

"DUST OFF"
AIR AMBULANCE PLATOON
326TH MEDICAL BATTALION
101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION (AIRMOBILE)

Commanding Officer: Major Robert R. Cloke
First Sergeant: SFC James T. Ratliff

Monthly News Letter

1 September 1968

August was another eventful month for the "old" 50th Med. I say "old" because on 14 August 1968 the official designation of the unit was changed to the Air Ambulance Platoon, 326th Medical Battalion, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile). In an impressive ceremony the new colors were presented to Major Cloke by LTC Bernard T. Mittenmeyer, Commander of the 326th Medical Battalion. The 50th is not gone, the colors will either remain in Vietnam to be taken by another unit, or go back to the states, where they can again lead the way at the front of a newly formed Detachment. We hope that the colors will mean as much to these new people as they have to us.

Again this month, the sound of building filled the area. More living space was needed for the growing strength of the platoon. The Seabees arrived and erected three new buildings for quarters, and one for the 326th Headquarters. This was an unexpected happening for us, for the first time since our arrival, we were not building, wiring or plumbing. We enjoyed the change! Sidewalk superintendents were plentiful, but the feeling was plain; given the materials we could have done better.

In the early afternoon of 25 August, during action near Hue, SP4 Martin was wounded in the right arm and side by enemy automatic weapons fire. He was immediately evacuated to the 22nd Surgical Hospital at Phu Bai for treatment. On 23 August SP4 Martin was awarded the Purple Heart Medal by LTC Mittenmeyer and now James Martin is on his way home. Our best goes out to SP4 Martin, he was an excellent crew chief, and we are all proud of him. His actions during the day of the 25th has earned for him a recommendation for the Silver Star Medal for extraordinary gallantry, above and beyond the call of duty.

Our unit is growing! With the buildup of strength to fill the ranks of the Platoon, many new faces are present. Arrivals during August are:

CAPTAIN ROBERT D. SAWYER
WO1 FRANCIS H. D. HICHENS III
PFC LAWRENCE HARRIS JR.
SP4 DONALD R. KERNES
SP4 DAVID E. PRUITT
PFC KARL T. WHITE
SP4 MICHAEL A. THOROUGHGOOD
SP5 JOHNNY L. COLE

PFC PAUL S. POLIZZI
PFC JAMES R. WALTERS
SP4 RICHARD L. CBEUG
PFC THOMAS E. COLLINS
PFC CAMIDULUS J. SASSO
SP4 CLEMENT G. GRILLO
SP4 GARY E. MUNOZ

We welcome these new people to the unit. There is a job for everyone.

Departures:

SP5 THOMAS J. KELLY -- To civilian life
SP4 JAMES E. STONER -- To civilian life
SP4 RUSSELL L. WRIGHT -- To civilian life
SP5 CHARLES T. CAHILL -- To Ft Hood, Texas
SP4 HUGH E. HOWELL -- To civilian life

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During their tour in Vietnam, the personnel that departed last month were awarded or presently recommended for the following total awards: One Silver Star, Five Bronze Stars, One Air Medal for Heroism, Two Army Commendation Medals, for Heroism, Three Army Commendation Medals for Service, Four United States Army Vietnam Certificates of Achievement, and Sixty Air Medals. That's quite a record!

During August, the unit performed the following tasks:

US <u>682</u>	Freeworld Forces <u>0</u>	Vietnamese Army <u>117</u>
POWs <u>26</u>	Vietnamese Civilians <u>131</u>	Other <u>0</u>
Killer/tracker dogs <u>3</u>	TOTAL <u>959</u>	
Average Aviator Time <u>44 hrs</u>	Hoist Missions <u>45</u>	

From 4 August to 19 August during Operation SOMERSET PLAIN in the Ashau Valley, the unit evacuated 362 patients and one dog. This was the largest operation that we have supported, and with only six (6) aircraft the unit again performed in an outstanding manner.

RERs during the month:

CW2 John Lama, to Kuala Lumpur
SP4 Patriamor E. Agullana, to the Phillipines
SP4 Jimmie G. Edwards, to Hong Kong

Proud Poppa: SP4 DAVID L. WOODS, a daughter, Barthena Heather, on 21 August 1968. CONGRATULATIONS!!!

The time is drawing close now for the original members of the 50th. We will be going home soon to our loved ones. It has been an eventful year. We will leave with mixed memories of Ft Polk, the USNS William Wiegal, (that fine troopship), Tuy Hoa, Ban Me Thout, The Dong Tre Valley, Landing Zones Sally-Bastogne-Eagles West and Normandy. We will always remember the Ashau Valley. On the lighter side, who can forget the volley ball games? It's the only game I know of that needs more referees than players to keep order!

This is my last News Letter and I want to thank the entire unit for their efforts to make this organization the finest of it's kind in Vietnam. We are leaving here proud of the unit and it's fine record of accomplishments, it's a record of working together all the way, doing the mission at 100% of our ability, and not tolerating anything second rate. Goodbye and God Bless.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

Mark E. Tucker
for RONNY E. PORTA
CAPTAIN, MSC
Public Information Officer