



DRAGON FIRE

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"IN GOD WE TRUST,
EVERYTHING ELSE WE CHECK"

PATHFINDERS IN CONTACT--361st 28 KBA's

Availability, mission accomplishment, professionalism and pride in accomplishment; that's what the maintenance game is all about. These are the bywords of the 665th Transportation Detachment.

The 665th Transportation Detachment is a (Direct support maintenance detachment) assigned to the 361st Aviation Company (Escort), 52nd Aviation Battalion Combat. The 361st Aviation Company is a Cobra unit with a general support mission in the II Corps area. The 361st, famed 'Pink Panthers' are best known for their actions in the Ben Het-Dak To battle in May-June 1969. The 'Pink Panthers' normally support either the 4th Infantry Division or CIDG units and the 5th Special Forces advisers.

Availability is the key work that aviation commanders live by. The 665th provides this for the Pink Panthers and achieved a 68% availability

Con't Page 4

A five man Pathfinder team of the 52nd Battalion Pathfinder Detachment came in contact with a large enemy force 13 kilometers north of Dak Pek (50 miles NW of Pleiku). The Pathfinder team was participating in search operations northwest of the Central Highlands Provincial Capital of Pleiku. According to CPT Vernon Klinger, Long Beach, California, several aircraft have been reported missing in the area and CPT Klinger's Pathfinder Detachment from the 52nd Aviation Battalion Combat at Pleiku joined in the search. Klinger explained, "One of the search aircraft spotted what looked like the wreckage of one of the missing planes, so we were called upon to go in and see what we could find in the area."

PFC Mark Westhoven, Napoleon, Ohio, one of the Pathfinders said, "There was no LZ big enough for our slick to land in so our five man team jumped from the aircraft as it hovered about 20 feet above some scrub type trees."

Con't Page 3