

SECTION III – The History of the 7th Armored Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry in Vietnam

In keeping with the traditions set by past VHPA Directories, the Directory Committee presents a few pages to support the theme of this edition – This History of the 7th Armored Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry in Vietnam. Due to page limits, only a portion of this material is printed in this paper edition. The complete Section III is on the CD edition and the membership directory web site on <http://www.vhpaservices.com>.

It is important for all readers of the VHPA Annual Membership Directory to know that there is no “hidden message here” by presenting this unit’s history in this edition. Neither the VHPA as an organization nor the Directory Committee are trying to “make any statement here” that this unit is or was better or somehow deserving of special treatment versus other units that served in Southeast Asian during the Vietnam War Era. This history is simply one good example for the material that makes up part of the VHPA’s legacy. As with all pieces of the VHPA’s legacy, they are worthy of collection, preservation, and addition to The Vietnam Archive at Texas Tech University.

The following six pages are simply an extract from the full history. The goal in selecting these six pages is to present the reader with samples for the history to display the “richness” of the material in the full history. Warning: The narrative on one page does not continue to the next page in this six-page extract.

The History of the 7th Armored Squadron, 17th Air Cavalry

This text, made available by the 7/17th Air Cav Association, is copyright (c) 2011 by Michael G. Law or the author, all rights reserved. This text may be used, printed, and archived in accordance with the Fair Use provisions of U.S. Copyright law. This text may not be archived, printed, or redistributed in any form for a fee, without the consent of the copyright holder. This notice must accompany any redistribution of the text.

First published as the 48-page History Section in the 1992 VHPA Membership Directory, the extensively updated 7/17th Cav history is published again as the History Section in the 2011 VHPA Membership Directory. Please report all updates to Mike Law as Historian of the 7/17th Air Cav Association (AKA Ruthless Riders Association).

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	1
Background Information - The Lineage of Air Cavalry	8
Background Information - Air Cavalry in Vietnam	9
1966	9
Activation	9
November 1966	9
Squadron Patch	10
1967	10
Deployment Preparations.....	10
January 1967.....	10
February 1967.....	11
March 1967.....	13
June 1967.....	13
Aircraft Details	13
July 1967.....	15
August 1967.....	19
October 1967	22
Background Information about the Pleiku Area of Vietnam and the 4 th Infantry Division	26

SP4 Don "Shane" Schoenemann joined D Troop at Ft Knox. He served as 2nd Platoon Leader's jeep driver both at Ft Knox and in Vietnam. At the 2006 Squadron Reunion Don displayed several photos of his jeep outside D Troop's Orderly Room at Ft Knox and he provided the following comments: I have attached pictures taken in 1967. D Troop was the first Troop to use Snoopy as an emblem. The color print shows 1LT Bill Baker (his nickname was "Wild Bill") holding the real Snoopy and myself as the driver. This same attachment has a black & white photo showing the front end of my jeep. Notice the license plate! None other than Snoopy. The bumper clearly shows 1A7R17Cav and the right corner shows D26 - my radio call numbers. Also look at the edge of the color picture, you will see Snoopy under D/7/17 on the sign. The actually dog named Snoopy left us a few weeks before we departed for Vietnam. All five of our Scout jeeps had Snoopy license plates. 2nd Platoon also had Baker's Raiders. I believe the Snoopy design even ended up on MAJ Emrick's helicopter when we got to Vietnam. [Editor's Note: Someone brought a D Troop patch that included Snoopy in the design to a Squadron Reunion about 2000. No one in the room had seen anything like it. The person had picked it up at a flea market. Many of us were rather skeptical of the design, but calls to some of the original D Troopers quickly changed all that!]



1LT Baker, SP4 Schoenemann & Snoopy.



D Troop Snoopy patch.

March 1967

PFC Homer Gwyn Huie recalls: After Basic I went to Ft Dix to Supply School to earn the 76Y10 MOS then I went to a Quarter Master Supply course at Ft Lee. There were about 20 guys in that course. It lasted about six weeks total and I was given the 76Y20 MOS. Basically this qualified me to work in the weapons side of Supply at the Squadron S-4 level. It was Good Friday when I reported into the 7/17th Cav at Ft Knox. Because of the Easter holidays no one was there save this one clerk. He said he could give me a pillow and a blanket but everything else was locked up until Monday but that it was OK with him if I just went to town and got a hotel. There was another new guy there, so we shared the hotel cost. On Monday I reported to MAJ Brown. I remember he looked over my records and announced to the clerk and 1st SGT that the Troop's new Armor had just walked in the door. Basically my job was to secure, store, and take care of all the weapons in the Squadron. I'm certain everyone remembers that in a state-side unit all the weapons are locked up with their basic load of ammo. I had been trained to assemble and disassemble all the small arms weapons up to and including a 50-cal machine gun and including the miniguns and 106 RR. I also order parts for these weapons. I remember when CPT Basta joined HHT. Naturally all pilots were issued 38s and he hated it. I had a 45. One day we were firing the pistols and I noticed that he not only preferred the 45 but was very good with it. So I asked him if he wanted that for his personal weapon. He was delighted with that idea! So I put a new barrel on it and signed it out of him. We had another gentleman named Jerry Dean Bahr with the 76Y10 MOS. He handled all of the supplies and supply records. He was a married man and stayed off post with his wife and baby whenever possible. He could also type about 90 words a minute! He quickly became the Squadron Supply Clerk and I stayed with the weapons.

Aircraft Details

The OH-6A Cayuse had the following dimensions and characteristics: length: 30 feet (9m), weight: 1,160lbs (519kg), payload: 930lbs (415kg), cruise speed: 150mph (240kph), and range: 380 miles (610km). The

For Wednesday, the 15th, Rick Schoeny's Diary reads: "We were up and ready to pull pitch by 5:30. We went to the east of Enari and dropped our ground troops to secure an LZ so that we could shoot autorotations. My first couple were pretty messed up but they settled down after that. CPT Doty bought the troop booze today because he got his gold leaf. Last night two C-130s landed at Dak To and they were mortared and we had five gunships up there at the time. Walley Raible [WO1 Ron "Walley" Raible] was flying one ship and he knocked out a mortar during some pretty rough fighting and we think he'll get the DFC for it. Our first hero."

16 Nov - First OH-6A Shot Down - C Troop had been flying some "ash & trash" but today was their first operational mission. The VHPA Helicopter database has a C Troop OH-6A #65-13000 with three un-named individuals on board sustaining battle damage that could equate to Tom's account. The VHPA record has a date of the 20th.

WO Tom Percy provides the following: WO Fred Nicely, Blueghost 17, was the scout with the first team. When I arrived on station, he briefed me that they had seen nothing and were basically screening ahead of the 2/1 Armored Cav pushing toward a village reported to be an enemy base camp. The terrain was rolling hills covered by thick, tall trees. Periodically there were clearings which held several rice paddies and a small village with 10 to 12 hooches. There was a reinforced trail or road leading through the area from village to village and the armored folks basically followed this road. I was Blueghost 18, flying scout in an OH-6A for the second team and Greg Ross and "Wild Bill" Owens were flying a C model gun. I made my initial pass over the open terrain toward the village at a fairly high rate of speed because that is what we had been told to do to save our butt. As I neared the village I noticed what I'd never seen before but had heard about, spider holes. There were four or five of them running along this path leading toward the village. I pointed this out to my gunner, Ed Gay, and turned the ship around for a second look. As we came back around, they threw open the covers, came up out of the holes and started shooting at us with AK-47s and bolt action rifles. There were four or five of them. Of course my voice goes up several octaves and I'm screaming "Receiving Fire." My gunner was so excited that he threw the smoke out without pulling the safety pin. Greg's saying "Where's the fire coming from?" I'm saying "Back there! Back there!" And not giving him very good directions at all, I made a sort of U turn at the end of this open area and started back toward the village so we could mark. I did a little zigging and zagging this time and we took some hits. Again my voice is up at least six octaves and out goes the smoke. But for some reason or other, it may have been a dud or it sank in some water before it could completely ignite, there was just a little trickle of smoke from the grenade. So I turned around just before the village and started back again. This time the smoke did get out in the correct area. I'm flying with my head looking left and adjusting Greg's rockets. You know - "A little more to the left. Add 50 to that pair." And Ed says "Mr. Percy ... ah ... tree!!" I looked up and saw the biggest tree I've ever seen almost dead in my flight path!! So I hit left everything and miss the tree by what seemed like inches but was most likely a couple of yards. This, however, was part of the VC plan as they had a claymore mine or something hanging in the tree. The explosion went off and sheared the tail rotor drive shaft. Just as the ship was starting to yaw, the engine made this terrible winding sound and quit. That corrected the yaw and I went straight another 50 or so meters before running out of most everything. The words of my civilian flight instructor at Wolters came into my ears: "There will always be a place to put the aircraft down in time of emergency." I remember thinking - "Yah, if you're so right you #@%&* - why am I going right into these trees?" So I did a zero airspeed autorotation and pulled everything I had at tree top level. We fell about 30 or 40 feet through the trees and then went inverted with the rotor blades sort of chopping a hole as we came down. When we came to a stop, I turned off the electrical system and started working with my harness. Unfortunately the seat belt part had been installed in the aircraft backwards and I am hanging upside down in it worrying that the ship would catch fire and explode. The maintenance people later said that I almost had the webbing worked in two. My fingers were sure bloody I remember that. The cyclic had banged my shin up a little, my observer had wet his pants, and the gunner had been scratched by the M-60 as it banged around; so we really weren't hurt at all. We took just a few smokes (I think we had lost a few on the way down or something) and our weapons. I remembered the E&E training from Rucker to move away from the aircraft about 50 yards so if the VC came and shot up the aircraft, we wouldn't be hurt. We

A Troop Aircraft Data for the period July through December 1969

MODEL	TAIL NUMBER	HOURS FLOWN	AIR FRAME	HOURS FLOWN	AIR FRAME	HOURS FLOWN	AIR FRAME	HOURS FLOWN	AIR FRAME	HOURS FLOWN	AIR FRAME	HOURS FLOWN	AIR FRAME	COMMENTS A/7/17 Cav
		6907	6907	6908	6908	6909	6909	6910	6910	6911	6911	6912	6912	
OH6A	6512942	14	524	25	549	37	586	104	690	15	705	32	737	
OH6A	6607886	77	488	89	577	47	624	Accident on 690922 See WO1 Dahl & SP4 Snader						
OH6A	6607932									41	202	150	352	From HUGHES ACFT Repair
OH6A	6617763	44	775	74	849	68	917	3	930					To 79 TRANS CO
OH6A	6617788	91	1025											Battle Damage & Loss on 690802
OH6A	6716073				From 79 th TC CO			10	172	LTI on 691116 An Khe Sapper Attack				
OH6A	6716241	4	517	51	568	47	615	156	771	17	788	18	806	
OH6A	6716245									25	35			From HUGHES ACFT To 604 TRANS CO
OH6A	6716250				From Hughes Aircraft Repair					70	435	155	590	LTI 691230 See CPT Robinson & PFC Joel
OH6A	6716293	From D/1/4 Cav		53	721	96	817	117	934	LTI on 691116 An Khe Sapper Attack				
OH6A	6716361	92	710	94	804	1	805	63	868	43	911	135	1046	
OH6A	6716553											40	359	From HHC 17CAG 17AVN
OH6A	6716634	24	169	57	226	53	279	14	293	96	389	93	482	
OH6A	6716653	22	296	76	372	94	466	79	545	LTI on 691116 An Khe Sapper Attack				
OH6A	6716666			93	308	100	408	112	520	88	608	114	722	
OH6A	6716676	92	93	87	180	79	259	24	283	LTI on 691116 An Khe Sapper Attack				
OH6A	Total	460		699		575		679		395		737		

This data comes from the VHPA's copy of the Army Goldbook database that contains a monthly report by aircraft of hours flown, accumulative hours on the airframe, and the unit. Data from the VHPA's Helicopter database that contains details from accident reports, battle damage reports (including crew injuries) plus aircraft disposition (repaired or removed from inventory). The 'From' unit identifies the previous unit prior to being assigned to this 7/17th Cav unit. The 'To' unit identified the unit who received the aircraft from this 7/17th Cav unit. The 79th Transportation Company (Aircraft Direct Support) was located at Qui Nhon. The 388th Transportation Company (Aircraft Direct Support) was located at Vung Tau. LTI means Lost To Inventory. The Army used this term to mean the aircraft was destroyed and therefore removed from inventory. The 355 AVN CO 'unit' is thought to be a code rather than an actual unit. The code seems to indicate that the aircraft was either returned to the Army for reissue or returned to CONUS for inspection, repair, and/or reissue. ARADMAC is the acronym for Army Aeronautical Depot Maint Center and generally denotes that this aircraft was repaired by the 1st Transportation Battalion resident on the USNS Corpus Christie Bay.

568th TC Detachment and 288th Signal Detachment integrated into A Troop

569th TC Detachment and 414th Signal Detachment integrated into B Troop

412th TC Detachment and 238th Signal Detachment integrated into C Troop

On the 21st, according to the Squadron Commander, LTC Rudy DeFrance, a new TO&E went into effect that officially had a LT as the infantry rifle platoon leader in each ARP. It also integrated the former direct support maintenance and avionics detachments into each ACT. Thus the 568th TC Detachment was deactivated and the resources integrated with A Troop's Maintenance Platoon. The same happened to the 569th TC Detachment at B Troop and the 412th TC Detachment at C Troop. The 288th Signal Detachment was deactivated and its resources integrated with A Troop. The 414th Signal Detachment was deactivated and its resources integrated with B Troop. The 238th Signal Detachment was deactivated and its resources integrated with C Troop.

On the 21st, while working northeast of Pleiku, A Troop made contact with elements of an NVA sapper battalion. For three days, A Troop employed their Guns, artillery, and airstrikes on this unit. The battle started when both LOHs in a Scout team were shot down and burned. The official histories are somewhat at odds on this point. The Squadron OR-LL said a Huey went down while the unit history says two LOHs. The VHPA Helicopter database has battle damage and loss records for to A Troop OH-6As #67-16311 and #66-07860 at grid AR887606. **1LT Lanny John Wallace, CW2 Marvin Leroy Wagner, WO1 Phillip Gerald Wright, and SP4 Walter Joseph Kacsock** died that day. The Wall database gives the following tour start date and MOS data: Kacsock, 29 Nov 1969, 11B40; Wagner, 4 Oct 1969, 100B; Wallace, 25 May 1970, 1204; Wright, 23 Jun 1970, 100B.

CPT Gary Downs remembers: That day we were staging out of Holloway because our AO was the Ia Krom and southern Dak Bla valleys. I remember one LOH had been shot up pretty good, so we sent them back to camp and called for the other team. This area was hot because the NVA had been moving units around Kontum, through these valleys and on toward the Mang Yang Pass. I also remember being like a traffic cop during those days; constantly coordinating airstrikes, gunships, arty, etc., etc. There were lots of targets. We even used the 361st Guns and that was sort of rare. Anyway, one of the Guns or maybe it was Opns back at Holloway mentioned that the first team hadn't checked in yet. We got to looking around and saw a column of smoke between us and Holloway. We hurried over there and found the two burnings hulls of the LOHs. It was really sad. The only thing we could figure is that one had flown up to get a close look at the other and they had had a mid-air. We put the Blues in quickly and secured their bodies.

CPT Ralph Foster recalls: I definitely remember the day my Supply Warrant, Marvin Wagner, who also flew with the Scouts crashed. He always wanted to go out with the Scouts whenever he could. That day, he was teamed with a 1LT (in another LOH). Can't recall his name, but we called him 'Car-54.' In his previous life he had been a cop. They had a midair and all aboard were killed. We think one of them took a hit from the ground and the second LOH was trying to see how bad the damage was and got too close.

SGT Anthony Morton shared: "When I first got to A Troop SP4 Walter Kacsock befriended me and showed me around. He was a clerk then and later volunteered to fly. I was always thankful for his friendship."

WO Hubert M. "Mike" Cochran joined the squadron during late July. He recalls: I arrived in country at Long Binh some time around 18-20 July 1970. I proceeded from Long Binh to the 17th Combat Aviation Group Headquarters at Nha Trang and on to the 7/17 Squadron Headquarters at Pleiku. C/7/17 at An Khe was my final destination. The day or so that I spent at Pleiku and my first day in C Troop let me know that, yes, this was a shooting war. One of the troops, A or B, I can't recall which, at Pleiku had one or two OH-6s shot down the day I arrived at Pleiku. Air strikes could be seen from the Squadron area hitting the location where the LOH(s) took fire. We passed through the Mang Yang Pass on the way from Pleiku to An Khe and I learned the interesting story connected with this pass about a French unit that was ambushed there. The day I arrived at An Khe, C Troop had an OH-6 shot up and the pilot was medically evacuated. Late that afternoon the troop had a cookout. A deer that had been shot in the AO and slung back by Huey provided enough meat to feed everyone. It was easy to see that my tour was going to be filled with a lot of crazy, unexpected and

A Troop Leadership Positions

Rank	Name	From	To	Status/Comments
Troop Commander				
MAJ	Carver, Dudley J.	4FEB67	22JAN68	WIA, evaced now deceased
MAJ	Inglett, Robert A.	22JAN68	4MAY68	
MAJ	Doty, Richard V.	4MAY68	31AUG68	
MAJ	Glover, William T.	31AUG68	25FEB69	** To Command HHT
MAJ	Marshall, Richard H.	25FEB69	25AUG69	**
MAJ	Maxson, Ronald G.	25AUG69	27FEB70	** Sqdn OR-LL states 24 Feb
MAJ	Rackley, Robert L.	27FEB70	18AUG70	**
MAJ	Trussell, James B.	18AUG70	FEB71	
MAJ	Fuller, George D.	FEB71	27AUG71	
MAJ	Turecek, Jack L.	27AUG71	The End	
First Sergeant				
1SG	Mercer, John A.	67	68	
Executive Officer				
MAJ	Wood, Douglas J.	4FEB67	13JAN68	
MAJ	Inglett, Robert A.	13JAN68	22JAN68	To A Troop CO
MAJ	Dantzler, William D. Jr.	28JAN68	18APR68	From B Troop
CPT	Saunders, Phillip A.	18APR68	26MAY68	
CPT	McDevitt, Coleman J.	26MAY68	8SEP68	
CPT	Jordan, Homer R.	8SEP68	15NOV68	
MAJ	Winslow, Roger D. Jr.	15NOV68	1JAN69	
CPT	Rosenberger, Friedrich	1JAN69	1JUL69	** Start date could be earlier
CPT	Pennington, Paul T. Error! Reference source not found.	1JUL69	21OCT69	** To Sqdn S-1
CPT	Helmke, Lester C.	21OCT69	26APR70	** To HHT CO
CPT	Hennies, Clyde A.	26APR70	15JUN70	**
CPT	Paduano, Ralph	15JUN70	10SEP70	**
CPT	Flenniken, Douglas	10SEP70	71	**
CPT	Hickman, James L.	20APR71	10SEP71	
CPT	Miller, Billy J.	10SEP71	The End	
Operations Officer				
MAJ	Inglett, Robert A.	67	13JAN68	To A Troop XO
CPT	Saunders, Phil A.	13JAN68	24APR68	
CPT	Rosenberger, Friedrich			Opns prior to becomes XO
CPT	Autry, Robert D.			From Jim DeWitt
CPT	Downs, Gary	27SEP70	NOV70	
CPT	Clausen, Dennis J.	NOV70	1APR71	
CPT	Dress, Harold J.	1APR71	20JUL71	
CPT	Hite, Alfred J.	20JUL71	10OCT71	
CPT	Harmer, Ronald T.	10OCT71	72	
Aero-Scout Platoon Commander				
CPT	Young, Robert S.	4FEB67	28FEB68	To HHT
CPT	Rayl, Charles R.	28FEB68	9JUN68	
CPT	Lee, Clarence E.	9JUN68	1OCT68	
CPT	Autry, Robert D.	1OCT68	9JAN69	
CPT	Holbrook, Mark	9JAN69	APR69	Dates from Mark