

RIPCORD REPORT

SPECIAL EDITION
NEWSLETTER

JULY 1986 — 16 YEARS LATER

For Friends and Survivors of FSB RIPCORD, RVN

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Screaming Eagle briefs





CHIP COLLINS- 1969 Ft. Lewis.

FOREWARD:

Several months ago, Chip and I discussed, by telephone, the newsletter and of course Ripcord. Since I own a commercial printing company in Arizona, I offered to help with the printing of the newsletter and try to improve the quality of the old photos.

About the time I was to start working on the newsletter, my company expanded and took on a weekly newspaper serving two cities in Central Arizona. This, as well as the Arizona National Guard, my wife, Linda, and our two children, seemed to consume all my time. Now, after almost

nine months, I am able to devote time to this very worthwhile newsletter.

As you read this special report to the regular edition, you will read some UPDATES that were actually written several months ago, but the stories are still as meaningful as they were then, sixteen years ago.

I have included many photos that may bring back memories as well as other items of interest. I hope you enjoy it, and please feel free to comment on this issue.

Bill Heath
A 2/506 and HHC 2/506
16 Oct 69 to 19 Oct 70



UPDATES:

BILL AESCHLIMAN 2/320 ARTY:

Got my copy of the RIPCORD REPORT and let me tell you it looks Great. The cover and format is very impressive and I found it very enjoyable reading. I loved the mail bag story. When Ripcord came to an end, I was on Firebase Gladiator firing support for Ripcord. We were nearly overrun ourselves. Shortly before that we were on O'Riley when the ARVNS were there. We were the only Americans on that tiny Firebase (seven) and there were North Vietnamese on the outside of the wire and South Vietnamese on the inside. I was just appointed by the governor of Indiana to sit on an advisory panel for Agent Orange and its effects on men. We are to make a full report to him July 1 and recommend any action the state of Indiana should take on the matter. It's one hell of a step forward for Vietnam veterans.



BILL HEATH - With captured 51 cal machine gun. Camp Evans.



BILL HEATH - Now a Staff Sergeant and Section Chief of the Nuclear Gun in the Arizona Army National Guard, "B" BTRY 1BN 180 FA Casa Grande, Arizona. This

battery has been featured in Soldier of Fortune magazine. He is pictured here without helmet.

WALT SMITH E 2/501:

I am pleased to see there are other guys who are interested in getting together and communicating with each other. The memories of Ripcord are hazy in some areas, but are very clear in others. For instance, I can't remember the day we arrived, but I can definitely remember 18, July, 1970, the day we were lifted out.

I served with E Company 2/501st in a mortar (81 mm) squad. We were located on one side of the mountain, I can't remember which direction! But it was my first time as a squad leader. I can remember arriving at Ripcord, digging in into the side of the hill and the heavy winds that blew up the side of the mountain. We might have been on the same side of the mountain as Hill 805, because one night we watched as the enemy made an assault on the Hill. For some reason our mortar squad was to be extracted on 18 July. Our squad was near the chopper pad when the Chinook went down, so we took shelter in the heavy bunkers near the pad. It didn't take long for the smell of the gas to reach inside the bunkers.

UPDATES Continued...

Naturally, we didn't carry gas masks, so we ran from the bunkers to one side of the hill to escape the gas. I can remember seeing live artillery shells lying around on the ground that had apparently been blown off the top of the hill where the Chinook had crashed. The smell of the gas had started getting to me and about that time a lieutenant came along and gave me his gas mask. I don't know who he was, but I was extremely happy, for once, to put on one of those masks.

We began to regroup after that. Our mortars had been left on the chopper pad and probably destroyed. We were still scheduled to be extracted that afternoon, but we helped unload choppers loaded with new weapons and ammo that came in and they left with the dead and wounded. Late that afternoon we were taken off the mountain and back to Phu Bai, I believe.

Some of the people in my platoon were SGT. Pompey, SGT. Joe Andrunas, SP4 Tim Holt. I haven't had any communication with these people since Vietnam. It would be great to see them. As for me now, I'm married and have an eleven year old son. I've been working fourteen years as a district sales manager for a steel building manufacturer.

... As for the newsletter, I think it's great. I would certainly look forward to some kind of reunion . . . I am involved in other Vietnam organizations, such as the VV Newsletter, the VV Network, etc.

JOHN MIHALKO, E 2/506 RECON.:

I do vividly remember my last night with Echo Company. Lt. Seitz came to my hooch and presented me with a Zippo lighter with my nickname on it. He asked me to make a speech. I remember looking at all the faces and not knowing any of them. Recon had changed. All of the old timers were gone; there were only a few of us left. Maybe you were in that crowd of new faces, unless you were out in the field. The date was probably November 30. As far as I'm concerned, Bravo was the best Recon team in the Battalion. The facts speak for themselves. Not only did we lead Recon, but we led the whole battalion in body count till April 1st. Our team set off more ambushes, captured more weapons and documents, found more bunker complexes, etc., than anybody else. We also got the worst missions cause we were so good. Ours was a very close knit team indeed. Over the months some of the faces would change, but all of our personalities seemed to blend together which made us very effective.

Enclosed is a copy of the newspaper article that was done on us. Maybe you'll recognize Junior, Doc Speed and yours truly. That weekend was a dream come true for me. Seeing Junior again brought back a flood of memories and the years just

melted away. It was almost like we were back at Evans. Junior had haunted me for so many years; we never got to say goodbye to each other in Nam. One day I came in from the field, and he was gone. I suppose that's happened to everybody that served there, but Junior is a very special person to me. He was the team leader before me, and it was he who molded Bravo team and made it the team that it was. No matter how bad things got, we always knew that Junior would get us out of it. We shared food and water, set up together at night, and I had my family write to him. In that one year together, I got to know him better than anybody I've ever known. It was Junior who led the first charge up hill 1000 on July 6 minus me. Luckily I was at C.L.C. He definitely did not want to go up that hill. He had already reported the mortar tubes and the amount of activity that was going on. Word came over the horn to "assault the hill". The rest is history. The whole team got the purple heart for that fiasco. Hill 1000 was never taken. Why would a seven man recon team be ordered to assault a well fortified, dug in enemy force? . . . That newspaper article also did a lot for my self esteem. Strangers were stopping me in the supermarket, shaking my hand, and asking me questions. Relatives that I hadn't heard from in years were calling me up. I guess that I've seen everything come full cycle. Ten years ago we were unwanted; now we're the good guys.

... When I got back to the states I got assigned to Fort Carson, Colorado, and while there I was the Brigade rep to the Racial Harmony Council. I really got to understand the problems and frustrations of the blacks, chicanos, etc. I also ran into a lot of friends from the 2/506, especially the mortar platoon. It was like old home week at Fort Carson. Working for a full-bird colonel didn't hurt either. He opened a lot of doors for me that would have been otherwise closed. Fort Carson was the trial post for the "New Army" and the rumor was that my Colonel was hand picked by General Westmoreland to go to Fort Carson. My colonel had come up from the ranks as an enlisted man, so he knew the problems of the ordinary soldier. If I didn't have a good civilian job waiting for me, I might have stayed in the Army. The Colonel promised that if I stayed in I would go with him wherever he went. The offer was tempting, but I opted for civilian life.

There's really not too much for me to say about the last fifteen years. I went back to my job and stayed for another seven years. I got married in between, but it didn't last. I then moved out to Fort Collins, Colorado, and there I met the woman that I'm now married to. I wish that I had met her first. We stayed in Colorado for about a year, moved back to Jersey, got married and last year we had our first child. Fifteen years ago I never dreamed that I would be married with a child, but here I am and loving every minute of it.

RAY "BLACKIE" BLACKMAN, D 2/501:



"BLACKIE" July 1970

... After being drafted I was sent to Fort Polk for basic and AIT. Then sent to Fort Benning for NCOC. Then to Fort Ord for OJT. After that to the Tropics. In my squad I did everything. Carried a M-16, M-79, M-60, was squad leader for awhile and was even sent to Evans for training on the new M-16, M-79 over and under though we were never issued them in the field while I was still out there. I was never wounded physically. After getting out of the Army, things were kind of cloudy for awhile. I went from job to job for a couple of years before going to school on the GI Bill. I am now a Tool and Die Maker and live on a one acre place north of Lincoln, NE, with my wife and two sons. I enjoy rebuilding old cars, latest one is a 1939 two door Chevy. I like to fish, drink beer, and work in my garden.



TODAY - "BLACKIE" is 36.
Sons, Danny 8 and Eric 5.



"OK - WHO'S TH' WISE GUY THAT SPILLED TH' TAR ON TH' GRENADES?"

RETROSPECTIVE:

This month's lengthier pieces regarding Ripcord come from John "Custer" Mihalko and Frank Gonzales both of E 2/506 Recon. Custer eventually was team leader of Bravo team Recon. and Frank was a medic with Alpha team (who eventually wound up at Charlie MED.) Custer's presentation begins with excerpts from a letter to his sister dated June 28, 1970 in which he pulls no punches on what his feelings and frustrations were:

June 28, 1970

Dear Marge,

Well, here I am back out in the jungle, so I thought I'd drop you a few lines. The Army managed to sock it to us again. I finished my last mission on the 26th of June. When we got back to Evans we were told that we wouldn't go back to the field until the 29th. Well, yesterday, they managed to get us some birds and they immediately flew us out to Firebase Ripcord.

We spent the night there and this morning we boarded the birds again, so here I am back out in the mountain. Needless to say I was very nervous riding out to the L.Z. because I've gotten a little superstitious since I've been here. This is my 13th mission. I feel much better now that I'm on the ground. I hope to get this mission over with quickly.

I was very scared coming into the L.Z. cause there was no L.Z. The helicopter came in, hovered about ten feet off the ground, and we jumped off. I'm not particularly crazy about jumping off a hovering chopper. That's the second time in three weeks that I've had to do it. I wouldn't mind it if I could manage to break a leg; but no luck.

Oh well, this mission is supposed to be over between four and six days from now.

Recon is finally getting a break. They're starting to give us five day missions, plus two days at Evans at the completion of a mission. It's supposed to go into effect the first of July.

Junior goes on R & R in 22 days, so in about two weeks from now I'll be the team-leader for awhile. Junior let me run the team a few times before, so I know I can handle it. Yes, Doc Speed is our medic. He's not out with us on this mission because he's going on R & R in about two days. As a matter of fact, Speed will no longer be coming out to the field with us. After R & R he gets his rear job. I'm very happy for him; but I miss him already. Speed and me are very close and since he's also from Jersey, we plan to get together after we get home from the war.

Our last mission went off without a hitch except for the day they brought us in. Usually when they take us out or bring us in from the field, we have two Cobra gunships along for protection and support. Before we go into an L.Z., artillery and mortars prep the L.Z. and surrounding areas. On our way out, just before the birds take us in, the Cobras prep the L.Z. with rockets, mini gun, and 40 mm cannon.

Since we've been losing a lot of birds lately, the Cobras also fire their rockets below the L.Z. that we're standing on as the birds come in to pick us up. Well on the last mission the gunner on the Cobra screwed up. He came in with his rockets real fine. They landed below and all around our L.Z. As he was coming out of his dive, he must have forgot to stop shooting the 40 mm. Anyway, we took a bunch of rounds on the L.Z. and two of our guys got hurt, but not seriously. One round went off just a few feet away from me and covered me with dirt.

For a second I thought that we were under attack. Needless to say, when our birds got in to pick us up, I was on it before it ever landed. I grabbed hold of the skid at about 5 feet and pulled myself in. Once again another close call. I wonder how long my luck will last. The Army makes a lot of mistakes over here. When I first got here I wasn't scared of anything but Gooks. Now I'm scared of our own artillery, which almost got me once, our mortars and jets likewise, and now our own Cobras.

Well, Marge, I guess I'll close for now. Thanks again for the care package. It even got here all in one piece. Take care.

When I first re-read that letter a few months ago, it really stimulated the old brain. That letter was written just before the old proverbial shit hit the fan on that mission. I can remember just about every detail. Here is what took place on my 13th mission in the jungles around Ripcord.

Junior (Robert Granberry) and I got our briefing at Evans on June 27th, and it didn't look good for Bravo team. The Captain giving the briefing pointed at a

mountain on the map on the wall and said, "Here we suspect is the 803rd N.V.A. Regiment. He then pointed at another mountain and said, "Here we suspect is the K-4 Sapper Battalion." He then pointed to a valley in between and said, "Here is where we are going to insert you." He then said very jovially, "This looks like a good mission, eh boys." "All we want you to do is see if they are really there."

We then flew out to Ripcord and spent a very restless night. Being in Recon, I never liked to spend a night on a firebase, especially Ripcord. There was just too much activity and noise to suit me.

Besides, it was such a tempting target. I take my hat off to you guys that manned the firebases. I also had something else on my mind that night. On our previous mission I had complained to Doc Speed that the bandoliers I was wearing were tearing up my shoulders.

Being slight of build, the bandoliers hurt my shoulders beneath my ruck. Doc looked at my shoulders and said, "If it was anybody else but you, I would say discard the bandoliers; but since you're the point man, they just might stop something some day." I looked at him and said, "Doc, these bandoliers will never stop anything." He just smiled and said, "You never know." In a couple of days those words rang true.

The next morning I decided to keep the bandoliers at least for one more mission. As our birds flew off of Ripcord, I wondered how Speed was doing on R & R I also knew that this time out was not going to be a picnic. Our briefing was ominous enough; the area was just too quiet. The first couple of days were uneventful, but there was a tenseness in the air. Even our Kit Carson Scout (Hai) was scared.

On about our third day out we made our first big discovery. While walking through a valley, Hai discovered a N.V.A. commo wire. The look on his face as he held up the wire was sheer terror. "Beau coup N.V.A., didi mau, didi mau" was all he could say. He didn't want to go any further and for good reason. We had evidently stumbled onto something very big. The date was probably June 30th.

Junior reported our findings and we thought that we would be extracted and a line company sent in. Much to our surprise they sent in a slick which lowered down some equipment to tap the line. If the Gooks didn't know we were there, they sure must know by now. Our new orders were to sit on the line and tap it for a few days. We did just that and I don't think any of us slept at night.

Finally we ran out of tapes and we thought that now a line company would be inserted and we could get the hell out of there. No such luck. Another slick was sent out, hovered over our position, and retrieved the tapes. By now our nerves were really frayed. Still no line company and our orders were to hump through the valley and up a mountain to a P.Z.

Going through that valley on the

CUSTER STORY Continued...

jungle floor was very tense, but luckily we made it without incident. The canopy was so thick that it was almost like walking through a tunnel. It took us a good portion of the day but we finally got to the top of the mountain. Lo and behold there was an old L.Z. staring us in the face. Junior called in the coordinates and was told that it was not the L.Z. they wanted for the extraction. Personally, we all liked the old L.Z. It was pretty much overgrown and besides, there were no signs of anything in the area. I didn't particularly care to go looking for more trouble.

Higher up was adamant, so off we went in search of the other L.Z. No sooner did we leave the old L.Z. when we picked up a "high speed trail". Junior and I looked at each other and we knew that we were heading into trouble. We stayed on the trail for what seemed like an eternity. The sun was starting to go down, and still no L.Z. According to the maps we should be pretty close. We finally decided to set up for the night. While the rest of the team was setting up, Junior and I decided to rif the area a little further ahead.

We did not have to travel too far. We found the L.Z. maybe a hundred yards from our N.D.P. As we approached it, there was a freshly built bunker staring at us. Luckily for us, it was uninhabited, but it looked like it had been built within the last 36 hours, maybe sooner. I pulled off some of the camouflage from the roof, and the sap was still coming out of the stems. Junior and I didn't have to say a word. We knew we were in the middle of something big.

We then proceeded very cautiously onto the L.Z. Everything was very calm and peaceful. There we were standing in the middle of an unsecured L.Z. just checking out the view and listening to the sounds. We really weren't that far from Ripcord and could hear the slicks coming and going to Ripcord. We then went back to our N.D.P. and called in our position. Extraction was set for tomorrow morning.

The next morning arrived bright and sunny and everyone was in a hurry to get to the L.Z. and secure it for extraction. Everyone but me. I was not going to move until I had breakfast. (I was the only member of our team who liked C ration ham and eggs). The verbal abuse was murder, but I stuck to my guns. After chowing down, we finally moved out, taking great caution as we approached the bunker. To our relief, the bunker was still empty.

Luckily for us the L.Z. sat on a little plateau at the foot of the mountain we had just climbed down. We had to climb up about ten feet to reach the L.Z. Just as my head cleared the top of the bunker, I saw a N.V.A. soldier standing in the tree line on the other side of the L.Z. He was just standing there, A.K. slung over his shoulder, looking up at the sky, listening to a slick passing nearby. My first reaction was to drill him, but since he hadn't seen me, I hit the dirt instead.

Since there was a bunker on our side of the L.Z., I knew there had to be at least one more on their side. I also figured that he had to be a trail watcher and that very shortly he would be coming over to our side of the L.Z. to man the bunker. Junior and I then backed off a little and held a little conference. He asked me why I didn't shoot the Gook right on the spot. I told him my feelings. We could pick him off anytime. They didn't know that we were there. If he came over to our side of the L.Z., maybe we could even take him alive. Since the bunker was below the top of the L.Z., they couldn't see what was going on.

While we were still discussing our alternatives, three shots rang out. Just as I had thought, the Gook came over to our side and Grove, our sniper, shot him. The jig was definitely up. Fear and adrenalin took over. We all knew from past experience, where there's one Gook, there has to be more. Taking into account all that we had seen on this mission, we had to be near a large enemy force or base camp. Why else would battalion insist on this particular L.Z.?

Junior immediately got on the horn and said that we had made contact. Could we go back to the first L.Z. for extraction? Our answer was not very encouraging. Our birds were already en route and we must secure the L.Z. for extraction. We decided to do a recon by fire. I had my slack man lob some thump rounds onto the other side of the L.Z. We got no return fire. We kept moving across firing thump rounds as we went. Still no return fire. We were now about two-thirds of the way across and still dead silence. I was beginning to think that we had made it. Maybe that N.V.A. soldier was just an isolated trail watcher.

Just then a sharp rat-tat-tat cut through the air. I thought the shots were coming from behind me. All in one motion I looked back and chewed dirt at the same time. At first I thought that it was one of our guys firing on rock and roll. It certainly wasn't an A.K. doing the firing. We all knew the distinctive sound of an A.K.-47. As I laid there trying to figure out what had happened, I heard a clink, clink, clink sound beneath me.

As I looked at the ground I saw that my M-16 ammunition was falling out of my bandoliers. It was then that I looked at my chest and saw a gaping hole with just the spring from a shattered magazine protruding from it, swaying in the breeze. It then dawned on me that I had been hit by an R.P.D. Funny, I didn't feel any pain. I didn't feel a thing when I was hit. I then lifted up the first bandolier and looked at the one beneath it. Sure enough there was another hole, not as large as the first one, but a hole nonetheless.

Now I was really getting scared. I was still searching for blood, but there wasn't any. I know I'm skinny, but there has to be a wound somewhere. Cautiously, I lifted up the second bandolier. Much to my relief there was no exit hole and no blood. I could see the indentations that the

bullets made in the back of the magazine, but they didn't come through. I shook the magazine and sure enough, the bullets were rattling around inside. Doc Speed's prophecy had come true. The bandoliers had indeed stopped something.

A great feeling of relief passed through me followed by a feeling of despair. Here I was lying on a bald L.Z. with no cover, approximately 40 feet from an enemy machine gun. My chances for survival didn't look good. I took a quick glance behind me. The rest of the team had gotten back to the safety of our side of the L.Z. It was just me and Jake, my slack man, lying there in no man's land.

My brain was moving in overdrive. The rest of the team must have seen me get hit and probably think that I'm dead. Well, if my guys think that I'm dead, then the enemy machine gunner must think so too. He must have seen the bullets hit me dead center in the chest and shatter the bandoliers. Why else is he not shooting at two sitting ducks? The longer we laid there, the more I thought that we had to do something. The Gooks weren't going to hold their fire forever; especially if they see us moving around.

I finally decided to throw a couple of frags. Just as I pulled the pin and threw it, I knew I had made a mistake. He has to be sitting in a bunker or else I would have seen him as we crossed the L.Z. A frag is not going to do any good unless I score a direct hit. Since I could only guess where the bunker was located, my chances were very slim that I would get him. The only thing that frag would do is piss him off a little more. After all, we had already wasted one of his buddies.

I dared not move for fear that he would surely finish me off. Why in the hell doesn't he finish us off? Maybe he was just toying with us. We laid there for what seemed like an eternity. The sun was now directly overhead, and our sweat was just pouring off of us. The damned flies didn't help matters either. Just then I heard the friendly sounds of choppers overhead. I looked up at the sky and saw a pink team circling the L.Z. I was feeling pretty good when I noticed the lead Cobra starting to make a run at the L.Z.

My feelings now turned to terror. Junior must think that we're dead and he's given the orders to fire up the L.Z.! Sure enough, the Cobra is into his dive and the rocket pods are pointed right at us. I can even see the gunner's face and he's not smiling. Finally, I can take it no longer. I scream at the top of my lungs: "Junior, don't let him shoot. I'm alive."

Junior shouted back to me, "Don't worry, he's not going to shoot. He's going to keep making passes at the L.Z. so that maybe the Gooks will keep their heads down and you can get out of there." The Cobras made a few more passes and then I heard a sound in front of us. The machine gunner was re-loading. That must have been the reason why he didn't shoot at us or the Cobras. Now was our chance. We

CUSTER STORY Continued . . .

crawled back to the safety of our side of the L.Z. at great speed. I was never so happy in my life.

Junior informed the pilot that we were back safely and to fire up the L.Z. The pilot asked us to pop smoke to mark our position. When he saw our smoke, he informed us that he couldn't fire for fear of hitting us. Junior told him to fire anyway. We were caught between a rock and a hard place with nothing to lose. The pilot finally agreed to fire, and came in with everything smoking.

The shrapnel was flying around all over the place. The noise was deafening. The ground was shaking. Trees were coming down around us, but we didn't care.

We now know what the Gooks must be going through, but with every explosion, we cheered for more. Finally, it was all over. The smoke hadn't even cleared when we got the word that our slicks were coming in. That sinking feeling started up in my stomach again. What if the Gooks were still there. They had to be dug in pretty good and we had seen them survive Cobra strikes before.

Before we could even collect our wits, we saw the lead slick making his approach. Junior shouted out, "Who wants to go first?" Since I was the point man, I thought that I may as well lead the charge. I timed my run just as the lead slick was coming in. I reached out for the skid as it was hovering about five feet off the ground. Just as I grabbed the skid, the door gunner waved me off, and the slick started climbing again. I stared up in disbelief.

There I was right back where I had started from; in the middle of an L.Z. with a machine gun burst in my chest as a souvenir. This time I just ran like hell back to the rest of the team. I shouted to Junior, "What happened?" He told me that the Gook machine gunner had opened up on the slick and had shot the pilot. By this time we had all had about enough. Battalion came over the horn and told us to go back to the first L.Z. for extraction.

Finally, the Army had seen fit to see things our way for a change. We made it back to the first L.Z. in record time. The birds arrived shortly later, and we got out of there without further incident. The flight back to Evans was a happy one indeed. When we touched down we were greeted by a lot of people. Most of them were from Recon, but there were a lot of officers, medics, grunts, and Kit Carson Scouts.

As I jumped off the slick, I held up our captured A.K. in a victory salute. It was then that I noticed that a lot of people were staring at the holes in my bandoliers. I guess that the news had traveled fast.

Everyone wanted to know how and why I was still alive. The scouts were the most interested of all. They kept sticking their fingers in the holes as Hai was recounting the events of the mission in Vietnamese.

Some of them were laughing and one

said to me in broken English, "N.V.A. almost crocodile you. You super G.I., but maybe next time they get you." I just smiled back at him and said, "They already had two chances, and I'm still here." As we were walking back to the company area, I noticed that Hai and the other scouts were following. Hai was still rattling on in Vietnamese and they were hanging on his every word.

When he had finished his story, he grabbed me by the arm and said, "John, you number one G.I.; N.V.A. no can crocodile you. With those words, we parted company. Hai went with the other scouts and I continued on; right on to the E.M. club on very shaky legs.

Well, that's the story of my 13th mission. There are a few footnotes though. Another recon team was sent to that same L.Z. and was hit with R.P.G.'s. I don't know if a line company was ever sent there or not. We did hear that the whole area was saturated with jet strikes after the second recon team was fired up.

Junior went on R & R on schedule, but he went with shrapnel wounds that he got on the first assault on hill 1000 on July 6th. My luck continued as always. I was supposed to lead Bravo team in Junior's absence, but I had no team to lead. Bravo team took 100% casualties on the assault on hill 1000. I happened to be at C.L.C. at the time and missed that mission. When Doc Speed got back from R & R, he did get his rear job; he was assigned to the aid station on Rropicord during the final siege.

If any of you readers are Cobra pilots, I would be interested in hearing from you. I would sure like to thank that pilot who fired for us on July 3rd. It took a lot of guts to make dry runs almost at treetop level to draw fire away from me.

Until next time.

RETROSPECTIVE — FRANK GONZALES

Chip, I would like to share with you and fellow readers a somewhat comical incident that happened to Alpha Team Recon while doing work on the Ashau Valley side of F.S.B. Rropicord around the middle of May, 1970.

Alpha team at that time was led by SP4 Juan Caredo from San Antonio, Texas. I remember that the team kept on the move constantly, because of the great danger we were in, of being pursued by the N.V.A. We set up ambushes on a regular basis attempting to take some P.O.W.'s for interrogation which would prove very valuable to the battalion and Rropicord. We also were hunting enemy food and arms caches.

Well, "Glory Be!" One day while humping through the bush, our point man discovered three N.V.A. having their supper totally unaware that we were about

to ruin their meal. The firefight that ensued lasted long enough for the three N.V.A. to make a very quick and determined exit. There were no body counts after the noise ceased, but we discovered one huge ammunition and rice supply. There must have been at least 3000 rounds of A.K., 47 bullets, 15 R.P.G. rounds, R.P.G. launcher, 500 lbs. of rice, cooking and medical supplies, and a "real prize", a drumfed R.P.D. machine gun, complete with tri-pod.

We knew it was just a matter of minutes before the word spread among the N.V.A. troops that their stash had been ripped off. Members of the Recon team then quickly placed all of the booty, minus the machine gun, in a clump, and blew the whole damn cache up with a clay more mine. All the booty went up in smoke with a big bang. We then got the hell out of there as quick as our legs could carry us. We took the machine gun with us and felt very secure with it because we felt that the N.V.A. was going to pursue us for what we had just done to their supplies.

The only arms we carried were the M-16 rifles. We felt that the stolen machine gun would give us an advantage if the N.V.A. decided to engage us in combat. So off we went into the jungles, deeper than before, to hopefully throw any N.V.A. off of our trail and hopefully not encounter a battalion size force while we tried to find a safe, high place to camp for the night.

After about two hours at breakneck humping, we found the ideal spot to spend the night. One of the guys placed the stolen R.P.D. on top of a five foot rock so as to get an excellent field of fire if we received an unwelcomed guest during the night. All of us looked at the machine gun and tried to figure out how to remove the bullet drum so we could satisfy our curiosity about the gun. All of us failed to separate the drum from the gun. All in all we felt very secure with the machine gun watching over us as some of us slept at night while the other stood guard. The team stayed on that hill for two days without any incident. We sure felt good with that Commie gun. The following day we humped to an L.Z. and split to the rear (Camp Evans) with our captured gun. We landed on the battalion pad and handed the machine gun to our battalion S-2 officer. We all came to find out the following day that S-2 had removed the drum from the gun and found it "empty"!



Photo Bill Heath

REVIEWS

Just read Thomas D. Boettcher's VIETNAM: THE VALOR AND THE SORROW (copyright 1984, Little, Brown and Company). As many of you know there is very little good literature in existence regarding our particular period in Vietnam. Del Vecchios' fictional account of a 101st unit in action just following the fall of Ripcord in THE THIRTEENTH VALLEY is a notable exception. What grabbed me about this well documented book was how the author was able to assemble the events leading up to the war and on through to America's final involvement.

Sitting down to read historical, rather documentary literature has been a thing that over the years people generally have had to force themselves to do. Even as in this case when it is of a very personal interest. Boettcher begins by describing the brutal French colonization of Vietnam in the 1800's. One note from that period was that eighty percent of the Vietnamese were literate prior to the arrival of the French and only twenty percent on their departure. Apart from the French helping themselves to the country's natural resources, the French were responsible for teaching the Vietnamese the very atrocities we were to later witness during our tours. Headings, for instance, were common.

By the time Roosevelt became president, the situation was desperate enough that he worked behind the scenes during World War II in an effort to get France to agree to establish Vietnamese self rule following the war. That was not an easy matter. The intermediary Roosevelt chose to impress upon the French was Britain. They had more than their share of bloodied hands from colonialist policies in other parts of the world. The British secretly feared that if France could be forced out of Indochina, their own empire such as it was at the time was not far behind.

Boettcher carefully sketches Ho's initial involvement with Americans, noting his rescue and return of many American pilots shot down in Vietnam during World War II, which was then occupied by Japan. Following the war, Ho continued to curry favor with the Americans, particularly through American intelligence officer, Archimedes Patti, who felt strongly that Ho was more nationalist than communist. All this effort went for naught when China, to the north, fell to the communists.

Given the building anti-communist mood in the U.S. and the fact that most, if not all, seasoned Asian intelligence experts were under suspicion, it became impossible to promote Ho's value to the U.S. as an ally. As a result, whether or not his leanings were then strongly communist or not, he was forced to turn to them for assistance.

Eisenhower was caught up in Indo-China during Dien Bien Phu. Our reluctance to provide massive air support to the French was in part based on the knowledge

that if the French won they would continue their grim treatment of the Vietnamese.

The Kennedy years found us well entrenched in the policies of Cold War. Politicians were making decisions regarding more troops at a time when military experts strongly recommended caution on any kind of commitment and, in fact, early on troop commitments were almost unanimously opposed by the Joint Chiefs. Later when the military was permitted more leeway in the direction of the war, they had by that time become obsessed with the feeling the war could be militarily won. In truth as a result of earlier decisions it was politically impossible. Like a fat, balding man with a beautiful but wayward mistress, they felt they could woo things eventually their way.

Needless to say, the book is hard to put down until finished. Adding more at this point could spoil it for those who are interested. One of the interesting things about most literature on Vietnam are the conclusions we undoubtedly draw regarding our own involvement at that late period in the war. If there was no national consensus in support of the war and if the early political and military decisions that committed us to the war for that long were wrong, in what way do we achieve closure with the war?



RICK BLYTHE in the company area.



101st Div. In Near Ripcord

By SPEC. 5 CHARLES C. SELF
S&S Staff Correspondent

FSB EVANS, Vietnam—The 101st Airborne Div. has opened a fire support base south of the area where enemy concentration caused the closing of Fire Support Base Ripcord late last week, a division spokesman said.

The spokesman said areas around Ripcord believed to contain large numbers of enemy troops still were being pounded by massive U.S. firepower.

The new fire support base, called Maureen, is located almost nine miles from the Laotian border as was Ripcord, but further south, outside the area of Red troop concentration.

During the two days after Ripcord's closing, troops were inserted to the south at Maureen and to the northeast of Ripcord. A division spokesman said they met little resistance.

The commander of the division's 3rd Brigade, Col. Benjamin Harrison, said the redeployment from Ripcord was tactically successful.

"We capitalized on two of our most significant advantages over the enemy — mobility and firepower," said Harrison.

He said that troops shifted quickly from Ripcord had placed pressure on the enemy's less secure northern and rear flanks while U.S. firepower destroyed Reds and their stores supplies.

The division spokesman said air strikes were credited with destroying 94 bunkers, setting off 37 secondary explosions and starting 14 secondary fires in the area around Ripcord since the outpost's closing.

Ripcord was closed last Thursday under heavy enemy fire after the NVA troops surrounded the tiny outpost and poured mortar, machine gun and small arms fire into it.

INTRODUCTION

My name is Bill Heath and I would like to introduce myself to all of you.

I was drafted into the Army from Riverside, California on 19 March 1969. I was finishing my second year of college and majoring in Industrial Arts (Printing). I wanted to teach printing in high school.

When I showed up at Fort Ord, California for basic, I had my grades, two letters of recommendation from my professors, and the knowledge that I could really help the Army by being a printer. I put this on my "Dream Sheet" and they matched an MOS of 81E to it. I then started basic knowing I had a good job waiting for me. Hell, if things worked out for me, I might even spend twenty years. After all, my Dad spent 22 years in the Navy.

Basic went fairly smooth for me because I was already in good shape from playing school sports and I was an Eagle Scout, so I knew how to march, read a map/compass, hike, camp, etc.

In the last week of basic, I received the Outstanding Trainee Award from my company and then competed against the other four graduating companies for the American Spirit Honor Award. I was also fortunate enough to win that. Needless to say, I thought "this Army is alright".

Well, then they read out loud to us our MOS and where we would be going. When the SGT. got to me he said, "PVT. Heath, you just lucked out and got the Infantry! You will be stationed around the corner from here, start your training on Monday." SAY WHAT?? There had to be a mistake. One other guy in my squad got permanent party as a printer, and he was truck driver in civilian life. There had to be a mistake! Didn't they read my "Dream Sheet". Didn't they know I was squared away. There had to be a mistake!

I was a victim of the "Army Way" of doing things. They told me later that they wanted me to either sign for another year and go to O.C.S. or for two or three more years and get the MOS I wanted. I chose neither, and started A.I.T. on Monday.

After A.I.T. and some months in Ft. Benning, Georgia, I was shipped to Vietnam. I arrived 16 October 1969, almost seven months to the day from the time I entered basic.

Having spent ten days on bunker guard at the holding area, they decided to give me a home. My name was called, 101st Abn. was my Division, and please move out sharply (without the please) was ordered. Final destination was to be "WAY". I looked all over the huge wooden map of Vietnam erected outside for, I guess, my convenience. But, there just wasn't a city called "Way". So, I asked. A Spec. 4, seem-

ingly bored with his job, said, "It's spelled H-U-E, Cherry. Look for the D.M.Z., then look down a couple of inches." Say What?? Isn't that where the war is, I thought. I picked up my gear and was off.

All of us going into the 101st Div. were sent to one area so we could be processed into the system and be assigned an individual unit. We spent the night there and next morning had a formation. By this time, I knew I was going to the field, was going to be in Charlie's back yard, and would probably be shot getting off the helicopter. As we stood in formation, I noticed there were seven or eight Vietnamese men standing in front of us. They didn't look too big or bad, just kind'a looked like kids. The Sgt. in charge started talking about a Kit Carson Program, "CHIEU HOI" he called it. Then, he asked for G.I.'s to volunteer to take one and be his buddy. I don't know what came over me, but I stepped forward and volunteered. I remembered then what my Dad had said, "Son, don't volunteer for anything, you'll get enough crap as it is." Well, it was too late to turn back. A Vietnamese LT., speaking very good English was introducing us. My K.C.S. name was Trân Dû. He was 21 years old (a year older than me) and had been an N.V.A. Terrific, an N.V.A. Why didn't I remember what my Dad said, sooner? — The LT. and the SGT. told us to disregard the orders we were about to receive because new ones would be issued, so we could attend Language School. As the other men boarded transportation for their new destinations, we remaining few volunteers, started talking about the lack of brains we must have. Someone asked me what my orders said. I hadn't even looked because they were not going to be used. So, I opened the large envelope and took out the paper. My name was the third one listed out of a group of 16. It started out: Heath, William W. 554822157 PFC P11B10. Sp instr; dy w/G1; DMOS: 81E.

I had no idea what this meant. I asked the SGT. and he said, "Well, if you hadn't volunteered for the Kit Carson, you would be going to Camp Eagle and working as a printer. Damn good rear job! Too Bad."

"Wait," I said. "How about if I use these orders and you get another volunteer?" "Sorry," he said, "Too damn late!"

"Too late my ass," I thought. I went to the office where these things are typed and began seeking out a friendly ear to talk to. There seemed to be a lot of humor in my situation since all the clerks were laughing at the dumb cherry, ME. Finally, a SPEC/5 came over and said "Go to Language School, then you will be sent to Camp Eagle, then go and show them your orders. Tell them you got delayed but that you are now ready to report. They may ask a few questions, but it should be no problem. Just let your K.C.S. go on without you."

This was something that sounded possible. Sure, I had the orders. They didn't take them back from us. Yes, that's worth a try.



Photo Bill Heath

Wrong! Didn't work. Didn't get close to G1. Didn't get close to anything. Next stop, Alpha Company, 2/506th Infantry. Oh well, this was what I was trained for anyway, might as well get with the program.

Trân Dû and I were assigned to 2nd Platoon and he was issued an M-16 and I got an M-79 grenade launcher. The supply SGT. started issuing us gear then and put it on the floor in two huge piles. I figured this must be for the whole squad, because no single man could carry all of this. He assured me I could carry it all, plus I still needed water, food and ammo. I knew this was going to be a long year.

Fortunately, a member of the company was at our sleeping area and he was helpful enough to show us how and where to put all this gear. I remember he was just back from R & R but can't remember his name. We stayed in Evans for the training new guys get before going out to the field.

When we did go out, we were CA'ed to a firebase. The name escapes me now, but I remember meeting the platoon and their questions to me about the "gook" I brought along. I explained the concept and they said, "Good, a new pointman".

Alpha Company had been in Operation Apache Snow, which was an assault on Dong Ap Bia in May 1969. The final assault was 20 May and the operation ended twenty days later. The units involved were A-2/506; A,B,C,D, 3/187; A,B,C - 1/506; 2/501; and 2-3 ARVN. They fought against the 29th NVA Regt. in northern A SHAU. Totals had reached 675 enemy killed, three detainees, 241 individual and 40 crew-served weapons captured and more than 100,000 rounds of ammunition discovered. I felt a little bit more comfortable knowing that there were some experienced fighters in my platoon.

For the next few months, we were operating in very bad weather and there wasn't any contact. Alpha was getting more

INTRODUCTION Continued . . .

Cherries in and our numbers began to swell. We soon had three full platoons, then a fourth was started. Trần Dũ had gone home on 3 January for leave and never returned. I never found out what happened to him, but he taught me a lot about the NVA ways before he took off.

I then moved to the fourth platoon and stayed until 8 February when I went into "A-Co 2/506 L.Z. Cutters". I then moved around a lot from platoon to platoon cutting landing zones for whomever needed one. They would call us, then we would repel in, cut the L.Z. and move on to the next. This is when I discovered Army Chainsaws were painted camouflage. I thought it rather stupid to paint it camo, then start the damn thing up and be heard for five miles. Oh well.

Like I said before, none of the units of the 2/506th had made any contact for months because of the weather, but the weather was finally beginning to change a little. The artillery people had been waiting, the mortar teams, the choppers, the grunts, all waiting for contact.

On Valentine's Day, Saturday the 14th, the L.Z. Cutters went with third platoon on a C.A. to an area where Recon was waiting. We got off the birds and they got on. I remember seeing them in their camouflage uniforms and light gear, boarding our birds. Before they all left, they reported the area was clean and had found no bad guys around. But, they said they didn't like the area.

The third platoon and the L.Z. Cutters moved off the L.Z. and humped a couple days to a new location. We set up for the night on the 16th. The weather got worse that night and the next day, so we stayed in the same place for another night. The next morning, 18 February 70, about seven in the morning, a squad of eight men took off for a R.I.F. in the area and direction we were to go. Just about the time the last man went into the jungle, all Hell broke loose.

First, a large explosion. Then, automatic fire and more explosions. We on the hill were hit, as well as the squad. The fight lasted only a few minutes. The patrol had been hit with a R.P.G., killing SP4 Gary Earlywind, just back from R & R, and wounded five others. The pointman and the last man were not hit. On top of the hill, third platoon's platoon SGT., Sgt. Patrick O. Pompella, was killed by a mortar round. The NVA had hit us with automatic fire, R.P.G.'s and Mortars. They hit hard and split. We called in Artillery and they put steel on target fast. By the time the choppers and cobras got there, which was also fast, the arty boys had killed at least two NVA. The chopper pilots saw the NVA carrying the bodies before they fired the others up. After all was settled back down, the wounded were evacuated, and the dead were gone, the Battalion Commander (Black Spade himself) came out to talk to us

and ask if there was anything he could get for us. We replied LRRP rations would be a good change. And, LRRP rations we got.

Well, I was no longer a Cherry or on the L.Z. Cutters. We became part of 3rd Platoon. The times, they were a changin'.

The next day, the 19th, Lt. Sanderson of the fourth platoon got hit from a booby trap. He was sent home and we heard later, they made him a recruiter. The following day, Friday the 20th, second platoon found two booby traps and their Kit Carson was killed and two G.I.'s wounded by some other booby traps. On Saturday, a field Hospital, bunkers, and a hootch were found and destroyed by air power. Sunday, our platoon spotted two NVA about to fire R.P.G.'s at our L.Z. and came up behind them. We fired them up and they dropped their gear and fled. We captured four R.P.G. rounds.

Monday, the 23rd, we moved and the 24th we cut an L.Z. and got resupplied.

On Wednesday, the 25th, it happened to be my birthday. So, for the occasion, I made a Jello Lemon Meringue Pie in my steel pot. No one could believe it! Anyway, there was to be another R.I.F. sent out, and since I was the pointman, I of course was to go. But instead of me going, SGT. Furlong said he would take my place since it was my birthday. A short time later, there was an explosion. Furlong had hit a booby trap and was down. We went to help him, but a trail watcher kept taking shots at us. We called in air and a Medivac to help, and we found out later that SGT. Furlong had lived only because a doctor was on board the Medivac and he had saved his life. We took sniper fire on Thursday but CA'ed to a new hill on Friday. We moved from spot to spot the next couple of days, then our C.P. was hit by two R.P.G.'s on Monday night. We cut another L.Z. on Wednesday, then continued to move around in the steady rain, soaked in most of the time. The weather let up on Tuesday, the 10th, for a beautiful day. The next day we were told of a mission to check out the area around a hill. We were to fly to areas around the hill, do R.I.F.'s around it, then slowly move up the hill and secure it. The plan was for Thursday, the 12th, and the hill was to be made into a Firebase. That Thursday morning, the helicopters took off with the first loads of Alpha Co., and instead of landing around the base of the hill, the pilots dropped the men off right on top of the hill. I believe two birds got in before the gooks took out the third bird.

We were, of course, monitoring the PRC-25 and heard we had one chopper down, men on the ground, and wounded. The question was, get the guys out, or give them some help. The choice was the latter, the rest of us came in hot. Within an hour, Ripcord had consumed one helicopter, 1 LT. Dudley Davis (first day in the field) and his R.T.O. SP4 Daniel N. Heuter had been killed and seven were wounded. We were on the top of the hill, but we knew that could change very soon.

That night an L.P. was to go out. We all knew that if we got hit, the L.P. would probably not make it back. No one volunteered. Of course, the answer was to cut cards, the low card from each squad would go. I hated to cut cards. I always lost. But, my buddies said it was the only fair way and besides, I could go first. I cut! I pulled a JACK. "Not too bad," I laughed to myself. Would you believe, the other four guys beat me? I got my fighting gear together, which included an M-16 which I got for the M-79 after my K.C.S. left, and waited until dark. We took mortar rounds off and on, but no direct fire that afternoon. As it got dark, myself and three others, moved down the side to where we knew the gooks would attack from. We waited. I saw Charlie walking around below us with flashlights on white. I had to wait my turn for artillery but I put a lot of lights out that night with Arty fire.

I didn't sleep that whole night, I just couldn't relax. The other three guys took turns and got a little rest. We had with us: two M-16's, one M-79, one M-60, and PRC-25. Of course, we had claymores, grenades, flares, and star clusters, but fortunately we didn't have to use any of our ordinance. Morning came and we made our way back to our perimeter. What a relief! Then I figured I would get a little rest time, but was called over by the LT. He told me we were to move off the hill to the hill next door and would I walk point again even though I hadn't rested. I knew I was tired, but agreed to go anyway. I picked a route and headed down the side. The going was slow because of steepness of the hill, the wet weather, and knowing that the gooks were all over the place. About half way to the other hill, we blew up a bunker with a LAW, but that was the only action. We spent the night at the new location. Saturday morning, the 14th, our resupply bird took fire so we moved off that spot and found another one for the night. Just after getting into our N.D.P., we took some rounds. Five rounds to be exact. We realized that they were not from the enemy and got a check fire. Turned out to be ARVN Artillery firing the wrong coordinates. We had one man with a sprained ankle, he took off with only one boot on and turned it, but that was the only damage. We figured the gooks wouldn't think we were there, because they knew we didn't make it a habit of firing Artillery on ourselves.

The next morning we moved back to hill number 2 and were replaced by Bravo Company. We then went to a new A.O. They also sent a dog team to walk point with me and SP4 Ken Lilley. Ken was my eyes to the left and right. He walked behind me and I checked for booby traps and basically straight ahead. We were a damn good team. (Haven't seen him since Vietnam, but he used to be a Photographer in New Jersey. His father, W. R. Lilley, lived at 12 Carol Lane, Bergenfield, N.J.)

The dog team didn't work out because

INTRODUCTION Continued . . .

the leeches were getting to the dog and he couldn't function properly. I found the booby traps or bunkers before the dog would. On the 19th, Firebase Granite got hit, and total figures were 10 K.I.A. and 30 W.I.A. For the next week we moved around a little but the weather was very bad, socked in with rain. On the 27th, it quit raining and Ken Lilley was awarded a REAR JOB. Sorry to see him go, but we all wanted out. The next day was Saturday and we cut an L.Z. on a very thick hill top. We stayed there until the following Wednesday.

Wednesday morning, April Fool's Day, Bravo Company landed on the top of Ripcord. The area had been pounded by B-52 strikes and the bad guys were supposed to be gone. Well, someone forgot to tell them that, because Bravo was getting mortared continuously. Alpha was then CA'ed to the hill next door (hill we had left from on 15 March) and got in without being spotted. We secured the hill, then called in Artillery on the mortar teams as we would spot them. We dug in and then sent out teams to find the other mortars. This is where I got hit with some shrapnel from a mortar. Just small stuff that Doc Draper took care of. (SP4 Martin Draper later was killed on 22 July 70). But SGT. Baldwin (Baldy) took a piece of metal through the top of his boot into his foot from a Cobra that was firing too close to our position. We called in a Medivac to get him and some of Bravo company back for medical treatment. The chopper landed fine, but in the heat of battle, the pilot took off too fast and hit a tree with his blade. He couldn't keep it airborne and made a crash landing on the top on Ripcord. Now the gooks really poured on the mortars. They wanted the chopper on fire. Baldy was now in a worse place than he was. He did later get out of there and the gooks never did get that chopper to burn. I remember watching Recon try to land on top so they could help Bravo out. The mortars would pound the top making it impossible to get in. We had to kill some more of those damn tubes. Finally, Recon got in and gave a hand. As the daylight was getting away from us, Higher knew that Ripcord could not be defended against a ground attack with the number of men remaining. There were six K.I.A.'s and 26 W.I.A.'s. My LT. walked over and said we were picked to go link up with the others and bring them back here. I knew that meant me and three others. I picked my people and we slipped out of sight and down the hill toward Ripcord. We told Bravo of our plans by radio and to get their people ready. We wanted to get them off the top as soon as it was dark.

We got to a low saddle between the two hills and set up the M-60. We started to call Bravo when we got movement to our front. They were between us. The ground was fairly clear of growth but very rocky,

like an old stream bed. We were hidden in brush, but the shadows were coming straight toward us. Very quietly, we called Bravo to see if anyone had left the hill to link up with us. They said no. We said check again, hurry! They replied, "Bravo is still here getting ready to leave." At that moment, I knew we were going to ambush those shadows. Just before we opened up, the pointman stopped and turned around to his buddy and spoke. Even in a whisper, I knew it was a G.I. We all froze. From my spot behind a tree, I called out "Currahee". The pointman responded with the same. And we linked up. I told him we almost blew him away and asked why we were told no one from Bravo had left yet. He said he was from Recon and they had gone down first, Bravo's R.T.O., I guess, didn't know Recon had left. We then helped carry their wounded and dead and led them back to our location. We spread out and secured the hill top. Throughout the night, Artillery pounded the rice out of the N.V.A. We stayed on the hill the 2nd, except for the squad that went back to get a couple of bodies that Bravo had left behind. They had buried them in a bunker, I believe.

The third, Friday, we were still socked in, low on resupply and water, had six W.I.A.'s and one K.I.A. The NVA were on Ripcord that Friday night, but Artillery gave them a fireworks display they will always remember, if they lived through it.

Saturday, we were finally resupplied but took incoming along with it. Some of the men left, along with the six W.I.A.'s and four K.I.A.'s. I couldn't believe it, but we were also paid that day. We had to crawl to where the pay officer was hiding out to get the M.P.C. We had been told back on 22 March, that we were going to Eagle Beach on 5 April. Since we were being paid, we figured the trip must still be on. However, the morning of the fifth, we were told Eagle Beach was a "NO GO". Instead, we made plans to go, by foot, to hill numbered 805. They were starting to call it "Cheeseburger" hill. We took off toward 805 on Monday. Tuesday we stayed close by 805 and Wednesday, the 8th, we moved onto the hill after an airstrike. There were plenty of signs of NVA, but no contact. Thursday we started cutting a landing zone but didn't finish. I was told I was to get a rear job. Friday we completed the L.Z. and Saturday, 11 April, we CA'ed off 805 and went to Eagle Beach for three days. We had

a memorial service for Davis, Pompella, Earlywine, and Heater that same day. The eulogy was by CPT. Albert P. Burchard, Prayer by Chaplain Howard Johnson and a memorial meditation by Chaplain LeRoy Fox.

Eagle Beach:

On May 1, 1969 Eagle Beach, the 101st's well-equipped rest area on the shores of the South China Sea, was formally opened as men of Co. D, 1st Bn. (Ambi.), 506th Inf. were greeted by a giant layer cake and Maj. Gen. Melvin Zais, then commanding general of the 101st.

Since that time Screaming Eagles have lived and relaxed on the white sand beach, watched movies, played miniature golf, attended USO productions and made use of the modern enlisted men's club. Other facilities at the beach include a massage parlor, speed boats for water skiing, pool tables, basketball courts, a day room and a small PX.

Eagle Beach still offers a respite from the war for hundreds of Screaming Eagles. It is a sanctuary where men can collect their thoughts and gain strength for the struggles ahead.

Eagle Beach is approaching its first anniversary. The Screaming Eagles who fight in the twisted jungles of northern I Corps, in the past year have had stand downs at Eagle Beach to look forward to. And they still do.

THE WEATHER

Today's forecast: Cooler with an increasing chance of rain. Winds will be east-
erly at 10 knots. Humidity 45-95%. High Thursday 97°, low 73°. Today's high 94°, low 75°. Sunrise 0629, sunset 1921. Valid period of forecast: 301500 to 311500.
RATNFALL: July 30: 0.00 Month: 2.26

SCREAMING EAGLES HAVE BEEN
IN VIETNAM 1828 DAYS

EAGLE BEACH MEAL CARD

This card must be presented for each meal consumed in the Eagle Beach Mess Hall.

Angel Burchard
Official

Breakfast	1	2	3
Dinner	1	2	3
Supper	1	2	3

101 FM 138-R, 4 Mar 70

I started my job at S-4 Supply on 13 April 70. The rest of April, May and June I logged birds out to the field to resupply all the different companies. I went to Tokyo for R & R 30 June through 7 July. While in the rear, I kept track of my friends in Alpha, sent them CARE packages and partied with them when they came in. There was best friend SP4 Donald Severson (K.I.A. 22 July), SP4 John (Fatbat) Carr (W.I.A. July), Ken Kowalski, and sniper Johnny McGinnis whom I went to visit in Texas after we got home and he came to

INTRODUCTION Continued . . .

California the next year to visit me.

July was starting to look real bad. While I was on R & R, Charlie Company was hit hard and had at least nine - ten K.I.A., Delta Company had three K.I.A. on the 7th and six more K.I.A. on the 14th. All of us 11 Bravo types in the rear were formed into a strike force. We were to be inserted wherever or with whomever needed us. We had to be ready to go in minutes. We finally got the call to go to Ripcord itself on my brother's birthday, 21 July. We tried three times to get in, but were being hit by ground fire from 51 cal. I remember the green tracer rounds. We finally landed at 2130 hrs. The place was a total mess from what it had been. We helped pull guard and be security. The next day we tried to fill sandbags, fix wire, secure loose gear, carry wounded and dead, and keep the supply lines open and make sure the ammo kept coming. It was hard working with the mortar rounds coming in at different times. I was standing next to a small tractor, used to keep the L.Z. clear, when a round landed just on the other side. It took the shrapnel that was headed for me. I was just knocked down but not hurt.

spot before the thing blew up. We finally got most the gear out and the personnel were starting to leave. We were all divided into small groups and told when our turn would be to leave. With me was SP/4 Juan Flores and SP/4 Frank Lindemann and one other man.

As chopper after chopper picked up people and left the area, the perimeter became smaller and smaller. As our turn approached, I watched the last mortar tube we had, fire round after round at the enemy. There, standing next to where we were to pass to get to our bird, stood LTC Andre Lucas and MAJ. Kenneth Tanner. I remember thinking that they should be down from where they stood. I knew they were trying to show courage and strength to us during a very bad time but they could get hurt. By this time, the regular L.Z.'s were on fire and couldn't be used so the pilots were hovering over bunkers to pick up their people. When our Huey came in, I stopped the guys from running down the path past Black Spade and the Major. I don't know why I stopped, but seconds later there was an explosion and both men were tossed up in the air and left lifeless on the still smoking ground. I could tell in an instant that they were dead. We ran over to

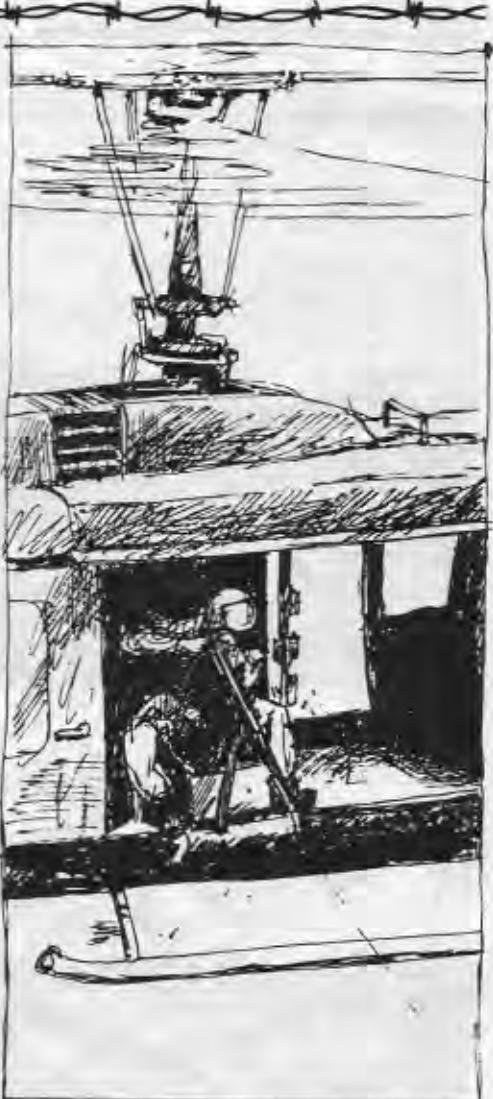


Photo Bill Heath



That night we were told all Kit Carson Scouts were to be held in a bunker under guard and all gear was to be made ready for an air lift first thing in the morning. We worked **ALL** night putting gear in nets, putting straps on artillery pieces (even the ones destroyed in the ammo dump fire), radios, weapons, packs, etc. The Chinooks arrived at first light and started flying out the gear. That's when I knew that equipment was worth a lot more than I was to the Army.

When the one Chinook was shot down that last day, it fell on top of my bunker. I could see and feel the rounds being walked up the side as the NVA tried to blow it apart. I relocated my young ass to another

them and a medic appeared and confirmed our thoughts. We had indeed lost the LTC and the MAJ. Shortly after that, we jumped on an arriving chopper, and got the hell out of Dodge. The rest of the month seemed to be working on combat losses, talking to friends, and mourning over all those we had lost.

I spent August working supply and was then sent to F.S.B. RAKKASAN on 1 Sept. I resupplied all the companies from the F.S.B. because my E-7 didn't want my 11 Bravo butt back there with his 76Y40. I sent food, mail, ammo, demo, and dog teams out to companies until 26 Sept. when I got a 7 day leave to Bangkok. The weather was so bad when I got back to Freedom Hill

I didn't make it back to Evans until the 4th of October. I extended for three days so I could get the 150 day early out. I got the extension and left Vietnam on 19 October 70. ETS'ed 20 October from Ft. Lewis.

Currently, I live in Coolidge, Arizona and have been married to the same wonderful woman for over 15 years. She and I wrote in Vietnam and we married five months after I returned. We have a 12-year old daughter, Jenni, and an 8-year old son, David. I went in the National Guard about 3-1/2 years ago and am a Staff Sergeant. I'm a Section Chief on an M109 self-propelled 155mm Howitzer.

I also enjoy shooting, where I took second in the Arizona National Guard State Rifle Championships with the M-16 last month.

I own a commercial printing company and play softball during the season.

I am looking forward to seeing some old faces and meeting some new ones at the reunion. I am really going to try to attend.

See you then,
Airborne all the way!

BILL HEATH
P. O. Box 1688
Coolidge, Az. 85228



U.S. spokesmen reported two U.S. soldiers from the 101st Airborne Div. killed, eight wounded and one light observation helicopter shot down during a sharp contact with an unknown size enemy force 16 miles southwest of Hue. Enemy losses are unknown, spokesmen said.

18 Feb. 70 3 PLT. A 2/506

Photo Bill Heath

Retreat From Ripcord

Four months ago, U.S. paratroopers set up Fire Base Ripcord in northern South Vietnam with orders to block Communist infiltration across the nearby Laotian border. Since Ripcord was in an area where the enemy had long held sway, the GI's expected trouble from the start. And after a period of relative calm, the anticipated onslaught began. Last week, it reached a climax when twelve Americans were killed and 56 wounded while on patrol a mile from the base. The following day, still under intense artillery fire, the paratroopers packed up and evacuated Ripcord. The commanding officer and two GI's were killed during the morning-long withdrawal. All told, 61 Americans had been killed and 345 wounded at Ripcord in three weeks.

This was the most painful U.S. military operation in Vietnam since last year's bloody assault on Hamburger Hill (which is only 11 miles northeast of Ripcord). In light of public outrage over that action, the U.S. command in Saigon had discouraged newsmen from visiting Ripcord and, until the final count was released, kept insisting that casualties there were "light." Moreover, the command did not adequately explain why American soldiers had been asked to set up a fire base in the midst of an enemy stronghold to begin with. Such a decision seemed to fly in the face of President Nixon's declared intention to hand over the brunt of combat to the ARVN—leaving the U.S. Army to play the back-up role of the "reluctant dragon."



Newsweek, August 3, 1970



Photo Bill Heath ↑

Photos: Chip Collins →



Mùa giỗ họ tuổi Xuân
minh Lân tung hoảng
Tết về rực rỡ chánh nghĩa
quốc gia!



CHIEU-HOI LEAFLET dropped during
Christmas Time - 1969

TV time this week

Schedule supplied by AFVN

Monday

June 8
 1200 Wild Wild West
 1300 Star Trek
 1400 Carol Burnett
 1515 Afternoon Movie
 1630 Naked City
 1700 The Monkees
 1730 Dragnet
 1800 Beverly Hillbillies
 1830 Voyage to the Bottom of Sea
 1930 News
 2000 Laugh In
 2100 Gunsmoke
 2200 The Fugitive
 2300 News
 1330 12 O'clock High

Tuesday

June 9
 1200 Here Come the Brides
 1300 Jackie Gleason
 1400 Burke's Law
 1500 News
 1515 Tonight Show
 1630 G.E. College Bowl
 1700 Get Smart
 1730 Information
 1800 Special
 1830 Felony Squad
 1900 Bewitched
 1930 News
 2000 Mod Squad
 2100 Red Skelton
 2200 Movie
 2300 News
 2330 Hollywood Palace

Friday

June 12
 1200 Mod Squad
 1300 Route 66
 1400 Dean Martin
 1500 News
 1515 Afternoon Movie
 1700 Felony Squad
 1730 Bewitched
 1800 Flying Nun
 1830 Hollywood Palace
 1930 News
 2000 Wild Wild West
 2100 Star Trek
 2200 Carol Burnett
 2300 News
 2330 Boxing

Wednesday

June 10
 1200 Jim Nabors
 1300 Bonanza
 1400 Ironside
 1500 News
 1515 Afternoon Movie
 1700 Wrestling
 1730 Julia
 1800 High Chaparral
 1930 News
 2200 Glen Campbell
 2300 Tonight Show

Saturday

June 13
 1200 Glenn Campbell
 1300 Red Skelton
 1400 Sports
 1600 Billiards
 1700 Auto Racing
 1730 Jim Nabors
 1830 Information
 1900 Get Smart
 1930 News
 2000 Here Come the Brides
 2100 Jackie Gleason
 2200 Burke's Law
 2300 News
 2330 Midnight Movie

Thursday

June 11
 1200 Laugh In
 1300 Gunsmoke
 1400 The Fugitive
 1500 News
 1515 High Chaparral
 1630 Special
 1700 Ed Sullivan
 1800 The Monkees
 1830 Twelve O'clock High
 1930 News
 2000 Mary Jane
 2030 Dragnet
 2100 Route 66
 2200 Dean Martin
 2300 News
 2330 Midnight Movie

Sunday

June 14
 1200 Religious Hour
 1300 Movie
 1400 Sports
 1600 Information
 1630 Mary Jane
 1700 Crossroads
 1800 Love on a Rooftop
 1830 Naked City
 1900 G.E. College Bowl
 1930 News
 2000 Ed Sullivan
 2100 Bonanza
 2200 Ironside
 2300 News
 2330 Midnight Movie

June 8, 1970





Medic Scampers Off After Hit By Dud

FIRE SUPPORT BASE ROY - It takes quite a bit to shake up a medic, as C Co., 1st Bn. (Ambl.), 327th Inf., has learned from Pfc. Wendell Drew, Marysville, Ohio.

Drew's company had set up for the night in the thick vegetation of Vietnam's coastal mountains, 25 miles southeast of Hue, when the jungle silence was broken by the crisp pop of AK-47 fire which sent men diving for cover.

But, before medic Drew could crawl to safety, the familiar whine of a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) made him hit the dirt.

Instead of an explosion, Drew felt a solid punch in his leg. At his feet lay the bluish-grey projectile, still menacing in appearance. "Charlie's" round was dud.

The medic then scurried over an embankment to safety, and a demolition team was called in to explode the RPG round.

FUB	FRI	FRI	THU	WED	TUE	MON
8	7	6	5	4	3	2
16	15	14	13	12	11	9
23	22	21	20	19	18	17
31	30	29	28	27	26	24
38	37	36	35	34	33	32

NO-SWEAT CALENDAR

A calendar designed with the Military Mind in mind has been making the rounds recently, but, like so many in-service spoofs, the origins of this one are all but impossible to trace. This one has been variously attributed to the Military Assistance Command in Thailand (MACT) and in Vietnam (MACV). Here's what makes it different from the Gregorian calendar most of us use to check off the days.

Everybody wants the job finished *yesterday*, right? Well, with this calendar, since the days of the week are numbered backwards, it's possible to issue an order on the seventh and have the job accomplished by the third.

Since everything has to be finished by Friday, there are *two Fridays* in each week.

There are seven extra days at the end of the month to take care of whatever has to be finished before the next month.

There can be no nagging reports due on the first of the month, using this calendar - because *there is no first of the month*. The tenth and the 25th days also are omitted, eliminating two other bothersome days.

There are no wasteful, non-productive Saturdays and Sundays. In that way, you can get rush work orders requiring weekend production without having to pay time-and-a-half or double-time wages to civilian employees.

Each week starts with a day called "Fub." This is the day all commanders get together and establish new priorities for everything.

Everyone knows how rough it is to start the week off on a Monday. No more of that with this calendar. It's the last day of the week.



By DON HIRST

SB RIPCORD, South Vietnam — The perimeter was being slowly sucked in as giant Chinook and smaller Huey helicopters swooped in to evacuate troops from this battered base. Suddenly one bird came under heavy fire from a .50-cal machine gun.

"I engaged the machine gun with my M60 but he spotted me and fired," recalled Sgt Christopher Hinman, 21. "One round hit my ammo can and it went up. I was hit in the arm and leg and it blew my flak jacket, helmet and gun all to hell. I left the area. Every man felt they were closing in..."

That was how the final hours of FSB Ripcord looked to one of its defenders from Bravo Company, 2d Bn, 506th Inf, 101st Abn Div.

It was a time when bravery was commonplace and sheer terror the normal state of mind. It wasn't the first time in the Vietnam War that a base had been abandoned under heavy fire, but in the men who fought the enemy, the memories of their private hell will still be vivid when Vietnam is a page in a history book.

When the battalion carved out the oblong-shaped base atop a 3,300-foot hill in early April, many of the grunts were looking forward to their turn at the relatively cushy duty of perimeter security even if the base was just nine clicks from the NVA-infested A Shau Valley. When the infantrymen sweated and strained to make Ripcord another in the endless series of firebases, none of them had any idea that their turf and the surrounding area would soon be one of the most hotly contested pieces of real estate in I Corps, and would ultimately cost 61 lives.

Their defenses were formidable enough — a company of infantry for perimeter security, miles of concertina wire, Claymore-mines and two batteries of artillery, both 105s and 155s. Outside the wire, the remainder of the battalion roamed the rugged hill country in search of the enemy. They found several small caches of mortar rounds and other ammunition, but in

The Battle of Ripcord

It was a time when bravery was commonplace and sheer terror the normal state of mind...

the words of one high-ranking officer, things were "pretty quiet." Then came July.

The NVA began to make their presence felt with occasional mortar or recoilless rifle attacks. First just a few shells, then progressively more and more until, said one platoon leader, at least 50 rounds a day came crashing inside the pocket-sized perimeter.

The gutsy cannon cockers of Bravo Battery, 2d Bn, 101st Abn Div, and B Btry, 2d Bn, 11th Art, XXIV Corps, manned their guns round the clock in an attempt to silence the incoming. They averaged only an hour or two of sleep each night and racked up almost a Purple Heart apiece.

"What was it like? Did you ever crap in your pants?" said a 105 gunner from 2/319. "The incoming just didn't land outside (the sandbagged gun emplacements) — it was hitting right inside the pit. Our six guns fired 1,800 rounds the first day."

But on July 18, a series of events denied Ripcord half of its artillery and started the brass thinking about pulling out. A Chinook with a slingload of 105mm ammunition was hovering over Bravo Battery when enemy fire knocked it from the sky. Minutes later the helicopter burst into flame, and soon the high-explosive shells began cooking off, first one or two at a time, then bigger and bigger explosions. The men had little choice but to abandon their guns.

Many hours later when the last shell had spent its explosive force, they returned to their gunpits. The once-lethal cannons were just so much scrap.

Before everything started going bang, recalled Hinman, he and a Pathfinder ran over to the downed Chinook with fire extinguishers.

"The ship was on fire," said Hinman, "and there was a guy trapped underneath. He was badly burned and several guys with shovels were trying to dig him out. We tried to bank the fire with sandbags, then the M60 ammo in the chopper started going off."

The rounds for the big guns were ready to blow too, recalled Hinman, so there was little that the battalion commander could do but order them to run for their lives. Their frantic efforts to save the trapped crewman from burning to death were in vain.

"Some rounds came in while we were trying to get him out," said Hinman emotionally. "God damn those ---- gooks!"

CS gas from some of the exploding shells began to spread over the firebase and made life miserable for the next several hours. But more than the discomfort, the loss of the quick-firing, pinpoint-accurate 105 howitzers worried troopers.

"I feel the 105 is a better defensive weapon than the 155," said one veteran squad leader. "It must have been a great morale boost for the gooks."

For the next four days the incoming increased in volume. Still, said one NCO, morale was good. "We just dug a little deeper," he said matter-of-factly.

"You didn't know where they'd land," retorted Sp4 Steve Hanson. "I'm not afraid of a dink I can see, but that..."

As the hours passed, brass back at division headquarters decided the base was more of a liability than an asset. Conclusion: get the hell out.

"We knew we were leaving the night before," said S/Sgt Tom Rubesam, a 21-year-old acting platoon leader. "They told us we weren't being beaten off and that Ripcord had performed its function. Tactically it was a good move. When I heard about it, I thought 'Let's go!'

While the weary GIs on Ripcord began the task of getting ready for the extraction slated to begin before dawn, Sp4 Floyd Alexander was sitting several miles away, still trying to get used to the fact that he was alive. Early that morning the young recon forward observer was with Alpha Company when it was hit by the NVA.

"We were getting ready to leave our NDP (night defensive position) when mortars started popping. Then there were satchel charges and AK fire. We were overrun."

A burst of fire killed the artillery FO and blinded another GI near Alexander. They were

separated from the rest of the company, so Alexander covered the wounded GI with his own body and played dead for more than three hours. The worst moment came when an NVA soldier padded silently over to where the two GIs lay and stared at them for several minutes.

"E" was carrying an AK and wearing sandals," said a still-shaken Alexander. "He stared at me and then he just walked off. I was scared and praying the whole time, believe me."

That night Alexander and his wounded buddy rejoined their company. "I didn't find out about Ripcord until we got back from the field," he concluded.

Back at Ripcord, the grunts sweated through what they hoped would be their last night of purgatory. Dawn was still an hour away when the first whup-whup of approaching helicopters announced the start of the extraction. One Chinook was shot down during the withdrawal, but the crew escaped intact. Ironically, the downed bird landed atop the already destroyed artillery pieces.

Fate still had its toll to collect from the battle-worn soldiers. Three men, including the battalion commander, Lt Col Alvaro Lucas, were killed during the extraction. Another 20 were wounded.

"He was a damned good CO," said one peon. "He was definitely for the troops. When the chopper crashed on the 18th, he was right there with us trying to get out the guy who was trapped."

The perimeter was steadily shrinking as helicopters ferried out load after load of GIs. Screaming Eagles screaming as well as antiaircraft fire didn't help, but chopper jocks still made textbook ejections.

"They did a helluva fine job," said one trooper. "Another hour and I think the dinks would have been in the wire."

The remaining Screaming Eagles were clustered around the TOC, almost everyone toting a machine gun. Suddenly, recalled Hinman, "I noticed that my wallet was missing."

So under the covering fire of his buddies, the youthful sergeant raced back down the hill to look for his missing billfold. He found it and made a mad right dash back to the TOC.

"There was 35 cents and a picture of my girl inside," said Hinman.

Finally the base was deserted. As the last choppers headed for safer territory, fighter-bombers rained death on the enemy below. The battle for Ripcord was over.

"We could have given them a good fight anytime they hit the wire," said one grunt, "and we could have defended the base indefinitely but what for? We're going to Eagle Beach for a party tomorrow. We'll take more casualties there than we did at Ripcord."



SGT. CHRISTOPHER HINMAN



SSG. TOM RUBESAM



SP4 FLOYD ALEXANDER

'...We Just Hit the Ground and Prayed'

By SPEC. 4 CHARLES C. SELF
S&S Staff Correspondent

FSB EVANS — "You just stayed in your bunker. Everybody did. The only time you left it was if you were ordered out."

That's the way life was at Fire Support Base Ripcord during the last few weeks, according to a soldier who lived there. The lonely outpost high in the rugged 3,000-foot mountains of western Thua Thien Province was abandoned by U.S. forces Thursday.

Friday, men of the last unit out—B Co., 2nd Bn., 506th Inf., — resting here described what they felt as they were extracted under enemy fire.

"The casualties were light because everybody kept their cool and kept dispersed," said one soldier. "The worst thing was the mortars. When they came in you just hit the ground and prayed."

The men said life hadn't been too bad at Ripcord even with the mortars and .51-caliber machine gun fire until the last few weeks. "It was mostly harassment fire," explained one.

They said some of the mortars contained CS tear gas. "You might be standing in line for chow and all of a sudden everybody's crying." They said one chapel service was even disrupted when a CS mortar hit the camp.

The soldiers said the day of the evacuation they started getting mortared early in the morning. "We were getting 120, 60 and 82mm mortars and a lot of .51-caliber and AK47 fire," said one.

They said the mortar fire was continuous, while sniper and .51-caliber fire came sporadically,

especially if a group started to form. "You ran," said one GI.

"The worst thing was the mortars," said a soldier who was there. "It was just luck who was going to get it," added another. "It don't bug you if you get shot at, but with mortars there's nothing you can do about it."

"With mortars it's a gamble, and you just have to take it," said another.

The men said they could see tactical air strikes going on in the triple canopy jungles on the mountains near Ripcord. "They were within 400 meters," said a

soldier. "You could see them dropping napalm."

The mortars started fires late in the morning. The men said every time a helicopter came in or a group started to gather, the mortar rounds came.

Just before noon only 18 men were left at Ripcord. One who was there said they waited for the last lift near some ammunition. The fire got too close.

"The 155 (mm, ammunition) was hot, and I was afraid of it cooking off," he said. "We ran up to the pad where the Chinooks had been landing, but a

mortar hit the chopper that had crashed, and fuel started to burn, so we ran to the other end and set up security. Just about everybody had machine guns then."

"You couldn't see much because by that time everything was on fire except where we were," he said. "We set up our security and tried to keep away from the fire."

After the helicopters came in, the men boarded and took off. Some said they never saw the enemy, only saw the fire pouring into the camp.

But one man said just as he climbed aboard the chopper and it lifted off he saw about 30 to 40 Reds within 300 meters of the abandoned perimeter defenses. "It looked like ants coming up for a sugar cube," he said.

"If we hadn't gotten out, they would have overrun us," said one man.

But another quickly disagreed. "We went in there to show the Reds we could do it any time we choose to," he said. "There just isn't anything up there to stay for."

Reds Were Planning to Assault Firebase

S&S Vietnam Bureau

FSB EVANS, Vietnam — Red troops surrounding Fire Support Base Ripcord were planning to launch a coordinated attack to overrun the post similar to earlier efforts when 101st Airborne Div. troops pulled out Thursday, division officials said Friday.

Information available indicated that the Reds were consolidating their strength in preparation for the assault, the officials said.

The decision to remove 200 troops from the base and two infantry security companies nearby came Tuesday when division officers decided that air and artillery strikes would ruin the enemy surrounding the camp more effectively and more cheaply than infantry troops, military sources said.

The troops were evacuated from the tiny, figure-eight-shaped outpost — the 101st's

westernmost outpost — during six and a half hours of what some soldiers described as "living hell" as more than 500 mortar shells slammed the base.

The men were evacuated from a tiny landing zone at the south end of the outpost. Three Americans were killed and 20 wounded in the escape, according to the U.S. Command.

One CH47 Chinook helicopter, attempting to remove some of the six 105mm howitzers virtually destroyed July 18 when another Chinook crashed with a load of ammunition, crashed on the pad and then was hit by a mortar round.

In the earlier Chinook incident, Red machine gun fire from near the camp's perimeter touched off the downed helicopter's fuel tanks which then exploded the 3,500 pounds of ammunition, causing the barrels of the six nearby howitzers to melt.

One man died in the incident, according to the command.

Firebase Ripcord was built three and a half months ago in the center of Red strongholds in western Thua Thien Province near the A Shau Valley.

B Co., 2nd Bn., 506th Inf., was the first unit into Ripcord April 1, and it was the last to leave Thursday.

"We had mortars the day we went in and mortars the day we went out and mortars every day in between," said Sgt. Richard Pryor, 21, who was one of the last 18 men to leave Ripcord.

Officials said the tiny outpost has taken an average of about 50 mortars every day since the 101st moved in.

"The most amazing thing was those chopper pilots," said Pfc. Daniel Biggs, 22. "I saw one go in when two mortars had just splashed down, right on the pad where he was going to land. It wasn't three seconds before he

came in — he came right in, didn't turn away or anything."

Officials said the enemy concentration was part of an enemy buildup to take advantage of dry weather by stashing supplies for future operations.

They said Ripcord had been established to upset his ability to move supplies through that part of western Vietnam toward the population centers. They denied the withdrawal represented any kind of defeat, explaining the fire support base had served its purpose and the men were withdrawn so that full U.S. firepower could be concentrated on the large number of enemy believed to be in the area.

Tactical air strikes began pounding Ripcord as soon as the last troops were pulled out and continued into the night and all day Friday. Officials said 44 tactical air strikes were called in Thursday.

With Sgt. Mike



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"Hey, it's from Mom—I wonder how things are goin' back on th' front . . ."

12-4



"And now we bring you a weather report straight from our weather desk here at AFR, your Voice of Information, Education, and Entertainment. As a special service to our listeners from our AFR weather bureau, this is brought to you in keeping with our policy of keeping you fully informed. And now the special weather report from AFR's weather desk, another of AFR's efforts to provide you with the very latest in Information, Education, and Entertainment. Here is your latest weather report from AFR: It is raining outside, sort of."

SỨC MẠNH BẢO VỆ MIỀN NAM VIỆT-NAM

Đây chiến hạm Niu-Gi-Gi đang loạt động ngoài khơi Việt-Nam. Chiến hạm này được trang bị 9 khẩu đại bác 406ly bắn với loại đạn nặng trên 860 kí, đi xa trên 33 cây số và 20 khẩu đại bác khác cỡ 127ly. Đầu đạn 406ly có thể xuyên thủng một bức tường bê tông cốt sắt dày 9 thước.

Trước hỏa lực cực kỳ dũng mãnh của Quân Lực Việt-Nam Cộng-Hòa và Đồng Minh, bọn Cộng Sản không bao giờ thực hiện nổi mộng xâm lăng miền Nam Việt-Nam. Muốn chấm dứt chiến tranh trong danh dự, chính quyền Hà-nội phải chứng tỏ thiện chí Hòa-Bình tại cuộc thương thuyết ở Pa-Ri.



CỘNG SẢN NHẤT ĐỊNH THUA

Quân Lực Việt-Nam Cộng-Hòa và Đồng Minh nhất định sử dụng hỏa lực dũng mãnh để đánh bại âm mưu xâm lăng miền Nam của Cộng Sản Bắc Việt ngụy trang dưới chiêu bài "giải phóng".

Chiến hạm Niu-Gi-Gi là một trong những hỏa lực dũng mãnh đó. Được trang bị 9 khẩu đại bác 406ly - loại đại bác lớn nhất thế giới - chiến hạm Niu-Gi-Gi có một sức công phá tương đương với máy bay B52.

Trước hỏa lực dũng mãnh này, âm mưu xâm lăng miền Nam của Cộng Sản nhất định thất bại.



CHIEU-HOI LEAFLET dropped in early 1970. These are reproductions of the front and back of leaflet.



IN VIETNAM
WE WERE HATED
AND DESPISED



WITH NO PLACE
TO GO.



THEY CALLED
US WAR
MONGERS...



AND IT WAS THE
SAME WHEN WE
GOT BACK HOME...



AND BABY
KILLERS.



WE WERE
STRANGERS...



EXCEPT IN NAM
WE HAD A
JOB.



Of course we have
room. We've been
waiting a long time
friend.

So have
I.

NATIONAL VETERANS MEMORIALS



JOLLY
ON
SUN



By Don E. Wilcock

GINGER BAKER terms his new band, AIR FORCE, an "occasional" group and that is the way they come off on their two-record LP - occasionally. Recorded live at Albert Hall, the album contains solos by DENNY LAINE (Remember "Go Now" by THE MOODY BLUES? Denny was their vocalist at that time). Ginger Baker rises to his inevitable drum solos, including a revision of "Toad" which sounds totally different from the last two times on record with the addition of jazz-influenced horns. STEVIE WINWOOD gets in about two cents worth of vocals and RICH GRECH is on bass. This tossed salad jam session of motley musicians led by the schizo-frenetic Ginger Baker produces a monolith of loose noise that comes together then dissipates into periods of cacophonous monotony.

JOAN BAEZ has received much criticism, particularly since her album of over a year ago of Dylan songs. Reviewers said that her unorthodox political beliefs had drained her of her vocal originality. Dylan songs were a potent influence on the HOLLIES also. GRAHAM NASH left that group, refusing to become part of an unoriginal concept like a Dylan album. He is now a member of CROSBY, STILLS, NASH AND YOUNG.

Joan's latest album, ONE DAY AT A TIME, is a testimonial to her continued singing talents. She is backed by dobro and steel guitar for some country songs, including "Long Black Veil." She also does THE STONES' "No Expectations." It is worth the trip just to hear a chick with her voice do that number, but her most moving performances are "A Song for David" and "I Live One Day At a Time." A lot of you do not agree with the views that sent her husband to prison, but her lonely love and expectations of future reunions as expressed in these songs are emotions familiar to each one of us. When you hear it you will understand and never accuse Joan Baez of lacking emotion.

THE CANNED HEAT reportedly will record an album with urban blues giant, JOHN LEE HOOKER. The Heat's boogies are based on Hooker's work. Listen particularly to "Boogie Chilien" on his ORIGINAL FOLK BLUES album.

Hooker is not the first veteran bluesman to team up with famous rock groups. OTIS SPANN'S piano on CRYIN' TIME is accompanied by members of COUNTRY JOE AND THE FISH. British rock bands often back touring bluesmen in a country where American blues has a large and appreciative audience. SONNY BOY WILLIAMSON and THE YARDBIRDS were recorded live in 1963 at the Craw-Daddy Club in London. The then-fledgling group takes a back seat to the powerful harmonica of Sonny Boy.

WILLIE DIXON doesn't tell us who his backup men are, but it is fascinating to hear the author of "Hoochie Coochie Man," "You Shook Me," "Spoonful" and "The Seventh Son" sing his own famous compositions on I AM THE BLUES.

Mini gets maxi use

FSB RIPCORD - Ever since the term "mini" was coined to describe a style of female attire, the GI has found it quite useful in naming nearly everything from machine guns to cavalry units.

Screaming Eagles from the 2nd Bn. (Airmobile), 506th Inf., not to be passed by the trend have used the prefix on various sections of this firebase 15 miles west of Hue.

At the mini-kitchen a Currahee begins his day, but not with a mini-breakfast. The forward mess hall prepares breakfast of eggs, hot cakes and sausages. "When we first arrived we were limited to powdered eggs and coffee, but we've built the place up and can now make any breakfast they can prepare in the rear," explained Spec. 6 Anthony Critchlow, Boise, Idaho.

Two stick it out with four units

CAMP EVANS - Two Screaming Eagles are beginning to think their IBM cards have been stuck together in someone's computer.

It seems Sgt. Ray Hudzinski and Spec. 4 Richard Hanson, both from Wisconsin, have been assigned to the same company during four different assignments in the Army.

The two Currahees with the 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile) Hq. Co., 2nd Bn., 506th Inf., met in basic training at Ft. Campbell, Ky., where they were in the same squad. But that was only the beginning. "After basic training we found ourselves in the same squad and the same company at Ft. Polk, La., for AIT," said Hudzinski.

The two buddies then arrived in Vietnam and subsequently were assigned to the 101st. "Then," noted Hanson, "we were both in the same squad of Co. D, 3rd of the 506th."

After some time, Hudzinski was reassigned to headquarters as a radio-telephone operator in the tactical operations center. Not to be left behind, Hanson's talents as a carpenter were soon recognized and he, too, found himself reassigned to Hq. Co.

Now that their tour of duty in Vietnam is drawing to a close, the two men recently received orders for stateside duty. Neither of them raised an eyebrow when the orders assigned them both to Ft. Riley, Kan.



"Here come them Army troops again. Hide the C.A.N.D.Y. and put out the S.O.A.P."

Later in the day, during a free moment, a soldier can stop at the mini-PX. The exchange conex is stocked with such items as transistor radios, stationery, and some snack items.

These mini-features were innovated to accommodate the men of the 2/506 working in the surrounding area, who come in for brief standdowns.

Besides the mini-kitchen and the mini-PX, Ripcord has one other unique miniature feature. A soldier on standdown can adjust his weapon's battlesight zero on the mini-rifle range just outside the perimeter.

The mini-rifle range is equipped with two unproved silhouette targets with modified Canadian bulls to point out windage and elevation adjustments.

Those Screaming Eagles who have experienced the mini trend all expressed hope that the fad would expand into other areas. As one trooper put it, "Maybe they'll come out with a mini-tour."

June 22, 1970



To 'Stand Alone'

The 1st Battalion (Airmobile) 506th Infantry traces its origin back to the 500th Parachute Infantry Regiment which began its colorful history in July 1942 when it was activated at

Camp Toombs, Ga. under the command of Col. Robert F. Sink. During those summer months the future paratroopers underwent rigorous physical training and completed the preliminaries for jump school. In November, 1942 the 506th moved to Ft. Benning, Ga. to complete the training which earned for the men the coveted "Parachutist Badge."

On June 1, 1943, the 506th was attached to the 101st Airborne Division and moved with it to Liverpool, England in September for more training.

At one a.m. on June 6, 1944, paratroopers of the 506th made their first assault over the northern coast of Normandy. From D-Day until November 1944, the men fought their way through France and Belgium. On December 19, the Currahees and other units of the 101st began their 28-day defense of the Belgian town of Bastogne against five divisions of the German Army living up to their nickname which means

"Stand Alone." In May 1945, the 506th captured the German stronghold at Berchtesgaden in its last mission of the war.

From 1945 to 1956, the Currahees were deactivated and reactivated several times. During the Korean Conflict the unit played a major role in training replacements at Camp Breckenridge, Ky.

On September 21, 1956, the 506th took part in reactivation ceremonies for the 101st at Ft. Campbell, Ky., and was redesignated the 1st Airborne Battle Group, 506th Infantry. On February 3, 1964, the battle group was divided into battalions making this the 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry.

On December 13, 1967, the 1/506th was airlifted to the Republic of Vietnam and participated in its first combat operations near Phuoc Vinh in II Corps Tactical Zone.

Since arriving in northern I Corps, the Currahees have been instrumental in suppressing NVA forces in the A Shau Valley, participating in the fierce combat that raged on Dong Ap Bia Mountain and in the battle for Hill 996. The unit was later airlifted north to the DMZ to screen the redeployment of the 3rd Marine Division.

The battalion, under the leadership of Lt. Col. Hugh C. Holt and Cmd. Sgt. Maj. Charles C. Eppler is currently operating in the mountainous regions and lowlands around Camp Evans.

U.S. Air Power, Viet Troops Hit Ripcord Area

By SPEC. 4 SETH LIPSKY

S&S Staff Correspondent

CAMP EAGLE, Vietnam—Vietnamese Army ground troops, U.S. helicopter gunships and Air Force jets for the second day in a row laced into heavily entrenched NVA troops Monday along a rugged ridge less than six miles north of Fire Support Base Ripcord, which U.S. troops abandoned July 23, informed sources here said.

ARVN 1st Inf. Div. reinforcements were reported late Monday to be battling an estimated NVA company that was hitting back with mortar and automatic weapons fire.

The exact location, sources said, has no name. It is "just a ridge west of O'Reilly," a fire support base carved into the edge of another ridge about 15 miles from the Laotian border and eight miles north of the upper A Shau Valley.

The pitched battle broke early Sunday morning, sources reported, after helicopter scouts from the 101st Airborne Div. spotted dozens and then an estimated 700 to 800 NVA troops in a patchwork of jungles and clearings about a mile west of O'Reilly.

From then on heavy air power blasted the area, they said, as ARVN troops fought from the ground.

Detailed reports of enemy and Allied casualties were not available late Monday, but sources reported at least 20 enemy had been shot or bombed from the air, and they speculated that a "significant" additional number had been killed by constant artillery and bomb strikes.

Helicopter pilots first spotted the enemy at 8:25 a.m. Sunday, sources said. Within hours and for the next two days, they said, A1 Skyraiders, F4 Phantoms and A37s were screaming through enemy automatic and antiaircraft fire that blazed from a series of long, steep, rugged ridges.

The area, one officer who had flown over it said, looked like the Smoky Mountains in North Carolina, but the ridges were deeper and more heavily vegetated.

Qualified 11Bs Can Apply

101st Needs Doorgunners

CAMP EAGLE — 101st personnel officers are looking for helicopter doorgunners.

Many current and projected vacancies exist, and interested, qualified personnel should apply for the positions through their chain of command.

Requirements for application call for Infantry personnel in grades E-3 and E-4 who have served five months in maneuver battalions.

Potential doorgunners must also have at least five months to go on their Vietnam tour. Those with less than five months may extend their DEROS for the job.

"He's Charlie Brown In Jungle Fatigues..."

WHAT IS A GRUNT?

Grunt is the guy whose unit is pulled out of Vietnam without him.

He's the guy in the outfit who gets a "Dear John" the same day he buys an engagement ring at the PX. Then he loses the ring.

He's the guy who arrives at the mess hall just as they run out of hot dogs—and bring out the steaks.

He helps high little old ladies across the street.

He's the guy who spends the entire last game of the World Series trapped in a turnstile at Shea Stadium—and then sells his story to *Sports Illustrated*.

His Valentine was returned marked "addressee unknown."

He's Charlie Brown in jungle fatigues—with Lucy for a first sergeant.

Grunt is the guy who goes to Taipei on R&R and spends the entire time in bed—with some strange new flu virus.

He's the guy who throws himself on the grenade when it lands in the middle of his patrol squad—and it turns out to be a dud. (Actually happened to 1st Sgt Ernest

Mines of the 4th Inf. Div. in the Nam.)

Grunt was the kid they stuck out in right field who surprised everybody by making the spectacular game-saving catch and got kissed by the Pretty Little Redhead right in front of the whole stadium full of people.

He's the guy who plays "chicken" on his Honda 50—and wins.

He was the guy who finally saved enough money to buy the gigantic stereo amplifier and taperecording rig—then plugged it into the 220 socket.

Once he stopped to help a kindly old gentleman change a tire and got arrested on suspicion of auto theft.

He's the guy who's still waiting outside the bar for the expensive chick who promised to meet him there ("for shuh") two hours ago.

Grunt is the guy whose buddies set him up for a blind date with a beauty contest winner—"Mr. Florida Sunshine of 1951."

He's a guy who has to send I.O.U.s for Christmas.

That's Grunt.





2/501 'Drives On'

Although the unit has a comparably short history, the "Drive On" battalion's accomplishments during World War II, in the States, and in Vietnam

have earned it a reputation as one of the finest fighting units in the Army.

The 501st Parachute Battalion was formed in October 1940 and used to test concepts for future airborne units.

The battle cry thus formed, the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment was trained and transferred to England in 1944 where it participated in the assault on Carentan, France on June 6. After 34 days of bitter fighting, the unit was again moved to England. This time was spent preparing for a daylight jump into Holland.

On September 17, the regiment participated in airborne assaults on Erde and Kameron. After 73 days on line the unit was moved to Mourmelon, France for a well-earned rest.

This rest proved to be a short one, however, because on December 18 the 501st rejoined the 101st Airborne Division in Bastogne. At this Belgium town the 501st helped stall the last German offensive of the war and turn the tide of the battle.

The unit returned to the United States in August 1945 and was inactivated.

In 1953, the unit was reactivated at Fort Jackson, S.C. as a training regiment. In the spring of 1956, the regiment became an airborne unit again and rejoined the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Ky.

In September 1967, the 501st was again alerted for combat, this time in Vietnam. A vigorous training program was immediately implemented and supervised by the many combat experienced officers and NCO's that volunteered to return to Vietnam.

The battalion made its initial step into Vietnam in December 1967 and started a 30-day in-country training program.

February 1968 was the month of the great "TET Offensive" and the troopers of the "Drive

On" battalion engaged NVA and Viet Cong troops in the historic city of Hue and surrounding areas. The counter-offensive was a success and freed Hue of her aggressors. As a result of this action two battalion members were awarded the Medal of Honor.

Throughout 1968 the battalion was engaged in building fire support bases and cutting landing zones in the northernmost part of Vietnam's I Military Region. Heavy contact with several NVA units marked this period, but the battalion's "Drive On" spirit suppressed any chance of a major enemy attack.

Turning to airmobility in November 1969 the battalion boarded a seemingly endless line of CH-47 Chinook helicopters and flew to Quang Tri, near the Demilitarized Zone. Through five days and nights of continuous contact with the NVA, the men of the 2nd Battalion (Ambl.), 501st Infantry diminished the NVA's operations in the area.

By early 1970, the battalion's area of operation was well secured and all were ready for "TET-1970". The expected attacks during the holiday did not take place, largely due to the well-planned operations by the troopers prior to the holiday.

The battalion again changed its area of operation in March 1970. They moved west of Hue and occupied Fire Support Base Granite. On April 29 Granite was attacked by an estimated battalion of NVA soldiers. One company held off the attackers and suppressed the offensive.

Still weary from the attack, the battalion departed to set up a new area of operations at Fire Support Base Henderson. Shortly after arriving, Fire Support Base Henderson was attacked by more than a battalion of NVA sappers and infantry. The 501st ended the long battle victorious and was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for meritorious and valorous action against the enemy.

The "Drive On" troopers are under the command of Lt. Col. Otis W. Livingston. The battalion's command sergeant major is Cmd. Sgt. Maj. Charles James.

July 20, 1970

The Screaming Eagle

A proud tradition



The 2nd Battalion, 506th Infantry had its inception parallel with the 101st Airborne Division. Born as Company B, 506th Parachute Infantry on July 1, 1942, its history began with the airborne concept.

It was at Camp Toccoa, Ga., that "Currahee" became the nickname of the 506th Infantry. Currahee, a Cherokee Indian word equivalent for "stand alone", symbolized the organization's strength and independence.

In June of 1943, the 506th was attached to the 101st Airborne Division and prepared for deployment to Europe. During World War II, the 2nd Battalion earned four battle streamers for actions in Normandy, Rhineland, Ardennes/Alsace and Central Europe.

Arriving in the Republic of Vietnam in December 1967, the unit distinguished itself just one month later. The 2/506th was called on to

stop an aggressive enemy from capturing the city of Bien Hoa. The "stand alone" troopers pushed the enemy's battalion-sized element out of the city within 24 hours.

After a successful campaign at Cu Chi, the battalion joined the rest of the division in northern I Corps and in November moved with the 3rd Brigade to Camp Evans and established various fire support bases.

In May of 1969, the Currahees air assaulted into the A Shau Valley to join the rest of the "Triple Threat" brigade in clearing out that traditional enemy stronghold. After working in the area near the Laotian border, the men of the 2/506th moved north to take part in operations near the DMZ.

Under the present command of Lt. Col. Andre C. Lucas, the Currahees are working out of FSB Ripcord in combined US-ARVN operations.

The 2nd Bn. (Ambl.), 506th Inf. carries the colors of one of the toughest, hardest fighting and most successful units of World War II. These Currahees in the Republic of Vietnam, 25 years later and half a world away, uphold that proud tradition.

The Screaming Eagle

July 20, 1970

Enemy drive halted

CAMP EVANS - One week of sporadic fighting in mountainous jungles 35 miles west of Hue recently culminated in a fatal firefight for 19 North Vietnamese Army soldiers.

After the hour-long engagement, troopers from the Reconnaissance Platoon, 1st Bn. (Ambl.), 506th Inf. were credited with killing all 19, with the aid of supporting helicopter gunships.

The platoon was working in squad-sized elements when one of the pointmen observed an enemy soldier hiding in bushes several feet off the trail. The area had been frequented by enemy snipers during the week.

The Screaming Eagles fatally wounded the NVA. Immediately thereafter, however, a second NVA stood up and began to fire. In the ensuing exchange of small arms fire a second and third NVA were killed.

The Currahees then moved out in a sweep of the area. "Before we took two steps it seemed like the whole world came down on us," said Staff Sgt. Keith Friend, Grand Rapids, Mich., the platoon sergeant.

Immediately after taking cover from enemy RPG's, machine gun and small arms fire, the Screaming Eagles began laying down a heavy cover fire of their own. Staff Sgt. Friend summoned helicopter gunship support and ordered one of his other squads to reinforce him.

During this action, enemy snipers opened up with AK-47 rifle fire upon the relief squad, led by Sgt. Robert Gonzalez, Ridgeway, Mich. The squad was maneuvered around the enemy and joined the command squad.

In the midst of the firefight three enemy soldiers were spotted by helicopter pilots circling above who marked their positions with smoke. The NVA had moved to within 25 meters of the command squad before they were killed by the Currahee defenders.

One Screaming Eagle, Spec. 4 Phillip Lee, Lima, Ohio, a medic, barely escaped death when an RPG round landed next to his head during the contact. The round failed to detonate. "It looks like someone up there is keeping an eye on me," he mused.

Misplaced Bomb Saves Embattled Troopers

By SPEC. 5 CHARLES C. SELF
S&S Staff Correspondent

FSB EVANS, Vietnam — The bomb fell short. "Its fins didn't open or something," explained a U.S. soldier who was knocked over by the blast.

But it probably saved his life, because it marked the turning point in a 6½-hour battle which left Alpha Co., 2nd Bn., 506th Inf., badly battered.

The day before Fire Support Base Ripecord was evacuated under fire by the 101st Airborne Div. last Thursday, the understrength Alpha Co. was working in a valley southeast of the beleaguered outpost searching for Red caches, bunkers and supplies.

They had found plenty, including a document outlining plans for an attack on Ripecord, according to Capt. Charles Hawkins, 23, company commander.

They were headed back to Ripecord when a large NVA unit attacked them on three sides as they left their night position atop a knoll.

"We were just moving out," said Hawkins. "Our lead ele-

ment was maybe 150 meters out and his rear element maybe 50 meters out. The rest were getting set to move."

"The point man saw movement and opened up, then the whole world came in on us," he said.

"They really had us reconned good," said one soldier who was there. "They dropped mortars right on our CP (command post)."

Hawkins said about 25 60mm mortar rounds, some containing CS tear gas hit between the elements of the lead platoon. The men took cover on the side of the knoll. Then the NVA drove in between them, surrounding the second platoon. "It was the first 15 minutes that were bad," said one soldier. "That's when we took most of the casualties. The mortars came in and there was a lot of confusion. They had all our equipment at the top of the hill."

"The ground troops came right behind the mortars," said Hawkins. "It was as professional an attack as you or I

would ever hope to be on."

The men said they took cover behind the thick jungle on the hill. They said the enemy made no attempt to push them the rest of the way off, and they had an opportunity to regroup and gather their wounded.

"If they had had Reds at the bottom of the hill, we wouldn't have had a chance," said one soldier.

The Americans tried to contact other elements.

"We would shout out 'Currahee' (the unit motto) or whistle. But the Reds would copy us. Then we'd do it again, they'd shoot," explained a member of the third platoon. "It took us 35 or 40 minutes to find where everybody was."

The enemy stayed at the top of the hill firing into the underbrush where the Americans hid. The men said they realized they had to take the top of the hill. All of their equipment was there, as well as their ammunition. Hawkins ordered the men to start moving toward the top of the hill.

"We were just at the top when the bomb fell," said one soldier. "Luckily there were some trees between us and the bomb or we probably would have been killed, too."

The bomb hit the top of the hill where the NVA element had wedged itself between the three platoons of Alpha Company.

"When we got back up the hill we could see the NVA. We could see them dragging the bodies off," said a soldier.

"The jet dropped the lucky bomb accidentally," said Hawkins, "but it saved us."

Hawkins said that as the Reds retreated they gave him a chance to gather the elements of the company again. They set up a defensive position atop the hill, dug in and waited.

"We had 30 to 40 men capable of defending the position that night, able to stand guard," said Hawkins.

"That night was really long," said a soldier. "We had been told that Delta (Co., 2nd Bn., 506th Inf.) was coming in to help us and everybody kept looking at his watch."

The next morning, "15 minutes after sunup," said Hawkins, Delta Co. was inserted about 500 meters from Alpha.

"They had to fight their way all the way in," said Hawkins. "but by nine o'clock, they had linked up with us and by 12:30 they had hacked out an LZ (landing zone) and the dustoffs were in taking my wounded and dead out."

By 2:30 that afternoon all the troops had been extracted.

Alpha had lost 12 killed and 51 wounded.

50 CENT MPC
Blue submarine, green background with brown border.



5 CENT MPC
Blue submarine, green background and border. Front and back view.





Helicopter pad located to the left of Currahee Tower.



Currahee Control Tower (with Snoopy).



The back of the sign to
the 2/506 Infantry.
Looking out toward the
theatre.



Medical Aid Station



S-1 and S-2 are located inside this building.



This is the S-4 office.
Supply, the lifeline of
the Currahees.



Photo Bill Heath

GENERAL BERRY HONORS CURRAHEES

Thirteen members of the 2d Battalion (Airmobile) 506th Infantry were among those soldiers receiving awards presented by Brigadier General Sidney B. Berry, Assistant Division Commander, for the evacuation of Fire Support Base Ripcord and conjunctive action.

CPT Charles Hawkins, CPT Benjamin Peters, SSG Jim Burnette, PFC Donald Colbert, CPT Rembert Rollison, SSG Sergio Macias, SGT Sidney Tucker, SP4 George Kitzmiller, SP4 Elisha Dixon, CPT James Harris, 1LT Henry Bralosuknia, SGT Donald Wilkens, and SGT Jon Penfold of the 2/506th Infantry all received Silver Star awards.

Speaking from Currahee Pad, General Berry also cited all units involved with Fire Support Base Ripcord for accomplishing what he termed "a highly successful operation". General Berry referred to both the establishment and operating the fire support base and the "professionalism shown in the evacuation operation".





Photo Bill Heath

CURRAHEES HOLD MEMORIAL SERVICE

Screaming Eagles of the 2d Battalion 506th Infantry recently paused to honor their fallen comrades with a memorial service held at Evans Theater.

With the traditional steel helmets, combat boots, and rifles at stack arms displayed before the Currahees, LTC John C. Bard, Battalion Commander, performed the calling of the roll.

LTC Bard has assumed command of the 2/506th Infantry after the death of LTC Andre C. Lucas, who was killed in action on Fire Support Base Ripcord.

After words from MAJ Howard Johnson, Brigade Chaplain, and CPT LeRoy Fox, Battalion Chaplain, the men of the 2/506th paid tribute with three volleys of rifle fire and the playing of taps.



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Our battalion has just passed thru an experience not uncommon to the task which has been set for us. It has been a time of terror, grief, and sorrow. Not one of us has escaped a deep sense of loss, but all that is of the past. We are now faced with a new beginning. The writer of Ecclesiastes helps us to understand the course of human events. He says, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven; a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which has been planted; a time to kill and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance; a time to get and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time of love, and a time of hate; a time of war, and a time of peace." We have just passed through one season, but now we must live in another. The Lord has been good to we who are left and we should give Him thanks. We can do that best by living our lives as He would have us, and by performing the tasks before us in the best possible manner. May the grace of God be our hope.

CPT LeRoy Fox
Chaplain

Photo Bill Heath



IN HONOR OF THOSE WHO DIED IN THE DEFENSE
OF THEIR NATION

101st Abn Div, 2/506 Inf

25 July 1970

Posting of the Colors
Invocation
Calling of the Roll
Commanding Officer
Reading of the Old Testament
Reading of the New Testament
Address by the Chaplain
Prayer
Solo - The Lord's Prayer
Silent Tribute to the Deceased
Benediction
Salute
Taps
Retiring of the Colors

CPT Vasquez-Rodriguez
Ch. Howard Johnson

LTC John C. Bard

Ch. LeRoy Fox

SP/4 Bill Woody



Photo Bill Heath



WE GATHER IN MEMORY OF

STAFF

LTC Andre Lucas	23 July 1970
MAJ Kenneth Tanner	23 July 1970

HEADQUARTERS COMPANY

PFC Richard Conrady	2 July 1970
PFC Rickey Scott	8 July 1970
SP4 Martin Draper	22 July 1970
PFC Danny Fries	22 July 1970

A COMPANY

PFC John Babich	22 July 1970
PFC Virgil Bixby	22 July 1970
PFC Robert Brown	22 July 1970
SP4 Robert Jawinell	22 July 1970
SP4 Donald Severson	22 July 1970
SGT John Kreckel	22 July 1970
SFC Pham Uam Long	22 July 1970
1LT Steve Olson	22 July 1970
1LT William Pihassa	22 July 1970
SP4 Thomas Schultz	22 July 1970
PFC Gerald Singleton	22 July 1970
PFC Gus Allen	23 July 1970

B COMPANY

PFC Robert Utecht	3 July 1970
SP4 Victor DeFoor	10 July 1970
SP4 Roberto Flores	21 July 1970
PFC Francis Maune	21 July 1970

C COMPANY

SGT Thomas Herndon	2 July 1970
CPT Thomas Hewitt	2 July 1970
SGT Lee Lenz	2 July 1970
SP4 Robert Radcliff	2 July 1970
SP4 Roger Sumrall	2 July 1970
SP4 Robert Zoller	2 July 1970
SP4 Gerald Risinger	7 July 1970
SP4 James Hupp	8 July 1970

D COMPANY

PFC Charles Beals	7 July 1970
PFC Michael Grimm	7 July 1970
SP4 Lewis Howard	7 July 1970
SGT Paul Guimond	14 July 1970
SSG James Hembree	14 July 1970
SP4 John Keister	14 July 1970
1LT Terrence Palm	14 July 1970
SGT Gary Schneider	14 July 1970
PFC Keith Utter	14 July 1970
SGT Stanley Diehl	22 July 1970

E COMPANY

SP4 Ray Johnson	10 July 1970
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Who died serving their country in the
Republic of Vietnam.