four others detained on Dec. 12 by riflemen of Co. C, 1st Bn., 20th Inf. in a tunnel complex six miles west of Duc Pho.

On Dec. 9, infantrymen of Co. C, 3rd Bn., 21st Inf., reconning an area 13 miles southwest of Tam Ky saw three enemy down a trail and called in artillery which killed all three.

Two days later, a recon platoon of the 1st Bn., 52nd Inf. killed two NVA soldiers 13 miles west of Quang Ngai City. The same unit killed two more NVA regulars in the same area later in the day.

3rd Bde, 9th Inf

Nineteen enemy soldiers were killed on Dec. 14 as men of the 2nd Bn., 60th Inf., 3rd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, and other elements of the 2nd Bn. together with Regional Force soldiers and aerial support from gunships of the 120th Assault Helicopter Co. engaged an undetermined number of NVA regulars near the Vam Co Dong River, three miles south of Rach Kien.

On Dec. 10, Kit Carson Scouts working with Co. B, 5th Bn., 60th Inf. spotted several VC four miles west of Rach Kien. The infantrymen killed one and gunships of B Troop, 3rd Squadron, 17th Cav. killed the other two.

Several minutes later, gunships of the 190th Assault Helicopter Co., working 200 yards down the woodland, spotted the remnants of the VC element and killed

another two.

The same day, reconnaissance elements of the 2nd Bn., 47th Inf. found a munitions cache buried one and a half feet below the ground, three miles southeast of their Tan An basecamp. Included in the find were 32 60mm mortar rounds, 32 RPG rounds and 20 pounds of TNT.

On Dec. 12, men of Co. E, 75th Inf. made contact with an enemy force four miles southeast of Tan An. Elements of Co. D, 6th Bn., 31st Inf. combat-assaulted into the area and gunships of B Troop, 3rd Squadron, 17th Cav. were called in. Eight VC were killed and one detained.

Action flared in the area about an hour later. This time U.S. Navy gunships combined with infantrymen to kill another three enemy.

On Dec. 9, men from Co. B, 8th Bn., 31st Inf., supported by gunships of the 3rd Squadron, 17th Cav. killed two enemy soldiers and discovered 15 bunkers containing 20 pounds of medical supplies, 20 pounds of fresh meat, two stoves, 10 gallons of gasoline and three unarmed Chicom booby traps in an area of thick nipa palm 16 miles southwest of Saigon.

4th Inf Div

A reconnaissance platoon of the 1st Bn., 14th Inf., 4th Infantry Division killed three NVA soldiers in a brief fight 13 miles northeast of Ban Me Thuot on Dec. 11.

On Dec. 8, men of Co. D, 1st Bn., 8th Inf. found and destroyed a deserted NVA fishing camp. Found in and around the camp were six large nets, a ton of rice,

two recently-dug fighting positions, 100 punji sticks, and 50 spider holes.

25th Inf Div

On Dec. 14, men of the 2nd Bn., 34th Armor, 25th Infantry Division found a large anti-personnel mine, seven RPG rounds, five hand grenades, four Bangalore torpedoes and 50 rounds of explosives on the lower slopes of Nui Ba Den. As they were removing them, they came under enemy fire.

The dismounted tankers combined with artillery and U.S. Air Force tactical air strikes and gunship support to kill 10 enemy soldiers.

In an unrelated ground action the same day, men of the 2nd Bn., 12th Inf. battled an enemy force in the Ho Bo Woods, 11 miles north of Cu Chi, killing nine NVA soldiers and detaining another.

Also the same day, soldiers of Co. D, 2nd Bn., 14th Inf., on a routine patrol in the Citadel region, eight miles northwest of Cu Chi, found 10 40-pound Chicom claymore mines stored in a hole.

Seven NVA soldiers were killed and another one detained by men of Co. C, 3rd Bn., 22nd Inf. on Dec. 10, as the enemy tried unsuccessfully to penetrate FB Crook, 14 miles northwest of Tay Ninh City. The men of Co. C were aided by the big guns of the 7th Bn., 11th Arty. in the encounter. Three RPG launchers with 13 rounds, three AK47 rifles, 43 Chicom hand grenades and 40 satchel charges were captured in the action.

Six more NVA soldiers were killed the same day in the southern section of the Ho Bo Woods eight miles northwest of Cu Chi by a light fire team and artillerymen of the 1st Bn., 8th Arty.

Also on Dec. 10, members of C Troop, 3rd Squadron, 4th Cav. discovered nine NVA bodies in the waist-high grass slightly further north in the Ho Bo Woods. The enemy had been killed the previous day by Sheridan tracks.

173rd Abn Bde

Men of Co. A, 4th Bn., 503rd Inf., 173rd Airborne Brigade engaged an undetermined-sized Communist force on Dec. 12 about nine miles northeast of LZ English and killed nine NVA regulars while detaining a tenth who claimed he was the sergeant major of the 90th NVA Sapper Bn. Helicopter gunships of the 173rd Airborne Brigade also took part in the action.

101st Abn Div

Elements of the 3rd Bn., 187th Inf., 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) killed two VC in two fire fights five miles north of Hue on Dec. 12. Thirteen VC suspects were detained and three AK47 rifles captured in the action.

The same day, men of Co. D, 2nd Bn., 327th Inf. engaged and killed three enemy soldiers and captured their individual weapons eight miles southeast of Camp Eagle.

On Dec. 11, members of Co. C, 2nd Squadron, 17th Cav. spotted an unknown-sized enemy force from their helicopters 36 miles west of Camp Enari and killed four with minigun and rocket fire.

Two days later, an aerial rifle platoon of C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 17th Cav. killed two VC soldiers and captured seven individual weapons in their area of operations.

199th Inf Bde

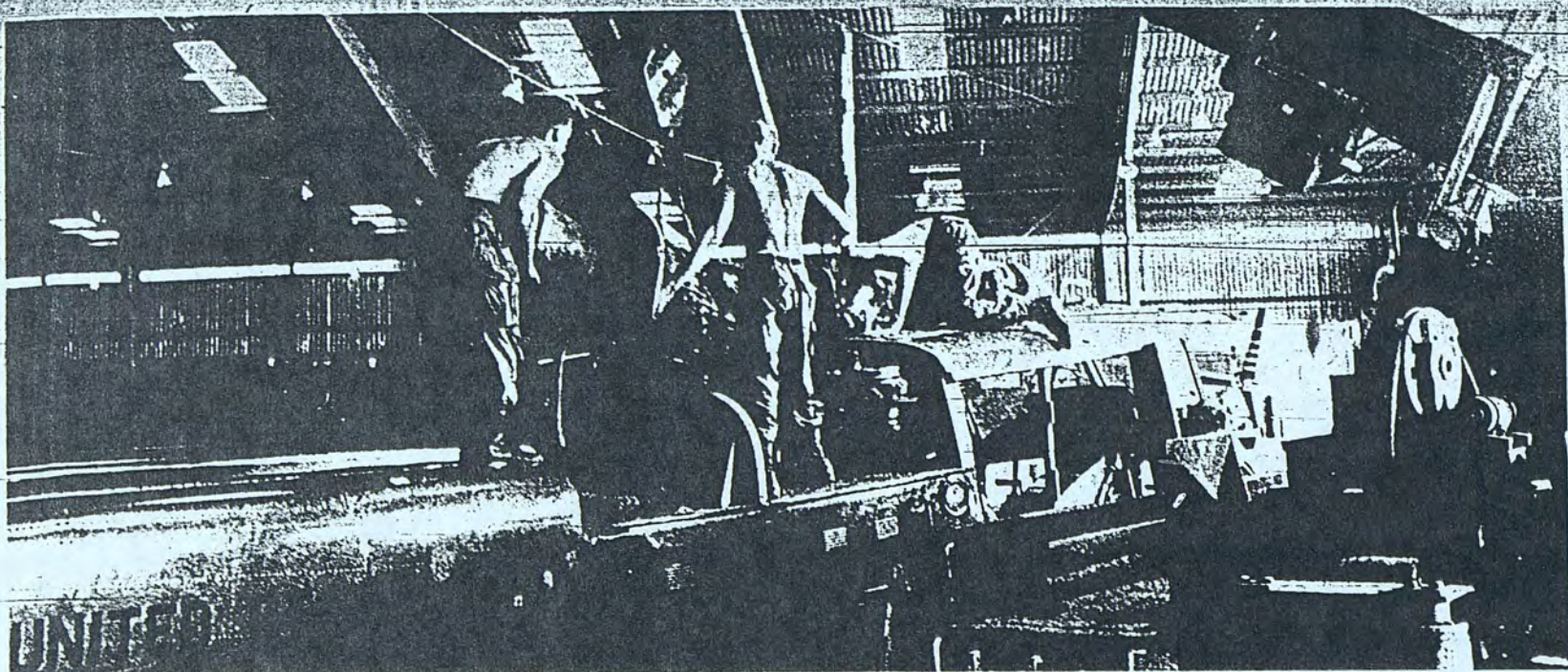
On Dec. 10, men of Co. B, 3rd Bn., 7th Inf., 199th Light Infantry Brigade skirmished briefly with an undetermined-sized enemy force 14 miles southeast of Xuan Loc. The infantrymen killed two Communists and detained another two VC suspects in the contact.

1st Inf Div

On Dec. 12, Co. D, 1st Bn., 28th Inf., 1st Infantry Division jumped what they thought was a three-man NVA patrol, killing all three in an area 23 miles northwest of Lai Khe. The action triggered two and a half hours of heavy fighting. Supported by 1st Aviation gunships and U.S. Air Force fighter bombers, the infantrymen killed an additional eight Communists.



RUMBLING THROUGH the rubber trees, an infantry element riding aboard an armored personnel carrier (APC) searches a rubber plantation southeast of Tay Ninh City. The squad-toting APC, from the 4th Bn., 23rd Inf., 25th Infantry Division was participating in a sweep of the area.



The engine crew mounts a new power plant in less than 15 minutes

Support unit 'fights' battle of nuts, bolts

CU CHI—Often in a war where combat troops are in constant contact with the enemy, the support units "in the rear" who keep the fighting men supplied with the best available equipment are often forgotten.

Ground troops are supported by logistics, artillery and air operations. Each of these supporting units draws its strength from additional support elements.

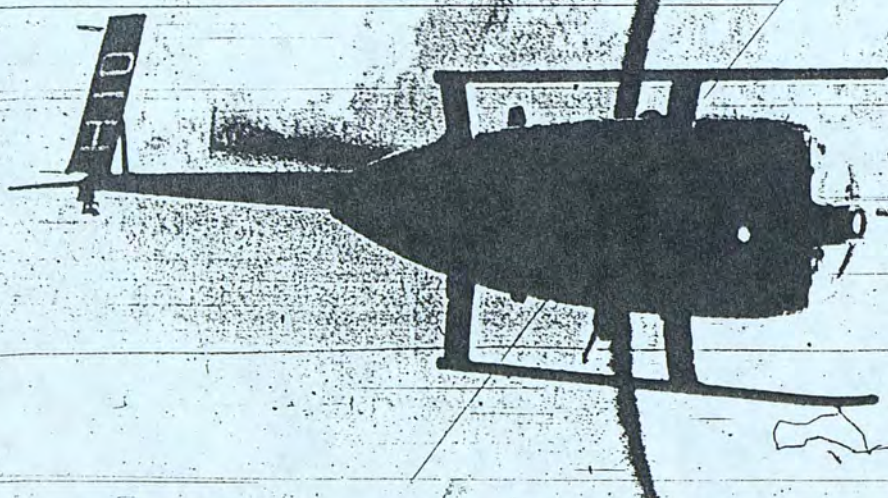
One of these "behind the action" groups is Co. E, 725th Maintenance Bn., 25th Infantry Division. The company provides maintenance support for the helicopter aircraft of the division.

Its job is to keep the helicopters in top flying condition. From the smallest vibration adjustment to major body work, engine repair and armament control, Co. E is responsible for all maintenance functions.

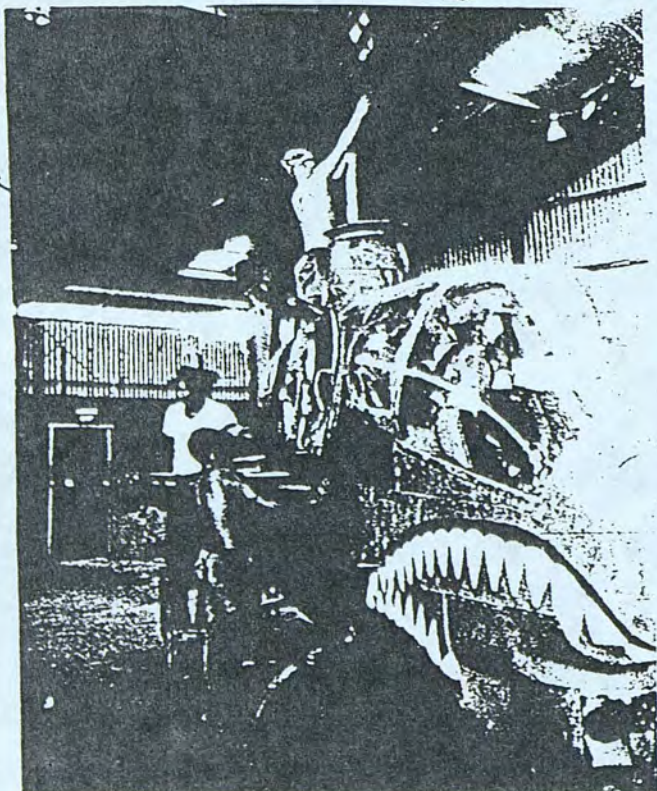
Field maintenance on 85 aircraft is the primary task of the company. The helicopters come from Co. A and Co. B, 25th Avn. Bn.; D Troop, 3rd Squadron, 4th Cav., division artillery and the three infantry brigades of the division.

Units such as Co. E maintain the support that enable the ground troops to have the often-needed help for successfully defeating the enemy.

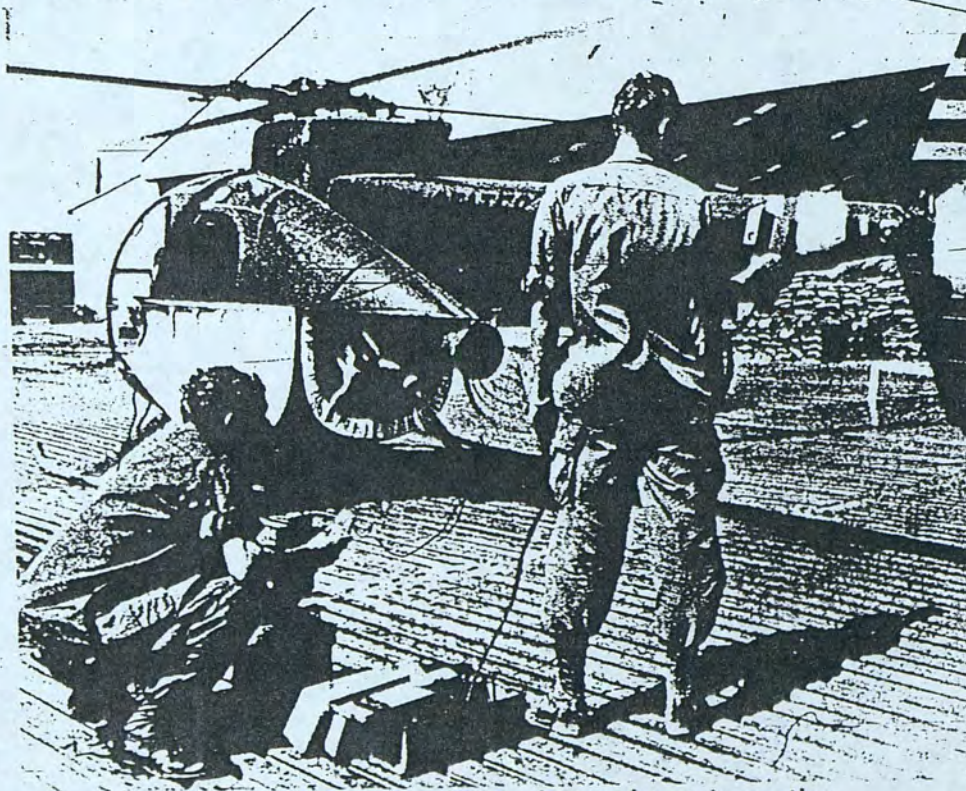
For the men of the division-level support unit, the hours are long and often tedious. But without the aid offered by such units, aircraft would not continue to fly in support of ground actions.



All repaired choppers have to undergo a thorough test flight



A repair crew works on a Cobra's transmission



A technician conducts an electrical test inspection