

CHAPTER V

REFLECTIONS

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"In memory's eye I can see them now - forming grimly for the attack, blue lipped, covered with sludge and mud, chilled by the wind and rain of the foxhole, driving home to their objective, and to the judgment seat of God. I do not know the dignity of their birth, but I do know the glory of their death." These words by GENERAL OF THE ARMY DOUGLAS MACARTHUR, spoken on 14 July 1935, ring true today. Three decades later, and in another strange part of the world, Americans answer the call. The methods of warfare have changed, but the sacrifices, hardships, and the many faces of death remain the same.

During this first year of combat operations, the "VAGABONDS OF VIETNAM" have traced an odyssey the length and width of Vietnam. The 10th Combat Aviation Battalion has a record second to none. The feats of our aviation crews are legendary among ground troops we support. Our successful operations, and contributions toward the effort to stem the rising tide of Communism have not been without cost. Our aviators and enlisted crew members have been called upon to perform many acts requiring courage, and valor above and beyond the call of duty. Many have never returned. They have given their lives fighting for the principles for which we stand.

It is with humility that we dedicate this chapter to our fallen comrades. In our future endeavors, let us be ever mindful of these men, and the principles for which they gave their all.

AWARDS FOR VALOR

In a unit that is as heavily involved in combat operations as is the 10th Combat Aviation Battalion, valor is a relative thing. Daily, our aviators are faced with dangers that are more real and deadly than one could ever imagine in a peacetime situation. Combat assaults under enemy fire are commonplace; gun-strikes against heavily defended positions are almost a matter of routine; and emergency extractions of surrounded patrols are an unpleasantly recurring fact of life. Yet, out of the vast potpourri of heroic actions experienced by members of the 10th Combat Aviation Battalion, we have those individuals whose intrepid gallantry is so conspicuous as to single them out for special recognition. The following synopsis of awards for calendar year 1966 discloses those individuals in the 10th Combat Aviation Battalion who so exemplified the type of heroism common to the "VAGABONDS OF VIETNAM":

3 January - CAPTAIN JOHN R. JENKS, 05307351, and CAPTAIN LA RUE R. ROSENGRANT, 05312474, 48th Assault Helicopter Company, were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for making an emergency extraction of a trapped reconnaissance patrol near PHAN RANG. They defied heavy enemy automatic weapons fire to make the rescue.

10 January - FIRST LIEUTENANT VICTOR L. DONNEL, 098409, 48th Assault Helicopter Company, was recommended for the Silver Star and CAPTAIN ROBERT J. FRAZIER JR., 084709, also of the 48th, was recommended for the Distinguished Flying Cross for rescuing a five man American patrol that was surrounded by an estimated 100 Viet Cong. While braving heavy enemy fire, they extracted the men from a tiny pick-up zone and carried them to safety.

12 January - WARRANT OFFICER DAVID L. GREEN JR., W315227, 117th Assault Helicopter Company was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for rescuing the lone survivor of a helicopter that crashed in the ocean. He lowered his helicopter until the skids were actually below the surface of the choppy water, allowing the injured man to crawl on the skid. He then skillfully dragged the casualty through the water to safety.

25 January - FIRST LIEUTENANT WILLIE M. WILSON, 05320415, 145th Airlift Platoon was recommended for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross for braving enemy fire to rescue two American soldiers who had been trapped by the Viet Cong.

28 January - MAJOR KEVIN E. MURPHY, 04021336, and CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER ROBERT A. JOHNSON, W3430291, 145th Airlift Platoon, were recommended for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross for extracting a five man reconnaissance team that was surrounded by a Viet Cong platoon.

29 January - FIRST LIEUTENANT JAMES A. JACKSON, 05320239, and SECOND LIEUTENANT RICHARD R. BOUCK, 05710611, 145th Airlift Platoon were recommended for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross for rescuing a single survivor of a Special Forces patrol who was surrounded by a Viet Cong force that was rapidly closing in on him.

29 January - MAJOR KEVIN E. MURPHY, 04021336, CAPTAIN JOHN W. GREEN, III, 05412896, FIRST LIEUTENANT JUNICHI E. YAHIRO, 05406165, FIRST LIEUTENANT JAMES A. JACKSON, 05320329, FIRST LIEUTENANT RICHARD R. BOUCK, 05710611, FIRST LIEUTENANT EDWARD O. LEACH, 05914828, FIRST LIEUTENANT WILLIE M. WILSON, 05320415, and CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER ROBERT A. JOHNSON, W3430291, 145th Airlift Platoon, were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. These men were flying four utility helicopters that extracted twenty one Americans who had become surrounded by a vastly superior force of Viet Cong. The rescue would not have been possible, however, without the assistance of two gunships that poured deadly suppressive fire on the enemy positions. These two gunships were piloted by the following men who were also awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for their actions: CAPTAIN JOE B. THURSTON JR., 091708, CAPTAIN DAVID E. HURD, 05405408, FIRST LIEUTENANT FRANK L. MACPHERSON, 05318531, and CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER GARY D. MARTIN, W3200581.

30 January - MAJOR CURTIS L. GARRETT JR., 01890237, and WARRANT OFFICER DAVID SPURGEON, W3152755, 117th Assault Helicopter Company, were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for making two emergency medical evacuations at night through deadly enemy fire.

3 February - FIRST LIEUTENANT KENNETH B. MC LAUGHLIN, 05220501, 129th Assault Helicopter Company was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for skillfully crash landing his aircraft in the jungle after experiencing a sudden loss of power. The landing was accomplished with no injuries to the crew and only minor damage to the helicopter.

7 February - CAPTAIN DONALD R. KELSEY, 05307234, and CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER BENJAMIN F. WILSON, 48th Assault Helicopter Company, were recommended for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross for providing cover for a ship carrying an emergency re-supply of ammunition to an American force under enemy fire, the pilots of the UH-1D carrying the ammunition, MAJOR RALPH W. BROMAN, 078242, and FIRST LIEUTENANT PAUL SILVERBERGER, were also recommended for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross for their courageous action.

8 February - CAPTAIN REX S. SAINDON, 05700172, 117th Assault Helicopter Company, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for saving the crew of a crashed helicopter just off-shore at TUY HOA. Although the updrafts and other turbulence made the approach almost impossible, CAPTAIN SAINDON skillfully touched down on a boulder and evacuated all personnel.

11 February - CAPTAIN JOHN B. DAHILL, 086039, and FIRST LIEUTENANT LOUIS L. SEXAUER, 05321131, 145th Airlift Platoon, were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for piloting a gunship in support of a Vietnamese combat mission near TAN TRU. They poured a devastating volume of fire on a Viet Cong force that was trapped by the Vietnamese troops.

28 February - WARRANT OFFICER HOYE D. TIBBETTS, W3152348, 129th Assault Helicopter Company, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for leading two armed helicopters supporting a combat assault near TUY HOA. He coordinated, led and directed close air support against the insurgent positions, all the while receiving intense hostile ground fire.

4 March - MAJOR LAVERE W. BINDRUP, OF103657, and CAPTAIN VINCENT G. RIPOLL, 02309987, of the 48th Assault Helicopter Company, were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for a night emergency medical evacuation of two wounded Americans while under fire.

4 March - CAPTAIN JOHN H. BOYSEN, 085919, and WARRANT OFFICER MERLE J. ARNOLD, W3152313, 129th Assault Helicopter Company, were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for each flying a helicopter loaded with emergency supplies to a unit that had been surrounded near TUY HOA. After approaching the landing zone through murderous enemy fire, the two ships succeeded in delivering their precious cargo.

6 March - CAPTAIN JOSEPH C. GROSS III, OF106635, 129th Assault Helicopter Company, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for leading a flight of three utility helicopters during a vital re-supply mission near TUY HOA. Although his flight was continually exposed to intensive hostile fire, CAPTAIN GROSS unerringly led his three ships in a successful re-supply of the friendly forces.

9 March - MAJOR LAVERE W. BINDRUP, OF103657, and FIRST LIEUTENANT WINDELL V. GREEN, 05406175, 48th Assault Helicopter Company, were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for making a successful emergency landing after their ship was raked by enemy fire, saving the ship from destruction and the crew from almost certain injury.

12 March - MAJOR RALPH W. BROMAN, 078242, 48th Assault Helicopter Company, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for leading a major night assault in the vicinity of TUY HOA. Although the visibility was poor and the landing zone almost impossible to discern in the darkness, MAJOR BROMAN successfully led his flight through a hail of automatic weapons fire.

21 March - MAJOR AUGUSTUS L. SHEIDER JR., 082237, CAPTAIN REX E. SAINDON, 05700172, and CAPTAIN KENNETH W. SCHERZ, OF105820, 117th Assault Helicopter Company, were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for making repeated re-supplies of critically needed ammunition to a beleagured American force near TUY HOA. Although exposed to vicious enemy fire, with the added difficulty of darkness to hinder them, the mission was completed.

27 March - FIRST LIEUTENANT FREDDIE J. USSERY, 05318284, 129th Assault Helicopter Company, was recommended for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross for delivering a critically needed re-supply of ammunition and other critical cargo through heavy fire to an assault force near TUY HOA.

28 March - CWO DAVID P. DAVIS, W3151827, and CWO GEORGE M. DENT, W320546, 129th Assault Helicopter Company, were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for the extraction of a trapped LRRP Team near TUY HOA. While CWO DENT's pickup ship braved the enemy bullets to make the pickup, CWO DAVIS's gunship poured deadly suppressive fire on the enemy positions.

30 March - MAJOR RONALD H. MERRITT, OF100428, and CAPTAIN HARRY T. WHETZEL, 02293801, 129th Assault Helicopter Company, were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for the extraction of a reconnaissance patrol under extremely heavy fire near TUY HOA. Directing suppressive machine gun fire on the enemy position, they accomplished the mission.

1 April - CAPTAIN DONALD R. KELSEY, 05307234, 48th Assault Helicopter Company, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for a medical evacuation near QUI NHON. In order to allow the "Dust Off" ship to make the rescue, CAPTAIN KELSEY placed his ship between the enemy positions and the rescue ship, drawing all of the enemy fire.

3 April - WARRANT OFFICER RICHARD N. BLUNT, W1352780, WARRANT OFFICER GERALD W. RAGLAND, W2216065, and PFC GLEN A. SCHNEIDER, RA 16825711, 117th Assault Helicopter Company, were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for flying continuously for ten hours in support of a combat operation near TUY HOA. Their ship continuously defied heavy enemy fire to deliver ammunition and medical supplies, and to make many medical evacuations.

3 April - CAPTAIN RICHARD D. AKRE, 05704107, and FIRST LIEUTENANT HOMER J. JORDAN, 05318362, 117th Assault Helicopter Company, were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for providing gun cover for an UH-1D attempting an emergency extraction of a small patrol near DONG TRE. These two pilots unleashed a torrent of deadly fire at the enemy, allowing the pickup ship to make a successful extraction.

3 April - MAJOR RONALD H. MERRITT, OF100428, 129th Assault Helicopter Company was recommended for the Distinguished Flying Cross for extracting three members of a reconnaissance patrol who were escaping from a Viet Cong force. Without the aid of gunships, MAJOR MERRITT bravely picked up the trio and flew them to safety.

4 April - CAPTAIN HARRY T. WHETZEL, 02293801, CWO WALTER L. FISHER, W3150265, and CWO ROLF E. SCHOELKOPF, W3151736, 129th Assault Helicopter Company, were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for escorting an unarmed helicopter to extract a LRRP near TUY HOA. When the UH-1D was hit by hostile fire and crashed, the gun crew immediately jettisoned their rocket pods and went to the rescue, picking up the stranded troops and flying the heavily loaded aircraft to safety.

6 April - CAPTAIN JOHN H. BOYSEN, 085919, 129th Assault Helicopter Company, was recommended for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross for flying more than ten hours in continuous support of combat operations near TUY HOA. Although his aircraft was under intense fire during the entire time, he successfully accomplished his mission.

21 April - MAJOR HARRY J. ZELIMER, 01935738, and MAJOR AUGUSTUS L. SHEIDER JR., 082237, 117th Assault Helicopter Company, were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for landing a reconnaissance team near PHAN THIET. They flew to the selected landing zone only to be met by heavy automatic weapons fire. They placed suppressive fire on the enemy positions and inserted the reconnaissance team in an alternate landing zone.

24 April - MAJOR LAVERE W. BINDRUP, OF103657, 48th Assault Helicopter Company, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for finding and guiding a lost helicopter to safety. MAJOR BINDRUP flew at tree top level over the enemy infested territory, located the lost ship, and led it to safety.

18 May - CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER THOMAS J. SCHAUMBERG, W3200555, and WARRANT JOHN W. HUDSON, 129th Assault Helicopter Company, were recommended for the Distinguished Flying Cross for extracting an LRRP Team that was engaged in a bitter fire fight with a superior Viet Cong force. Without any gunship support, these pilots landed in a small jungle clearing, touched one skid to the steep slope, and picked up the patrol.

2 June - CAPTAIN LLOYD A. SCHMID, 02284767, and CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER ROSS E. MARKLE, W3200530, of the 48th Assault Helicopter Company, were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for providing gun cover for helicopters re-supplying a friendly Vietnamese force that was in danger of being overrun. By placing accurate suppressive fire on the well armed enemy, these two pilots allowed the successful re-supply of the embattled Vietnamese.

3 June - CAPTAIN RICHARD D. AKRE, 05704170, FIRST LIEUTENANT HOMER R. JORDON, 05318362, CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER HAROLD R. HEBER, W2215844, and WARRANT OFFICER EDWIN R. CONSTANT, W3152516, 117th Assault Helicopter Company, were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for aiding a Vietnamese unit engaged in a bitter fire fight with an estimated regiment of Viet Cong near DAK TO. Although their gunships received multiple hits, and several crewmembers were injured, they poured a devastating amount of fire on the enemy.

7 June - On this date, a large Viet Cong force suddenly attempted to overrun an artillery position near DAK TO. The Commanding General of the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, and his staff were visiting the artillery positions at the time. His command and control helicopter was airborne, circling the area when the vicious attack commenced. The crew of the ship was composed of CAPTAIN JAMES F. PRICE, 05515117, A/C, CWO GEORGE A. WECKERLE, W2214352, STAFF SERGEANT ALLEN L. RUSSELL, RA55658190, and SPECIALIST FIVE ORVILLE L. STOVER, RA 19781824, of the 48th Assault Helicopter Company. They flew right into the midst of the battle, with the crew chief and gunner pouring fire at the enemy. The pilots maneuvered their ship to try and disrupt the enemy attack. These four men received the Distinguished Flying Cross. After the attack commenced, Joker gunships rushed to the scene. They directed an enormous volume of fire at the attackers, and inflicted major casualties on the enemy. The two crews were composed of CAPTAIN DONALD R. KELSEY, 05307234, CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER DOMINIC L. GUCCIONE, STAFF SERGEANT ROBERT E. SHANNON, RA15556582, SPECIALIST FIVE ALOIS MUELLER, SPECIALIST FOUR BOBBY R. HAMBY, and PRIVATE FIRST CLASS FLOYD E. GREER, US 54364461, also of the 48th Assault Helicopter Company. These men were all recommended for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross.

8 June - The following six members of the 48th Assault Helicopter Company were recommended for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross: MAJOR HARRY MCK ROPER, 066246, CAPTAIN VINCENT G. RIPOLE, 02309987, CAPTAIN JAMES F. PRICE, 05515117, CWO GEORGE A. WECKERIE, W2214352, FIRST LIEUTENANT WILLIAM T. RAGAN, 05320764, CAPTAIN MORRIS R. STEENSON, for providing gunship cover for Air Force CH-43's winching twenty six wounded men out of the jungle near DAK TO. While the vulnerable CH-43's were attempting to winch out the wounded, they came under heavy fire from fortified gun positions. The two gunships immediately attacked the enemy positions, and allowed the successful extraction of the twenty six American wounded.

9 June - MAJOR HARRY MCK ROPER, 066246, 48th Assault Helicopter Company, and MAJOR FRANCIS D. BETTINGER, 085481, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10th Combat Aviation Battalion, were recommended for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross for making a night reconnaissance under enemy fire to better evaluate an area for a forthcoming assault. The ultimate success of the assault was due to the excellence of their reconnaissance.

9 June - CAPTAIN LESLIE J. HEPLER, 086249, was awarded the Silver Star and WARRANT OFFICER HAROLD D. HARRISON, PRIVATE FIRST CLASS DAVID L. ENSLIN, RA 13847584, PRIVATE FIRST CLASS CHARLES U. CAMPBELL, RA12738634, 117th Assault Helicopter Company, were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for flying a command and control mission for the 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division. During more than ten consecutive hours of hazardous flying, these brave men repeatedly made emergency ammunition re-supplies, medical evacuations, and flew command personnel into many positions actively engaged in battle, while exposed to heavy hostile fire.

10 June - WARRANT OFFICER RICHARD J. FEDOROWICZ, W3152592, was recommended for the Distinguished Flying Cross, and the rest of his crew, composed of WARRANT OFFICER RICHARD N. BLUNT, SPECIALIST FOURTH CLASS GEORGE O. PEAY, and PRIVATE FIRST CLASS BRUCE T. BLACKBURN for the Distinguished Flying Cross for making an emergency re-supply of critically needed medical supplies to a unit involved in a bloody battle with a Viet Cong force. Although they came under murderous machine gun fire from several locations, the re-supply mission was accomplished.

11 June - CAPTAIN GREGG S. BOND, OF106505, 117th Assault Helicopter Company was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for providing gun cover for a "Slick" in search of survivors of a crashed helicopter near DAK TO. CAPTAIN BOND led the rescue ship to the site of the survivors, laying a heavy blanket of fire on enemy gun positions.

13 June - CAPTAIN MORRIS R. STEENSON, 05310067, and CAPTAIN JAMES F. PRICE, 48th Assault Helicopter Company, were recommended for the Distinguished Flying Cross for actions while on a search and destroy mission near DAK TO. After discovering a sizeable Viet Cong force in the jungle, they launched an attack on the enemy. Although their ship was hit four times, they persisted in their attack and led reinforcements to the area.

13 June - WARRANT OFFICER RICHARD J. FEDOROWICZ, W3153592, and WARRANT OFFICER RICHARD R. IZOLD, W3152908, 117th Assault Helicopter Company were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for locating and extracting a Special Forces Team that was trying to escape from a Viet Cong force near POLEI KLENG. With their machine guns firing, and a gunship providing deadly close-in fire support, the rescue was made. The gunship pilots, FIRST LIEUTENANT LARRY A. JEFFERIES, 05709520, and CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER HAROLD O. CROOKS, W2215624, 117th Assault Helicopter Company, were also awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for their courageous actions.

14 June - CAPTAIN JAMES A. MC CRACKEN, 05301776, was recommended for the Distinguished Flying Cross for providing gun cover for a UH-1D attempting to locate a six man reconnaissance patrol. CAPTAIN MC CRACKEN placed deadly fire on the enemy forces and drew the hostile fire away from the rescue ship, insuring the success of the mission. CAPTAIN MC CRACKEN was a member of the 129th A. H. C.

15 June - CAPTAIN FRANCIS J. RODDY, 05404368, 117th Assault Helicopter Company was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for extracting an LRRP Team that was in heavy contact with the enemy. CAPTAIN RODDY defied vicious enemy fire and rescued the six man patrol.

17 June - CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER CECIL C. GIBSON, W3151023, 129th Assault Helicopter Company was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for providing cover for a UH-1D that was to extract a besieged reconnaissance patrol. Arriving at the pickup site before the rescue ship, he immediately launched heavy gun runs on the enemy position, inflicting many casualties. He then escorted the rescue ship into the pickup zone, where the extraction was made.

18 June - MAJOR CARL R. JONES, 02266308, 48th Assault Helicopter Company, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for flying a UH-1B armed helicopter in support of a combat assault near DAK TO. When the assault ships came under heavy fire, MAJOR JONES established a fix on the enemy, fearlessly attacked their positions, and allowed the assault to continue.

16 July - MAJOR RICHARD T. CLINE, 04030723, and CAPTAIN RICHARD G. CHAPMAN JR., 02297661, 129th Assault Helicopter Company, were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for rescuing a badly outnumbered Special Forces Team near DAK TO. Although receiving heavy hostile fire, they skillfully made the pickup of the team.

26 July - MAJOR HARRY MCK ROPER JR., 066246, 48th Assault Helicopter Company, was recommended for the Distinguished Flying Cross for flying a UH-1D in support of combat operations near TUY HOA. After receiving a call stating that two injured men were stranded in a minefield, MAJOR ROPER unhesitatingly flew to the minefield, hovered his ship only inches off the ground, and rescued the injured men.

8 August - LIEUTENANT COLONEL BENJAMIN L. HARRISON was awarded the Silver Star and LIEUTENANT COLONEL FRANK R. WILSON was recommended for the same honor. On this date, while flying a command and control helicopter during the conduct of a major combat assault near TUY HOA, they received word that an American patrol had captured an important prisoner. They promptly flew to the patrol, which was in a bitter fire fight. Bravely defying the heavy enemy fire, they landed in the pickup zone. Since the area was so confined, three volunteers had to stay behind to allow a successful takeoff. After departing the area through a hail of bullets, LIEUTENANT COLONEL HARRISON and LIEUTENANT COLONEL WILSON delivered the valuable prisoner to an interrogation team. They then returned to the patrol's locations to pick up the men who had stayed behind. One of these volunteers was MAJOR FRANCIS D. BETTINGER, 085481, who was also recommended for the award of the Silver Star. After departing the helicopter, MAJOR BETTINGER immediately took his trio to reinforce the patrol. They became engaged in a fire fight with the enemy forces. When gunships approached the position, MAJOR BETTINGER directed their fire to the enemy strongholds. With the aid of the command and control ship, MAJOR BETTINGER and the trapped force were rescued from almost certain annihilation.

13 August - FIRST LIEUTENANT WHITNEY I. YOUNG JR., 05323085, 48th Assault Helicopter Company, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for extracting an LRRP Team near DONG TRE. Without the aid of any gunships, LIEUTENANT YOUNG flew right through the enemy fire to the site of the trapped team, calmly holding the ship on the ground until the team had boarded. He then flew through still more hostile fire to safety.

14 August - CAPTAIN LOUIS T. COX JR., 04031385, and WARRANT OFFICER RICHARD P. TAYLOR, 48th Assault Helicopter Company, were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for exfiltrating an LRRP Team near MY CANH. Because of the nature of the terrain, only two men at a time could be lifted out. These pilots made three trips into a difficult pickup zone under enemy fire to effect this rescue.

17 Aguust - WARRANT OFFICER STERLING J. ESSENMACHER, W3153045, 281st Assault Helicopter Company, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for making an ammunition re-supply into a Vietnamese force that was under heavy siege. Although under intense fire, he delivered the precious ammunition.

18 August - MAJOR CARL R. JONES, 02266308, CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER DOMINICK L. GUCCOINE, W3150624, 48th Assault Helicopter Company, were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for providing cover for a rescue helicopter that was attempting to rescue an LRRP Team near TUY HOA. The UH-1D pickup ship was flown by CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER THOMAS R. RAULSON, W3151094, who was also awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his heroism. While his ship approached the landing site with its machine guns blazing, the gunship poured a steady barrage of fire on the enemy positions, paving the way for the successful rescue of the patrol.

19 August - CAPTAIN PAUL R. LALUMIERE JR., 05405855, and CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER ARCHIE A. HARRELL, W3150783, 48th Assault Helicopter Company, were recommended for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross for rescuing an LRRP Team that had been ambushed near DONG TRE. By flying through heavy automatic weapons fire, and directing their machine gun fire at the enemy positions, these brave pilots made a daring rescue of the patrol.

19 August - CAPTAIN JAMES A. WARREN, OF103066, WARRANT OFFICER DANIEL A. SULANDER, and SPECIALIST FOURTH CLASS WILLIAM G. FOX, RAL6798760, were recommended for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross for exfiltrating an LRRP Team in PHOUIC LONG Province. By skillfully low leveling into the area, and bringing heavy fire on the enemy positions, the rescue was completed.

20 August - CAPTAIN JAMES I. McDOWELL, 090269, and CAPTAIN LAWRENCE E. PRAVECEK, 05514299, 48th Assault Helicopter Company, were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for exfiltrating a reconnaissance team from the jungle near DONG TRE. Although under fire from a force that had lain in ambush, they took the enemy force under fire and successfully rescued the team.

21 August - On this day, three gunships and three unarmed ships from the 281st Assault Helicopter Company were called to extract a reconnaissance patrol near PHOUIC LONG Province. These crews were composed of the following men: CAPTAIN THOMAS P. BUCKLEY, 05320552, WARRANT OFFICER RONALD O. GADDIS, W3152955, SERGEANT WILLIAM C. CARTER, RAL4832093, PRIVATE FIRST CLASS LAWRENCE WILLIAMS JR., RA 18723297, MAJOR CURTIS GARRETT, 01890237, MAJOR REINO O. OKSA, 071850, SPECIALIST FOURTH CLASS BENNIE J. COINS, RA 14909098, PRIVATE FIRST CLASS RICHARD T. COOPER, RA 56404064, CAPTAIN GENE THOMAS STOCKWELL, 05320239, WARRANT OFFICER DANIEL A. SULANDER, W3152892, SPECIALIST FIFTH CLASS HERSHEL CROSBY, RA 14882153, SPECIALIST FOURTH CLASS JOSEPH L. TURNER, RA 19806896, CAPTAIN LYNN F. COLEMAN, 083692, FIRST LIEUTENANT FRED B. PHILLIPS JR., 05710714, SERGEANT JAMES W. COFF, RA 13820564, SPECIALIST FIFTH CLASS FARRYL H. DAVIS, RA 17679187, CAPTAIN JAMES G. GOOD, 05309067.

FIRST LIEUTENANT JOHN J. HYATT, 05416591, SPECIALIST FOURTH CLASS ROBERT J. LONG, RA 19780623, PFC WILLIAM S. PERBEN, RA 14874918, and WARRANT OFFICER RONALD G. PALASCAK, W3152746, WARRANT OFFICER GARY D. O'CONNOR, W3152918, SPECIALIST FOURTH CLASS RONNIE B. LYNCH, US 53385294, SPECIALIST FOURTH CLASS RONALD R. SCHWARTZ, US 52618317. As the flight neared the pick-up zone, it came under murderous enemy fire. The six ships poured an enormous volume of murderous fire on the enemy, but their resistance was still strong. As the first rescue ship went into the pickup zone it received heavy fire and was shot down. As the gunships continued to deliver their deadly suppressive fire, the two remaining slicks managed to land and pick up both the patrol and the crew of the downed helicopter. All twenty-four men were recommended for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross.

21 August - MAJOR ALVERADO F. KYSAR JR., 083656, and CAPTAIN IVAN G. SWIFT, 02297583, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10th Combat Aviation Battalion and 48th Assault Helicopter Company respectively were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for making an emergency medical evacuation near TUY HOA. Another ship that had attempted the pickup had been damaged by intense fire and had to abandon the mission.

2 September - CAPTAIN GEORGE E. DAY, 087081, and FIRST LIEUTENANT WHITNEY L. YOUNG, 05323083, 48th Assault Helicopter Company, were recommended for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross for extracting a reconnaissance team that had been surrounded by a superior enemy force. Defying intense enemy fire, the two effected a daring rescue of the six man team.

4 September - CAPTAIN WILLIAM J. BRENDEN, 084958, and FIRST LIEUTENANT GENE T. STOCKWELL, 05320239, 281st Assault Helicopter Company, were recommended for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross for flying individual UH-1D helicopters involved in an extraction of a Special Forces LRBP Team. Defying heavy enemy fire, the two ships succeeded in making the rescue.

12 September - The following four members of the 48th Assault Helicopter Company were recommended for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross for rescuing a reconnaissance element that was surrounded by a superior Viet Cong force near TUY HOA. MAJOR JOEL J. WILLIAMS, 067532, MAJOR ROBERT L. YOUNG, 077243, SPECIALIST FOURTH CLASS DON J. KUHL, RA 19849673, and SPECIALIST FOURTH CLASS ROBERT W. KLINE, RA 16335220. After approaching the area through a rainy and overcast night, the aircraft was met by a hail of bullets as it approached the pickup zone. With the crew chief and gunner pouring devastating fire on the enemy positions, the two pilots executed the rescue without injuries or damage to the helicopter.

17 September - FIRST LIEUTENANT STEVEN B. DODGE, 05013874, and FIRST LIEUTENANT THOMAS M. WALLACE, 05711218, 129th Assault Helicopter Company, were recommended for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross for rescuing a "HAWK" team that had recently been inserted near TUY AN. The pilots had to navigate through overcast weather using a combination of time, distance and heading. The two pilots executed a perfect approach to a small landing zone in the Viet Cong infested area and completed the rescue.

28 September - CAPTAIN JOHN J. LIVINGSTON, OF100878, and CAPTAIN BRUCE J. DUBOV, 095011, 117th Assault Helicopter Company, were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for making a night emergency extraction of a reconnaissance patrol near TUY AN. The patrol was being pursued by a superior Viet Cong force. Although the sky was filled with tracers, they made their approach to a penlight in the small landing zone, touched one skid to the ground, rapidly loaded the patrol aboard, and flew them to safety.

7 October - CAPTAIN HARRY T. WHETZEL, 02293801, CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER ROBERT F. CHAMBERLAIN, W3152395, SPECIALIST FIFTH CLASS ROBERT W. GILLIAM, RA 19798594, and PRIVATE FIRST CLASS JOHNNY L. NEAL, US 55812782, 129th Assault Helicopter Company, were posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for their actions in supporting a Vietnamese company during a mission to secure a train near DONG BA THIN. When the train came under attack by an estimated platoon of Viet Cong, the brave crew immediately responded. Upon completing a strafing run, the aircraft was suddenly hit by intense ground fire, and crashed, killing all occupants.

20 October - CAPTAIN STEVEN B. DODGE, 05013874, and WARRANT OFFICER CARL DOHERTY JR., W3152947, 129th Assault Helicopter Company, were recommended for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross for extracting an LRRP Team near DONG TRE. As they approached the site of the insertion, they were met by intense enemy fire. At this moment, a gunship piloted by WARRANT OFFICER WILLIAM L. SMITH, W3153960, came on the scene. He placed his ship between the UH-1D and the enemy positions so as to protect the rescue ship. As both ships approached the pickup zone, the gunship was able to loose a devastating stream of fire on the enemy positions, allowing the pickup to take place. WARRANT OFFICER SMITH was also recommended for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross.

8 November - CAPTAIN CHARLES S. SIMERLY, OF109296, WARRANT OFFICER RICHARD J. MEYER, W3154218, SPECIALIST FIFTH CLASS MERLE W. MEARS, RA 13832086, and STAFF SERGEANT SIDNEY M. CHATMAN, RA 17548300, 129th Assault Helicopter Company, were recommended for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross for extracting a beleaguered seven man LRRP Team near DONG TRE. Although under an intense volume of fire while loading the wounded, the crew accurately returned the fire and picked up the patrol and flew them to safety.

11 November - CAPTAIN JOHN J. LIVINGSTON, OF100878, was posthumously awarded the Silver Star, and WARRANT OFFICER TERRENCE M. ROONEY, W3152825, SERGEANT MAYNARD J. HUMES, RA 16727170, and SPECIALIST FOURTH CLASS LOREN S. REEVES, US 55838313, 117th Assault Helicopter Company, were all posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for crewing an armed UH-1B helicopter providing gun cover for a combat mission near PLEI DJERENG. During the battle, this fearless crew volunteered to fly a direct assault on a well entrenched heavy machine gun position. As they attacked the position, they received numerous hits, and although CAPTAIN LIVINGSTON attempted to land the aircraft in a small clearing, it crashed in the jungle, killing the entire crew.

11 November - WARRANT OFFICER FLETCHER S. STITZLE, W1353072, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for flying in pursuit of two enemy soldiers fleeing a battle area near TUY HOA. Although the target of automatic weapons fire, WARRANT OFFICER STITZLE landed his aircraft while his passengers initiated a search for a suspected Viet Cong hideout.

30 November - FIRST LIEUTENANT EDWEN S. BRAGUE, 05623617, 129th Assault Helicopter Company, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for simulating an extraction of a reconnaissance element to enable the patrol to regain its clandestine status. When he arrived over the patrol's location, he immediately began drawing enemy fire. After skillfully deceiving the enemy and pretending to load the patrol, he called in artillery fire on the enemy position and remained in the area until it had been destroyed.

2 December - WARRANT OFFICER DANIEL A. SULANDER, W3152892, WARRANT OFFICER DONALD D. HARRISON, W1354175, SPECIALIST FOURTH CLASS LEE J. BOUDREAU, JR., and SPECIALIST FOURTH CLASS WILLIAM T. BODZICK, US 55826395, 281st Assault Helicopter Company, were recommended for the posthumous award of the Distinguished Flying Cross for extraction of a Special Forces team that was under heavy fire. Although no gunship cover was available, the brave crew initiated their approach through the intense enemy fire. As the helicopter attempted to depart the area with the patrol aboard, it received numerous hits. Although the pilots bravely tried to control the crippled aircraft, it crashed, killing the entire crew.

23 December - MAJOR HARRY MCK ROPER JR., 066246, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 10th Combat Aviation Battalion, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and MAJOR ALVERADO F. KYSAR JR., 083656, also of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, was recommended for the same honor for supporting a major combat assault near POLEI KLENG. As a flight of helicopters departed one of the pickup zones, one of the ships lost power and crashed. MAJOR ROPER and MAJOR KYSAR were immediately on the scene, calling rescue ships to the area and directing friendly fire on known enemy positions. Their poise and bravery allowed the crew of the fallen helicopter to be successfully rescued and flown to safety.

23 December - MAJOR HERSCHELL B. STEPHENS, 02269631, 117th Assault Helicopter Company was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for flying a UH-1D in search of a C-130 transport that had crashed near TUY HOA. After locating the downed ship, MAJOR STEPHENS, although wounded in the foot, bravely continued the mission until he was sure there were no survivors.

23 December - WARRANT OFFICER MICHAEL R. SMITH, W3153959, 129th Assault Helicopter Company, was recommended for the Distinguished Flying Cross for rescuing the crew of a ship that had crashed near KONTUM. Although he had to literally chop his way through the heavy jungle canopy with his rotor blades to get to his stricken comrades, he courageously and skillfully effected the rescue of the entire crew.

27 December - LIEUTENANT COLONEL BENJAMIN L. HARRISON, 065760, ³⁰¹ Commanding Officer, 10th Combat Aviation Battalion, was recommended for the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross for actions during the largest night combat assault ever attempted in the Republic of Vietnam. LIEUTENANT COLONEL HARRISON braved heavy enemy fire as he unhesitatingly led the flight through the darkness. His navigation was perfect, as all landing zones were assaulted precisely on schedule, despite the severe turbulence and gusty winds in the precipitous, jungle covered mountains.