

VOL II No 7

16th COMBAT AVIATION GROUP, CHU LAI, RVN

APRIL 9, 1969

176th AHC RESCUE NEAR TIEN PHOU RATES 21 IMPACT AWARDS - 176 AHC-10

Two Silver Stars, 11 Distinguished Flying Crosses, and eight Air Medals with "V" device for valor were presented by Americal Division Deputy Commander Brigadier General Wallace L. Clement at award ceremonies held at the 176th Assault Helicopter Company maintenance ramp, Chu Lai, RVN on Mar. 26, 1969, the largest number of "impact" awards ever given by the Americal Division for a single action.

It was 1755 hours, Mar. 19, 1969--First Lieutenant William D. Bristow, Alhambra, Calif., aircraft commander of a 14th Combat Aviation Battalion Huey "slick" had been flying resupply missions in support of Americal ground units operating near Tien Phouc.

Bristow had hauled some food and ammunition and picked up a medevac on the last sortie of the day. As the aircraft commander emerged from the remote landing zone, a waiting enemy directed heavy automatic weapons fire at the chopper.

Private First Class Robert Wilhelm, Tolley, N.C., the Huey crew chief, and Specialist Four Boyd L. Kettle, Durango, Colo., doorgunner, responsively began suppressing the hostile fire with their M-60 machineguns.

1LT Bristow's craft pressed for more altitude, and then came a fateful lurching sensation--flames started spreading through the helicopter--they had been hit,

Crew and passengers placed weapons fire into the enemy position while LT Bristow attempted to land the burning chopper in the nearest possible place. Co-pilot Warrant Officer Paul E. Lent, Richmond Springs, N.Y. radioed two distress calls, giving call sign and location.

As 14th CAB aircraft number 516 touched ground, flames were lapping the cockpit; the medevac patient, passengers and crew evacuated the ship as its fuel cell exploded--the Huey "slick" burned like an inferno.

Approaching darkness added a note of fear to the stranded men. Bristow checked weapons and ammunition that would secure their defense--an M-16 rifle with 35 shells, and a .38 caliber pistol with 20 rounds.

WO1 Lent's call for help was luckily monitored by another aircraft and the message was relayed to the 176th Assault Helicopter Company operations. Two 176th AHC "Musket" gunships and
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(CONT'D) I M P A C T

two "Minuteman" slicks, already airborne, immediately flew toward the crash area. Meanwhile, Major Ronald C. Metcalf, Hickory, N.C. commanding officer of the 176th AHC, departed "Minuteman Pad" in a recovery aircraft with maintenance and medical personnel aboard.

At 1830 hours there were three "Minuteman" slicks and two "Musket" gunships orbiting the downed aircraft. Enemy ground fire increased as the choppers inched towards the burning "516."

Major Metcalf's first impression was that no one could have survived the burning aircraft, but instructed pilot WO1 Jerry W. Herman, Wooster, Ohio, to lead his "Musket" gunship light fire team over the area to look for survivors. Several passes over the stretch of land surrounding the crash site revealed nothing, and the gunship team temporarily diverted from the area to provide cover for a ground patrol that had been ambushed while attempting to secure the downed ship.

When the 176th AHC gunships returned to the crash site, they failed to discover any trace of the downed crew and passengers. Hope was dwindling when "Musket" aircraft commander, WO1 Richard K. McLean, Miami, Fla., exclaimed what he had first thought was a muzzle flash of a weapon, was actually a strobe light.

Co-pilot of burning "516," WO1 Lent, had spotted the rescue ships making low passes over the crash site, from which the stranded group had moved about 75 meters away to the cover offered by a hedgerow. Lent had used LT Bristow's strobe and crawled into the middle of a rice paddy where he lay on

A W A R D S (CONT'D)

his back and directed the blinking beam of light at the gunships overhead.

WO1 Bruce W. Shaffer, Washington, D.C., a "Minuteman" slick pilot, on monitoring the conversation about the strobe, immediately volunteered to extract the crash victims. Major Metcalf quickly organized the three slicks and gunship team and WO1 Shaffer began a high overhead approach to the flickering strobe.

As he descended through the intensifying enemy fire, 176th AHC Commander Metcalf, flying his "slick" like a gunship, followed behind Shaffer to land cover. WO1 Gary L. Williams, Phoenix, Ariz., swooped in as Major Metcalf's wingman.

As WO1 Shaffer landed, "516" crewmen WO1 Lent and SP4 Kettle hustled the other five crash survivors into the rescue craft. Lent darted for the waiting chopper among a hail of bullets; "There were rounds hitting all around me," he said, "I thought I was a gonner."

SP4 Kettle was last on the ship as he returned the enemy fire with his M-16 rifle.

176th AHC firepower and knowhow made possible a successful rescue, and qualified 20 members of the "Minutemen" and "Muskets" for impact awards.

Receiving the following decorations were:

Silver Star- WO1 Bruce W. Shaffer, Washington, D.C., and WO1 John M. Blair, Spokane, Wash.

Distinguished Flying Cross- SP4 Robert O. Allison, St. Helens, Ore. SP4 Antonio K. Taylor, New York City, Major Ronald C. Metcalf, Hickory, N.C., 1LT James D. Horton, Troy, Pa., WO1 Gary L. Williams, Phoenix, Ariz., WO1 Glen E. Goff, Knightstown, Ind.

WO1 Jerry W. Herman, Wooster, Ohio, WO1 Thomas G. Melin, Clyde Park, Mont., WO1 Richard McLean, Miami, Fla., WO1 Philip S. Lee, Norfolk, Va., and 1LT William D. Bristow, Alhambra, Calif., a member of the 14th CAB.

Air Medal with "V" device for valor- SP4 Steven R. Cundry, Springfield, Mo., SP4 Phillip R. Varnum, La Crosse, Wis., SP5 Lawrence J. Silva, San Leandro, Calif., SP4 Billy L. Parsons, Trona, Calif., SP4 Jerry L. Mitchell, Reading, Pa., SP4 Richard C. Sear, Akron, Ohio, SP4 Richard R. Conover, Levittown, N.Y., and SP4 John C. Gruidl, Minneapolis, Minn.

Awards for WO1 Paul E. Lent, PFC Robert Wilhelm, and SP4 Boyd L. Kettle of the 14th CAB are pending.

THE FALCON

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PLUG SAVES CH-47

CHU LAI, RVN, 178th ASHC-IO

While on a normal resupply mission northwest of Chu Lai recently, "Boxcar 158" commanded by Warrant Officer Ronald E. Olivetti, Sunnyvale, Calif., and piloted by WO1 Nilo L. Harter, Miami, Fla., of the 178th Assault Support Helicopter Company, encountered intense hostile fire resulting in a round ripping into the aircraft transmission, and warning lights and dropping pressure gauges signaled the end of the flight.

Downed aircraft are not new to the 178th ASHC, but the incidents that took place in this situation were.

The immediate report forwarded back to the 178th maintenance team was that the aircraft definitely would have to be recovered by a CH54 "Skycrane," because of its weight and flying condition.

Maintenance men, Chief Warrant Officer Alfred J. Romaszewski, Mineral Wells, Tex., and First Lieutenant William R. Thibeault, Richmond, Va., realizing that the aircraft could not be recovered by a CH54 until the following day, decided to go to the disabled Chinook. They realized that the aircraft was in a very conspicuous location and its chances of lasting the night in the barrage of mortars that was sure to come were very slight despite the hasty security that was established around the aircraft.

After evaluating the damage, Mr. Romaszewski offered an extraordinary solution. Hoping that no real damage was done to the interior of the transmission, he fashioned a wooden plug for the gaping hole and the transmission was refilled with oil. Specialist Six John W. Reid, Weiser, Ottawa, Canada, and SP5 Melvin C. Young, Maricopa, Ariz., volunteered to crew the ship as CW3 Romaszewski and 1LT Thibeault attempted to fly it out.

The engines were started and all looked well except for one blinking chip detector warning light; Romaszewski decided to make the attempt.

The ailing transmission caused the flight to be made at a low level while emerging from the enemy infested area without the benefit of door gunners. Mr. Romaszewski had selected to take minimum crew, and both Specialists Reid and Young were occupied at holding the wooden plug to keep it from being shaken loose by the vibration of the

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MAN'S FRIEND ?

CHU LAI, RVN, 132nd ASHC-IO

The 132nd Assault Support Helicopter Company, located in Chu Lai, seems to have become somewhat of a refuge for stray canines, all of which are well versed in the arts of begging and seeking an occasional pat on the head. Who could possibly turn his back on some pup with big, sad eyes? W.P. Fowler, Phenix City, Ala., that's who!

Specialist Six Fowler of the 132nd ASHC, who should, no doubt, receive some form of award for his humane act, chanced upon a cute little pup while returning from the mess hall. The pup, seemingly friendly, looked hungry and lonesome.

Whether he was lonesome is not certain, he was however, hungry. For his good samaritan intentions, SP6 Fowler was rewarded with a bite on the hand, and he then had to submit to a series of shots or be issued a muzzle.

SP6 Fowler decided to take the shots, and the pooch was captured and is under the care of the veterinarians.

Fowler has learned a lesson the hard way. To prevent the same thing from happening to other would-be humanitarians, he suggests that anyone who wants to earn a star for his crown for feeding some mongrel that is new to the area, "feed him something besides yourself."



SEND
THE FALCON
HOME

COMPUTER CORNER

By Bud Goode, AFPS

When the new American Basketball Association was formed last year they introduced the 3-point field goal. In the last few seconds of a tight game it can be a dramatic, game-winning score.

Every night of the season, basketball games are won and lost by only two points. This is one reason the exciting three-point shot was born. Assume you are pulling for the Kentucky Colonels. Your team is down by one field goal, only seconds remain on the clock. But sharpshooting Lou Dampier has the ball. He moves outside the three-point arc. Whoosh! Three points pop up on the score board, and Kentucky wins.

But—and it is a big but—what does the three-point field goal mean to the rest of the league? Kentucky has Louie Dampier, hitting 127 of 365 three-pointers for a .348 average; and big Darel Carrier, also Kentucky, is second in the league, sinking 89 of 231, tops in long shot accuracy at .385. But what does the three-point long shot do for the rest of the league?

Computer Corner poured the season statistics into our Data Processing Enterprises, Inc. electronic sports analyzer (through games of Feb. 24) and came up with those results:

Team (East Div.)	3-Pt. Per Game	FGM Per Game	Per Cent W/ L
MIAMI	.43		.554
MINNESOTA	3.40		.534
KENTUCKY	3.90		.509
INDIANA	1.20		.492
NEW YORK	.86		.286
(West Div.)			
OAKLAND	.45		.804
DENVER	1.00		.586
NEW ORLEANS	1.60		.508
DALLAS	1.10		.473
LOS ANGELES	1.80		.421
HOUSTON	1.20		.327

Interesting result, here. According to Computer Corner's analysis of the three-pointer, the more long shots the average ABA team tries, the more it loses. That is to say, there is a negative co-relation between 3-point field goals made per game and a team's won/lost record. The two top teams, Miami in the East, and Oakland in the West, average less than one-half a 3-point field goal per game—but are winning.

BEST FOOD IN TOWN

OHU LAI, RVN, 16th CAG-IO

The Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 16th Combat Aviation Group mess hall officially opened its doors at 1700 hours, March 23rd, when Colonel Hanz K. Druener, 16th CAG commander, and Sergeant First Class Henry J. Williams, mess steward, jointly cut a ribbon admitting soldiers to eat the first meal to be served.

SFC Williams, Wichita Falls, Tex., encountered numerous problems in getting the mess hall operation underway, but the results were worth the effort and the waiting.

Built from an empty shell of a run-down building, the new mess hall boasts a complete, modern set of "Garrison-type" cooking equipment. It also is accommodated with hot and cold running water, installed sinks, and even an electric meat slicer.

According to Mess Steward Williams, the brilliant, eye-appealing, and well lit eating area was the outcome of many contributors. The Army, Navy, and Marines all devoted time into the mess hall construction, and SFC Williams added 16th CAG carpenter's Specialist Five Brantley Harris, Atlanta, Ga., SP5 Marvin Israelson, Pine River, Minn., and SP4 Richard Swain, Alpine, Ala., were indispensable in finishing the construction.

Of course, well finished mess halls and fancy cooking equipment are great, but the food is of prime concern. The 16th CAG cooks, SP5 Leon Ashmore, Lexington, S.C., SP5 William Brady, Fitchburg, Mass., SP5 James Butcher, Chicago, Ill., SP4 Pedro Lopez-Gonzalez, Aqua Dilla, P.R., SP4 Richard Odom, Bath, S.C., and SP4 Harry Wampler, Durocker, Ill., are putting out what SRC Williams and other members of 16th CAG headquarters consider some of the best meals in Vietnam.

When asked what the secret of his cooking success was, Williams replied, "I just follow the cookbook—I tell my cooks to do the same—no secret!"

(PLUG SAVES AIRCRAFT Cont'd from Pg 3)
massive transmission.

Specialists Reid and Young both suffered burns on their hands from holding that all important homemade plug in the transmission of ailing "Boxcar 458."

The 178th Assault Support Helicopter Company offers "hats off" to an able crew that did what had to be done.

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16TH CAG BACKS ORPHANAGE

CHU LAI, RVN, 16th CAG-IO

The Tabitha Orphanage at An Ton will highlight the 16th Combat Aviation Group civic action program for 1969 according to Major David Greer, acting project officer.

Located on Highway One, the Tabitha Protestant Orphanage has 85 homeless children between the ages of 4 and 12-years-old. In addition to living quarters, there are five classrooms provided to help with teaching the children to read and write.

The orphanage, originally supported by the 14th Combat Aviation Battalion, will now be backed by the entire 16th Group. Through volunteer payline contributions, about 80,800 piasters per month have been made available to the children's home.

In addition to financial support, the 16th CAG gives material help with surplus foodstuffs, clothing and other items contributed by families and churches of servicemen in the States.

Among successful projects completed are the capping of the orphanage waterwell and the supplying of a hand pump and water storage area. The children's living areas have been rescreened and

playground areas improved in addition to bunkers being constructed for the orphans' protection.

Projects to be completed in the near future include improvements made by a team of 16th CAG personnel, led by Sergeant First Class Emory Johnson, Chamblee, Ga.

Further screening, and applications of insecticide is planned, to control insects and other pests as part of the Group's effort to upgrade the sanitary standards of the orphanage.

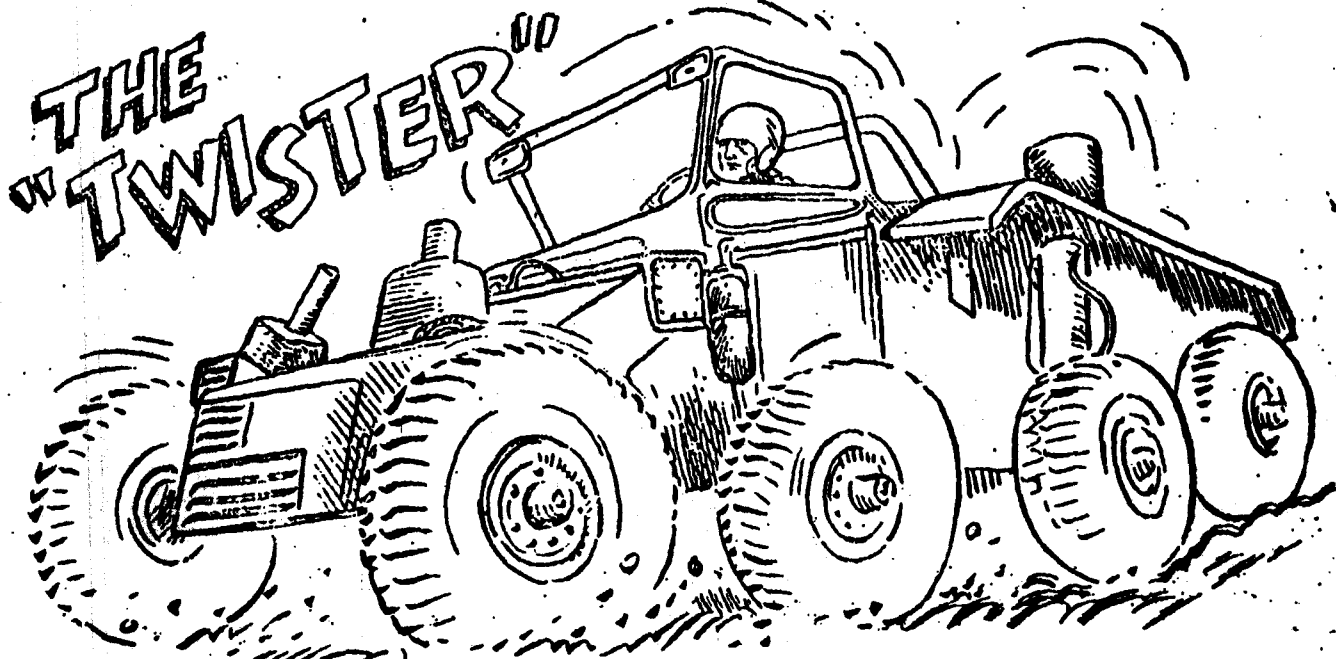
Gravel will be obtained and technical assistance given to help build living quarters where an orphanage resident director will live.

Acting project officer, Major Greer, encourages all members of the "Falcon Group" to visit the Tabitha Orphanage and see first-hand accomplishments of the civic action program and what is yet to be done.

Suggestions on what the 16th CAG can do to better the orphanage are welcomed and may be submitted to the Group Orphanage Advisory Council via Major Greer, 16th CAG Surgeon's Office, telephone 3582.

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The "Twister" is the U.S. Army's new eight-wheel-drive vehicle that can move at high speed over rough ground where even jeeps and tanks can't go. The five-ton vehicle has two main body sections joined by a pivotal yoke that allows each unit freedom of movement while all eight wheels remain on the ground.