

RIPCORD REPORT

A Newsletter

No. 23, May 1989

For Friends and Survivors of FSB RIPCORD, RVN



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(Feb. 2, 1970)

= FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTORS =

- * John Schuelke
- * William Ayres
- * Paul Greaux
- * Doug Quick
- * Sonny Caughlin
- * Rodney Moore
- * Fred Behrens
- * Vince Kenyon

= FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS =
(To Treasurer)

- * Ripcord Association
c/o John Mihalko

= EDITOR =

- * Ray Blackman

NEWSLETTER INTENTIONS

The intention of this Newsletter is to bring those of us together that are interested in FSB Ripcord, RVN. The events, the people, the humor, the memories of that time are being written by those that served there. We want this to be a healthy experience for the Veteran, his or her family or friends. We encourage you to write, call and talk, or send a taped message to us with your feelings about our Newsletter or Ripcord in general. We wish to improve as we grow and your initial input is necessary.

However, there may be those Veterans who are still troubled by their Vietnam experience. We regret this situation, but can not share responsibility for their reactions regarding the Newsletter contents. Ideally, this Newsletter will help all of us through our past and into a rewarding future.

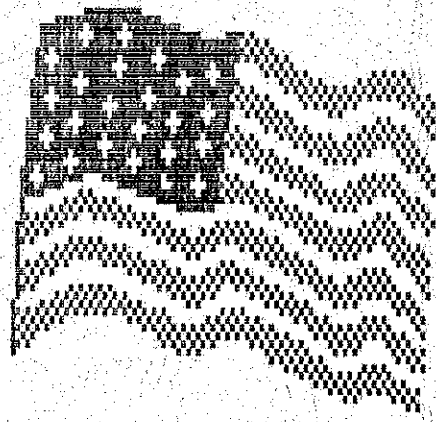
ADDRESS CHANGES

Mr. Bill Aeschliman

Mr. Al Booty

Mr. Mike Miller

Mr. Gregory Mitacek



INCOMING

Dear John,

Now that I finally got some time, I thought I'd drop you a line, and also ask you something.

Have you sent out the new Ripcord Report? The last one I have is the Sept. one and they come every other month right? I'd appreciate it if I could have the new, or the latest issue. With my luck, you have already sent it, but it's stuck in the mail and I'll get it the day after I mail this.

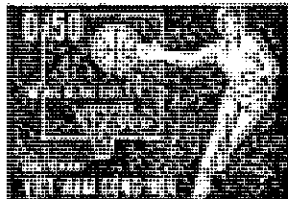
Thanks for putting my last letter in the Report. A few weeks or so ago I got a letter from Steven Hawk, who served in the Ripcord AO. I wish I'd written earlier because our band had Band Camp at Purdue University in Lafayette, Ind. this year, and that is where he lives. He said he had some pictures & his map of that area, so he might let me take a look at it soon.

Blackie sent me the video he made of his photos. I thought it was great. I've watched it a lot, and Dad's seen it a few times too.

I'm getting more things all the time for my museum. One guy I wrote said he'd try to get me a pair of jungle boots. Talk about helping, huh? This Saturday I'm getting my AR 15, finally. It took about 4 months but it's worth it.

Well, thats about it for now. I'd appreciate any help with the newsletter, if its already been sent out. Give my best to your family, and I'll talk to you later.

Wm. T. Ripley



Sept. 12, 1988

Dear John,

Sorry that its been so long since I've made a contribution. I'm still recieving the newsletter and enjoying it very much. Hopefully, in some small way, this

will enable you to continue your fine work. Additionally, in the future I may be able to contribute something to its content.

Again, keep up the fine work.

Currahee,
James Kilgore



Jan. 27, 1989

Dear John,

Use this to keep the letter coming. I've never met you or Chip Collins, but from your writing I feel I have. I know Blackie personally so I feel the quality will remain. As we said in D-2-501, "Drive On"

John Schuelke
Ft. Myers, FL



Jan. 31, 1989

Dear John,

Maybe you can use the enclosed photo-copy news for your Eagle Action section. I have accumulated the tidbits here & there from various periodicals over the past four years. I have been receiving Ripcord Report for the past two issues only, so don't know if the tidbits appeared in previous issues.

I know I belonged to a sister Bn., and my tour ended in 69, but your Ripcord Report really touches home.

Now for a few questions. Do you have a "looking for" section? If yes, could you print the names of two buddies, I have been looking for; for 18 years. Both medics, 1/506 HHQ, 69-70. Melvin Howell & Billy Eaton. Also I am looking for a 1969 copy of 101st ABN Yearbook. Will pay top dollar. Also, may I have a copy of the Ripcord Report pertaining to Hamburger Hill?

Thanks,
Paul Greaux

SIT/REP

Congradulations are in order for Doc Speed Sherba and his wife Debbie on the birth of their son, John Carlton Sherba, born on 11/24/88. He weighed in at 8 lbs., 1oz.

It's re-run time! Our retrospective for this month was written by Chip Collins and first printed in the #7 issue of Ripcord Report back in May of 1986. John and I thought it would be a good idea to give our newer members a chance to read one of Chips retrospectives, and I'm sure that the old-timers of our group will find that it is well worth reading again.

There has been some interest in the video that I made for the D, 2/501 reunion last summer. If you would like to see a Ripcord Video made please contact me or John Mihalko. If there is enough interest we'll try to put one together.

A few of you have mentioned that you would like to locate some of your long lost Vietnam buddies. There is a process for doing this that has worked very well for the Delta Raiders Association. We have located over 200 Delta vets who had served with D, 2/501 between 1968 and 1972.

One of the best tools for locating a vet is your memory. Make a list of all the names you can remember, trying to make note of where they were from. Most of the guys we located were still living in the same area as they were while in Vietnam.

If you can remember the home town of someone, try calling information for that city and ask for the persons phone number in the hope that he still lives in the area. If there is no number for him, ask for the number of anyone with the same last name. If it's not too common of a name you may get lucky and reach a relative that knows his present location.

Look through your orders for medals! They usually list several names with Social Security numbers for the guys in your unit that received the same medal. The first 3 numbers of a Social Security number indicate which state the card was issued in. Once you know what State a person is from try calling information for the larger cities in that State. We have located several men that way.

If you run into a brick wall with information (an unlisted number), don't worry, there may be a way to get through to the person anyway. Call the R.L. Polk Co. in Detroit, MI at (313)961-9470 and ask for extention 533. The R.L. Polk Co. makes city directories and can give you the persons address. Then you can write to him!

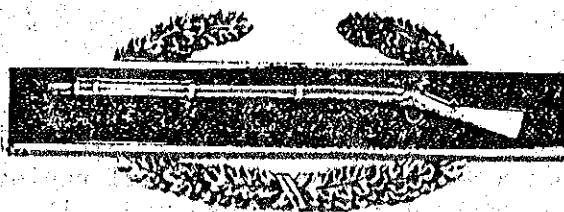
Look through your photo album! On the backs of some of my photos I had written the names and States of where the guys in the pictures were from.

As you locate the lost members of your unit you will find that they can be very helpful by passing along more names and States of others that served with you in the Nam. It is a building process that takes a strong desire on your part to locate your friends.

Don't give up! You must think like a detective. They are out there and you can find them if you want to bad enough. I can't even come close to describing the feeling you'll get once you finally get ahold of your best buddy from the Nam.

Please support the Ripcord Report by sending us a retrospective about your tour of duty!

Blackie



SIT/REP FROM FIREBASE WHIPPANY



John Mihalko - Sept. 1, 1970

Greetings once again from "the field." First of all, I must apologize for the delay in this issue of the newsletter. Blackie, as usual, did an outstanding job, especially with the cover sheet.

I make no excuses, but an explanation is in order. Having just completed six weeks of double shifts at work, compounded by the sudden death of my father in law, and my wife's surgery, I had no spare time left to get the newsletter copied and out in the mail to you, the readers.

I didn't realize how much time it took to do the job until I didn't have the time to do it. I feel badly about the delay, but it just couldn't be avoided.

Now for the good news! The offensive at work is over, so my hours are back to normal. Kathy's surgery was successful, and she's resting comfortably at home, with the capable assistance of her mother, who flew out from Chicago to help out. Good mother in laws are hard to find, but I've got the best.

Kathy and I are also pleased to announce that sometime in October we will be proud parents once again. Since Blackie and Doc Speed are doing their best in "fielding" Recon teams, we figured that we would supply the "point men."

Many, many thanks to John Schuelke, Doug Quick, Bill Ayres, Paul Greaux, Sonny-Caughlin, Rodney Moore, Fred Behrens, Vince Kenyon, and last, but not least, Jim Fairhall, for their generous contributions to the Association. Without the above mentioned, there is no newsletter, because their donations paid the bills.

The cost for this issue of the Newsletter comes to \$185.40. We had a net profit of \$14.60.

I am proud to announce that portions of this issue were done on our copier. The rest of it was done by Kathy, at work, before she went into the hospital. I love our copier, which was graciously donated by the president of Consolidated Bearings, where I am employed. Many thanks again to Mr. Ralph N. Meerwarth for his generosity.

The copier was our foremost goal four years ago, and now we have one. Our next goal is to insure that we have paper and toner and funds for those needs. That is where you, our readers come in. Without the support of our membership, there is no Ripcord Association.

The last bit of news from the Firebase comes from Fred Behrens, an Eagle Dust-Off pilot. Fred is working on an initial reunion for Eagle Dust-Off, 326th.-Medical Bn., 101st. Airborne Div.; 50th. Medical Bn., (Helicopter Ambulance); Phu Bai Dust-Off, 571st.; Quang Tri Dust-Off. All Personell contact Fred Behrens at

ISSUED IN SOLEMN WARNING, THIS ____ DAY OF _____, 19 ____ TO FRIENDS,
RELATIVES AND NEIGHBORS OF _____

Very soon the above named individual will once again be in your midst - deamericanized, demoralized, and somewhat dehumanized. It is his wish that he can once again assume his place in civilian life with liberty, freedom, justice and a somewhat belated pursuit of happiness.

In making preparations to welcome and help him adjust to society, you must make a few allowances for the crude environment in which he has suffered for the past ____ months. He may be a bit vulgar, uncouth and suffering from barnyard profanity, as well as advanced stages of jungle rot, exposure, amoebic dysentery and amnesia. He must be handled with care. A little time in the land of the big P-X will cure the malady.

Show no alarm if he insists on carrying a weapon to the dinner table, looks around for his steel pot when offered a chair or wakes you up in the middle of the night for guard duty. He may prefer to squat on the floor rather than sit on a chair; lounges around the house in thong sandals and a loin cloth; slyly offers to sell cigarettes, gum, or candy to the postman and neighbor kids; and picks at his food suspiciously with his fingers, wondering where the olive green cans went that all the food comes in. Don't be surprised if he should jump up from the dinner table and rush to the garbage can to wash his plate with a toilet brush. And don't be surprised if he answers all questions with "I hate this \$%&*@ place." He is so accustomed to using it daily that it's a basic part of his conversation. Be tolerant when he tries to buy everything at less than half the asking price; accuses the grocer of being a thief and refuses to enter an establishment that isn't encircled by rolls of concertina (barb) wire; doesn't have steel mesh screens over the doors and windows and a well sandbagged bunker along side. After all, this has been his standard.

Be tolerant when he strips completely and charges out into the rain with soap in hand, intent on getting clean, or starts digging up the garden to fill sandbags for the bunker he's building. Please don't use the word, "re-enlist, extend, or lifer" in his presence.

Any of the following sights should be avoided since they can have a traumatic effect on his deteriorated mind: people dancing; television; blondes; brunettes; and redhead women. In a relatively short time his profanity will decrease enough to permit him to associate with mixed company and soon he will be speaking english as it was meant to be spoken. He may complain of sleeping indoors and refuse to go to bed without a mosquito net. Don't let it shake you up if he picks up the phone and yells "Kismet one" or "Roger Out" for goodbye or simply shouts "Working".

Make no flattering remarks about the exotic Southeast Asia. Avoid mention of the "Bennies" (benefits) of over seas duty, seasonal weather and above all, ask before mentioning food delicacies of the East, such as fried rice and nuocman (a Vietnamese sauce made from rotting fish). The mere reference to these particular subjects may trigger severe convulsions and vomiting spells. And by no means, ever ask why the Jones' boy held a higher rank than he did.

Be especially watchfull when he is in the presence of women the first week. He will probably just sit and gawk, trying to remember what they are... Wives and sweethearts are advised to take advantage of this momentary shock and move out of his reach. When his memory returns, ALL WOMEN between the ages of 8 and 80 had better take cover.

Keep in mind that beneath his tanned, worn and rugged exterior there beats a heart of gold. Treasure this, for it is the only thing of value he has left. Treat him with kindness, tolerance and an occasional bottle of good scotch and you will be able to rehabilitate that hollow shell of a man and civilian you once knew and loved.

Please fill the freezer with steaks, the refrigerator with his favorite beverage, and put on the coffee pot. "THE KID IS COMING HOME"

SEND NO MORE LETTERS TO APO SAN FRANCISCO _____ AFTER _____ FOR THE KID IS LEAVING THE TROPICS IN _____ DAYS AND HEADING HOME.

DA FORM S.H.O.R.T.

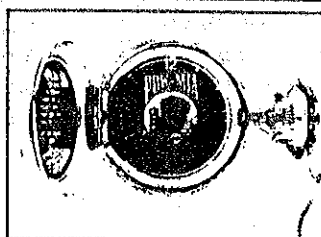
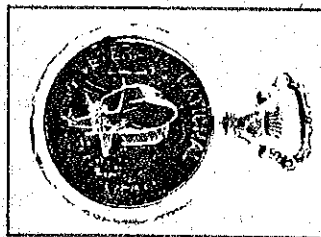


★ ★ ★ **VIETNAM VETERAN** ★ ★ ★

With special tooling the cover of our finest quality quartz pocket watch has been exclusively designed to hold the Vietnam Veterans National Medal. All moving parts are Swiss made.

This spectacular medal is not a reproduction but the authentic medal as issued by the U.S. MINT. Appearing on the reverse side is the phrase, *"In honor of those men and women who gave of themselves in an effort to insure democracy and peace throughout the world this medal is struck by act of congress 1984."*

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Rodger "Chip" Collins
B,2/508 & E,2/508

"THE APRIL FOOLS"

They had told us about the heat. It had come off the tarmac in relentless waves during the brief stop in Guam. But still the impact on arrival at Tan Son Nhut was breathtaking. In Guam there had been simply heat. Here it was worse heat mixed with sweat, urine, shit and diesel oil. Throw in that along with some of the other aromatic exotica that was Southeast Asia and you have a fair sence of the sensory overload we were faced with.

You've read accounts of the flights over and the airport approach and landings. Mine was no different than the rest. We had started out as a boisterous lot but as the hours rushed by we became somber and reflective. No longer the youthful warriors setting out on their first real adventure.

Stewardesses who had encouraged our antics in the beginning eventually reached the stage where they avoided looking at anyone directly. They didn't want to remember our faces, knowing what we were in for and that many of us would not be returning the same. We eventually avoided looking at each other as the final approach left us struggling with the wonder of what we would be doing, and how the hell we would cope. Being able to see ground-fire put the final lid on any thought of conversation.

Two things happened almost immediately that I should have recognized as omens for the entire tour. My duffel was ripped off at the airport before I could collect it. The ride in the large green and screened Army bus to Bien Hoa saw us taking fire from an SKS.

The duffel presented the most difficult of the two problems. It had contained clothing, records, everything. The SKS never scored but was symbolic of the fact that everywhere in Vietnam was

Injun Country. Why the fuck could we never seem to secure a single piece of real estate?

I had a copy of orders in my fatigues. I began the series of hops and jumps up country receiving new sets of orders at each stop but no one was prepared, or so they said, to replace my clothing. So began my first experience of making do in the Nam. Between help from brief friends and my own scarfing I made do until I reached my company. Many months later when I arrived at Recon and was apologetically informed the Camo's we wore were not issued and that we were left to our own devices I smiled. Yeah, I can handle that. It's the part of Nam I know like an old friend. At the end of my tour I would be incensed when I learned that no effort at all had been made while there to retrieve needed records from the States. I was asked to sign an affidavit as to when I came in country to be able to Deros. It was like someone had felt it unimportant. I was supposed to have died anyway.

Coming in-country I had been worried about what outfit I would eventually be assigned to. I had been told that the more strack the unit the better your chances of survival. Charlie was not kind to anyone but less so to the rag-tag outfits. Some stories inferred that Charlie might even avoid the bad boys.

When I finally learned that I would be with the 101st I breathed a sigh of relief. 1st Air Cav and the 101st had been my two top choises. To this day I am grateful that it was the 101. Sure it caused me to go to Ripcord not once but twice and it seemed like we always had the worst A.O.'s but I would not want to have gone to some of the other units I heard about.

The short hops in the C-130's, after the accommodations coming over, were noisy and down-right primitive. If this is flying I'll have Scotty beam me up country. At one of the stops another precursor of the tour. A guy who had been in-country several months was shot in the

back of the head with a .45 while watching an outdoor movie. It had been dark, hot and crowded. No immediate suspects. Drug deal gone bad? Racial related? Jealousy? What? They hadn't found out by the time I left but if the rear is like this what is the fucking bush like?

All those outposts coming up. Finally Camp Eagle and at last Evens. Serts training was a boring repetition of what we had had in AIT and to some extent Basic. The only difference was the authentic locale. Guard duty while there saw us poorly oriented to the task. Hell it was confusing with all that was going on. Red tracers, green tracers, Cobras unleashing their beautiful but deadly light shows. Everybody but everybody wanted a body count. No wonder the base camps were regularly infiltrated.

Finally I learned I would be going to Bravo of the 2nd 506th. I arrived after dark one rainy evening. The damp seeped into your bones and the first people I met were mostly shadows. I was eventually introduced to Top. God I wish I could remember his name now. I knew immediately I had found a friend.

He gave myself and another cherry a short spiel that I'm sure in retrospect he gave to every green asshole coming in that if we look after "Tiger" Bravo, it would look after us. Still, he made us believe every word of it.

I was right about having found a friend. Later, when Ripcord related ill will boiled over in the rear, it was he who kept me from being court martialled only because he had learned that I had looked after my men in Bravo while on Ripcord. He also had zealously seen that while on Ripcord everything that could be done in the rear in terms of support was done.

After the brief meeting with Top the other cherry and I settled down in one of the cold and damp hooches. I found out he was from a town named Williston, North Dakota that I had passed thru on a drive from Ft. Meade just before going

to NCO school. I had remembered the town for its rustic appearance and the fact that a huge W was on a hillside above the school.

His name was D-Dave C-Cote and Dave was an obvious stutterer. He was a likeable sort with his pot-belly, sandy brown hair and Rodney Dangerfield eyes. He got my respect. It ended up that Daves tour ran parallel to mine with his even ending up in Recon and my team months later. He was one of those people that made the tour more bearable.

His stuttering was an interesting thing. I'm sure researchers on the subject could have learned a lot about the social impact on stutterers by following Dave thru his tour. At first he was a veritable machine gun of D-Damns and of Sh-Shits. But later in the warmth, closeness and camaraderie of the squad it virtually disappeared. The only exception was when we came in contact and he d-damned th-those f-fucking g-gooks in short order. Wherever you are now Dave Cote as far as I'm concerned you're a damned g-good dude.

The monsoons were beginning to break up. The company, after months in the lowlands, was now in the mountains. Our orientation had made us aware that a spring offensive into the mountains was in progress. The weather was still such that our getting to the field was delayed several days. Word came back, the company was deep in Injun Country with constant signs of enemy presence and activity. They were in the Coc A Bo.

Then bodies began to come back to Currahee pad. Handled roughly out of the choppers they looked like they'd been thru meat grinders. The results of brief skirmishes and trail watchers firing from spider holes. One had been shot in the back of the head as he turned around to alert his slackman that things didn't look good ahead.

We began to meet some of the guys coming out of the field for various rear related tasks. They looked bad. They stank. Their

fatigues were all to hell. They were beardy. They looked like man-kind gone two steps back toward ape. They were quiet, speaking little, signing a lot. They had fear written on their faces. They ate with their hands, hunched over, wolfing down food.

We were beginning to be needed in the field. By now several cherries had arrived. Finally a bird for us was announced. There ensued a terrifying first chopper ride in which they left the fucking doors open.

The chopper finally approached a narrow L.Z. and began to land. There were apes in dirty and ragged jungle fatigues securing the L.Z. and dealing with the usual log bird logistics. We were on the ground. We were in the field with a combat infantry unit in fucking Vietnam. John Wayne would have said it was about time he told these pilgrims how lucky they were to have him as a replacement. Funny, they didn't seem to care and I was not a replacement I was a "cherry". They put us all quickly out of the way as "security" preferably next to the spot where most of the platoon had been taking a shit.

I was briefly with first platoon. My first night was spent with two of the most field-scared people I ever met over there. One was a guy named Shakey for obvious reasons. Another was a guy who was plotting a way to get to the rear so he could re-up to get out of the field. That night I heard every Vietnam horror story there was about troops getting their throat slit while asleep and their cock stuck in their mouths. No, they weren't trying to scare me. They were justifying the extent of their own fear.

A few evenings later on O.P. with two others an NVA in pith helmet and khakis almost walked on top of us. The two others were digging in as the O.P. would soon become L.P. I was so cherry that I had not even looked and loaded. The delay in my response and their inevitable one permitted one NVA to fight another day. All that night we

were probed close at hand. The rain beat down unmerciful and we were repeatedly told not to fire unless engaged first. I learned that night that should we have been "engaged" and attempted to come in with them close at our heels we would likely have been killed from fire along our own perimeter. In close bush being on L.P. really meant you were an expendable first alert for the main force.

With the exception of the handful of cherries I wasn't treated with anything but trepidation by the old-timers. However one guy named Terry Radcliffe, the platoon leader, eased some of the problems I might have had.

Terry was from California and looked like he just stepped off a movie set or the beach. His soft spoken, encouraging ways made a point of making me feel at home and that I could at least do something. He was extremely bush savvy. He looked like a survivor, someone you could depend on. He was the one friend I would have for many days.

All hell broke loose, only days after I arrived, when my cherry acquaintance Richard Tapp walked most of first platoon into an open area and an ambush. The wounded and dead had to be carried for several hundred yards. My first experience with carnage found I could block it out if I stayed busy enough. Air strikes went on all around us and we kept expecting the huge shards of shrapnel from the bombs slashing thru nearby to take off our heads.

The first platoon ambush was only the beginning result of the fact there was a strong force nearby that had probed and observed our company for several days. The trails we had been walking on were practically four-lane highways and we kept going back over the same ones every day. Was someone stupid? You be the judge.

The next day saw word coming around the platoon we were getting the hell out of there. People were joyous. Questioning found me told that we were going to a

firebase. There we would provide security for mortars, artillery etc. Supposedly this was a pie job. One grunt pointed out it was a lot like the rear. Never was I told that the L.Z. would be hot or that someone didn't want us to take on this job.

By then I had been appointed Van Hout's assistant gunner. We didn't really get along well. I didn't know a lot about what an A.G. did except pack part of the ammo and keep it clean and help him keep it fed during contact. Mostly I seemed to keep in his way.

As we prepared for the C.A. I began to sense an uneasiness from some of the guys. Old-timers could be extremely superstitious. It was April Fools Day and they didn't like that a bit. Not in the Nam. Van Hout and I finally boarded a bird. From the air the huge mound of dirt that was Ripcord looked harmless. When we finally landed we were pointed in the direction of what was eventually to be the TOC. Within seconds I could hear popping sounds in the valley around us. Then came the sssh-crump. I had landed in a shallow depression on the wrong side of Van Hout. He had already taken te-te shrapnel in his face. Had I been on the side I was supposed to be I would have caught more of that shrapnel. The rounds were extremely close, within a few feet and the depression was the only thing saving us.

I flooded Van Hout with questions. I didn't know what that stuff was. What the fuck is that noise Van Hout? Mortars, God Damn, get down! I was flabbergasted I didn't have anything to shoot back at. The mortars continued indiscriminately.

People were falling all around. I looked behind and slightly above us and saw Terry Radcliffe was down. A widening pool of blood flowed out from under him. Van Hout frantically yelled for an "Aid-Man". Radcliffe's helmet had been knocked off. His blond hair riffled in the breeze. He looked serene, like a child that had finally drifted off to

sleep.

Raw-boned Doc Kellogg scrambled over and felt for a pulse and shook his head at Van Hout. Van Hout replied "Fuck". Kellogg laid Terrys helmet gently across his face. The wind kept on fluttering the golden hair.

The sun warmed up and began beating down in earnest. Time moved quickly until the afternoon. In our first hour there were some 25 serious casualties including a direct hit on the company C.P.

Finally we received word that we would secure another part of the figure eight shaped hill. A sigh of relief. That little spot we were at initially had to be the hottest little place this side of Tijuana.

In the process of moving I ran into the C.O. He was about as new as I. Rumor had it that he had jockeyed a desk so long that the only way he could be promoted was to go infantry. Whether it was true or not he looked the part with his balding head and bankers disposition. He recognized me and approached excited as hell asking me what I felt about just having earned an Air Medal. I mumbled "That's something" but silently thought "You fucking jerk, we have just lost something like 25 men and you're going on about your pissy-assed Air Medal". I couldn't understand why I hadn't been told it would be that bad and if so, what had we done to prepare for it. A lesson from the Vietnam primer. Never trust command. Find your own ways of verifying what you've been told. It was rare after that that I ever trusted any officer.

We continued to take casualties. Birds were put out of action. We were seriously beginning to question holding the hill given its size, the lack of reinforced fighting positions and the tremendous casualties. Even Recons being there in force wasn't enough.

Toward dusk the order came to get the fuck off. There were bodies left. A chopper was down and they did their best

to strip it of anything useful. We were low on water. I felt like hell rifling thru a dead mans ruck for food and water. Later I would remember that and smile sadly at how naive I'd been then compared to what we would all in the end do just to survive.

Our group was one of the last in the line that moved off the hill as darkness quickly overtook us. I was to learn years later that a lead element of Alpha Company provided us escort off that hill to an NDP some distance away. As we moved off the guys who had warned earlier about April Fools Day being a bad omen could be heard with their I told you so's. "Yeah, man we're the April Fools for even coming to this damned place".

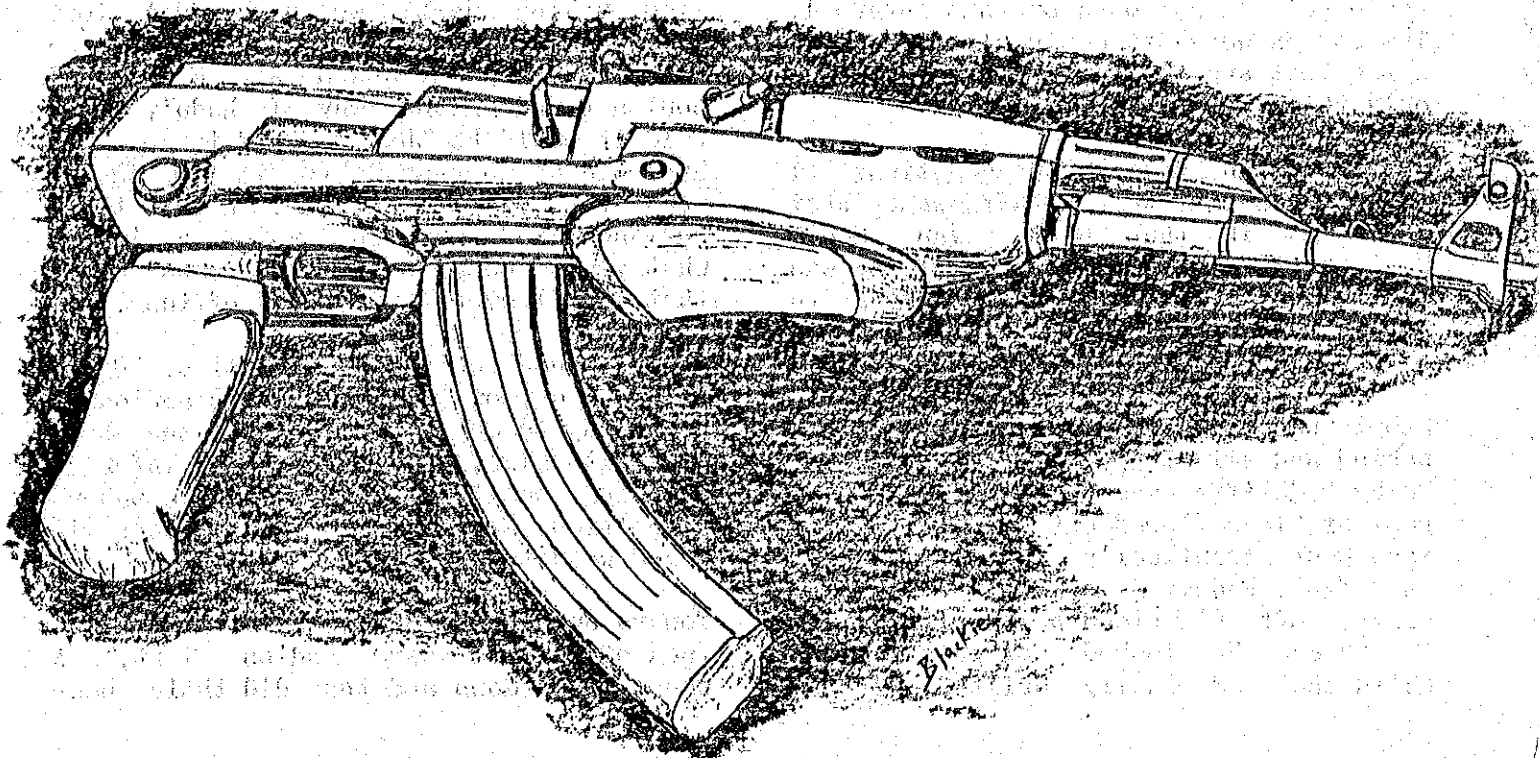
EPILOGUE

My first several days in the field, which had included the infamous April Fools Day assault, had a profound impact on the way I would relate to Vietnam from there on out. Initially as events shaped up from the time I saw my first NVA to the fear I saw in soldiers in the bush, to the carnage of an ambush and

eventually the full might of the NVA on Ripcord I was confused and scared. Later I became angry that so much life could be lost with such seemingly little effort. By the time I spotted Terry Radcliffe dying, who to me had seemed un-killable, I had begun to come to a purposeful resolve.

I had learned in a few days that the NVA could kill me. Command might cause me to be killed, and that no matter how good I got at killing back I could be killed. My reaction was if thats how it is and I'm going to die then at least it's not going to be simple.

Forever after that during my tour I trusted very few people and tried to come at my own conclusions independently from what I saw, or was told, or heard. I think ultimately that saved my life along with the infinite good luck we all needed. The other thing I tried to do was be damn good at whatever it was I was doing, whether it was walking point, standing guard or carrying a machine gun. I did it not because I was gung-ho but because life was so hard in the Nam that luck and opportunity, as we knew it existed in the States, was non-existent there. It was, I felt, my only chance of survival if there was one at all.



(compliments of Art Wiknik)

MRF, 101st Conduct Cordon Operation

CAMP EAGLE - In another example of Vietnamese-American tactical cooperation, Vietnamese Mobile Regional Forces (MRF), supported by units of the 101st recently conducted a cordon and search operation in the village of Phu Luong, south of Hue.

"The purpose of the operation," said Lt. Col. Le Thien Phuoc, "was to find and arrest enemy sympathizers in the populated area."

Lt. Col. Phuoc is the deputy sector commander of Thua Thien Province.

Lt. Col. Roy J. Young, commander of the 2nd Bn. (Ambl.), 502nd Inf., who was in charge of the operation, labelled the Americans' role as one of "providing support and command to and for the participating Vietnamese forces."

The operation actually began when two companies of MRF's rolled into the "O-Deuce" rear at Camp Eagle. Later that night, they linked up with American

forces and were shipped by vehicle to the village.

U.S. soldiers and Vietnamese were intermixed in each platoon, and the elements proceeded to close around Phu Luong on three sides. The sea side of the village was sealed off by a Navy patrol boat.

At first light the sweep began as MRF's moved through the village while Screaming Eagles secured the perimeter of the cordon area. Meanwhile, ARVN

police and National Police began controlling traffic through the village on Highway 1, detaining all suspects.

Four MEDCAP teams were on the scene throughout the day, rendering medical aid to persons who had already been processed and released from the cordon.

In all, the joint operation netted 65 persons carrying false identification and one confirmed member of the local Viet Cong infrastructure.

The Screaming Eagle



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101st Airborne Division (Airmobile)

Feb. 2, 1970



INSTRUCTIONS - One of many in Hue during the cordon operation. The boat is being used as a floating observation post. The soldiers are looking for enemy sympathizers in the populated area.

Hue's Gates Guarded By Floating Eagles

CAMP SALLY - "Waterborne" troopers of the Pohi Bridge Boat Patrol are a unique and valuable asset to the 101st.

The team is made up of volunteers from the 326th Eng. Bn. and a platoon-sized element from the 1st Bn. (Ambl.), 502nd Inf.

The Boat Patrol was organized under the direction of engineer Staff Sgt. Robert W. Cullison of Knightstown, Ind. A request for men with inboard-outboard motor experience went out to the infantry battalion's line companies.

The recruits who were selected underwent an intensive orientation at Camp Eagle, covering the maintenance and operation of river craft. These sessions were followed by practical exercises along the rivers around Hue.

The Boat Patrol employs 16-foot fiberglass boats with outboard motors. Several pneumatic assault boats are also in use.

Lt. George A. Casaine, officer in charge of operations at one bridge near Hue, described the patrol's mission. "The Boat Patrol performs reconnaissance of areas likely to be used by the enemy for infiltration into the city of Hue and the surrounding area."

In addition, the patrol checks an average of about 100 fisherman's permits each to insure that the enemy is not using the waterways to transport food and other supplies.

Despite the fact that they have been operational only a short time, the crews have already been credited with finding numerous enemy emplacements along the river banks.

When asked about the future of the Boat Patrol, Cullison replied, "We were originally attached to the infantry battalions for a 90-day period during the rainy season. How long we will be able to continue operations will depend on how much the water level drops after the monsoon rains are over."

ARVN Aim Improves Under 101st's Eye

CAMP EAGLE - Vietnamization of the war involves a lot more than tactical training for the men of Div. Arty.

One of the Div's Arty. units, the 2nd Bn. (Ambl.), 411th Arty. has been conducting an extensive maintenance training program with the 1st ARVN Div. Artillery at various artillery sites north of Hue.

The program is currently aimed at medium artillery pieces -- the 155mm towed howitzers. The 2/11th Arty. is a 155mm battalion.

The 34th ARVN Arty. Bn. and one battery of the 44th ARVN Arty. Bn. undergo frequent inspections given each of the pieces by maintenance technicians from the 101st unit. Most deficiencies are corrected on the spot.

The project has been coordinated by Capt. Jerry W. Rogers, St. Louis, Mo., the 101st Div. Arty.

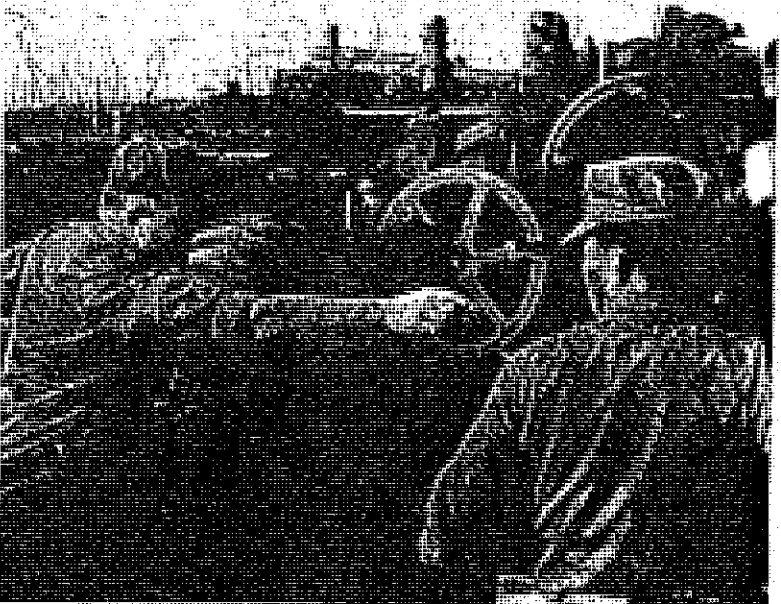
liaison to the 1st ARVN Div. Arty. and the 1st ARVN Div. Arty. commander, Lt. Col. Le Ngoc Hy.

"The lack of technical manuals on the 155 in Vietnamese is the main problem," says Rogers. "The goal of the project," he continues, "is to eliminate this trouble area by familiarizing the ARVN artillery personnel with the most common maintenance problems, as well as some of the more complicated aspects of howitzer maintenance."

The project has another goal as well -- to equip every ARVN 155mm battery with the "speed shift" pedestal.

The special mounting allows the 5-ton cannon to be rotated a full 360 degrees with just the push of a finger. The pedestals are being installed by airlifting the howitzers, one at a time, to Camp Eagle for installation. At the same time, any necessary major maintenance is also performed.

Meanwhile, inspection teams from the 101st Div. Arty. have already visited many ARVN fire bases in the 1st ARVN Div. area of operations.



INSPECTION - ARVN Arty. Bn. - Capt. Rogers, St. Louis, Mo., inspects the maintenance of a 155mm towed howitzer at Camp Eagle. The project has been coordinated by Capt. Jerry W. Rogers, St. Louis, Mo., the 101st Div. Arty. liaison to the 1st ARVN Div. Arty. and the 1st ARVN Div. Arty. commander, Lt. Col. Le Ngoc Hy.

Communists May Stage Tet Attack

CAMP EAGLE - During the past two years, the Viet Cong and NVA have chosen the Tet holiday for an offensive. They may well do so again this year. Tet will be officially celebrated Feb. 6, 7 and 8, but traditionally the Vietnamese celebrate it for at least a week.

There are several reasons why the Communists would choose the Tet holiday for an extensive offensive. They include psychological reasons as well as tactical reasons.

The population is much more mobile during the pre Tet season. The people are busy making purchases to make Tet a happy holiday. They are visiting the homes of relatives. Farmers come to the city more frequently than at any other time of year.

In the past the VC and NVA have taken advantage of the increased movement to place fighting men in tactical areas. With the increased mobility of the country in general, it is much harder to identify Communists who are moving into strategic areas.

Tet to the Vietnamese is a time of happiness and peace; it is at time to be at home with loved ones. They are looking forward to a new and more prosperous year.

The psychological gains the Communists can make at Tet, with a successful offensive are great because of these traditional feelings and desires. The people do not want to think of war and the hardships that come with it during the holiday season.

During the Communist Tet offensive of 1968, the VC and NVA took advantage of the psychological and tactical situation to shock the allied forces. There are several lessons that can be learned from studying the 1968 offensive.

The offensive proved that the Communists are capable of launching and coordinating a major offensive. It is a grave mistake to underestimate the enemy's capabilities. The allied forces now realize that the most successful deterrent to an attack is total preparedness.

There are several things that the enemy would have to do to stage a major offensive this year. All these things can be stopped by alert Screaming Eagles.

They would have to position caches in staging areas and prepare bunkers and caches along the advance and withdrawal routes. They would have to have resupply lines into the staging areas.

Sappers would have to be placed in or near targets. NVA units would have to be infiltrated in small groups to the areas where the attack would start. Reserve units would also have to be placed in the area to increase the momentum of the attack.

Alert soldiers and recon teams should be able to spot such positions during the days before Tet and thereby thwart such an offensive. Getting set is the best way to stay alert and alive.

Col. Schandler Takes Charge Of 3/187 Inf.

CAMP EVANS - A special group of spectators helped turn a recent battalion change of command ceremony into a very special event.

The group consisted of government and military officials from the Phong Dien District and the Thua Thien Province chief who were there to witness the ceremony in which Lt. Col. William A. Steinberg, King of Prussia, Pa., turned over command of the 3rd Bn. (Ambl.), 187th Infantry, to Lt. Col. Herbert Y. Schandler.

The Vietnamese watched as

Maj. Gen. John M. Wright Jr. presented Col. Steinberg with the Legion of Merit and when 3rd Brigade Commander Col. William J. Bradley, St. Petersburg, Fla., praised the Rakkasans' efforts in the Phong Dien District.

Col. Schandler, former division inspector general, accepted the battalion's colors from Col. Bradley. He voiced the hope that the American Vietnamese cooperation would continue as the 3/187 carries on their efforts throughout the Phong Dien District.



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THE NEW YEAR BRINGS MANY SURPRISES



Get Set For Tet Guests

CAMP EAGLE - With the possibility of an enemy offensive occurring during the Tet holiday, it is important for each man to be certain that both he and his weapon are in top physical condition.

The Division has to be prepared for Tet. But the Division is not prepared unless each individual Screaming Eagle is ready. There are several things that must be done to insure individual combat readiness.

Increased vigilance is one of the most necessary defenses against an attack. If the enemy is detected early, he can be stopped. The fighting positions must afford a good view of all possible routes of approach, and the individual soldier must be alert to enemy movement at his front.

Personal weapons and ammunition must be kept in the best possible condition. Even the rear echelon personnel must be prepared to repel an attack on the base camps. The M-16 will collect dust and grime that can impair its firing capabilities even while stored in a rifle rack.

The bunker line is another area that should be checked for its combat readiness. Are the claymores and fougasse in good positions? What about the firing mechanisms; are they in working order or have they corroded and rusted until they will no longer fire. Are trip flares in place?

Protective wire is one of the best ways to stop sappers. But it must be in good condition. If there

are breaks in the wire, the enemy will find them and slip through. A 101st Kit Carson Scout who was formerly an NVA sapper has said that tangled foot, placed two to four inches above the ground hinders sappers more than anything else.

The fighting positions are not the only things that must be kept in top shape. Helicopters, jeeps and all other vehicles must be ready to go at a moment's notice. As a matter of fact, all support equipment should be in A-one condition.

Radio positions should be well known by all members of each unit. And every soldier should know how to call for supporting fire, medevacs and information. Each man should also know how to use pyrotechnics and what each color means.

Along with the weapons, the soldier must make sure that his flak jacket, helmet and other protective gear are in good condition. The soldier himself must remain in top physical shape. Accidents to personnel cost the Division an average of 92 persons a month lost from duty. These are men who can not be spared if the 101st is going to be 100 percent ready for Tet.

The importance of being ready for anything during Tet cannot be overstressed. It is the responsibility of every man to see that he and the guy next to him are ready and capable to repel an attack.

Getting Set for Tet is the duty of each individual soldier.

'Gunslinger' Leaves

Col. White 1st Bde. CO

CAMP EAGLE - Col. Frank L. Dietrich, well known by his code name, Gunslinger, has passed the colors of the 1st Brigade to Col. John D. White in ceremonies here.

Present for the change of command were Maj. Gen. John M. Wright Jr., commanding general of the 101st Lt. Gen. Melvin Zais, XXIV Corps commanding general, and Assistant Division Commanders Brig. Gen. John J. Hennessey and Brig. Gen. John C. Smith. Gen. Wright paid tribute to

the departing 1st Brigade commander, Col. Dietrich, for his outstanding leadership and asked the men of the brigade to "continue meeting the challenges you have met so well in the past."

Col. White comes to the 101st from XXIV Corps where he served as the head of GI (personnel). He completed his first Vietnam tour with the 1st Air Cav. Div. as a battalion commander. Col. White is also a veteran of Korea.

The new Brigade commander

is a graduate of the University of Omaha, with a degree in business administration. A native of Ozark, Mo., he now makes his home in Springfield, Va. with his wife and four children.

He is a 1948 graduate of the Airborne School and was awarded the Master Parachutist's Badge in 1966.

Col. White has received the Legion of Merit, the Bronze Star, the Vietnamese Gallantry Cross with Palm, the Air Medal and two Purple Hearts. He joined the Army in 1945.

White Team Serves As Point For 2nd Brigade Infantrymen

CAMP SALLY - Infantrymen of the 2nd Brigade have become accustomed to having a Light Observation Helicopter fly point for them.

The point team, or "White Team", as the aviators prefer to be known, has the mission of providing forward reconnaissance for ground troops. The teams often fly below tree level in search of the enemy.

"Our mission," says Capt. Thomas Avery, Palm Springs, Calif., "is to fly close to the ground until we either see signs of the enemy, or we're fired upon."

Capt. Avery is a veteran pilot with the 2nd Brigade's "White Team," with over 1000 flying hours in Vietnam. He has been credited with locating numerous enemy bunker positions, trails, caches and troop locations.

A team normally consists of

two OH-6A Cayuse helicopters. One flies close to the ground, while the other supports it from above.

Spec. S. Kevin Kenehr, Medfield, Mass., a crew chief with the "White Team" says, "It's a unique experience flying with the team, because we have

so much maneuverability. The OH-6A is the sports car of Army helicopters."

"At times, flying the low bird is like driving in heavy traffic back in the States," Avery remarks, jokingly. "When you fly at such a low speed, there's plenty of time to look around."

Good View A Must For 3/506 Firebase

By Sgt. Canute Delmasse

FIRE BASE ABBY - In the center of a valley in the rugged Crowsfoot range, northeast of Qui Nhon, stands Hill 86, with nothing to recommend it for human habitation except the breathtaking view of the valley.

But, when a battalion of American infantrymen, in this case the 3rd Bn. (Ambl.), 506th Inf. is operating in the valley, a hill with a commanding view is suddenly a necessity. That was the start of Fire Base Abby.

Once the location of the fire base had been selected, in late December, the actual construction progressed quickly. The Currahees of the 506th have built five such support bases since mid-September, and they wanted Abby to be the best one yet. It is.

As always, the brunt of the task of turning a barren mountain top into a habitable and defensible military complex fell to the engineers. Under the watchful eye of Sfc. John W. Anders, Clarksville, Tenn., the men of the 326th Eng. Bn. combined long hours of hard work with skill, born of experience, to produce a truly model fire base.

"We can't afford to fool around on a job like this," said Anders. "My men work hard because they realize the men in the field need this fire base, and this fire base needs security."

The central and highest peak of the mountain houses the support fire of Abby "D" Battery, 2nd Bn. (Ambl.), 320th Arty. The Screaming Eagle guns are set up in a formation which provides all around security and total coverage of the battalion area of operations.

Flanking the guns are elements of the 3/506th and the 3rd Bn., 503rd Inf. of the 173rd Airborne Brigade.

Teacher Can Handle VC

PHU LOC DISTRICT - Nguyen Che figures the best offense against the VC is a good defense. The 44-year-old Truoi village schoolteacher is a member of the local militia, though troopers of Co. D, 2nd Bn. (Ambl.), 327th Inf. call him a "one man army."

Fighting the VC is not a new experience for Che. He served with the French Army in Indochina in the late 1940's and early 50's in

Che received Citations of Honor from the ARVN in 1956, 66, 67 and 69 for his outstanding work in defending the village from the VC's terrorist attacks.

Quang Tri Province. He was decorated four times before moving to Truoi village in 1951. He joined the militia in his village, and in 1956 he teamed up with ARVN forces operating in the area.

Soldiers of the 101st working in the Truoi village area know Che, not only for his reputation as a fighter, but also for the hot coffee and meals he brings them each morning after a cold, wet night on patrol.

The Americans have also heard of Che's generosity in feeding and caring for many orphans after the Tet Offensive of 1968. He did all this with ten children of his own to support.

"There are so many stories about this man that it's hard to keep up with all of them," comments Capt. Thomas Deal, 2/327th battalion chaplain from Falls Church, Va.

"My father was Phillipino, and my mother was Vietnamese," he explains. "After my father passed away, my mother married an American soldier. When my step-father got orders for Ft. Bragg, N.C., he took my mother, my brother and myself with him."

He continues, "I couldn't speak a word of English when I came to America. Although my step-father taught me most of the English I know, it was very difficult to adapt to school and all the kids - particularly with the language barrier. Seeing America for the first time was quite an experience."

"The thing that impressed me most was the technological advancement. Life moved at a very rapid pace. I was impressed with the children's toys; they were all very realistic replicas of the real thing."

When asked about his opinions on Vietnam after seeing it for the first time in years, he says, "There wasn't much emotion involved because I feel I'm an American now."

Fenequito notes other changes as well - a definite improvement in the highways, modes of transportation and architecture, especially in Saigon.

In retrospect, Fenequito reflects, "I think my feelings about Vietnam will always be the same. I want to help the Vietnamese people. I also want to refresh my recollection of the language. Hopefully, I'll be here for more than one tour. There is a lot to be done."

Cav. Destroys Enemy Stockpiles Near Sark

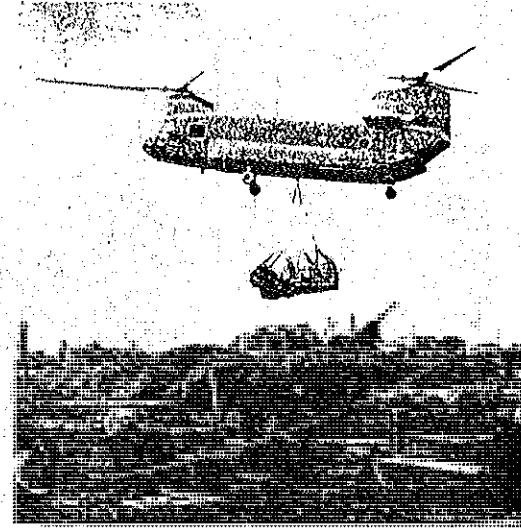
CAMP SALLY - An enemy warehouse near Fire Base Sark, south of Khe Sanh, was recently discovered and destroyed by "C" Troop, 2nd Sqdm. (Ambl.), 17th Cav.

The stockpiles, consisting of cartons of fuel and ammunition, were found on either side of a major enemy infiltration route.

During the operation, the helicopters came under heavy automatic weapons fire from approximately two platoons of NVA soldiers in bunker emplacements near the warehouse.

The Cavalry troop received support from four Cobra gunships from the 4th Bn. (Ambl.), 77th Arty.

Observers reported 23 secondary explosions and three enemy soldiers killed in the action.



LT. COL. RICHARD A. C. HARRIS, JR., 1st Bn. (Ambl.), 320th Arty., delivers a shipment of 105mm ammunition to an enemy unit on Fire Support Base Mustang, northwest of Hue.

(U.S. Army photo by Lt. Ken Strafer)

Divarty Hits NVA Targets In A Shau

CAMP EAGLE - Howitzers from the 101st have blasted enemy targets in the southern A Shau Valley, destroying more than 400 bunkers, huts, bridges and fighting positions.

Five 105mm howitzers from Btry. A, 2nd Bn. (Ambl.), 320th Arty., spent nearly two days on an abandoned fire support base in the Div. Arty.'s most recent probe of the A Shau.

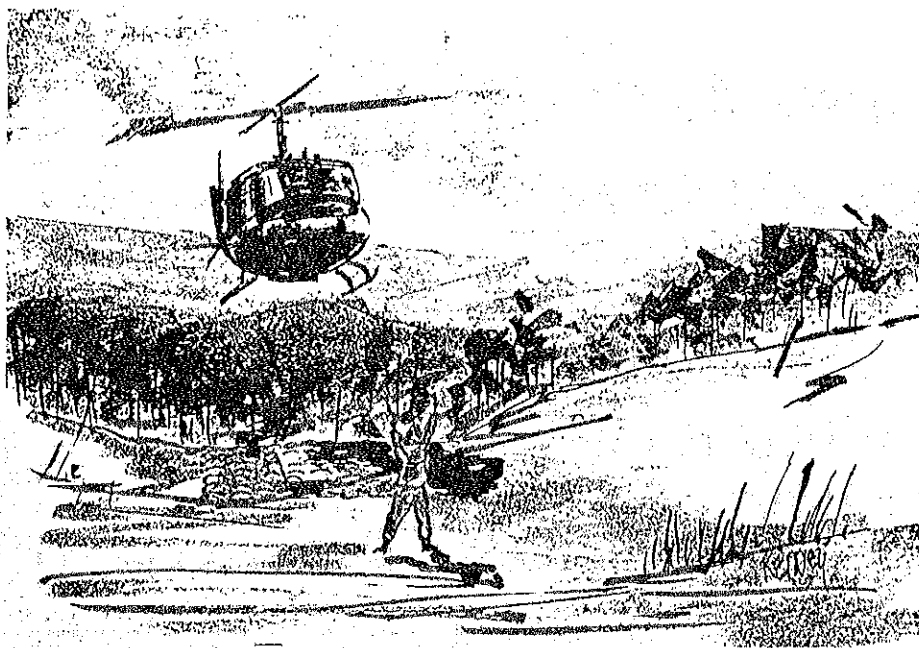
Elements of the 4th Bn., 77th Arty. joined the cannon artillery in destroying 36 huts and damaging 22 more. The aerial rocket/artillery battalion's heavily-armed Cobra gunships have been used in conjunction with tube artillery on all of the Div. Arty. raids to date.

In all, 353 enemy fighting positions were engaged. Four wooden bridges were collapsed by artillery fire, augmented by air strikes.



SP5 JOHN R. SPAN, 4th Bn. (Ambl.), 77th Arty., affixes the cap of a 105mm howitzer with the 101st Airborne Division during a mission against the enemy in the A Shau Valley, northwest of Hue. He is a member of the 4th Bn. (Ambl.), 77th Arty.

(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. S. J. H. HARRIS)



Building A Is A Non

FB RIFLE -- "Home" to the infantrymen after a long patrol, the built-up area of his. And the men of the 2nd Bn. (Ambl.) simply as "Rifle" to its tenants, a model he didn't become that way overnight. L. the area which was then nothing more than. Several days' hard work transformed it and cases of rations and ammo going into it.

The first structure to be completed was of a hole in the ground, tarpaulins, sandbags. A briefing room followed, and then it started fashioning more ammo boxes and c. A major job was clearing lanes of fire, and it had to be blown and cleared away rounds was found less than 200 meters from.

Lt. Col. Roy J. Young, the battalion's major construction was finished quickly, w. "People assume a fire base is simply built not true," he says. "Improving and adding its occupation."

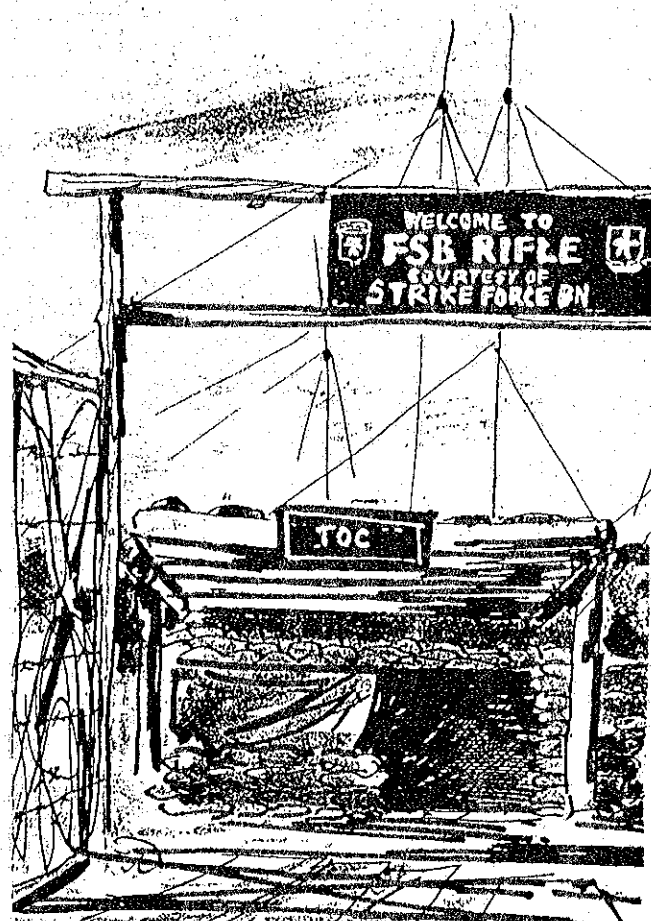
Hootches are constantly being erected, ceases.

The mess hall at Rifle, men of the complete of any on a fire base in the division. Home may be very far away in Vietnam. Rifle can inspire loyalty.

As Col. Young says, "We are very proud of the wilderness."

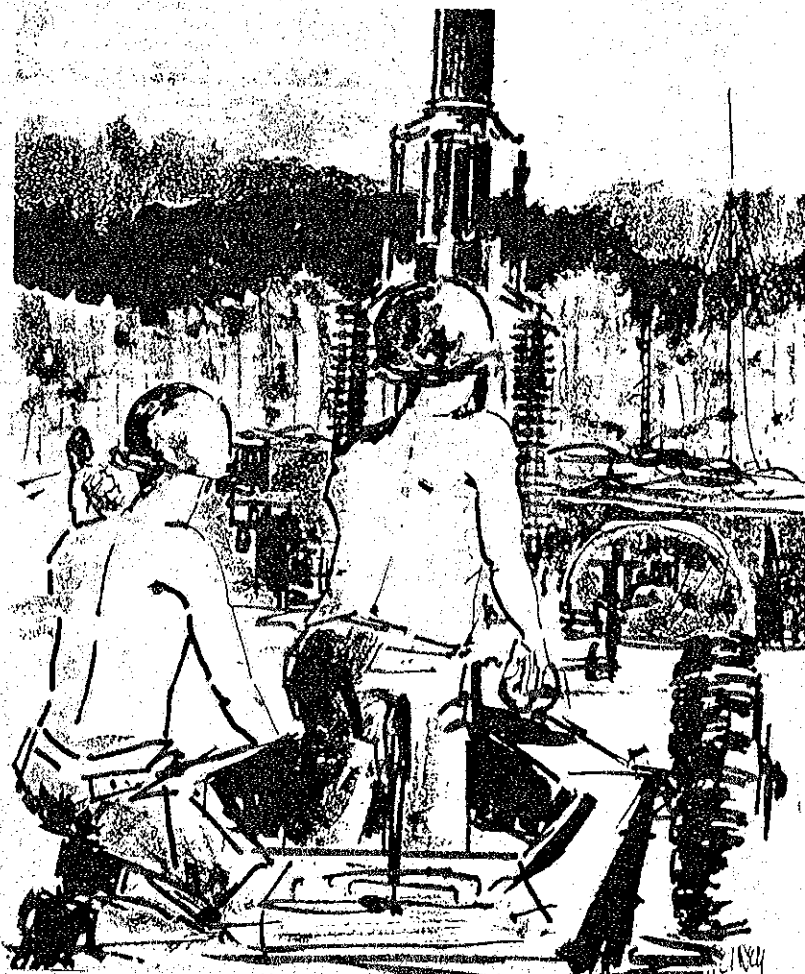
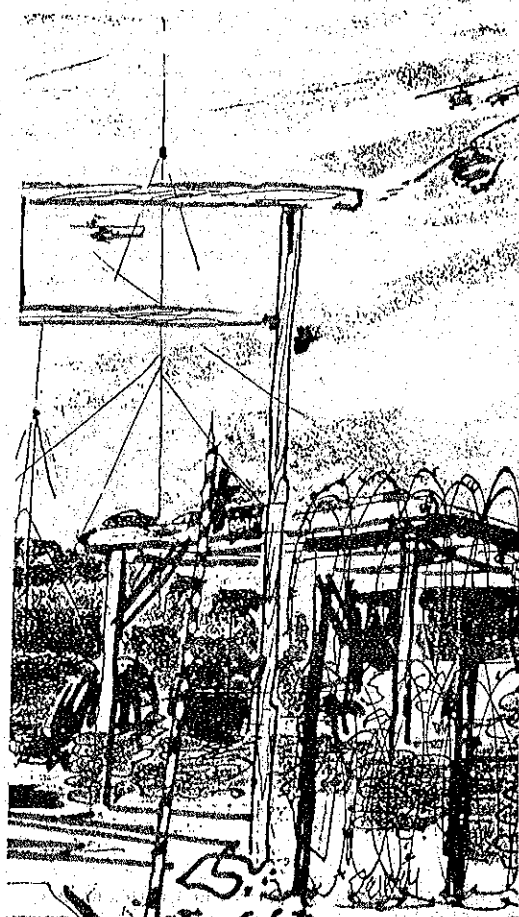
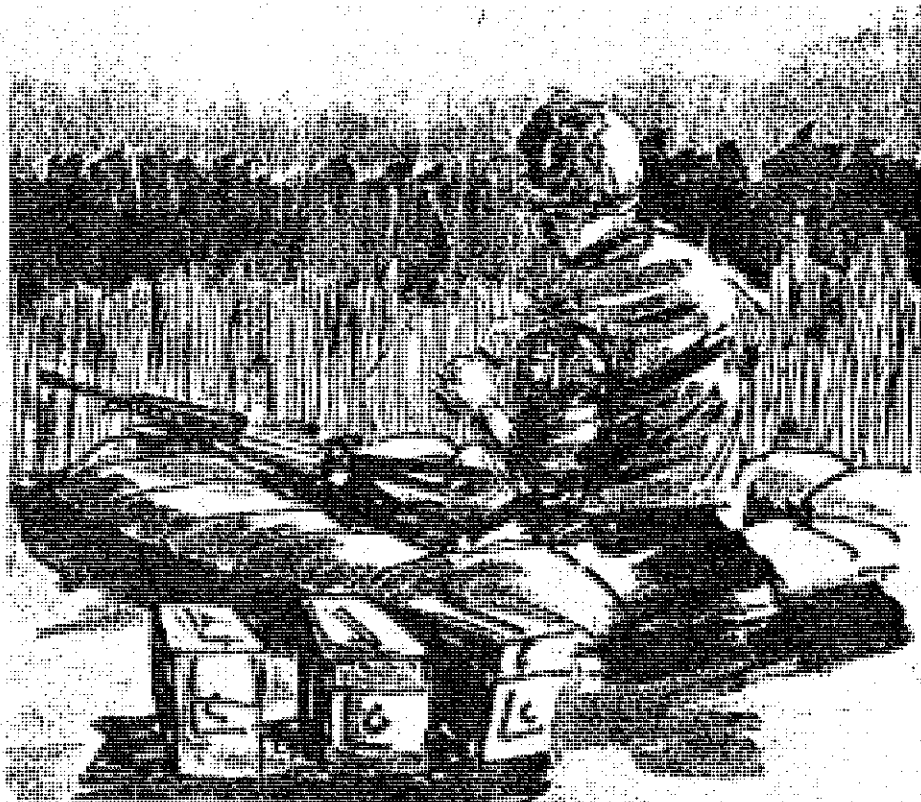
Art by Spec. 4 Howard Reiney

Story by Spec. 4 Elliott Cooper Jr.



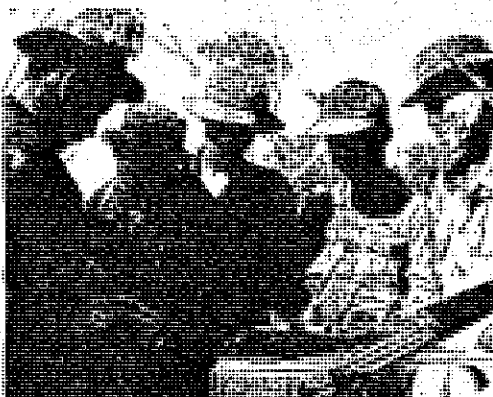
A Firebase -Stop Job

an in Vietnam changes from day to day, but
battalion fire base is home, indeed.
, 502nd Inf. consider this firebase, known
me away from home.
ist October men of the battalion moved into
a series of bald hills.
; with sandbags, timbers, wire, CONEXES,
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the Tactical Operations Center (TOC), made
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ie inhabitants of Rifle, chased by the rain,
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Dense undergrowth surrounded the fire base,
by hand. At one point a cache of 38 RPG
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to a fire base is a continual thing throughout
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battalion like to think, is one of the most
on area of operations.
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d of it. Rifle has become, I think, a palace in





Plt. George Shaw introduces a youngster to the toothbrush.



Sgt. 4 Civil Affairs teaches local Regional Force members proper care of the M-16.

Photos by Lt. Ivan Pinnell



A regional Force soldier is instructed in the proper placement of the claymore.

3/187 Pitching In With Pacification Program

CAMP EVANS - Soldiers of the 3rd Bn. (Ambl.), 187th Inf. operating in the coastal lowlands north of Hue, have an expanded mission - pacification.

For the Screaming Eagles from one platoon of the 3rd Brigade, first exposure to the problems and rewards of the new mission came in Uu Thuong, a typical agricultural hamlet.

It was a new and different experience for both the Vietnamese and the Americans. "We really didn't know what to expect," admitted one member of the platoon assigned to train local Popular Forces and the village's own Peoples Self Defense Force.

The trooper's reaction was typical for a man whose unit had just returned from a very different kind of war - combat with highly-trained NVA regulars in the rugged A Shau Valley.

Despite the language barrier, progress was made quickly as the 101st soldiers instructed the Vietnamese in the use of various small arms and the techniques of ambushing and patrolling operations, designed to stop enemy rice-carrying parties.

Later, after several weeks in the village, the platoon began to work hand-in-hand with the residents of Uu Thuong on a number of civil affairs projects. In each case, the suggestion which initiated the projects came from the Vietnamese.

"There was a period of anxious waiting," recalled Staff Sgt. Robert A. Greensmith of San Diego, Calif., the platoon leader, "but, once the ice was broken, we found ourselves involved in all kinds of worthwhile projects."

Among the accomplishments of the joint effort were the completion of a school, repair of the roads around the hamlet, and the construction of an irrigation dam.

Between the long hours of work, Americans and Vietnamese learned to relax together. Screaming Eagles taught the children of Uu Thuong to play baseball. It was an immediate hit. Later, the "recreation program" expanded to include volleyball and soccer.

Eventually, the 101st platoon left Uu Thuong for another pacification mission, although the villagers organized an active "pressure group" in an effort to persuade the local leaders to let the Americans stay.



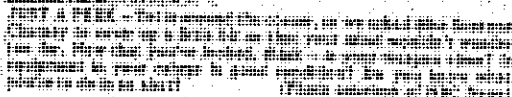
Staff Sgt. Robert Greensmith helps Vietnamese youngsters repair a schoolhouse



Screaming Eagles join the children of Uu Thuong in a game of baseball

2nd Bn. (Ambl.) 506th Inf.
Roberto E. Fischer

DiGiovanni's newest project is the construction of a dispensary for the people of Loc Tu, south of Hue. Loc Tu has four trained nurses who presently have no place to treat their patients, and few medical supplies. In Loc Tu, people who need medical attention have to be flown to other distant villages.



Khe Sanh Quiet; But Signs There

By Lt. Ken Strafer

KHE SANH: Cavalymen of Troop C, 2nd Sqdrn. (Ambl.), 17th Cav, sat in the tall elephant grass around the plateau watching, waiting for the enemy to move from his hiding place.

The plateau, about 30 miles west of Quang Tri, resembled a grain field in the Midwest of America. The grass was tall, and the warm sun shone while a gentle breeze blew across the flat land.

It was quiet at Khe Sanh while the Cavalry was there. There were no animal sounds, not even a bird chirping. But, the land was not sterile. Numerous animal tracks and the corpse of a wild boar were found by the Screaming Eagles.

"If it weren't for the war, this would be a nice-looking place," commented Sgt. Terry O'Connor, Torrington, Conn., as he pushed through the dead scrub brush. "There are a lot of places at home like this. I suppose there really isn't much difference at all, when you stop and think about it."

Looking for signs of NVA

The cavalymen's mission was to move through the plateau area and report all signs of NVA activity. It wasn't a difficult task. The signs were everywhere.

NVA fighting positions, a trench line, expended canisters for rocket launchers and debris from the Marines' assault were all in evidence. These signs were about two years old. One had to look more closely to find the more recent signs of enemy activity.

Light Observation Helicopters from the Cav. troop spotted the footprints of an enemy squad, an escape tunnel in the brush, and other fresh indications of the enemy's presence.

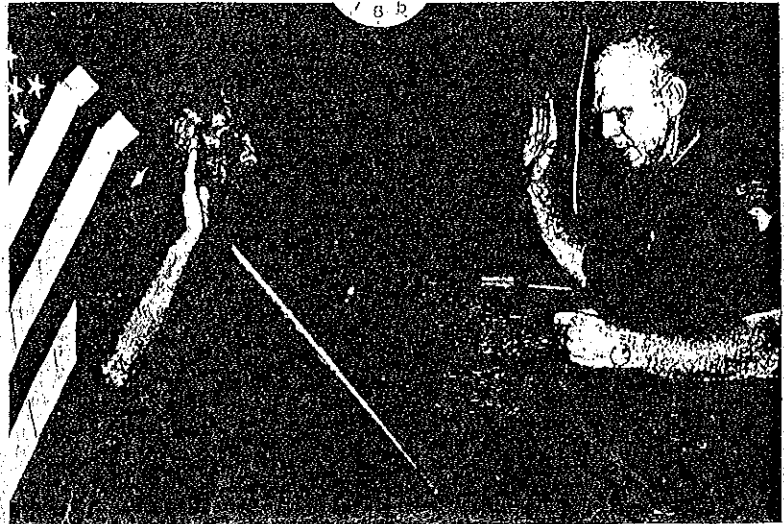
A bunker was discovered with a supply of canned foods which apparently had been brought to the area about a month before the 101st soldiers arrived. The supplies were destroyed by Cobra gunships, who were covering for the ground troops during the reconnaissance mission.

Spec. 4 Ralph Cotto, Bridgeport, Conn., a point man, remarked, "It's a lot easier to move out here than in most of Vietnam. A unit can move a long way here in a short time." Cotto added, "There just doesn't seem to be anyone out here but us."

It's Armor Country

The commander of the troopers on the ground, Capt. Mark Emory, Haverford, Pa., offered his opinion. "I thought this would be a big place, but there's much to it. This would be excellent armor country, but it would play havoc with the infantry. It's too open. There's no place to hide; they'd see you coming a mile away."

As Capt. Emory spoke, the men prepared to be extracted from the plateau. It had been an interesting day for them in an historic place. When the ships lifted the men out for the trip back to base camp, one soldier remarked, "All the time, I was thinking back to all the pictures I'd seen in magazines and on TV, showing this place when the battle was being fought. It seemed strange today. It was so quiet."



FIRST IN THE 101st: Staff Sgt. Edward R. Friedrich Jr., Fayetteville, N.C. (right), claimed a first for the decade among Screaming Eagles when he re-upped for six years just seconds after midnight, Jan. 1, 1970. Lt. Col. Ronald N. Bowman, CO of the 426th Supply and Service Bn. where Sgt. Friedrich is assigned, re-enlisted the 11-year veteran ammo storage supervisor. Sgt. Friedrich not only claimed the first division re-enlistment of the 70's - if not in the entire Army - but also took advantage of a maximum \$2,000 Variable Re-enlistment Bonus and his CONUS station of choice, Ft. Bragg, N.C., and the 82nd Airborne, when he decided to stay Army.

Captured NVA Becomes Bde.'s 1000th Detainee

CAMP EAGLE - When the 2nd Bn. (Ambl.), 502nd Inf. captured another NVA soldier during the last days of December, it marked the 1000th detainee taken by the 1st Brigade in Vietnam. The brigade was deployed here in July, 1965.

The incident began when a lone enemy walked into an ambush set by "O-Deuce" soldiers. After being wounded, the enemy crawled away in the night, leaving a blood trail.

"The next morning, we were getting ready to sweep through a draw looking for him when we

heard a shot," explained platoon leader Lt. Ron Wildes, Cedarburg, Wis. "A Cobra gunship had just begun to fire his minigun nearby. The enemy must have thought the whole world was coming down on him. He got scared and fired."

Lt. Dan Horgan, West New York, N.J., whose platoon was close to the scene, moved his men out on a sweep of the area. The frightened NVA again opened up, giving his position away.

Horgan's Kit Carson Scout, Ngo H., talked to the wounded enemy soldier, telling him that if he gave himself up, he would be taken to a hospital. The NVA quickly surrendered, bringing the 1st Brigade's detainee count to 1000.

A new AK-47 and an RPG launcher were seized in the encounter.



SWEEP—Men of Co. D, 2nd Bn. (Ambl.), 501st Inf. check a hillside for enemy activity. The unit uncovered a regimental-size bunker complex on this sweep, about 17 miles west of Hue. The complex is believed to have been used as a headquarters for enemy operations during Tet in 1968. (U.S. Army photo by Lt. Ken Strafer)

Accident Free Flying Nets Award For Co.

CAMP WATSON—Co. C, 158th Avn. Bn. received the annual battalion flight safety award recently for six months of accident free operation here.

The battalion commander, Lt. Col. Joseph H. Kastner, Washington, DC, presented the award to the operations officer, Capt. Gary Elliot, Mustang, Okla.

The award is presented to the company with the least number of accidents for total flight time. As of Jan. 9th, C Company had flown 11,123 accident free

hours over a six month period to win the award.

Wishing to stress the difficulty of attaining such a safety record, Lt. Aft. Stewart, Battalion S-1 from Memphis, Tenn., commented, "This achievement is truly exceptional when you realize that in an assault helicopter company the greatest percentage of flight time is spent in combat logistical support."

"Most of those hours were spent under hazardous conditions in the A Shau Valley and the area just south of the DMZ."

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.